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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF ECA INVOLVEMENT AND PROGRAMME
FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

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Introduction

The need for developing an intensive programme for the integration of women in development in Africa led to the setting up of a special Programme for Women in Human Resources Development Division of the Economic Commission for Africa. It was from this programme that the African Training and Research Centre for Women was developed and set up in 1976, the Division in the ECA under which the Centre works is known as the Social Development Division.

The ATRCW was the first regional centre to be set up for working towards accelerating women's participation in national development and had thus to develop its own strategy of work. This has often been innovative and closely related to the needs of the women in the rural and urban areas, thus yielding, excellent results. The programmes undertaken have been essentially action oriented and directed towards problem solution rather than pure research or experimentation. During the past years the ATRCW has carried out direct training programmes for trainers and women leaders, workshops, seminars, research, and identification of institutions which have been working in the field, strengthening of the existing institutions and developing new institutions needed for this work.

The ATRCW has also been involved in creating an awareness amongst the policy-makers of the need to develop programmes which would strengthen the women's role, seek their greater involvement, as well as raise their status as equal partners in the building up of national economies.

Up to the present the specific areas of activities of the ATRCW have been as follows:

- Promotion of national machinery for the integration of women in development;
- Training at different levels for the rural needs of the women;
- Establishment of African Women's Development Task Force or Volunteer Force;

- Study and Improvement of Village Technology;
- Communications and Publications for creating an awareness amongst women of the possibilities open to them, as well as the institutions involved in the work pertaining to women.

One of the important areas of activities identified by the ATRCW is generating women's economic contribution to the G.N.P. by upgrading their skills in existing industries and introduction of new skills needed in the African countries. Keeping this objective in view a joint ECA/ILO/SIDA project was developed for Handicrafts and Small-Scale Industries Development. The agreement was signed by the agencies in April 1978 and the work was initiated in August 1978.

The project has identified the following basic approach to the type of activities it will initiate in the first year.

Broad outlines of the Approach to the Programme for Handicrafts and Small Scale Industries Project

This project will concentrate its activities in the rural areas where ATRCW has already built up a base through its different activities. Administratively the approach would be to work through the MULPOCS* in those sub-regions where there already exists a national machinery and where ATRCW is intensively involved.

The approach towards setting up activities would be firstly to identify traditional skills in the sub-region which are common to the area and improve the technology and skills, thus increasing productivity, improving quality and where possible packaging as well as identifying new market outlets.

* The ECA has recently set up Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCS) in 5 sub-regions, these are seen as operational, as well as planning and programming agency for the sub-region. They are also seen as a step towards inter-country co-operation thus making for multi-sectoral and multi-national programming and leading towards pooling of resources and development of free trade and common market in the sub-region.

Identify consumer needs, available raw materials and develop new industries with careful planning as follows:

- research in production methods, costs and markets
- introduction of the production in one pilot centre for studying aptitude, adjustment, acceptance, performance, cost and quality of production, consumer response
- follow-up by demonstrating to other countries in the sub-region and arranging in-training, where necessary itinerant training and training through task force volunteers.

This approach would upgrade available skills, thus increasing the incomes; utilise available resources and give added value to the local produce, as well as reduce the import of goods from outside the Region.

The areas of activities would be off-farm, non-farm, constructional materials and local speciality manufactures (Please see Annexe I).

The next important area of the activity would be building up of the infrastructure for the development of Handicrafts and Small-scale Industries.

In each sub-region one country having a well organised national machinery and showing an interest in the development of programmes for women in employment and income generation would be selected and a national policy and programme for the development of handicrafts and small scale industries would be prepared. The ATRCW and the HSSIP would assist the country in an advisory capacity to develop the programme. The approach would be of integrated development of building up infrastructure, institutional support, as well as actual training, research, and implementation of programmes for employment and incomes generation.

Besides the above mentioned programmes the project would also assist the ATRCW in the following areas:

- (a) Identify existing institutions involved in handicrafts and small scale industries and strengthen their activities;
- (b) Identify institutional needs for the sector and assist their development;

- (c) Organise training in cooperatives for organisers and officials;
- (d) Organise training in entrepreneurship;
- (e) Organise training in small scale and handicrafts for Refugees;
- (f) Organise jointly with the ECA two seminars on the role of handicrafts and small industry in integrated rural development;
- (g) Arrange visits of women leaders and policy makers to important women's programmes in the centres in the region and outside the region;
- (h) Introduce in the existing programmes of ECA, international agencies and national governments women's participation. Specially in the areas of training in new industries and needed skills so that women can be equal partners in the development of the country's economy.
- (i) Study the needs for protective measures for selected handicrafts and small scale industries as well as licencing policies;
- (j) Prepare audio visual materials for training in improved techniques and work methods;
- (k) Also prepare basic lists for bookkeeping, costing and marketing for the self-employed and small entrepreneurs;
- (l) Make depth studies in three selected crafts which are closely connected with the life of the women, thus leading to a deep understanding of the traditions of the society.

In the case of urban handicrafts and small-scale industries the approach would be to assist in:

- (a) those crafts which have an export market and is a potential foreign exchange earner
- (b) in the areas of non-formal training or skills training in new industries for girl school leavers
- (c) in the introduction of women itinerants in industries which have so far been reserved for men and where women can participate actively i.e. electronics, assembly and certain ancillary industries.

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UNIDO's Contribution to the development of activities
for Women

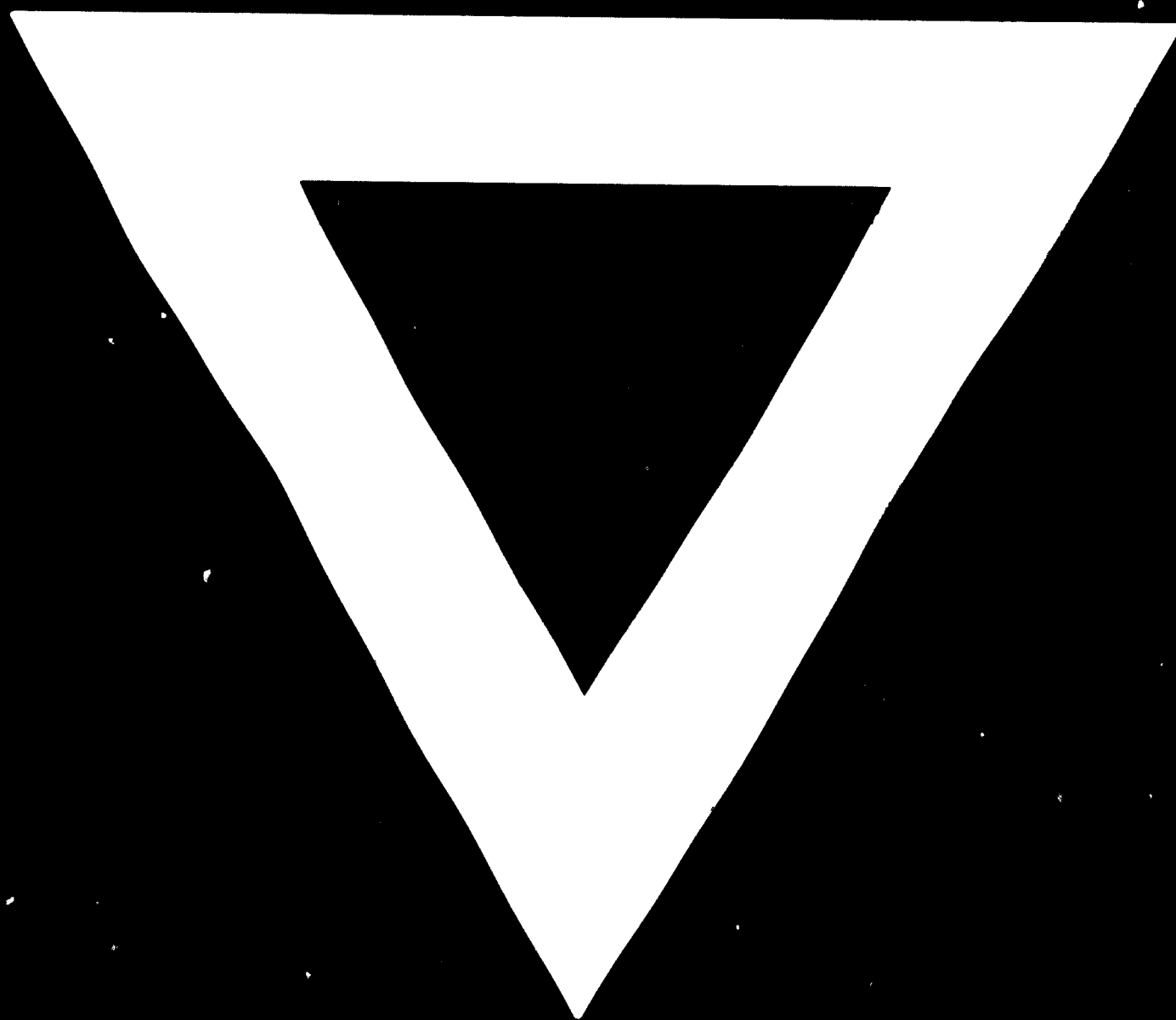
The project has a large area to cover and would be utilising the expertise of the international agencies involved in these activities. The contribution of the UNIDO in the development of small industries sector would be essential and of great importance. The specific areas of activities in which the UNIDO's help has already been requested through the Joint ICA/UNIDO Industries Division is:

- (a) Development of indigenous materials for building and construction;
- (b) Food and Agro Industry;
- (c) Engineering Industry;
- (d) Forest Industry.

The assistance is asked for in the feasibility studies, setting up of pilot projects with expertise from UNIDO and organisation of training programmes for women as well as in the integration of women in the UNIDO programmes for the activities proposed in these fields.



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