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THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA *

prepared by

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1. Romania is a socialist developing country in which structural - political, economic and social-changes have occurred in the last three decades. They include the eradication of relations based on exploitation and on national and social oppression, of any kind of discrimination and inequality as well as the setting up of equitable relationships among all the members of society. The deliberate orientation of material and human efforts towards meeting the objectives and the requirements of general progress, the planned development of the country, materialized in the implementation of social and economic development plans, have provided a good technical material base for industry and agriculture. Placing at the basis of her development a steady rate of industrial development, Romania has changed from a country with a pronounced agrarian character, with a poor industry and a backward agriculture into an industrial-agricultural country, in full swing of development. It goes without saying that important efforts are still needed for the future economic and social development of Romania.

The measures taken so far are fundamental premises of ensuring the equality of men and women, at the same time providing the necessary framework for the assertion of women in all fields of social life. In terms of law, this framework is provided by the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania which stipulates, among other things, the fact that all the citizens of the country "irrespective of their nationality, race, sex or religion have equal rights in all the spheres of economic, political, juridical, social and cultural life" and that "woman is equal in rights with man.

The state protects the family and the marriage and defends the interests of the mother and of the child".

On the basis of these constitutional provisions, the legislation of the country, while constantly improving in its various domain strengthens the juridical and social status of woman and ensures the effective equality of men and women in both the economic and socio-political domain, in the family relations and in those included under the civil law. At the same time, special regulations are introduced to facilitate the women's ever more active participation in the material production and the spiritual creation while enabling them to exercise the social function of motherhood.

Thus, the Labour Code stipulates that "Women are granted vast opportunities of asserting themselves in full equality with men, enjoying equal pay for equal work as well as special measures of protection. Women are eligible for any kind of office and they can choose any kind of work in accordance with their training in order to make their contribution to material production and spiritual creation while being granted the necessary conditions for raising and bringing up children." In this spirit, the Labour Code includes special provisions concerning the working mothers, the protection of their health.

2. The dynamics of the complex process of social and economic development, revolving around a high industrial rate, the adequate distribution of the production forces throughout the territory of the country, the location, within the programme of investments, of suitable industrial units in those areas in which there are large and derutilized female labour resources, the development and improvement of the education system, the progress of science and technology, the access of young girls, of women in general, to all levels and forms of education, of vocational training and skill-raising courses, the

provisions of the work legislation and the social measures in favour of the working mothers, the permanent improvement of the living and working conditions in accordance with economic growth, are major factors leading to a growing social integration of women along the years.

The development of economy as a whole, the major role of industrialization, has a strong impact upon the role played by women in the economy of the country, of her position in the structure of the labour force. Industrialization, urbanization, and, in general, the modernization of economy, objectively facilitate the integration into production of female labour force. All this does not automatically influence the degree, the measure and the rhythm of women's integration which can be effectively carried out only as ^apart of the general policy of planning in the national economy.

A few figures are illustrative in this respect. Thus, the share of women in the occupied population in Romania's national economy is 44.5 %, and their share in the industrial production of the country is about 38 %.

At the beginning of the industrialization process, women used to work in those branches of industrie in which their labour force was traditionally employed, such as the food and the light industries, doing less skilled work. There are branches in which women still have an important share in the total labour force, but at a higher level of professional skill (the light industry - 80 %, the food industry - 46 %).

In the course of time, as a result of the diversification and modernization of industry, as new technologies were being introduced in the process of production, and as the physical efforts were gradually lessened, the range of jobs and professions which could be chosen by women became larger, facilitating the utilization

of female labour force in major industries, calling for a high degree of training and skill. Women are almost 23 % of the working personnel in the machine-building and metal-processing industry; the share is much higher in fine mechanics, electronics, and automation in which it reaches 50 %; in the chemical industry the share is of 36 %. Other industries, like the printing one, the wood and timber processing one the building materials one have an increasing percentage of female working personnel (51 %, 27 % and 20 % respectively).

These examples confirm the importance of increasing the technological capacity of developing countries, as a source of stimulating the women's participation in the industrialization process; the development of sciences and technology being ^{an} efficient means of speeding up this process. The access of developing countries to the gains of science and technology proves to be a condition for ensuring their economic and social development and, at the same time, a means of facilitating the integration of women in the process of development.

The further priority development of industry, the systematic growth of highly-technical branches and industries capitalizing the raw materials and social work, at the same time stimulates and facilitates the ever higher share of women in production and their ever more important role.

3. The participation of women in the process of industrialization cannot be separated from their contribution to developing and improving other domains, such as agriculture, as well as other sectors in which women make an ever larger contribution. For example, scientific research and science in general, previously almost inaccessible to women, is now 40 per cent covered by female personnel. A growing share is also to be noticed in services and the circulation of goods (56 %), in communications (over 50 %), in education, culture and art (40 %).

4. It is important to underline the fact that the level of the women's contribution to various fields of activity is determined by the ever-higher quality of their work, a quality which is due to higher skill, to increasing participation in the running of economic and organizational activity, in the decision-making process.

As the level of training, of professional skill, of experience in management and activity in the most varied domains steadily grows, the participation of women in the working people's councils in enterprises and institutions, in other collective bodies at the level of economic, social, cultural units as well as at the national level, increases accordingly.

The consistent policy of promoting women in managing positions in accordance with their abilities and training is translated into an ever larger number of competent women which hold the offices of managers, chair persons of industrial, agricultural or other social, cultural or economic enterprises, chief engineers, general managers and general directors in ministries, state secretaries, deputy ministers or ministers. There are 56 women deputies in the Grand National Assembly, the highest body of the state power and about one third of the deputies in the people's councils, the local bodies are women. Their promotion is based on the conception that all leading position can be equally held ^{by} men and women, the only criterion being their work and ability. Since the promotion of women is not entirely up to the existent possibilities, it remains a problem that constantly concerns the responsible factors.

5. One of the major preoccupations is further ensuring the professional and vocational training of women in accordance with the requirements of the present and future social and economic development. Mention must be made in this respect of the general ten-grade education and of the full access of girls to all forms and

levels of education, their share being: 48.2 % in primary and secondary schools, 46 % in lycées, including specialized lycées over one third in vocational training, 67 % in post-lycée specialized education and over 44 % in higher education. The correlation of the educational and professional training system with the requirements of national economy ensures job opportunities for all graduates - girls and boys - in conformity with the training and specialization of each of them. Half of the average trained cadres and over one third of university graduates, over 20 % of the total of engineers, 40 % of the total of medical doctors and 29 % of the university teaching staff are women. All this increases the contribution of women in the social and economic activity and makes it the more effective.

6. Increasing the participation of women in social and economic life requires permanent preoccupation with solving the living and working problems appearing in this process. We have in mind ergonomic measures, developing the sphere of services and other means of facilitating household work, developing the network of nurseries, kindergardens and infant schools, boarding and half-boarding schools in which children are looked after while their parents are away to work, a.s.o.

The preoccupations of the state bodies in this respect are reflected in the special provisions included in the general programmes of raising the living standards of the whole population or in special programmes. There is for instance a special programme for developing the network of day nurseries, kindergardens and infant schools that will enable us to meet all requirements in this respect by 1980.

Measures of protection for the woman as a mother and a worker are also necessary, allowing her to fulfil both her professional and public duties, both her responsibilities at work and in the family.

The labour Code stipulates among other things (art.151-158, ch. VIII) that expectant and nursing mothers cannot work in noxious or unwholesome conditions and the respective enterprise is obliged to find them a suitable place of work without altering their wages. Throughout the period of pre- and post-natal maternity their labour contracts cannot be cancelled. The employed women have paid sick-leave which are not deduced from their legal leave, for looking after their sick children.

7. The assertion of women in the process of industrialization in all domains of activity does not mean ignoring difficulties, overlooking the complex problems which cannot be solved on the spot but only by developing the technico-material base, in the course of the general economic-social development, while perfecting social relations and eradicating the remnants of the old mentality concerning the role of woman in society.

The achievements therefore do not make us to ignore the shortcomings and deficiencies which are still existing. The decision-making factors are fully aware of them and periodic analyses are made in order to find adequate solutions in keeping with the means and possibilities existing at that time. Such an analysis was made through the debate on the multiple aspects of the role and condition of women in the present stage of building up the multilaterally-developed socialist society in Romania, as a result of which The Ministry of Labour, The Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Health, the General Trade Union Confederation in Romania, and the National Council of Women produced a programme of measures for 1974-1980, concerning the increasing of the participation of women in the activity in enterprises and institutions. The provisions of this programme are meant to increase the proportion of women in the number of working personnel in the state enterprises and institutions, from

33 % at the beginning of the period of time to 39 - 40 % at the end of it. This planned rise means 2.9 million women working in non-agricultural domains and an important rise in the number of working places held by women.

The programme covers both productive activity and social work and includes the orientation, training and raising the skill of female labour force with a view to facilitating their occupying various jobs in accordance with their abilities and the needs of national economy; it also refers to the conditions of hiring women workers, measures of improving living and working conditions with concrete tasks for ministries and other central and local bodies and institutions which make their own plans in order to implement the tasks devolving upon them. The way in which the programme is carried out is periodically analysed, supplementary or urgent measures being taken if need be.

8. We have presented a few aspects of Romania's experience concerning the participation of women in the economic life in general in industria' development in particular. Our experience, like that of most states, demonstrates the decisive importance of the efforts of each country in carrying out the objectives of economic and social development and, in this context, in promoting the participation of women in the industrialization process.

It is our believe that the participation of women in the implementation of the programmes of national development is first and foremost one of the home affairs of a state, like all questions regarding the general, social and economic development of a country. It belongs to the competence of the respective state, the only one called upon to establish the parameters, the ways and the means of development in conformity with its conditions and requirements. It derives from the necessity of pooling all material and human

resources and efforts as a sine qua non condition of ensuring the progress of a nation . The same purpose makes it necessary to achieve international collaboration and cooperation on the basis of equality, of national independence and sovereignty, of observing the right of each and every people to be the master of its own destiny, of its own national riches. Nowadays, it is a generally acknowledged fact that establishment of the New International Economic Order leading to the levelling up and the bridging over of the gaps between the developed countries and those lagging behind in this respect, will directly contribute to improving the status of the woman, to increasing her role in the life of society.

Therefore international cooperation can and must play a more important role in this field too and UNIDO, according to its specific objectives and functions is called upon to directly and increasingly contribute to promoting this cooperation. This would be in the spirit of the Lima Declaration and Plan of action in accordance with which "conditions must be created to allow for the total integration of woman in economic and social life especially in the process of industrialization, on the basis of full equality in rights".

Considering the present day reality and necessities we consider that the actions to be taken within the framework of international cooperation could be directed, inter alia, towards :

- effective assistance for the developing countries in their efforts to create and develop their industrial units so as to achieve an optimum utilization of labour force and, in this framework, the participation, with equal rights, of women, in the process of industrialization, the capitalization of their energy potential;
- adequate vocational training for women, so that they may be up to the requirements of industrial activity;

- providing the framework for effective participation, at all levels, of women, in the decision-making process in industrial activity;
- providing adequate conditions so that the participation of women in the productive process in general and in industry in particular should not tell upon their family and public life.

The role of UNIDO should mainly consist in identifying, proposing or initiating together with the other bodies and institutions (first and foremost UNDP, UNESCO, ILO, FAO, WHO, a.s.o.) measures and concrete actions leading to the implementation of the above-mentioned objectives. The following proposals could also be considered in this respect

- studying possibilities and working out concrete proposals aiming at helping the developing countries in selecting, introducing and developing those industries that while best meeting the requirements of national economy and the local conditions should ensure the integration of women in industry. UNIDO itself could have a direct contribution to building such enterprises, by drawing concrete assistance projects;

- promoting and facilitating the development and transfer of industrial technologies to the developing countries, in order to facilitating and encouraging the work of women in industry ;
- suggesting and supporting concrete measures concerning the development of cooperation among developing countries in the field of promoting women in the process of development by using the experience of other developing countries;
- allotting a higher part of the UNIDO resources meant to help the training of industrial personnel, for the training of women, first and foremost by increasing the number of fellowships and other grants for women; organizing courses

- and seminars, and other programmes for training female labour force at various level;
- organizing, by UNIDO or under its aegis, symposia, expert meetings with a view of having an exchange of opinions and mutual information about the experience in the respective countries;
 - .. improvement of the information system of UNIDO especially with regard to the participation of women in the industrialization process, including an increase in the public awareness, of the necessity of this participation.

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It seems to us that the right time has come to define, prove and implement a UNIDO plan of action on the participation of women in the process of industrial development in the developing countries

These aspects could be the subject of the future international meeting concerning the participation of women in the process of industrialization. It is essential in our view that such a meeting should be an action oriented one namely to discuss and formulate concrete measures and actions whose implementation should effectively contribute to the integration of women in economic life and industrial development in developing countries. Such proposals could also represent a direct contribution of UNIDO to the preparation of the next UN world conference, for assessing the progress of the Woman's Decade and of the special session of the UNO General Assembly (1980) devoted to the New International Economic Order.

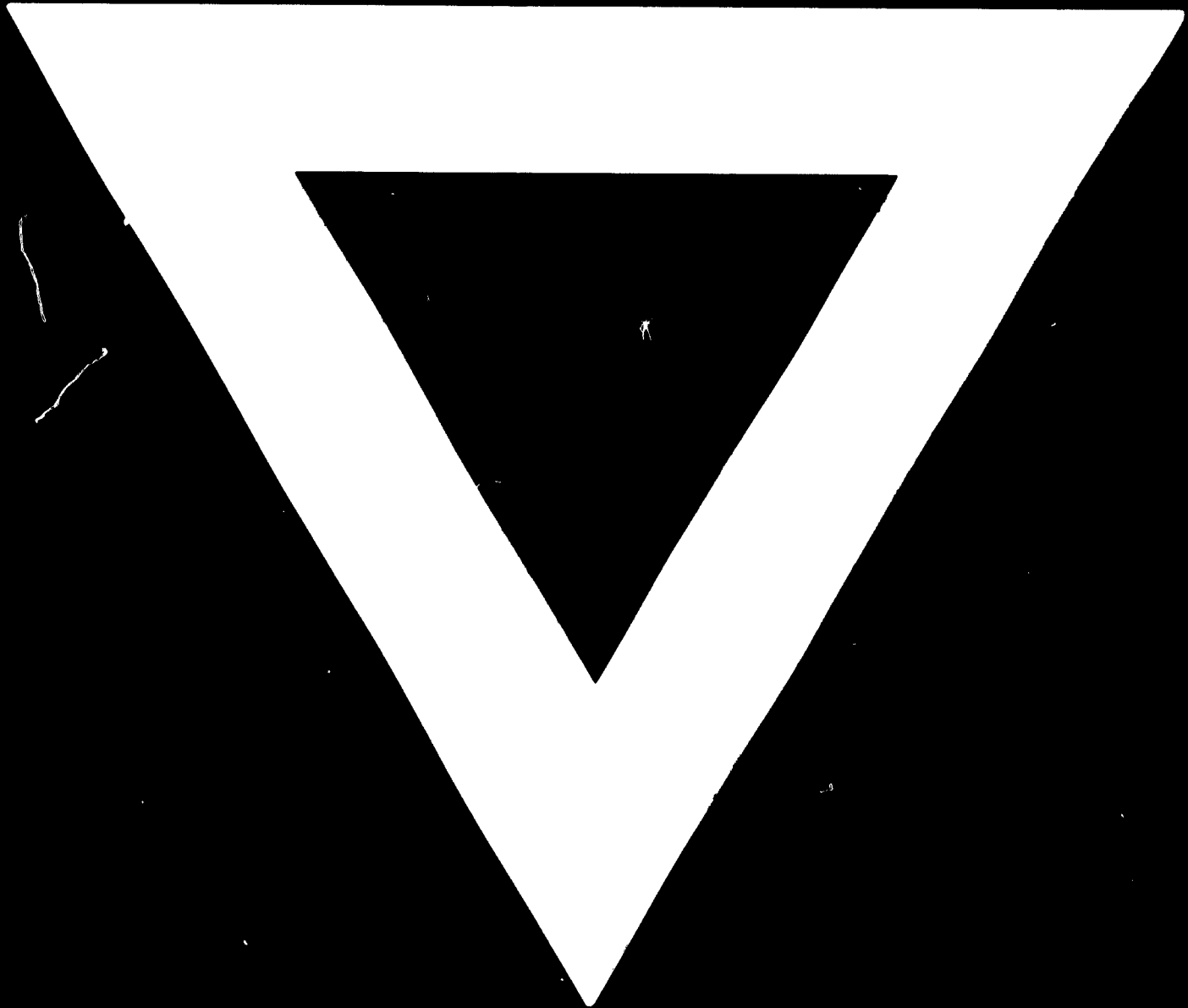
Ways and means for increasing¹ the participation of women in the industrial development of the developing countries could also be considered in the context of establishing the system of consultations

One could also consider the possibility that UNIDO undertake a study concerning the long term strategy for promoting woman in the process of industrialization, as part and parcel of the United Nations third decade of development.



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