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United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Preparatory Meeting on the Role of Women
in Industrialization in Developing
Countries

Vienna, Austria, 6 - 10 November 1978

UNESCO ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES *

prepared by

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1. Few activities of Unesco have dealt directly with this topic although certain programmes of Unesco may be of interest in the context of the theme of the meeting.
2. Unesco's programmes for promotion of equality of educational opportunities for women have been directed inter alia to ensuring that women obtain training in scientific, technological and other modern sector-related employment areas. Unesco's revised recommendation concerning technical and vocational education, adopted by the General Conference in 1974, places more emphasis than did its predecessor on the necessity to give equality of opportunity of access to all forms of technical and vocational education to girls and women, so that they can seek wider participation in all kinds of occupations outside family and domestic activities. It stresses the need for particular attention to be given to guidance for girls and women. The relationship of educational and employment opportunities open to women has been the subject of detailed studies in five countries (Argentina, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka) prepared in collaboration with ILO, and programmes have been undertaken in conjunction with ILO on educational and vocational guidance for girls and women. The specific question of obstacles posed to women's employment in scientific careers was also the subject of a special issue of the Unesco journal Impact of Science on Society (Vol. XXV) entitled "Women in Science: A Man's World". In Unesco's Draft Programme and Budget for 1979-80, still to be approved by the Unesco General Conference in October/November 1978, studies are planned on the access of women to science education and training and associated careers. A seminar for 1979-80 to consider the problem of women's education, training and employment in developed countries may however provide useful findings for UNIDO's planned programme.
3. Unesco has undertaken, in collaboration with the Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences (FLACSO), a survey study to

examine the phenomenon of rural-urban migration in Latin America and its implications for women. It examines inter alia the types and level of entry into employment of women in urban centres, with particular reference to the Buenos Aires region. Many women from the lower socio-economic categories enter into employment in private domestic service, and research has shown that this sector serves as a labour reserve for capitalistic sector activities. Others are employed in low levels of certain industries where women are concentrated, in particular textile and ready-to-wear manufacturing and food processing industries. The ready-to-wear clothing industry is described by A. Marshall in his study Inmigración, demanda de fuerza de trabajo y estructura ocupacional en el área metropolitana argentina as "... a typical sector of employment for migrant women, characterized by piece-work which is basically seasonal and commands the lowest wages". This study, being published in the Unesco series Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences (No. 41), will be followed by case studies conducted by Unesco and FLACSO in selected Latin American countries to examine the situation of women migrants in urban centres and to assist in formulating policies and preparing projects to up-grade the situation of these women. UNIDO, as well as ILO, might wish to consider contributing an input to these studies.

4. In the field of population, Unesco would be interested in collaborating with UNIDO in research on the impact of education on employment in the industrial sector in both urban and rural areas. Also as part of its training of women communicators in development/population issues, Unesco could, with UNIDO inputs and collaboration, undertake and integrate coverage of women in industry in the regular teaching and training programmes of institutes of mass communication. As part of this same programme, it could award fellowships to women communicators to develop programmes (both print and electronic media) on the role of women in population/industrialization processes. Unesco would also be willing

to initiate special workshops and seminars for journalists and communicators on industrial reporting with special focus on women in industry.

5. Some general points of reflection on the question may be noted. It would be necessary to consider the role of women in industrialization in developing countries in a wider developmental context. It is important to ask the question of what type of industrialization is required to meet the country's needs, who will control it, how it is meeting local development needs and drawing on local human resources. Women's integration in the development effort does not mean simply gaining access to positions held by men, but the consideration of structural changes that may in fact bring benefit to both men and women.

6. In many cases the industrialization process may in part be directed so as to utilize and reinforce women's present activities. Many women are engaged in productive and commercial activities in the informal and formal sector and by receiving a few inputs (such as credit facilities, introduction to techniques of organization) they may considerably augment their production.

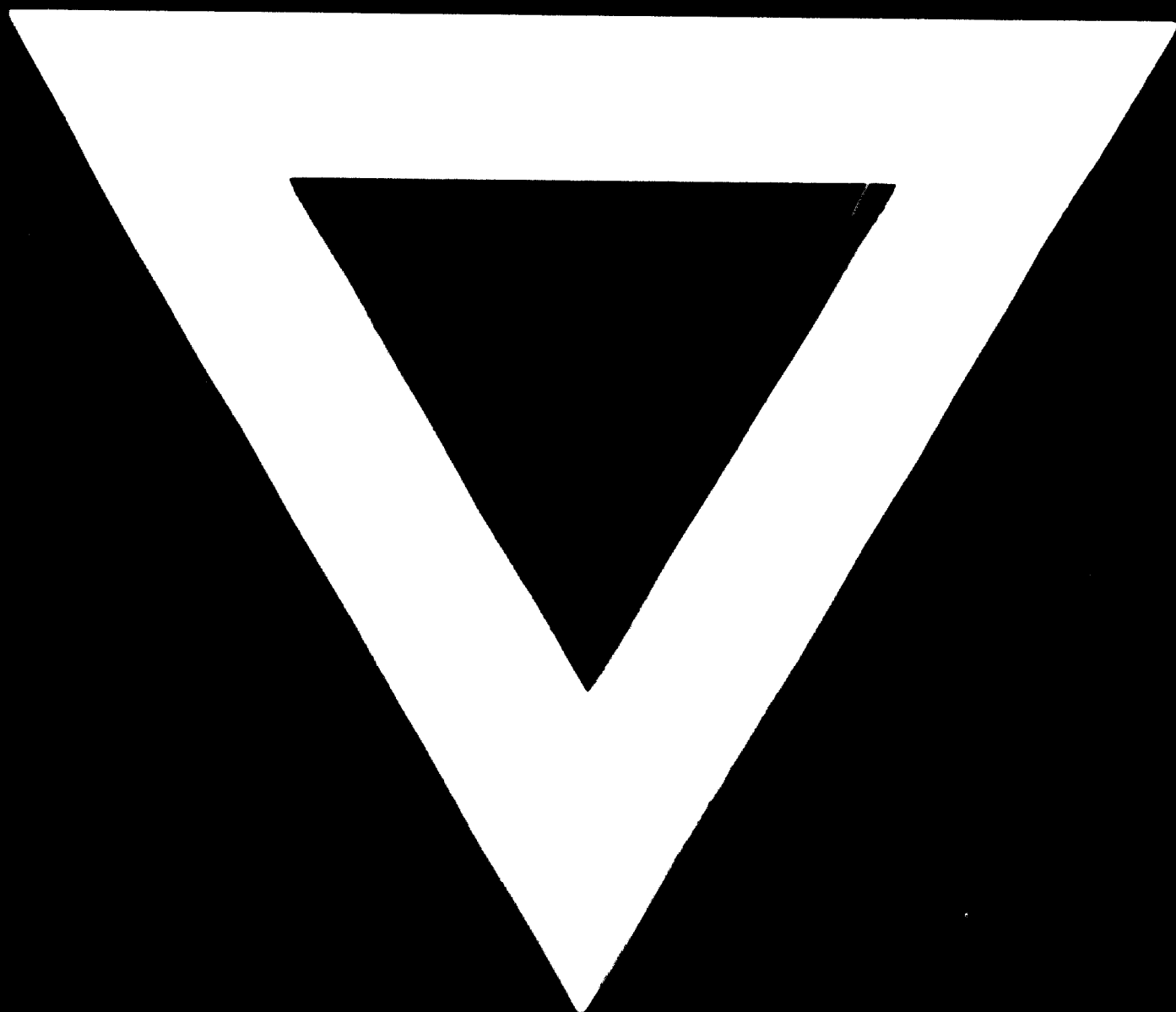
7. One area that might merit investigation would be the particular role played by transnational corporations in the process of industrialization and their use of feminine labour. It might also be of interest to examine the causes for the "feminization" of certain industries and the mechanisms whereby women are retained in the lowest employment categories.

8. Cooperation between UNIDO, Unesco and other sister organizations, such as ILO and FAO, in this field and other areas is desirable if the impact of the programmes sponsored by the United Nations system is to be tangible and long-lasting. In line with this

idea, it seems that instead of dispersing scarce resources, it would be useful if the concerned United Nations organizations would center their efforts on pre-concerted multi-component programmes to be carried out in selected countries which would fulfill a certain number of technical criteria. Each participating organization would then implement those components of the programme which are of their technical competence. Unesco looks forward to learning of the results of the UNIDO preparatory meeting and will be pleased to lend its assistance to UNIDO and inter-agency projects proposed.



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