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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES *

prepared by

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1. Introduction

The potential of women to contribute to industrialization and economic development in a country still needs to be tapped. Women are still wanting on the top of the hierarchy of the industrial sector. Furthermore, in a study conducted on the female labor force in 49 selected countries,¹ the percentages of women in the labor force averaged 29.56%, for countries with a development index ranging from 5.07 to 9.89, 26.67% for countries with a development index ranging from 2.52 to 4.96, 26.36% for countries with a development index ranging from 1.21 to 2.46.² The relatively significant percentage of women in the labor force in these countries even during the 60's shows that women represent a potent force which needs to be well guided to serve the needs of industrialization in developing countries.

The Lima declaration stipulates that the share of the developing countries as a whole in total world industrial production by the year 2000 should be at least 25%. To reach that goal, developing countries should harness all their available resources, be they men or women. Indeed women planners and policy makers as well as managers, entrepreneurs and industrial workers, both in the government and the private sectors would be needed to accelerate industrialization.

*Prepared with the assistance of Mrs. Aida Gonzales-Gordon, Asst. Vice-President of the San Miguel Corporation and Mrs. Ofelia Bulaong, Chief Analyst, Philippine Board of Investments.

¹"An International Comparison of Women's Participation in the Professions", Rudolf C. Blitz, The Journal of Developing Areas 9 (July 1975); 499-510

²Ibid.

There is so much to be done that prevailing social attitudes and prejudices against women in industry in some countries should be changed immediately.

In the Philippines, the female population 10 years old and over has steadily, but slightly, outnumbered the male population of the same age. Despite the dominance in number, the female participation in the labor force is continuously outnumbered by the males. The Department of Labor's Bureau of Women and Minors reports that the female labor force has never reached a third of the total labor force for both sexes for May 1969, 1970, 1971 and 1972, respectively. As of November 1972, 3,982,000 or 31.6% of the total number (12,582,000) of employed persons 10 years old and over were females. The trend as of November 1972, was employment of the greatest number of women in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing, which was 1.374 million or 34.5 percent of the female labor force.

The 1974 statistics show that of a labor force (10 years old and over) of 14,244,000, 68% are males and 32% are females. The highest labor force participation of women is in the 25-45 age bracket (40.3%) followed by the 10-24 year old (37.8%). Over the years, the majority of the women in our labor force have been engaged in agriculture and related work, the 1974 figures showing 36.6% of them in said occupational group. Next to agriculture, our women have gone into commerce, 17.9% being in the sales force, followed by an estimated 16.2% in services (domestic and personal), sports and related occupations. Only 9.9% are professional and technical workers and a slim 0.1% are found in administrative, executive and management levels.

As of February 1975, the estimated number of females 10 years of age and over was 14,663,000 of which 35.9 percent were in urban areas and 64 percent were in rural areas. On the other hand, the males numbered 14,287,000 of whom 31.5 percent were in the urban areas and

68.5 percent were in the rural areas.

In urban areas, the ratio of males to females was 854:1,000. In rural areas, the males gained the upper hand with a ratio of 1,042 males to every 1,000 females.

As of February 1975, the female labor force was 4,586,000. Out-numbering the females, the male labor force is 9,700,000 of the same age group. There is indeed a wide gap in actual number between female and male labor force.

In the rural areas, there were 2.626 million employed females. Of this 32.2 percent were 10-24 years old, 39.8 percent were 26-44 years old, 23.5 were 45-64 years old and 3.4 percent were 65 years old and over. As previously indicated, women workers chose to concentrate mostly in agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing, where there are 1,502 million of them or 34.1 percent. As of February, 1975, out of every 100 females employed: 20 were in commerce; 15 were in manufacturing; 14 were in domestic service; 13 were in government, community, business, and recreational activities; and 3 were in personal services other than domestic. This indicates that less than 1/5 of the women labor force is involved in industry. The number decreases further as one goes up in the industrial ladder. In policy making, there is only one woman head of a ministry, two (2) deputies and four (4) assistants ministers. Of these numbers, only the minister and one (1) assistant minister has something to do with the industrial sector.

Findings of February 1975 reveal that male workers received greater income than their female counterparts. This disparity in earnings is attributable to the following factors: 1) More males than females worked 40 hours and over during the survey week in February 1975, the males exceeding the females by 1,231,000; 2) More males hold high salary positions e.g., managerial

and supervisory positions. The males exceeded the females in these positions by 64,000.

Recently, an increasing number of rural women have forsaken the fields, lured by the more attractive wages offered by industrial firms in urban areas, particularly those calling for finger dexterity and attention to detail as in cigarette making, electronics, packaging, garment manufacture and the like. Whilst it is true that there is now a marked tendency for women to work in industry, and women have gradually invaded what used to be regarded as exclusively male domain, it is still predominantly the males who are appointed to managerial, executive and supervisory positions calling for decision-making and the exercise of supervision. It is to be noted that in the 1974 statistics, out of 4,412,000 gainfully employed Filipino women, only 33,000 or 0.1% are in the top levels. However, in the last few years, it should be pointed out that a lot of traditions have been broken and Filipino women, particularly the highly educated professional elite have become more accepted and recognized in traditionally male-dominated areas. It is therefore anticipated that more and more Filipino women will join and participate in the labor force as it has now been established that increase of women in the labor force coincides with the economic development of a country.

It is within this context that we believe that UNIDO can spearhead the role of women in industrialization in developing countries, with due consideration to the various recommendations arrived at particularly during International Women's Year 1975, the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development and Co-operation.

2. The Potential Role of Women in National and International Policies on Industrialization

It has been the general impression of representatives from developed countries of the high status of Filipino women who are conspicuously present in academic, in business, politics, in government and

even in international development and diplomatic circles. Studies show that these Filipino women are not representative of Filipino women since they are highly educated and usually come from middle-income and upper-income groups.³ The majority of Filipino women in the labor force are engaged in agricultural work, i.e. rice and corn production, fishing and livestock raising; in services, such as transportation, food trading, home culture and as industrial factory workers.

It is accepted and recognized that the Filipino woman of today is more capable and prepared and can definitely play an important part in the industrialization process of the country. The role that she has to play in this process, however, needs to be defined and uplifted. It can be perceived that there are two groups of women who can be harnessed and properly guided to achieve more effective participation in our national development.

The first group which may be composed of the educators, professionals, lady entrepreneurs and managers can be tapped to play a lead role in policy-making and planning, technology development, restructuring of industry, management, training and entrepreneurship development as well as rural industrialization.

The second group of women whose collective force can also be harnessed to play a supportive role are the lady factory workers themselves which number will definitely multiply as we further industrialize. These two groups together, given the proper role and support can play an increasingly significant role in the industrial sector.

The Philippines from an agricultural economy is moving to more industrialization. The fear that an agricultural economy cannot sustain its ever increasing population, impels its planners to look to industry to supply the much needed employment opportunities and improvement in

³"Women and Labor: Is the Economic Emancipation of the Filipino Working Woman at Hand?", Romero, Florida Ruth P., Philippine Law Journal, Nos. 1-5, Vol. 50, 1975, pp.44-54

the quality of life of its citizenry. According to the National Development Plan, the industry sector is envisioned to grow at an average rate of 10.8% for the next ten years. Its share in net domestic product is targeted to rise from 29.2% in 1978 to 36.9% in 1987 with the manufacturing sector expected to grow at an average annual rate of 10.2%. This would mean that by next year the industry sector will have outpassed the agricultural sector's contribution to total production.

To attain the above targets, some of the strategies that have been adopted are the development of small and medium industries outside the Metro Manila area and encouragement of export oriented industries. In these particular strategies, women have played a meaningful role and can continue to play more active role. In small and medium industries, women entrepreneurs have ventured in handicrafts for exports abroad and women have provided employment in a number of garment and electronic firms that are bringing foreign exchange in the country. These industries involving exports of manufactured products a non-traditional exports helped the country meet its foreign exchange requirements for industrial development. Women potential in the bigger industrial plants still have to be tapped although local universities are turning out women graduates in engineering, chemistry and other technical courses. In the Ministry of Industry proper, its attached agency, the Board of Investments, and other government agencies involved in industry, there are more women division chiefs than men. While in the higher policy making position men still outnumber the women, it would seem that women in the middle management are ready to meet the challenge of higher position in the coming years. In big industrial companies, women in policy making is still rare. However, in small ventures, the number of women entrepreneurs is steadily increasing. They could be the answer to the policy of the government to promote and develop small and medium industries in the country.

3. Current Contribution of Women to Industrial Development

The present experience of the Philippines in "women power" other sectors of the economy can help set the tone for planning and programming the role of women in industrialization. In comparison, with other women of the world, it may be said that the Filipino woman has relatively advanced in many fields where women perhaps of many other countries have not. The number of Filipino women in relation to its size and degree of development, who have occupied and continue to occupy positions in the Cabinet, in the judiciary and in the foreign service is perhaps more than in some countries. It is also true, as has been frequently remarked by others, that at international conferences there is quite often a woman member of the Philippine delegation; in several instances, women have acted as heads of the Philippine delegation and in some instances, women have acted as Chairpersons at important conferences, e.g. Secretary Estafania Lim to the World Population Conference (1974), former Senator Helena Benitez at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (1972) and Commissioner Razon Heresco as Asean Project Team Leader of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (1974).

In terms of economic contribution, the Filipino woman is now slowly emerging as a new contributor to the family income in her pursuit to help uplift and improve her family life. There is now a growing acceptance in the Filipino society of the dual role of a woman - as more work opportunities are made available with the government's continuing emphasis on labor-oriented large industries and its encouragement for women to engage in small-scale industries. There is now a growing realization that the Filipino female worker is an economic agent and her plight as part of the labor force must be properly attended to.

To further bring into focus the cause of women in the Philippines, a National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women was created on January 7, 1978 with the following functions:

- (1) To advise the President in formulating policies and implementing programs on increased contribution by women in national development;
- (2) To ensure that the gains which Filipino women have achieved because of Philippine culture and tradition will be preserved and enhanced in the process of modernization;
- (3) To continuously review and evaluate the extent to which women are integrated in all sectors of economic and social life at all levels on a basis of equality with men;
- (4) To make recommendations which could guarantee the enjoyment by women and men of full equality before the law in all fields where it does not exist;
- (5) To prepare a national program for International Women's Year which can be implemented throughout the Philippines.

This Commission has collaborated with other national agencies better equipped for a particular task such as the UP Law Center (for the necessary legal reforms), the Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (for the integration of women in development programs), the Bureau of Women and Minors (for the survey on the distribution of women), the UP Institute of Population, the Nutrition Center, the Human Settlements Commission, and lately the National Media Production Center (for a study on the image of the Filipina in media). It has also launched the "Balikatan" movement in cooperation with other related government and private institutions to mobilize people at the grass-root level to assess their problems and needs and adopt programs to meet community needs. While the work of the Commission covers all sectors, the Ministry of Industry is an action participant in the Commission.

An interesting case on the successful activities of women in industrialization is the involvement of Madame Imelda Marcos as

governor of Metro Manila area and as the Minister of Ministry of Human Settlements and Ecology (HSE). Madame Marcos directs the activities of the HSE as well as the Technology Resource Center (TRC). The HSE was created to carry-out the government's policy to improve the living and working conditions of the masses. To this end, the HSE has developed a Land Use Plan to effect on national allocation of land resources; has identified growth centers to achieve self-sufficient urban centers; has devised an industry dispersal scheme to guide and control growth of industries in the Metro Manila area; and has actively participated in zoning of communities. The overall impact of the HSE activities will be felt in the future state of industrialization of the Philippines. On the other hand, TRC has established a technology development and delivery program, a technobus, a comprehensive on line for research service, and data services.

In business, several women are included in the Board of Directors of the Philippine Chamber of Industry (PCI). As of 1974, of the 423 members of the Philippine Chamber of Industries (PCI), some 92 firms have women presidents or chairwomen of the Board.⁴ In the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (CCP), out of a total membership of 1,300, 146 are women and most of them are involved in management and in the operation of the industries they belong to. Due recognition has also been given to women with significant achievements in the development of the country, such as awards to outstanding women by the Manila Lions International and the Federacion Internacional de Abogadas (Philippines). In addition, there are various professional groups where women are involved which do their share of encouraging more active participation of women in industrialization.

4. Measures to strengthen contributions of women to industrial development

The industrial development of a nation necessarily brings with it concomitant planning and programming for the establishment of in-

⁴"Women and Business", Sanvictores, Lourdes L., Philippine Law Journal, Nos. 1-5, Vol. 50, 1975; 80-87.

dustrial facilities whether large, medium or small-scale industries and support banking and financing facilities; agricultural/and rural upliftment; social welfare and educational institutions; and accompanying infrastructure facilities, such as road, electrification and telecommunications. The monetary and fiscal policies are likewise coordinated with the national development plans. The role of women must be made part and parcel of the development program.

The move to strengthen the contribution of women in industrial development must initially come from government. However, implementation of most of plans and programs prepared by government depends a lot on private sector participation and cooperation, industry being basically in their hands. Measures to improve the conditions of women in family laws, in politics and public service, in labor, in education and in business as part and parcel of the overall development program must be undertaken.

In the field of legislations, efforts are underway to amend laws which discriminate against women. Some of these laws have direct bearing in women's participation in contributing to industrial development. For instance, the husband can object to the practice of a profession of occupation by his wife if his income is sufficient to support the family according to its social standing. In this connection, the husband is designated as administrator of conjugal property and determines the family residence. Such restrictions can be constraining to a wife who might wish to become an entrepreneur or become employed in the industrial sector.

While there are express legislatures prohibiting discrimination against women and providing equal opportunity for work, regardless of sex, there is traditional preference for men in the industrial sector which cannot be legislated away. As one local woman writer observed, to attain success, women have to be excellent, while men need only

to be good. The educational system therefore needs to emphasize that women can play an equally important role in industrial development as men -- that women should not be limited to homemaking and that homemakers can also be nation-builders.

5. UNIDO's Role

For the entry of woman in industry, as policy makers to help chart industrial development or as an industrial entrepreneur or worker or scientist or researcher that can discover new things and new systems to help a country's industrialization, policies must be adopted that will equip women with the necessary skills and education to tackle their chosen role in industrial development. Thereafter, their talents should not be left to waste and both the government and the private sectors should not discriminate against their assimilation in the various sectors of industry or any activity that will help in the country's industrialization. The major problem of developing countries is lack of employment opportunities even for its male population. It is possible that this lack of employment stems from lack of entrepreneurs. Women have great potential for being successful entrepreneurs, being innovative and not being afraid to start on small things first. Women's capacity for details also make them good researchers and scientists which are badly needed in R & D facilities for industrialization. Efforts should be made so that industrial establishments should improve their system of job classification, comparison and evaluation and in practice would not make it difficult for women to gain entry in said offices and at the same time have a chance to be promoted.

In this regard, UNIDO can assist in sending labor experts that will help out in coming up with legislation to do away with discrimination against women. Perhaps the experience in developed countries compulsory ratio of men to female employment in various job categories as well as other similar measures may be examined for the purpose of determining their applicability to developing countries,

countries where the problem is less of job creation. UNIDO can also be instrumental in setting training programs for women in rural areas or in training women in depressed areas in the urban sectors. Experts also may be needed for an effective campaign to change outmoded ideas of a woman's place conducive to waste of her potential to contribute in industrialization. UNIDO can also work on identification of specific opportunities for women in a particular country or help create such opportunity. It can also assist in promoting regional cooperation among ASEAN women, for instance, to define their specific role in the ASEAN scheme. Lastly, UNIDO is expected to be a mechanism where countries can exchange information and experiences on the role of women in industrialization and thus learn from each other.

The proposed meeting of larger policy and technical grouping of leading industrialists from developing^{and} industrialized countries may indeed provide for the necessary political will to integrate women in the industrial development effort of developing countries and accelerate industrialization in these countries. Developing countries are now faced with a number of constraints in their industrialization such as the emerging protectionist policies of developed countries for their own industries. New export ventures or arrangements to provide inputs for industries in developed countries where women can play a role may help their respective countries. On the operational level, discussion of women employment policies and practices of industrialized countries and industrialists may lead to suggested improvements in these policies. In this connection, a topic on major obstacles being encountered by women in the field of industrialization should be discussed together with suggestions on how to overcome these obstacles.

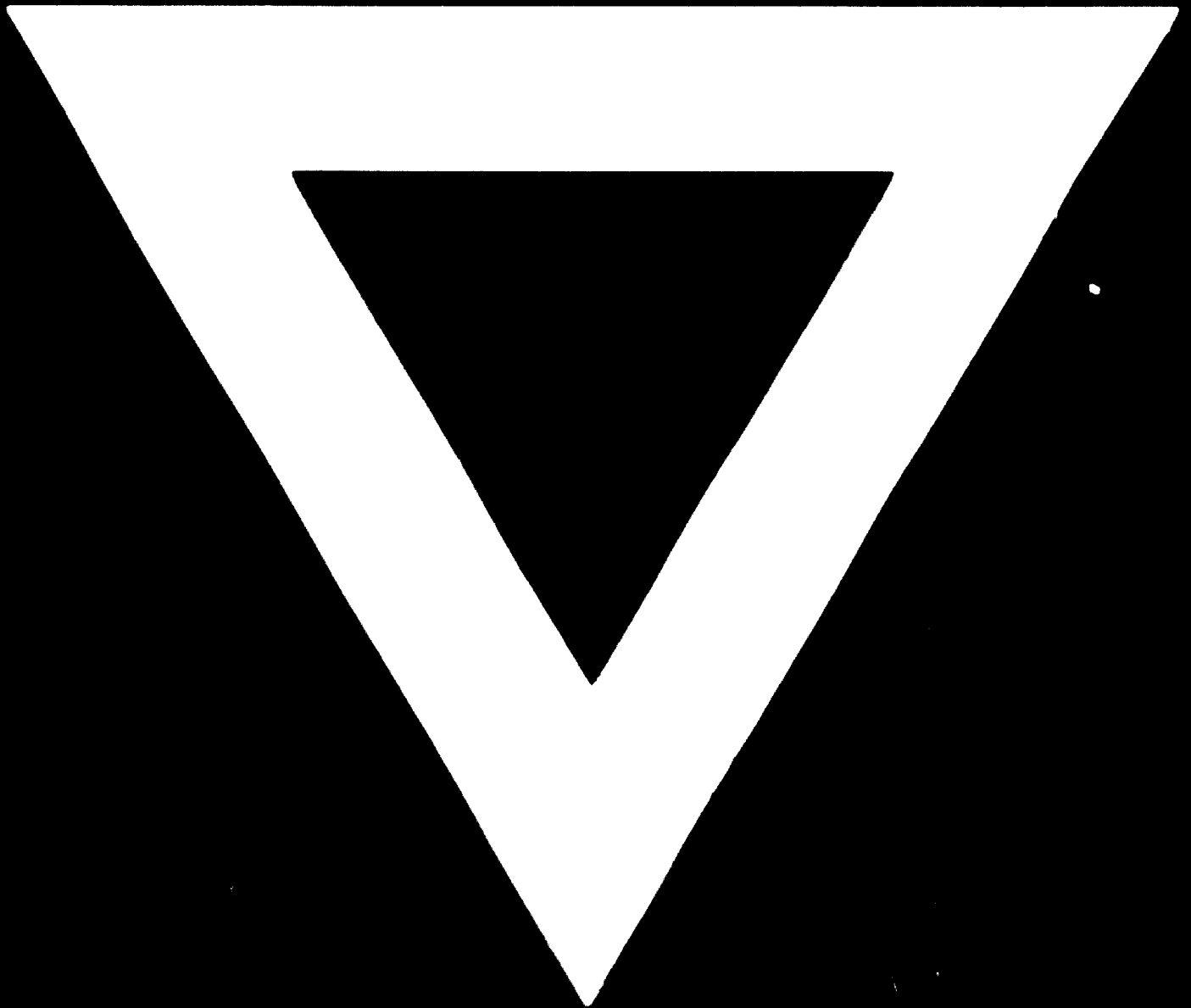
Indeed, it is time for women in developing countries to define their role in their country's industrialization. The opportunities are

wide and varied if prejudices and social attitudes can be overcome. It is not sufficient that legislations of non-discrimination as well as incentives to women's participation be passed. What is important is the sound and effective implementation of legislation and policies to enable women to do their part in accelerating their country's industrialization.



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