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08715



United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Distr.
LIMITED

ID/WG.283/22
2 November 1978

ENGLISH

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

Vienna, Austria, 6 - 10 November 1978

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

BY THE UNIDO MEETING ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN INDUSTRIALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES*

compiled by the secretariat of UNIDO

* This paper is a compilation of views expressed by various authors in the documents submitted to this meeting as of 1 November 1978, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the UNIDO Secretariat.

The present paper is an attempt to bring to the attention of the meeting the main ideas expressed in the contributions received by the Secretariat^{1/} for discussions on the role of women in industrialization in developing countries. Parts of some documents have been included in extenso when they seemed to cover observations made by most authors.

Introduction

1. It is generally recognized that there is inequality between men and women both in developed and developing countries. However, the unequal distribution of economic and political power is more acutely reflected in developing countries where the common historical and political past has resulted in a discrepancy between the incomes of a small minority and the majority of the population, a discrepancy which has affected, above all, women. It is also widely recognized that a new approach to economic development is needed, which would ensure the equal participation of all population groups in the development processes. Only when this is achieved can a nation awaken fully to economic and social stability. If industrialization is an essential part of economic development, conditions must be created for the full integration of women in the industrialization process. This has been clearly stated in the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action on Industrial Development adopted by the Second General Conference of UNIDO in March 1975 as well as resolution 44 (IX) adopted by the Industrial Development Board in April 1975.

2. Since Western patterns of industrialization with adverse social effects have often spread across national and cultural boundaries, it is clearly the responsibility of the whole international community to analyse the situation of women in the process of industrialization and to bring about change.

I. CURRENT CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR CONSTRAINTS TO AN INCREASED PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROCESS

(a) Current contribution

3. In almost all developing countries the population is heavily concentrated in rural areas, and the modern industrial sector absorbs only a very small proportion of the total labour force. The percentage of

^{1/} This includes documents received at UNIDO Headquarters by 1 November 1975. The list of such documents appears in an Annex.

women in the recognized labour force is very low-- approximately one third of the total labour force -- and in the majority of cases only 4 - 10% of this female labour force is involved in industry. Women are concentrated in the unskilled, lower grades of industry, where incomes are the lowest and job security practically non-existent. The educated woman has an insignificant role in industry, the number occupying managerial and technical posts being negligible.

4. The female labour predominates in low technology industries such as food, beverages, tobacco, textiles and wearing apparel, specially in rural and cottage industries (weaving, pottery, carving, soap manufacturing, etc.). In addition to their participation as wage earners, women are in many developing countries small producers and traders in their own right. In some cases, women are engaged in building and road construction as well.

(b) Constraints

5. Protective laws for women and laws for equal remuneration seem to exist in most developing countries. However, in most cases protective legislation has not helped to save women from exploitation and discrimination.

6. Centuries old traditions and the resistance of conservative circles have retarded the emancipation of women and their full participation in the economical life as equals to men. The legacy of colonial structures has also played a major role in the exploitation of women (examples: wage discrimination and the reluctance to employ women at higher echelons of industry).

7. The illiteracy of women is one of the major obstacles to draw them into active production and public life. In certain countries -- and particularly in rural areas -- female illiteracy exceeds 90%. On the other hand, many educated women are idle and economically inactive. A relatively large number of women either do not use the knowledge they have acquired or work in jobs for which they are too highly qualified -- a type of brain-drain that should be avoided.

8. It has been demonstrated that during national emergencies and independence movements women have been mobilized to assume important roles at all levels; however, due to the non-existence of institutional mechanisms, these efforts are not subsequently being channelled into development. On the other hand, when there is acute unemployment, the

promotion of women's employment is considered as snatching chances from men, and women find it particularly hard to find work in industry. According to studies made by the ILO, the level of unemployment in developing countries is nearly 25% of the available work force. It is thus obvious that general unemployment is one of the main reasons for the low percentage of working women.

9. The situation is aggravated by the fact that few women have the minimum technical skills required in industry. Modern and advanced technologies offer less and less job opportunities for women who do not possess the required skills and for whom corresponding training is not being made available.

10. Women's effective contribution to the industrialization process is further limited by the fact that whenever women enter the industrial labour force, they still remain responsible for the household and the care of the family group.

11. One of the main constraints encountered by women in the development of their own industries is lack of finance. Rural women, in particular, are not considered credit worthy.

12. The lack of proper organization among women is one of the major weaknesses in promoting the integration of women in development in general and in industrial development in particular.

II. SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE WOMEN CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROCESS

13. Three main groups of women can contribute to the industrialization process of the developing countries, if they are properly guided and motivated:

- (1) government administrators, educators, managers and entrepreneurs who can play a key role in policy making and planning;
- (2) technologists, scientists, engineers, educators and managers who can play a role in appropriate institutional/infrastructure development;
- (3) factory managers, technicians and workers (skilled and non-skilled), whose collective force can also play a supportive role to make sure that those policies on behalf of women are implemented.

14. The findings in the above sections would, furthermore, point to the following as areas where there is a potential for increased women participation:

(i) in rural and small-scale industries through

- the use of agricultural technologies and machines, e.g. mills, pumps, carts;
- improvements in the infrastructure (water supply, dairy technology, etc.) which would permit them to spend free time exploring new options for advancement (education, health practices etc.);
- better utilization of local resources;
- development of appropriate technology;
- more involvement in income-generating activities, if they are granted loans and credits;
- development of their traditional handicrafts to produce marketable goods;
- rural crafts, manufacturing, construction and rural services, e.g. village stores;
- activities in export trade, increasing foreign currency and introducing them to other economic and social issues;

(ii) in large-scale industries through

- participation at all levels within the framework of the industrialization process;
- access to all levels of education and vocational training, including professional careers.

15. In other words, women may contribute to their countries' industrialisation process by

- using their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of local conditions to participate effectively in project planning and design;
- using locally available materials for production of essential items;
- a more active role in obtaining necessary loans;
- promoting the development of industrial co-operatives;
- 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;

- participating in regional/international activities related to industrial development.

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

16. The role of women must be made an integral part of the development programme of each country, and measures to strengthen the contribution of women to industrial development should thus be initiated by Governments. National policies have to be formulated for the improvement of the conditions of women in family laws, in politics and public service, in labour, in education and in business as part and parcel of the overall development programme. The educational system in particular needs to emphasize -- beginning at the pre-school level -- that women can play an equally important role in industrial development as men, that women should not be limited to home-making and that homemakers can also be nation-builders.

(a) Policy for the integration of women in the development process

17. A policy for the integration of women in the development process is a prerequisite for enhancing the role of women in industrial development. Such a policy should include:

- initiating mechanisms for women to have a say in the formulation and implementation of matters which directly affect them;
- stimulating the national decision-makers in defining the resources, programmes and inducement that the nation requires to integrate women into the industrialization process;
- correcting the imbalance between education and job opportunities by restructuring industrialization in a decentralized manner so as to generate job opportunities for the educated female youth; and reorganizing the educational system so as to match jobs with skills;
- making use of the mass media to propagate progressive measures to protect and ensure women's rights and to make known the significance of their participation in production and the inadmissibility of any form of discrimination against women;
- ensuring equal pay for work of equal value;

- providing the necessary facilities to enable women with children to participate in the labour force (day care centres and infant schools, flexible working hours, part-time jobs and leave without pay);
- generating greater opportunity for women to acquire basic skills for self-employment;
- introducing formal courses in management and leadership as well as training in trade union activities; and encouraging women's participation in policy and decision-making as well as technical and managerial positions.

(b) Adequate planning for industrialization

18. At the planning stage of industrial development, the constraints mentioned under Section 2 above should be taken into consideration. Thus in combination with the policy mentioned under (a) the aims and objectives of planning for the increased participation of women in industry should in particular include measures for more employment for women. Self-employment along with rural industrialization seem to be the main answer for this.

19. The planning of the infrastructure must take into account the possible future expansion of industries in the rural sector. Planning must take into account the great need of the moment, i.e. producing in sufficient quantities and acceptable quality those items of food, clothing and household requisites required by the people of the country.

20. Planning for rural industrial development which will result in women getting greater employment opportunities must be a two-pronged effort:

- (i) existing industries must be upgraded so that not only productivity but also product quality is sustained, thus ensuring ready marketability of the goods;
- (ii) new industries, particularly agro-based industries must be developed where women too can actively participate.

The planning of rural industrialization projects should

- provide full-time or seasonal full-time employment
- generate employment at hours suitable for the rural woman
- require low-capital investment and utilize local skills and locally available raw materials
- take a cautious approach to mechanization or rationalization which could restrict women's participation
- provide facilities for leisure and infant-care and be sufficiently attractive to prevent urban migration.

(c) Self-employment projects

21. Experience has shown that projects for self-employment for women should work well if:

- every worker has an interest in the enterprise either by share or in any other capacity which will avoid exploitation
- project reports are drawn up with the assistance of competent and qualified authority till such time as they can manage to organize their own
- availability of raw materials is arranged
- bank financing is provided at concessional rates of interest
- sufficient management and technical training is given to women workers
- residential accommodation for women workers is arranged, if necessary
- day-care centres are organized for the children of working mothers
- technical and expert advice is made available when the units run into problems
- 95 % of the workers are women
- a good sense of trade unionism and joint effort is encouraged
- women are involved at decision-making levels
- special marketing facilities are planned.

(d) Women's groupings

22. While building up the infrastructure, strong national women's organizations have to encourage the movement. 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.

23. 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. 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.

IV. ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THIS FIELD

24. The United Nations and its specialized agencies are already involved in various activities aimed at integrating women in development, some of them related to the industrialization process of developing countries as can be seen from the documents prepared by representatives of the UN system. In the contributions received, an appeal has been made, however, for assistance by the international community as follows:

(a) Legislation and conscience-raising

- (i) Proposals for enactment and legislation to remove discrimination against women, e.g. to ensure everyone's entitlement to work according to her/his ability; equal pay for equal value; security of health and life and adequate risk insurance; and employment combined with active parenthood.
- (ii) Assistance in re-designing the educational system to supply women with appropriate skills to enter the market competitively.

- (iii) Seminars and workshops for women, to create awareness and review problems and prospects.
- (iv) Media campaigns to accept women's potential in industrialization.

(b) Research, information and promotion

- (i) Monitoring of trends and policies related to women in industry.
- (ii) Improvement of statistics giving a picture of women's position in the developing countries and preparation of national surveys in the developing countries on the status of women in the basic sectors of the economy, the possibility of increasing female employment and ways of improving their working conditions in general.
- (iii) Co-ordination of research and fact-finding on the current status of women in industry and identification of potential new areas towards which women could be geared.
- (iv) A forum for exchange and dissemination of information on questions related to women in industrialization. In this connexion proposals are being made for the establishment of
 - a committee connected with the UN (or UNIDO) national committees in each country to be a source of information on questions related to women; or
 - some other regional or sub-regional network for that purpose.
- (v) Creation of a UN Office with qualified personnel for the development and promotion of industries for women especially in those countries where industrialization is now beginning.
- (vi) Preparation of regional or international directories of women experts in industrialization.

(c) Direct assistance to the participation of women in industry

- (i) Training programmes and job orientation for women both in rural areas and in depressed areas in the urban sectors, particularly vocational training and training in production and managerial skills for entrepreneurs.

- (ii) Creation of a special fund to be used for training in production and managerial skills, purchase of raw materials and equipment, loans, etc.
- (iii) Training and motivating women for more effective trade union participation.
- (iv) Regulating employment practices by transnational corporations in developing countries, practices which affect women in particular.
- (v) Studies on various factors of industries such as raw material availability and technical co-operation which are likely to have an effect on women's participation.
- (vi) Identification of industries with high female component to determine their common interests and their order of significance to national/regional development. Also identification of specific needs of those industries.
- (vii) Planning and formulation of pilot projects for women in industry.
- (viii) Establishment of infrastructural services in rural areas.
- (ix) Promotion of regional co-operation and definition of the role of women therein.

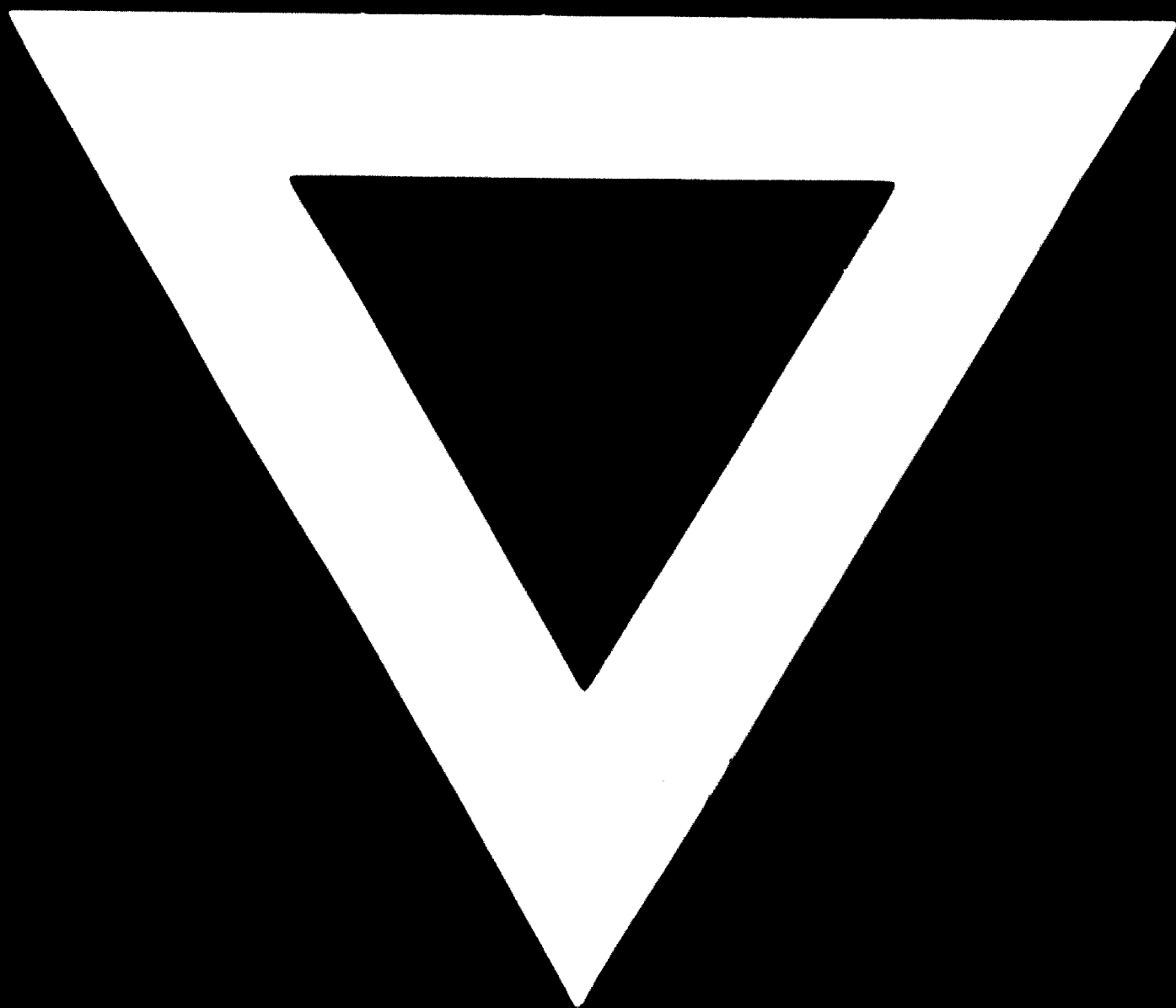
1 November 1978

ANNEX

List of Documents
submitted to the Preparatory Meeting on the Role of Women
in Industrialization in Developing Countries

Women, industrialization and under-development, paper prepared by E. Flegg, UNIDO consultant	ID/WG.283/1
Country paper on Sri Lanka, by N. Fernando	ID/WG.283/7
Country paper on the Philippines, by R.L. Bautista	ID/WG.283/12
Country paper on Ghana, by E. Ocloo	ID/WG.283/13
Country paper on India, by L.D. Menon	ID/WG.283/14
Country paper on Tanzania, by K.T. Mtenga	ID/WG.283/17
Country paper on Turkey, by A. Kudat	ID/WG.283/18
Country paper on Thailand, by M. Sundhagul and O. Tanskul	ID/WG.283/19
Country paper on Nigeria, by B. Awe	ID/WG.283/20
The Soviet Union and the Role of Women in Industrialization in Developing Countries, by Ye. A. Bragina, USSR	ID/WG.283/15
The Role of Women in Industrialization in Developing Countries, by D. Gaudart, Austria	ID/WG.283/5
Women and Industrial Development, by M. Boesveld, Netherlands	ID/WG.283/9
Contributions by the United Nations:	
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	ID/WG.283/2
- United Nations Development Programme	ID/WG.283/3
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	ID/WG.283/10
- Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations	ID/WG.283/6
- The World Bank	ID/WG.283/11
- Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development	ID/WG.283/4
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	ID/WG.283/8

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