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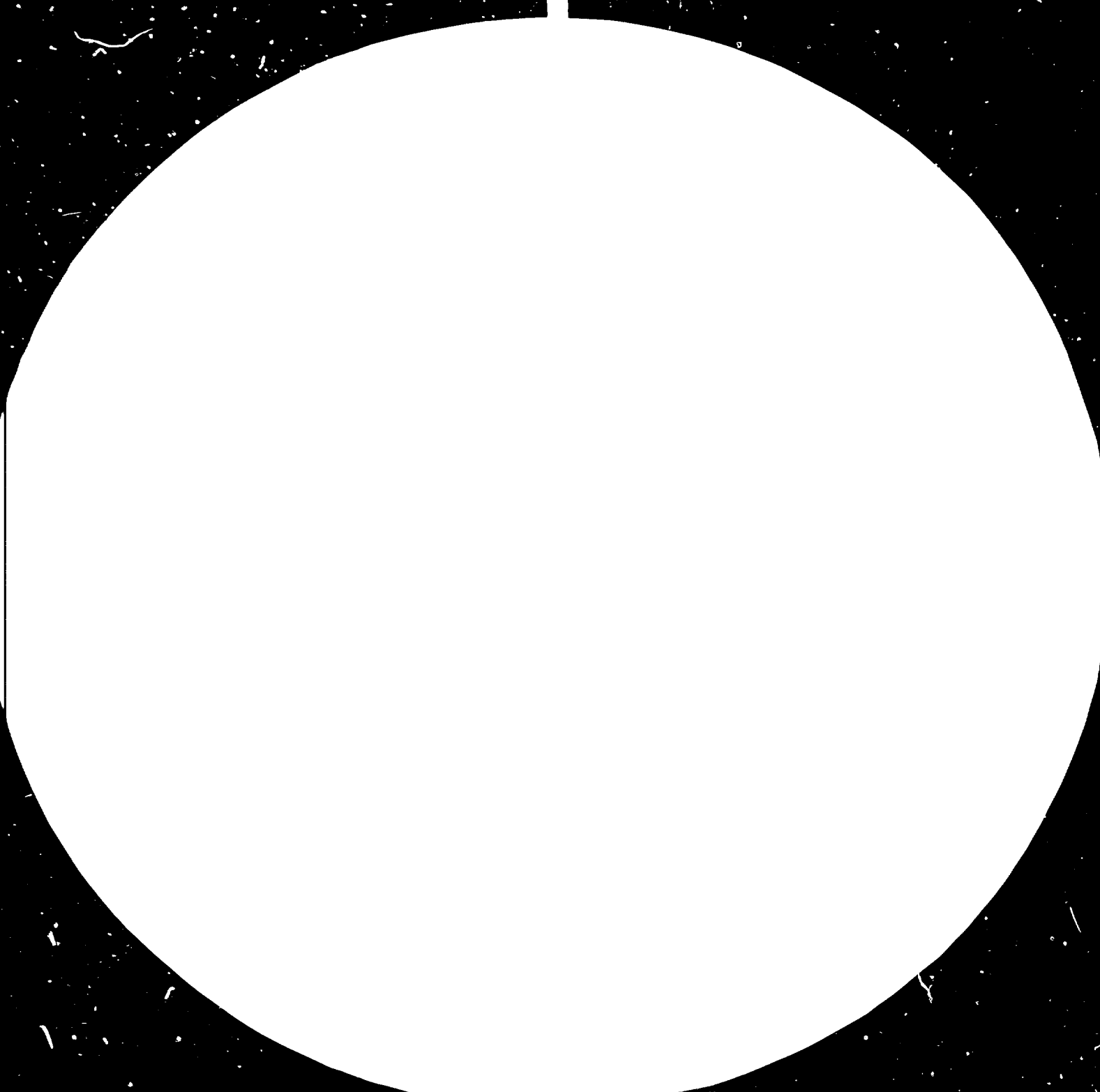
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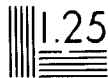
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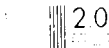
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Seminar on the Role of Women
in the Development of Industrial Branches
Traditionally Employing Female Labour*
Sofia, Bulgaria, 15 - 18 October 1981

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Note by the UNIDO Secretariat

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As part of the background research carried out for the Seminar on the Role of Women in the Development of Industrial Branches Traditionally Employing Female Labour, the Secretariat of UNIDO commissioned a consultant to prepare a paper on the subject. This paper, entitled "The Impact of Industrialization on Women's Traditional Fields of Economic Activity in Developing Countries", is available in English under symbol . Although the views expressed in that document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Secretariat of UNIDO, it is felt that its conclusions and recommendations merit special consideration and are thus herewith drawn to the attention of the Seminar.

By virtue of its mandate, UNIDO is mostly concerned with those recommendations which relate to manufacturing industries. The recommendations related to agriculture, commerce and trade, are also reproduced herewith in view of their significance and the unavoidable linkage between these three sectors.

The impact on women of changes brought about through the processes of industrialization and modernization has shown that changing production structures tend to create and perpetuate a "north-south" situation of unequal exchange between men and women similar to that existing between the developed and the developing countries.

Women's role and status in society undergo changes, usually gradual but occasionally abrupt, through technological improvements, political decisions and legal measures, as a consequence of war or revolution, through changes in educational and training systems. The examination of the proven or potential impact of different types of economic development on the socio-economic status of women, and bringing the results of these analyses to the attention of national and international bodies, should make it possible to guide, balance or accelerate these changes.

Despite the wealth of evidence of marginalization of women brought about by industrialization and modernization, this should not be accepted as inevitable. There is no compelling reason why women should not be able to benefit from industrialization and why the process of industrial development should not be furthered by women's contribution.

The negative effects of development on women can be avoided by ensuring at the planning stages full consideration of the needs of women, the possible impact on women, and the vital economic and social role of women. A national and international development strategy directed towards gaining equitable access to the world's resources for formerly marginalized countries and population groups within countries can be implemented by:

Promotion of increasing local, national and regional self-reliance;

Acceleration of processes of growth and diversification that originate within a country and are relatively autonomous;

Progressive eradication of unemployment and mass poverty.

Considering the demand for technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) and its emphasis on the full utilization of human resources, the need for the involvement of women in developing countries cannot be ignored. As far as possible, TCDC should take into account the sources of knowledge and technology with which women are familiar, and stimulate and promote the utilization of this knowledge in ways that originate at the grass roots level, rather than being imposed from above. Whether it involves the use of existing technologies for easing women's burden of work, or relying on the expertise of professional associations of women in research and training, or teaching income-generating activities that have already been utilized successfully in one area to women in other areas, the application of TCDC as a strategy for women will provide vital impetus for development.

In order to achieve the aims of development, the biases against women mentioned already should be eradicated at all levels. It is vital that the value and importance of women's work be recognized. The relegation of women to performing unremunerated activities and the consequent under-estimation of the value of their activities has had serious negative consequences, not only for women but for society as a whole.

Instruction and training are frequently mentioned as prerequisites for the integration of women into the development process. It is equally important that education and information be provided to men - particularly to national and international development planners and other local or national

Government officials as well as to fathers, husbands and other male relatives - to educate them as to the true value of women's work and the importance of women's productivity and their contribution to the familial, local, and national economic well-being. This should lead to the full remuneration of women's work, counter-acting the increasing privatization of their economic activities and deterioration in socio-economic status.

The myth that women are not capable of adapting to technological change, which has been seen to exclude women from participating in production, particularly in wage employment in the modern sector, restricting women to their reproductive role, contains the further danger of leading to an increased population growth and placing an additional strain on national resources.

The elements of industrialization and modernization that have directly and indirectly affected women adversely that have been identified are:

Emphasis on capital-intensive technology;

Organization in large-scale production units, either for major urban markets or for export;

Change of production priorities and methods without adequate provision for the alleviation of resulting imbalances.

The most important measures in the three areas of activity in which women have been traditionally engaged are the following:

In Agriculture:

- Access to fertile land within reasonable distance;
- Availability of loans and credit;
- Inputs (improved seeds and agro-chemicals) in affordable quantities at the right time;
- Appropriate implements based on appropriate technology;
- Labour besides their own;
- Labour-saving equipment for household tasks;
- Adequate infrastructure, including transport and storage facilities;
- Access to markets and marketing co-operatives;
- Full and equal participation in extension services and training courses;
- Setting up collective organizations such as co-operatives, with movement outward from the family unit to the community level, in which women participate as full members.

In Manufacturing:

The expansion of the industrial sector of the economy has not automatically led to increased employment opportunity for women. In fact, the opposite case has often been observed, in which the elimination of women's work in traditional production patterns has not been compensated by a corresponding increase in wage employment. Women's possibilities in the modern sector are, for the most part, extremely limited, both as to quantity and quality of employment.

Women's employment prospects in manufacturing would be improved by the following:

- Pre-vocational training;
- Adequate formal education including training in occupational skills which can be used both in self-employment and wage employment;

Vocational training in all fields;

On-the-job training (in co-operatives and in-plant training)
for adults as well as adolescents;

Effective job placement services;

Work: ; situations which permit women to fulfil their responsibilities
as mothers, e.g. the establishment of infant and child care facilities,
flexible working hours, part-time employment;

Expansion of industries, especially small-scale manufacturing,
including those organized as co-operatives, to rural and peri-urban
areas, providing increased wage employment as well as opportunities
for self-employed women;

Assured regular access to necessary raw materials and other inputs at
affordable prices for women engaged in home or community manufacture.

Increased productivity of goods using local raw materials to meet
increased domestic demand, including import substitutions.

Under the current conditions of increasing poverty in most developing
countries, women are highly motivated to earn an independent income and
are willing to learn any necessary skills to this end. Alternative patterns
of development which provide them with opportunities for doing so would
enable them to contribute to their country's economic growth.

In Commerce and Trade:

In some countries women have for a long time played an essential role
in commerce and trade. However, with the increase of modernization and
specialization in the market sector, women traders are gradually finding
themselves excluded from the market. This development has serious
consequences for the women and their families and for the effective
distribution of basic commodities for mass consumption, especially in
rural and peri-urban areas.

The following measures are necessary to provide opportunities for
earning additional income through trading to women in the rural subsistence
economy and to assist the poor and unskilled urban women engaged in petty trade:

Building up adequate infrastructure, e.g. inexpensive means of transport of goods, accessible to small-scale traders, predominantly female, and not only to large, male-dominated enterprises, permitting adequate profits without driving up prices;

Provision for an equitable distribution of products for mass consumption between rural and urban areas;

Promotion of higher production of basic commodities (food and non-food) in rural areas, in order to have marketable surplus;

Encouraging increased production of goods using local materials as a substitute for imports;

Establishing rural marketing co-operatives as a more efficient use of women's trading skills;

Expanding potential markets for local traders through rural industrialization.

Furthermore, women's possibilities for engaging in trade should be improved through measures allowing them access to capital and training in commercial skills. For those selling their own products, availability of necessary equipment, inputs and instruction in labour-saving techniques and methods to avoid waste would increase their income.

Further measures should be taken to overcome those factors that hinder women engaged in large-scale trading, specifically the imported and indigenous bias against women as economic competitors of men, the monopolization of the market sector by large-scale commercial enterprises, the pressure by international firms to adopt sales patterns of industrial countries (supermarkets, etc.) and the attempts by the male-dominated urban elite to control distribution and sales activities. Policies which are not discriminating by sex would allow women equal access to import and export

licenses, credit and loans, would not restrict the sale of non-perishable goods and would provide women with opportunities for relevant training in such fields as management and marketing.

Women are vital to their country's economy. The restructuring of the international economic order cannot be achieved without recognition of women's essential economic role. Reversing the process of women's marginalization is not an act of compassion for women but an urgent necessity for the well-being of humankind.

