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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES \*

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1. ACTIVITIES BY AUSTRIA RELATING TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN  
IN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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1. The Austrian Delegation to UNIDO has repeatedly referred to the importance of a better integration of women in development. At the twelfth session of the Industrial Development Board, the Austrian delegation especially stressed the urgent need for a wider participation of women in UNIDO-assisted programmes and projects.

2. It also recalled the progress that had been achieved in this regard in the framework of bilateral co-operation between Austria and developing countries. In recent years, the number of female applications for scholarship programmes financed by the Austrian Government has steadily increased. At present, one third of Austrian technical advisers and experts serving in the field are women.

3. The Catholic Women's Movement is promoting projects which are either specifically designed for girls or women or integrate women in rural development projects. The organization provides financial assistance to developing countries through a special committee responsible for the administration of funds collected on an annual Family Day of Fasting (Familienfasttag). Twenty scholarships are granted to students from developing countries for their education in Austria. <sup>(1)</sup> The Protestant organization "Women's Work" is equally involved in assistance programmes for developing countries. Other women's organizations seek direct co-operation with partner organizations in developing countries.

4. The Vienna Institute for Development is concerned with the promotion of cultural, social and economic co-operation in favour of developing countries and undertakes research on particular aspects of development policies. <sup>(2)</sup>

2. MAJOR CONSTRAINTS TO THE ACHIEVEMENT BY WOMEN  
OF AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE INDUSTRIALIZATION  
PROCESS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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5. According to recent reports from different parts of the world, women in developing countries could not achieve effective roles because they have been excluded to a large extent from the industrialisation process. (3, 4, 5)

Some of the studies have shown that industrialization has even produced negative effects on women:

(i) in rural sectors

- \* training in agricultural technologies and the use of machines is provided only to men;
- \* women continue to do the hardest types of work in the fields and as machines and other mechanical devices set the pace in specific agricultural work processes, have to increase their work input;
- \* the evolution of new economic patterns devalued rural work as a means of making a livelihood for women;
- \* the impact of agricultural technology has led to the displacement of women from rural sectors;

(ii) in non-rural development

- \* land tenure and loans are only given to men;
- \* women have lost their traditional small retail trade to men who raise crops commercially;
- \* women have lost marketing opportunities and, as a result, purchasing power;

(iii) in small-scale industries

- \* working places were primarily created for male workers only;
- \* women lost their original working opportunities as domestic workers, e.g. handweavers (with only a small number of men finding work in relevant industries);
- \* in some countries female participation in the total work force declined in all sectors of the economy; (3)

(iv) in large-scale industries

- \* employment in large-scale industries has frequently led to the displacement of women, e.g. from domestic handweaving to textile industries, or, in the service sector, from trade to commerce;
- \* women are only employed as unskilled workers (mostly due to a lack of training opportunities);
- \* in moving to work places in industry, women were cut off from supporting family groups and were confronted with the negative effects of urbanization.

6. Some of the causes for such constraints can be seen in the social, cultural and religious values influencing the attitudes and behaviour of women and men, the division of labour and the relative position of the sexes (gender roles) in the power structure at all levels of society. Similar to the situation in Western societies, women are ascribed inferior positions in their non-domestic relations and, consequently, in the industrialization process. At the same time they remain responsible for all household consumption and maintenance, as well as for the care of the family group. The Western concept of a male supporter of the household has been transferred to the Basic Needs Approach for developing countries. (4) This concept has proved detrimental to the role of women in the development process. (3) Consequently, rather than focusing on the household or the family, basic needs should be identified with reference to the individual.

7. In this connection due account must be taken of the increasing number of sole female supporters which comes close to 25 - 33 per cent and represents the poorest group of the female population, especially in certain age groups. (6)

### 3. SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE WOMEN CAN CONTRIBUTE TO INDUSTRIALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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8. The examples for constraints mentioned above can, however, also be cited as areas in which women can contribute to the industrialization process:

#### (1) in rural sectors

\* women and men, girls and boys, should receive formal and informal training in agricultural and agricultural extension work through the use of agricultural technologies and machines, e.g. mills, pumps, carts;

- \* material improvements (water supply, dairy technology, etc.) should permit women to spend free time exploiting new options for advancement (education, health practices, etc.)

(ii) in non-rural development

- \* women should be trained in income-generating activities;
- \* women should be given their own land and granted loans and credits;
- \* they should be allowed to sign loan applications and receipts;

(iii) in small-scale industries

- \* women should develop their traditional handicrafts to produce marketable goods;
- \* rural crafts, manufacturing, construction and rural services should be developed and run by women, e.g. village stores;
- \* women should expand their activities in export trade, increasing foreign currency and introducing them to other economic and social issues;

(iv) in large-scale industries

- \* women should receive vocational training for gainful economic activities;
- \* more employment opportunities for women should be created within the framework of the industrialization process;
- \* women should have access to all levels of education and vocational training, including professional careers and top level positions;
- \* women workers should receive further training including management skills, in order to provide them with business contacts in other countries.

9. To summarize, women may contribute to their countries' industrialization process by

- a) using locally available primary products to develop a range of goods for domestic markets;
- b) using locally available materials for production of essential items;
- c) obtaining loans to finance the purchase of equipment;
- d) promoting co-operatives and other self-help schemes in food production, animal husbandry, marketing, housing and health;
- e) developing training skills for different occupations in industries, e.g. textiles, clothing, electronics, food processing, chemicals;



- f) encouraging their entrepreneurial skills and improving their retail trading abilities;
- g) gaining professional knowledge to carry out effectively industrialization tasks, e.g. banking, transportation, communication;
- h) developing and training their management skills;
- i) participating in project design and planning, and industrial management;
- j) sharing in the development of tripartite economic structures, participating in chambers of commerce and federations of industries on the one hand and trade unions on the other, and finally in the national administration at all levels;
- k) obtaining and ascertaining information on projects of industrialization at the local, regional and national level;
- l) identifying the decision-makers and defining the inducement they require to integrate women into industrialization projects;
- m) making use of opportunities to engage women in the industrialization process not readily apparent to male officials and industrial planners;
- n) increasing women's participation in technical and managerial positions as well as in policy- and decision-making positions;
- o) increasing women's eligibility for international activities.

#### 4. WAYS AND MEANS OF DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN THIS FIELD

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10. Women's achievements must be included as objectives in national programmes and economic plans. This goal must be generally recognized. Its realization should be verified at certain intervals. All administrative officials should receive special instruction to this area.

11. The possibilities as they exist in individual communities must be clearly defined. Women must be provided with the necessary means, such as training, appropriate machines, credits, etc.

12. Possible ways and means for furthering the process of industrialization must be chosen depending on the prevailing structures in a given country. Sometimes the capability of central units to support local administrative bodies must be improved, in other cases it is the local administration which needs assistance from the central government. Promotion and assistance must be forthcoming from organizations and institutions capable of implementing programmes relating to the role of women in the industrialization process (administrative authorities, political parties, employers' or workers' organizations, professional associations, women's organizations, etc.).

13. The potential role of women's organizations as institutional mechanism for promoting the industrialization process must be seen from different angles. Historically, women have found it easier to develop their ideas in confrontation with other women. Women's organizations and, more recently, women's groups function as consciousness-raising institutions on the one hand and pressure groups on the other. In addition, they are expected to support their members and to prepare rosters of women experts.

14. Since it is essential that all national programmes and economic plans be evaluated and reviewed under women's perspectives, women's bureaux, divisions or commissions should be established as national machinery. (7)

They should help male administrators and government decision-makers to become sensitive to and aware of the achievements of women in the industrialization process. Another aspect of their functions is to make the community understand the implications of planning and working for women.

15. As development plans are, as a general rule, designed by urban middle class men whose own wives, mothers and sisters do not participate in the industrialization process, it must be the most important goal to change the attitudes of the male society in the direction of a greater acceptance of female participation. (3) If special machinery does not exist or if there are no sensibilized female or male individuals to draw public attention to the role of women, only a long learning process will alter the situation.

16. In setting up national programmes and economic plans for the industrialization process, all aspects of the humanisation of labour should be promoted in parallel, protecting women against discrimination. Legislation, protective measures and collective agreements should apply to all workers, female or male.

17. For successful project formulation, planning and implementation, the closing words of the above-mentioned Report of the Asian and Pacific Center for Women and Development on "The Critical Needs of Women" could be cited as a general conclusion:

- "there must be genuine political will on the part of government,
- a new understanding on the part of men and
- a commitment and vision on the part of women that accepts and transcends differences and unites us in our demands for a new world order". (3)

5. SUGGESTIONS AS TO A MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THIS FIELD

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18. Since the mid-seventies, economic concepts on the one hand and concepts promoting the status of women on the other - both

developed in the United Nations and other international organizations- have approached one another.

19. General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI), of 1 May 1974, containing the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, supplemented the promotion of "economic advancement" by "social progress of all peoples". Furthermore, GA resolution 3281 (XXIX), of 15 January 1975, containing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States enlarged the primary responsibility of every State "to promote the economic, social and cultural development of its people" with inter alia the aim "to ensure full participation of its people in the process and benefits of development". (8)  
Can one not rightly assume that women are fully included in these concerns ?

20. More specifically, since women are entrusted with the upbringing of future generations (feeding, clothing, education etc.) should they not share, for instance, in the responsibility for the protection, preservation and enhancement of the environment as called for in article 30 of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States ?

21. GA resolution 3362 (S-VII), of 16 September 1975, on Development and International Economic Co-operation, requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the relevant organizations of the UN system, in regard to Section VI (Co-operation among developing countries) to undertake studies, inter alia, on the utilization of know-how and skills available within developing countries for promotion of investments in industry, agriculture, transport and communications. (9)

A relevant provision of the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Co-operation (see UNIDO A/10112, annex, chap. IV) recognized the importance of ensuring an adequate role for the public sector in the expansion of the industrial development of developing

countries. The conclusion may therefore be drawn that, in the context of economic self-reliance, the training of national skills of both men and women should receive priority. The public sector may be expected to play a pace-setting role in this regard.

22. Concepts promoting the status of women, mostly seen under social auspices, are contained in the following international documents:

In 1975, The General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the Decade for Women (1976-1985) and endorsed the World Plan of Action, Res. 3520(XXX), of 15 December 1975, which was the first socio-economic plan devised on a global scale to improve the situation of individuals. (10)

This comprehensive World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year was addressed to governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, institutions of various kinds, and individuals.

A world movement was set in motion and should alert the general public to recognizing that development cannot succeed without the involvement of women.

23. The links between women-oriented and economic instruments have originally been established by the Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The following resolutions, adopted by the Economic and Social Council, are cases in point: E/RES/2059/LXII, of 23 May 1977, on Training for the preparation and implementation of project proposals, E/RES/1978/27, of 24 May 1978, on Institutions responsible for implementing the World Plan of Action within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Women, and E/RES/1978/34, of 25 May 1978, on Women in development and international conferences.

24. The Industrial Development Board of UNIDO, at its ninth session, adopted resolution 44(IX) on the Integration of Women in Development. The Executive Director reported on

UNIDO's efforts in technical assistance, in the field of studies, on the contributions of UNIDO to joint efforts within the United Nations system, and on the employment of women in the secretariat and in the field. (11)

25. In implementing all these measures the United Nations system has had a world-wide impact on the role of women in industrialization in developing countries. Never before have these issues received so much international attention. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the role of the United Nations and other international organizations and institutions in this field depends upon the representatives of member states. These highly-skilled individuals with great diplomatic abilities and administrative power are usually male. They ordinarily have no gainfully employed women at their homes and often lack insight into the needs of the vast majority of the female population. Therefore, an important suggestion centers on a constant rise in the participation of sensibilized female representatives (delegates, high-level officials, policy planners, educators, etc.) on an equal footing with males.

26. In this context it should be emphasized that the improvement of female participation need not turn out to be a zero-sum game, taking into account the enormous amount of work to be accomplished at the national and international level in implementing the objectives of the New International Economic Order.

27. In the meantime,

- a) relevant information about women's integration in development processes must be disseminated;
- b) mechanisms and guidelines must be developed in order to ensure that this information is taken into account for the development of global, regional, national and local programmes and economic plans;
- c) the involvement of women in all spheres of public life must be enhanced by making full use of the work done by national and international research and training institutes. (12,1)

6. OTHER RELEVANT POINTS CONSIDERED OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE

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28. Of particular importance in all fields is the relationship between the sexes. Difficulties arise in view of the underlying expectations and conceptions for the roles women and men have to play. They form a part of the value system which is embodied in the national culture and crystalize only through socialization. As long as women and men consciously or unconsciously submit to these expectations and conceptions no changes should be expected. This vicious circle will be broken by new achievements only. Positive examples of effective roles of both women and men in the industrialization process will influence and gradually change the existing value system.

29. In some countries more equality in status and behaviour has been realized by implementing the concept of partnership in social and economic life. The relative position and participation of women and men in power structure are by no means static. Consequently, the gender roles in a given society should be fully analyzed before setting out to improve the role of women in the industrialization process in developing countries. Action-oriented research will yield best results in this respect.

It should not be overlooked however, that sexual considerations continue to be prevalent and sometimes prevent objective and functional approaches. (12, 13, 14, 15) The prevailing differentiation between the sexes as regards feelings, thinking, talking, acting is not absolute and qualitative, but rather relative and quantitative in physical and psychological terms. (16)

30. At the international level another relevant point might be considered in some detail. Transnational corporations, which have their seat in countries that apply legislation on equal pay and equal employment opportunity, have developed positive or affirmative action programmes. (17)

These affirmative action programmes involve a series of positive steps undertaken by employers to remove systematic barriers to employment and to achieve measurable improvements in hiring, training and promoting qualified workers who have in the past been denied access to certain jobs. (18)

31. Transnational corporations could transfer those affirmative action guidelines and necessary consultative services to improve and enhance employment opportunities for women in all areas of the work force to their affiliated companies in developing countries. This would have a double effect. Qualified women of developing countries would be given access to the accelerating industrialization process. Female managers of developed countries would not be handicapped in their business transactions with their male counterparts who so far have lacked experience in doing business with women in developing regions.

32. It would thus be desirable to increase the number of female professionals in developing countries through training and exchange as envisaged by UNIDO-assisted programmes and courses.



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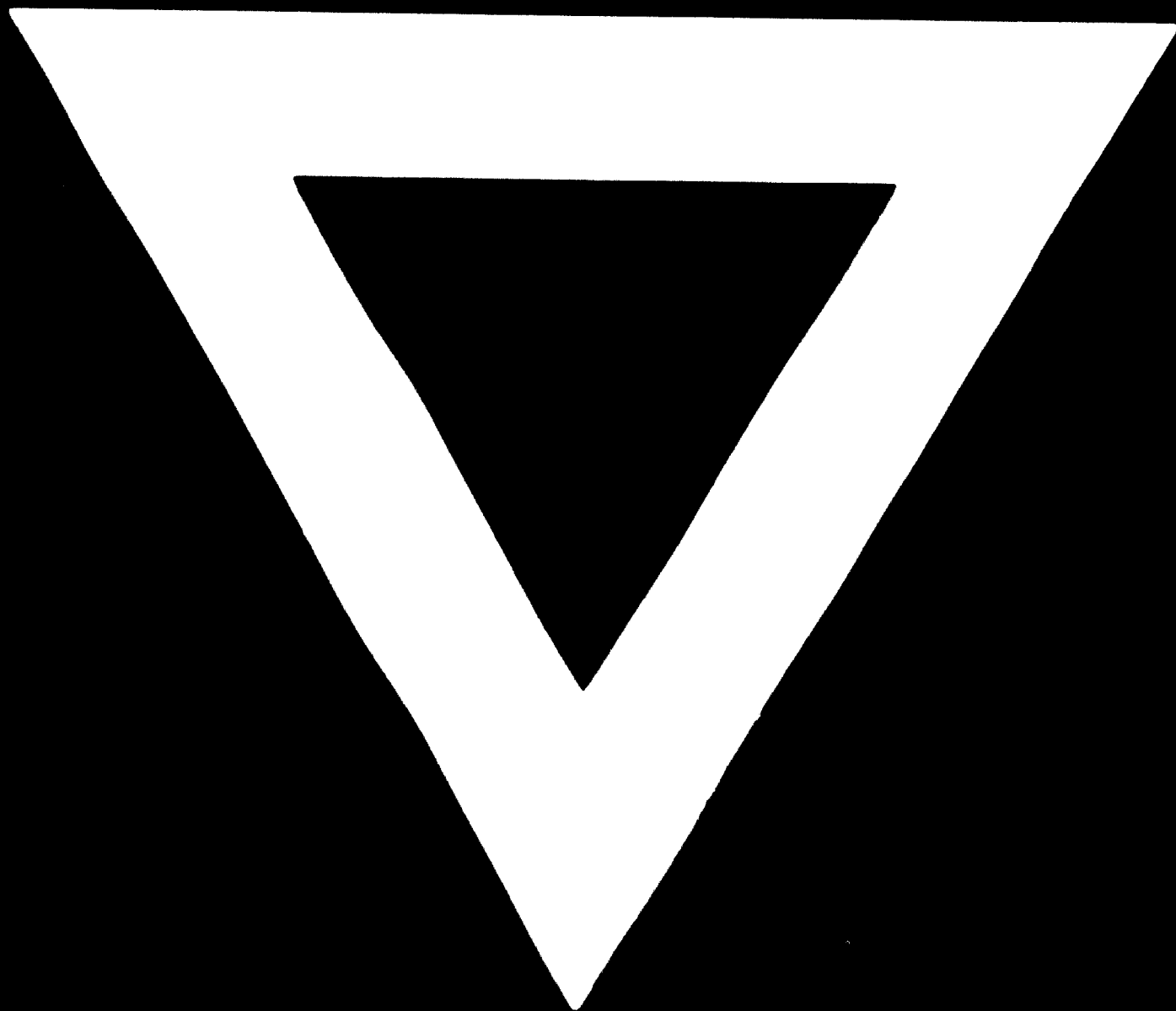
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