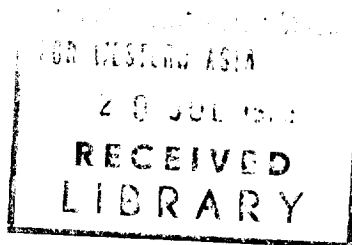




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Regional Plan of Action

for

The Integration of Women in Development for the Countries of the ECWA Region

(Note from the Executive Secretary)

The Economic Commission for Western Asia and the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs held a regional conference in Amman, Jordan, from 29 May to 4 June 1978 on the adoption of a "Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development for the ECWA Region".

The attached explanatory note describes the legislative bases of this Regional Plan of Action and the measures taken in its preparation. It also describes the desired objectives on the national, regional and international levels and the measures proposed for achieving them.

The Plan of Action was submitted to the Governments of the member States so that they could consider the recommendations that needed implementation aimed at the national level. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall raise

before the General Assembly the recommendations for implementation at the international level. The recommendations addressed to the regional level - the region of Western Asia - form the last sections of the attached explanatory note and are being presently submitted to the Commission so that it can consider them and make decisions on their implementation.

Annexed to the explanatory note is a report of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women which contains a summary of the projects approved by the Fund's consultative committee, including the projects submitted by ECWA.

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Explanatory Note

1. The importance of the full participation of women in all the efforts and phases of development and in the achievement of the objectives of the New International Economic Order has been highlighted in the past few years. Beginning with resolution 2716 (XXV) of 15 December 1970 the General Assembly has stressed the need for adopting intensive programmes for the advancement of women in the different spheres of life.
2. In resolution 1684 (LII) of 2 June 1972, the Economic and Social Council recalled General Assembly resolution 2716 (XXV) of 1970 and called upon the Member States to adopt programmes for advancing the conditions of women so that they can play their role as spouses and mothers and as citizens contributing to the development of their country. The Council also called upon the United Nations and its organizations to undertake programmes in this area.
3. At the same meeting of 2 June 1972, the Economic and Social Council re-endorsed the need for more action devoted to advancing the status of women and referred with interest to the Commission on Arab Women formed by the League of Arab States in September, 1971. The Council urged all the United Nations regional commissions to take the necessary measures for introducing into their work programmes projects for increasing women's participation in social affairs and to submit progress reports to the Economic and Social Council.
4. Economic and Social Council resolution 1681 (LII) of 2 June 1972 declared 1975 "International Women's Year". The General Assembly in resolution 3010 (XXVII) of 18 December 1972 seconded this resolution and called upon all Member States to put an emphasis throughout 1975 on programmes and activities devoted to the integration of women in development in their dual capacity as participants and beneficiaries thereof.
5. On 10 December 1974 the General Assembly called upon the Member Governments, specialized organizations and regional commissions of the United Nations to implement the work programme of the International Women's Year proclaimed by the Economic and Social Council. This resolution called upon Member States to examine their national development plans and to introduce among their projects

programmes for training and educating women so as to increase their participation in the social and economic life of their countries. This resolution also recommended the establishment of a national organization in each Member State devoted to the question of accelerating the process of the integration of women in development.

6. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1851(LVI) of 16 May 1974 and General Assembly resolution 32760 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974 it was decided to hold a World Conference on the occasion of International Women's Year. The General Assembly called upon the Conference to submit its recommendations and suggestions for deliberation at the Assembly's seventh special session in September 1975. The Assembly also decided to place a special item on International Women's Year on the agenda of its thirtieth session.

7. The General Assembly in resolution 3505 (XXX) of 15 December 1975, reaffirmed its conviction that the participation of women in development was one of the major objectives of development. It also emphasized the importance of work at the regional level, especially in two resolutions which it adopted upon examination of the results of the World Conference for International Women's Year. In resolution 3490 (XXX) of 12 December 1975, paragraph 1, the General Assembly called upon the organizations of the United Nations, the regional commissions included, "to make annual reviews of their activities in the area of the World Plan of Action... and to include these reviews in the reports submitted to the Economic and Social Council". In paragraph 6 of resolution 3520 (XXX) the General Assembly also called upon the regional commissions to give first priority to developing and implementing an effective strategy for achieving the objectives of the Plan of Action at the regional level and at the national level, taking into account the respective national plans of action of their different member States.

8. In the same resolution (3520 (XXX) of 15 December 1975) the General Assembly declared the decade from 1976 to 1985 the "United Nations Decade for Women Promoting Equality, Development and Peace", and designated the decade for the achievement of specific objectives embodied in the World Plan of Action.

9. The World Plan of Action called upon governments to formulate short-term, medium-term and long-term goals within a basic general framework consonant with the circumstances and the priorities of their individual countries. The World Plan also set minimum objectives for achievement by 1980, leaving the more detailed exposition to the different regional plans.
10. In the World Plan of Action the first priority was given to action at the regional level and to the role of the United Nations regional commissions for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and Western Asia. The World Plan of Action provided that the regional commissions should promote interest in the World Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development and should supply governments and non-governmental organizations the needed assistance for implementing the Plan's objectives.
11. After referring to the World Plan of Action that resulted from the World Conference on Women that met in Mexico in June 1975, General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) called upon the Governments to study the recommendations of the World Plan of Action and the resolutions of the World Conference, especially as they related to action at the national level - more specifically, the recommendations that required the determination of short, medium and long term objectives. It called upon them to adopt national strategies and national plans of action for implementing the recommendations of the Plan, and to conduct periodic evaluations of work progress in this field.
12. The General Assembly in resolution 3520 (XXX) paragraph 20, decided to call a Second World Conference for 1980, the middle of the Decade for Women, for the purpose of reviewing and evaluating work progress since the adoption of the World Plan of Action in 1975.
13. Based on General Assembly resolution 3275 (XXIX) of 10 December 1975, which called upon the regional commissions to implement fully the programmes of International Women's Year, and after referring to the programme prepared by ECWA for International Women's Year, the States members of ECWA called upon the Executive Secretary in resolution 17 (II) of 9 May 1975 to intensify the activity of the secretariat in this field and to accord the World Plan of Action the attention it deserved.

14. Based on the recommendation of the World Plan of Action, the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the decisions of the General Assembly, which called upon the regional commissions of the United Nations to adopt programmes in the area of the integration of women in development, and based on the contacts between the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and ECWA, the Commission prepared a Draft Regional Plan which was submitted to an expert meeting held in Amman between 15 and 20 April 1978. A limited number of experts from the countries of the ECWA region was invited to this preparatory meeting so as to facilitate the in-depth study of the Draft Plan. Invitations were sent to the following countries: Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Syria. The invitations requested that each of these members send a representative specialized in a specific area of the involvement of women in development, so as to provide for a complementary representation of the expertise available in the specializations devoted to this subject. Also invited to this meeting were the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations and the Commission on Arab Women of the League of Arab States.

15. The objective of the preparatory meeting was to submit the proposed Draft Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development for the ECWA Region, to permit the exchange of views and deliberations thereon, to seek the necessary recommendations for redrafting it and to take cognizance of the experts' proposals concerning the amendment of this document so that it could be put into its final form as the principal working paper of the Regional Conference for the Integration of Arab Women in Development.

16. The Regional Conference for the Integration of Women in Development for the ECWA Region was held in Amman from 29 May to 4 June 1978 at the invitation of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and ECWA. The invitation stressed the importance of the subject to the member States and to the United Nations and called upon the Governments to participate at the highest levels so that their delegates would have the authority to take the necessary decisions on the subject.

17. The Conference was organized by the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and ECWA as part of the United Nations regular technical co-operation programme and on the basis of the recommendations of the World Plan of Action adopted at the International Conference for Women. The Amman Conference was the first conference on the integration of women in development in the region of Western Asia to take place under the auspices of the United Nations. At that Conference the countries of the region adopted a Regional Plan of Action.

18. Representatives of the following ECWA members attended the Conference:

1. Bahrain
2. Egypt
3. Iraq
4. Jordan
5. Kuwait
6. Lebanon
7. Oman
8. Palestine Liberation Organization
9. Syrian Arab Republic
10. Yemens.

Also attending were the League of Arab States - the Commission on Arab Women - and the Arab Socio-Economic Planning Institute of Kuwait. In addition to the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and ECWA, various organizations of the United Nations and its specialized agencies were also represented.

19. The following section of this note contains a summary of the Plan of Action adopted by the Regional Conference at the conclusion of its meetings as well as an enumeration of the opportunities for action at the national level and, finally, excerpts from the recommendations proposed by the Plan for implementation at the regional level.

Regional Plan of Action  
for  
The Integration of Women in Development for the ECWA Region

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20. The Regional Plan of Action for the integration of women in socio-economic development for the countries of the ECWA region is founded on national, Arab - regional and international - humanitarian supports. These supports consist, at the national level, of the realities and circumstances of the individual countries of the region and the efforts expended by them to confront the challenges of the development advancement of their populations. Regionally, these supports consist of the common historical and cultural heritage that the countries of the region enjoy as members of the Arab nation, as well as their determined efforts to achieve greater socio-economic and cultural integration so as to enhance the freedom of the Arab nation and the dignity of the Arab citizen wherever he may be. The international foundations of this Plan consist of the support of the international community as expressed through the United Nations and its different organizations, in the texts of its covenants and the declarations of its conferences and in its objectives in the area of international co-operation at all levels aimed at the development of human resources and the advancement of human progress. The areas of concern of the Plan of Action at the three levels indicated above were designated as follows:

1. Planning and implementation
2. Law
3. Education and training
4. Employment and labour
5. Family services and welfare
6. Family formation and personal status
7. Improvement of the conditions of rural and bedouin women
8. The Palestinian woman
9. The role of the information media and culture
10. The role of women's groups and organizations
11. The role of research, study and information.



21. The Plan concludes with a summary extracting from the proposals for action contained in the preceding eleven sections the more significant recommendations which represent projects susceptible to short-term planning and execution. The recommendations selected represent major elements that can be instrumental in leading other projects and proposals towards implementation at both the national and the regional levels. They also embody the essential common needs of the region in terms of efforts to integrate women in socio-economic development.

22. The following are the recommendations involving action by ECWA in the area of women and development:

(a) Strengthening co-operation among ECWA, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Commission for Arab Women in the exchange of information and expertise on projects for the advancement of women in both regions and vitalizing technical co-operation among the States of the region;

(b) Establishment of a permanent organization for the exposition and evaluation of preparations taken for implementing the recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action. ECWA is assigned responsibility for formulating the appropriate conception of this organization, its composition, terms of reference and work procedures;

(c) The Plan of Action assigns ECWA responsibility for programming the projects financed by the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women; calls upon ECWA to take interest in women's training activities and in productive projects in the rural areas and urban slums. The Plan also proposes that a major portion of the projects of this Fund be directed towards the least developed countries of the region and that ECWA seek out further sources of finance for projects for the advancement of women from among Arab funds and international sources;

(d) ECWA is urged to co-operate with the specialized agencies of the United Nations and Arab regional organizations, to publish a professional directory of women in the different fields of economic, social and cultural specialization - especially those fields that are related to women's affairs and programmes for integrating them in development. This directory will be useful for the exchange of experts and expertise among the Arab countries as well as at the international level;

(e) The collection of information and data on the conditions of women and on programmes for integrating them in development in the countries of the region - as part of the activities in provision for the Regional Preparatory Conference on Women which is expected to meet in 1979 in preparation for the 1980 World Conference;

(f) Bolstering women's programmes at ECWA by increasing the number of experts in the field of women's affairs and development so that ECWA can meet the responsibilities that will increase during the Decade for Women; the study of the possibility of establishing within ECWA a unit devoted to women and development.

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ANNEX

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women

- 1) In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) of 15 December 1975 declaring 1976 - 1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women, recalling the Voluntary Fund for International Women's Year which was set up under Economic and Social Council resolution 1850 (LVI) of 16 May 1974 and stressing the need to assist the least developed countries and the countries with limited budgets which find it difficult to carry out their national work programmes for the integration of women in development, the General Assembly decided in its resolution 133 (XXXI) of 16 December 1976 to extend the Women's Voluntary Fund to cover the 1976 - 1985 Decade for Women.
- 2) In its resolution 133 (XXXI) of 16 December 1976 the General Assembly endorsed the terms of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women stipulated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2005 (L) of 12 May 1976.
- 3) The General Assembly stressed the need to limit the resources of this Fund to programmes and projects designed for the least developed of the developing countries with the proviso that these projects should meet the following specifications:
  - (a) Technical co-operation activities;
  - (b) Activities to consolidate and promote regional and international programmes;
  - (c) Activities for the promotion and implementation of joint inter-organizational programmes;
  - (d) Research in connexion with (a), (b) and (c) above;
  - (e) Cultural and informational activities related to the objectives and developmental programmes of the Decade for Women;
  - (f) When selecting projects special consideration must be given to projects which benefit rural women and needy urban women.

4) Under the same resolution the Secretary-General was called upon to set up an Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from the various regions nominated by their governments, to examine the projects of the various commissions.

5) For the implementation of these projects the Advisory Committee decided to appoint a woman to take charge of the programmes within the budget of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women and suitably qualified candidates are now being sought for this post.

6) The Economic Commission for Western Asia submitted seven project proposals to the Advisory Committee on the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women which was set up after the World Conference of International Women's Year, held in Mexico in 1975. The aim of the Voluntary Fund, which is financed from contributions from States members of the United Nations, is to promote the advancement of women through practical projects adapted to the circumstances of each region and each country. The Advisory Committee on this Fund concentrates on helping the developing and poor countries which need technical assistance in order to implement certain projects in this field.

7) After studying the projects of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, the Advisory Committee approved six projects and rejected one since it entailed aid in kind only (laboratory equipment) rather than human technical assistance. The following is a summary of the six projects approved by the Advisory Committee and which are based on practical training courses in various fields:

(a) Training of nursery nurses/teachers/supervisors in the Bait Al Sumood for the people of Tell Zaatar in Lebanon.

This project aims to train thirty female employees engaged in teaching, administrative and welfare work for the children of Bait Al Sumood which is run by the General Federation of

Palestinian Women. The training courses will provide instruction in proper modern methods of child care in the special conditions of Bait Al Sumood, administrative procedures for the management of child care centres including the requisite information on methods of programming daily activities, housekeeping and school management, methods of dealing with the relatives of orphaned children and other matters necessary for the operational organization of Bait Al Sumood. ECWA will establish contact with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with a view to co-operation in this project.

(b) Integrated development and advisory services in rural areas.

This training course is intended for twenty five rural cadres in Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic. The purpose of the course is to discuss integrated rural development concepts with women engaged in rural advisory service programmes and to train them in methods of providing rural services in agriculture and in the home. Contact will be established with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations with a view to its participation in this course. This project will be carried out in conjunction with the Agricultural Guidance and Education Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Baghdad, which has offered to co-operate with ECWA in this course.

(c) Eight-country training course in methods of project formulation.

Eight countries, namely Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, Egypt, Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic will be invited to participate in this training course. Female employees of voluntary organizations or ministries will receive training in methods of project formulation, from project definition right through to

programming, implementation and, finally, evaluation. During training emphasis will be placed on the importance of co-ordination between the various projects to be carried out by the voluntary organizations or ministries and the national development objectives as defined in each country's development plans. The Arab Planning Institute in Kuwait will be invited to participate in setting up this course.

(d) The provision of suitable social services in rural areas.

Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Lebanon, Egypt, Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic will be invited to participate in this project which is designed to help rural planners and advisers with the modernization and adaptation of existing social service methods. This project consists of two phases. The first concentrates on the collection of data and information on social services in rural areas so that an assessment can be made of the type of services, the qualifications of the staff providing them, the benefit derived therefrom by members of the community, the degree of participation by the latter in the planning of these services and the extent to which existing services meet the actual needs of the community as expressed by its members. The second phase comprises a seminar and a training course in which the participants will examine the results of the survey carried out during the first phase together with new and modernized methods of revitalizing and improving social services in order to adapt them to the real needs of members of the community. The League of Arab States and the Functional Literacy Centre for the Arab States, Sirs Al-Layan, will be invited to participate in this project.

- (e) Training course in national planning and the integration of women in development. All members of the Economic Commission, together with the other Arab countries members of the League of Arab States, will be invited to participate in this course which is designed to train individuals of both sexes working in various planning offices either in the Ministry of Planning or other ministries. Training will concentrate on methods of integrating programmes for the advancement of women into the priorities of general national development and sectoral plans. The League of Arab States and the Economic Commission for Africa will be invited to participate in this course.
- (f) Flexible financial resources to increase technical assistance for existing projects in certain member States such as the Basic Health Programme in Oman, rural development in Democratic Yemen and **the Yemen Arab Republic, women social workers in Bahrain** and the development of human resources in Lebanon.