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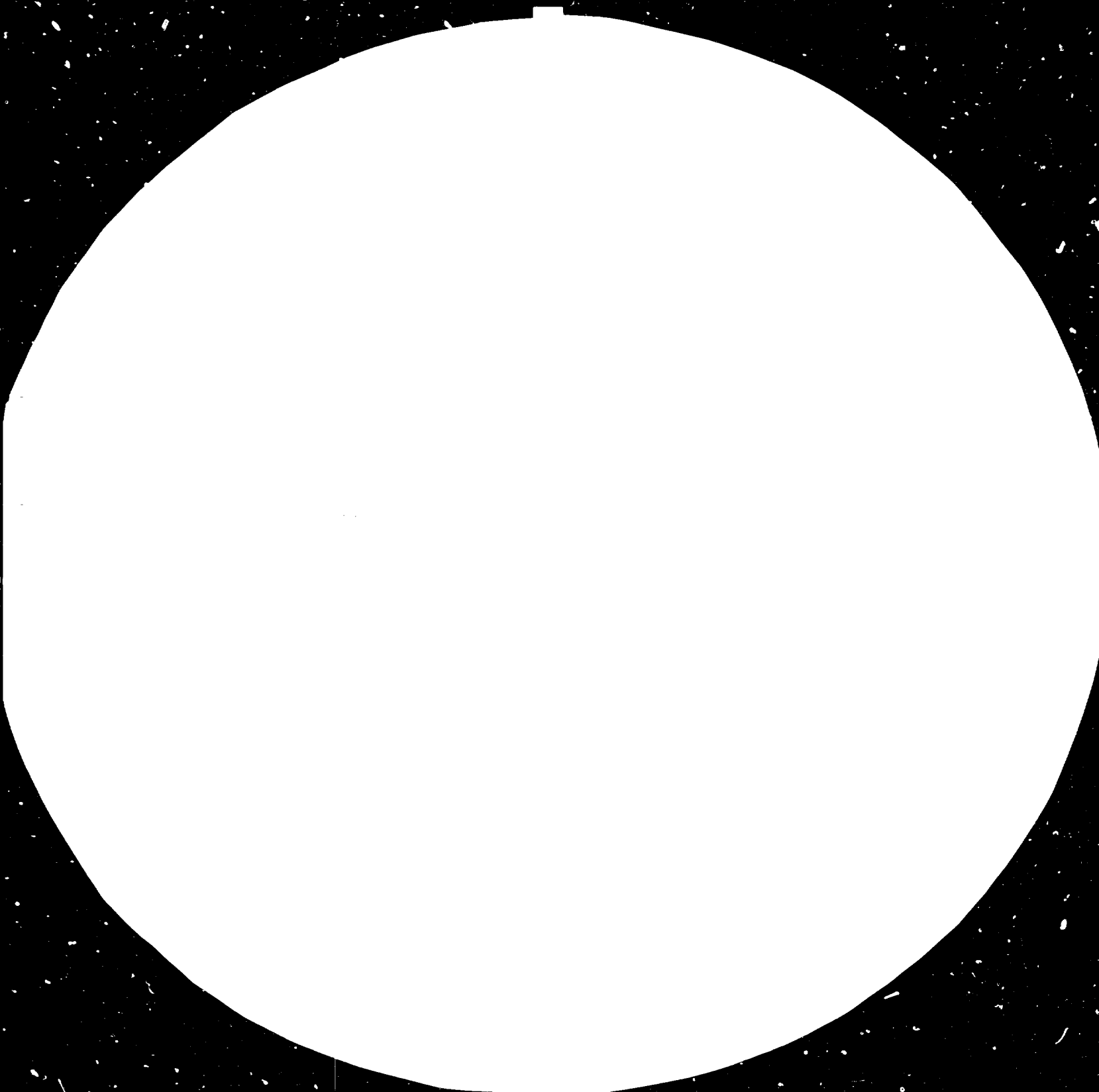
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WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
TEXTILE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES^{*/}

Preliminary case studies on present female participation
in those industries and the potential for effective enhancement
of that participation^{**/}

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^{**/} The present document contains Chapters I and II only. Chapters III containing the country reports on textiles industries and Chapter IV containing the country reports on food processing industries will appear as addenda to this document.

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1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The ever-increasing importance of the role of women in the economy and the need for their fuller participation in the development process are now widely acknowledged. In the International Development Strategy of the Third United Nations Development Decade emphasis is placed on ensuring that women participate fully and effectively in all aspects of economic development. The Strategy reflects the need to restructure those economies and societies which compound and perpetuate women's disadvantages.^{1/} The Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace,^{2/} as well as the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order^{3/} contain similar basic aims: they emphasize the urgent need to create new equitable socio-economic relationships between the industrialized and developing countries and, within that context, between men and women.

2. Experience has shown that the changes induced by the integration of developing countries into the international economic system often lead to a series of internal processes which rather than benefit women, sometimes set them at a disadvantage. International monetary, trade, aid and technology policies do not of themselves produce an undifferentiated, let alone beneficial effect on the employment of women, and specific measures are needed to produce such an effect.^{4/}

3. At present the participation of women in industrial employment and the economic value of their contribution to industrial development are very limited. Many governments have demonstrated their willingness to adopt measures that would bring about a fuller and more effective contribution of women to industry. This process entails important changes in present policies

1/ A/RES/35/S6, 20 January 1981, (Annex, para. 51)

2/ E/Conference/66/34, Report of the World Conference on International Women's Year, Mexico, 19 June - 2 July 1975.

3/ General Assembly Resolutions 3201(S-VI) and 3202(S-VI) of 1 May 1974.

4/ "Effective mobilization and integration of women in development: Report of the Secretary-General, document A.35/82, 27 March 1980. I. Tinker and M. Bo Bramsen, eds., Women and World Development, Washington, D.C., 1976.

and practices. On the one hand, attitudinal barriers, social concepts and traditions in respect of women throughout the world limit women's opportunities outside the home and family to make an economic contribution, and more precisely, to undertake paid employment in industrial establishments. On the other hand, when development policies and industrial plans are formulated, little consideration has been given to the extent and value of the potential contribution by women to development, nor have women significantly participated in the elaboration of such policies and plans.

4. The effective integration of women in the industrial development process faces a wide range of obstacles and concrete steps to solve existing problems need to be taken without further delay. However, an essential prerequisite for launching effective new initiatives is the availability of realistic information on resources and infrastructure, their possible development, social factors and local conditions in specific industries. This essential prerequisite is not given: the information available does not meet the minimum requirements. Although a number of general studies have been carried out on women in economic development (a few focusing on the industrialization process), little systematic research seems to have been directly aimed at specific industrial sectors or sub-sectors in any country or group of countries.

5. One of the fundamental objectives of the UNIDO studies covered by this report was to initiate research on possibilities, within the context of current national development efforts and local resource endowments, of mobilizing female labour as an economic force in a more dynamic and rewarding development of the textile and food processing industries. The ultimate aim of such research is to contribute to an equitable distribution of the resulting benefits, thereby improving the living standards of women and strengthening their role in society.

6. More specifically, the immediate objectives of these studies were to assess existing policies, attitudes and practices that promote or inhibit female participation in the textile and food processing industries as well as to identify and assess those areas of activity where women have made a major contribution or could increase their contribution significantly. The studies were also aimed at evaluating the impact of existing and new technologies on that contribution, and to identify the socio-economic factors affecting both the demand and supply of female labour. Finally, the studies were to be action-oriented, outlining both short-term and long-term policy measures that could augment women's contribution to sectoral growth and, wherever possible, providing concepts and recommendations for specific programmes.

7. The project was launched pursuant to resolution ID/CONF.4/RES.1, operative para. 10(a), adopted by the Third General Conference of UNIDO in February 1980,^{1/} and to previous mandates set by the Industrial Development Board. The industrial sectors selected were first identified at the Preparatory Meeting on the Role of Women in Industrialization in Developing Countries organized by UNIDO in November 1978, whose recommendations also listed the electronic and pharmaceutical industries.^{2/}

8. It was originally planned to undertake a much deeper and broader study and appropriate preparations were initiated late in 1979. Consultations were also held at that time with FAO and ILO on possible joint action, particularly in respect of field research. Consultations were also held with the Advancement

^{1/} See ID/CONF.4/22, Report of the Third General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 11 April 1980.

^{2/} See ID/WG.283/23 of 8 February 1979, printed later in ID/251, Women and Industrialization in Developing Countries, October 1981, page 12, para. 4.

of Women Branch of the UN Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Subsequent severe financial constraints, however, did not permit conduct of the studies to the extent originally planned and required. The essential in-depth field research had to be curtailed and the project was limited to five pilot studies in Colombia, Indonesia and the United Republic of Tanzania (on textiles), and in Sierre Leone and Thailand (on food processing)

9. Furthermore, the time and resources were so limited that on the basis of contacts established by field staff, local consultants were engaged to carry out field research and analyze their findings in the shortest possible time. Of necessity, they restricted themselves to those parts of the country where industrial operations in the appropriate branches were significant. In the course of the field research, interviews were held with government authorities and other decision-making sources, employers, managers and workers. Three sets of questionnaires were utilized to suit these main groups.^{1/} The areas of coverage, sample size and methods of analysis used varied considerably in each case, as can be seen in the country reports.^{2/}

10. The local researchers made every effort to derive findings, conclusions and/or recommendations that might hold true for the country as a whole and, if possible, for other developing countries facing similar situations. However, given the constraints, the findings and conclusions contained in this document should be considered tentative and subject to modification in the light of further investigation.

^{1/} The standard questionnaires prepared for this purpose will be contained in the addenda to this document. They were slightly revised by the local consultants in keeping with the conditions of each country studied.

^{2/} The full report on the case studies will appear in addenda to this document: Add.1 (textiles) and Add. 2 (food processing)

II. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. TEXTILE INDUSTRIES. A desk survey of present female participation in this industry and three preliminary case studies in Colombia, Indonesia and the United Republic of Tanzania.

11. The textile and clothing industries have been traditionally regarded as typical employers of women workers, particularly in the developed countries. Both industries were among the first to be established in developing countries, by virtue of the fact that: (i) they employ simple technology, (ii) required little capital, (iii) were labour intensive, (iv) made use of skills developed in the traditional sector, and (v) for the most part utilized domestic raw materials.

12. In recent decades, the production of textiles and clothing has gradually shifted from developed to developing countries. This shift was caused, mainly, by rising labour costs in developed countries which found it difficult to remain competitive, and thereby stimulating the further development of textile and clothing industries in a number of newly industrialized countries.

13. While the production of textiles and clothing has traditionally been considered "women's industries" in developed countries, the picture is less uniform in developing countries. First of all, employment patterns differ in the two industries. In the clothing industry, women form the predominant part of the labour force in most developing countries, and account for 60-90 per cent of the workforce. Some important exceptions exist: in some Asian and African countries women constitute only about 20 per cent of the total labour force, which is particularly attributed to small tailor workshops run by men. However, as soon as these small size activities become "industrialized", female labour becomes predominant.

14. The proportion of women in the textile industry is generally lower than in the clothing industry. The degree of fluctuation, however, is greater - not only between countries, but also between branches and even between plants. In general, and all other things being equal, the more technologically advanced and capital-intensive the production process is, and the more

specialized training is required, the smaller the number of women employed. The number of women employed in the textile industry is also governed by the degree of industrialization in the country and by the "maturity" of the textile industry. However, whereas the number of women employed in the textile industry is relatively less than in the clothing industry, it is still higher than in the manufacturing sector as a whole.

15. The fact that in developing countries women constitute at present a larger percentage of the labour force in the clothing and textile industries than in the manufacturing sector as a whole underscores the importance of these industries to the participation of women in development. It also provides a certain warning for the future. Even in some developing countries (and, of course, even more so in the industrialized countries), the textile industry has become capital intensive, does not any longer absorb a high degree of female labour, and therefore no longer plays the revolutionary role it played in the early days of industrialization in the context of female employment. On the other hand, the more the clothing sector industrializes, the larger the number of women employed. However, though expanding in developing countries, output in these two industries as a whole, is growing at a slower rate than output in the manufacturing sector and this trend should be borne in mind when establishing long range strategies for a more effective participation of women in industrial and economic development as a whole. The country reports identify certain possible approaches in this respect.

16. For the immediate future, however, employing more women, and improving their position in the textile and clothing industries can undoubtedly play an important role in the industrialization process in a number of developing countries. It is therefore essential to take measures that will have an immediate impact on specific situations and that will be effective to the country or region in the context of its present stage of economic and industrial development. Furthermore, since the basic preconditions and necessary initiatives for an increased and better employment of women in the textile and clothing industries are the same as those for the increased employment of women in industry as a whole, including the modern service sector, it is to be

expected that the short-term measures taken to tackle the immediate future in these sectors will also be effective in the long-term task of improving the participation of women in a conglomerate of industries, as may develop in the country or region. This is especially true for those industries which are more dynamic, where employment requirements will be growing and earnings more rapidly increasing.

17. The findings of the case studies carried out in Colombia, Indonesia and the United Republic of Tanzania reveal the extent to which there is an awareness in those countries of the need to improve the integration of women in the development process.

18. In Colombia, a law ratifying the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women was passed in 1981. It is regarded as a major step in the struggle to improve the employment situation with which women are confronted. This government initiative was matched by the CTC and UTC trade unions establishing the National Council for the Integration of Women in Development. Both these measures are too recent, however, to have resulted in concrete policies for the improved participation of women in the economy.

19. In Tanzania, policies specific to the employment of women have yet to be implemented. In general, labour legislation applies to both men and women, with basic provisions exempting women from night work, entitling them to maternity leave, etc. However, the Tanzanian Government is committed to the Arusha declaration of 1967 and the principles of sexual equality contained therein. Some concrete steps have been taken to derive some benefit therefrom for both rural and urban women. The United Women of Tanzania movement is particularly active and effective in this respect.

20. In Indonesia the principle of equality between men and women and their rights to employment are embedded in the Constitution. Regulations prohibit women working at night, underground, or in an unhealthy environment, while maternity leave and other benefits are guaranteed. A law has been passed in

support of Indonesia's ratification of the ILO Convention No. 100 on equal pay for work of equal value. Concrete steps have also been taken in order to facilitate the more effective participation of women in the economy. These include the appointment of an Associate Minister for the Role of Women, whose task includes the co-ordination of government activities related to the improvement of women's skills, the promotion of co-operative projects managed by women, the provision of practical guidance and training necessary for women's small-scale business activities, etc.

21 All three case studies stress the magnitude of traditional attitudes and values as an obstacle to a more active role of women, especially in the formal industrial sector. Traditional attitudes prevail at all levels - in government, enterprises and the family.

22. In all three countries, however, women form a large part of the labour force, including wage earners, self-employed and, above all, family helpers. In Colombia and in Indonesia their share in manufacturing employment is high, amounting to 36.6 per cent (1980) and to 49.8 per cent (1978), respectively. In the United Republic of Tanzania, women represent 14 per cent (1980) of those employed in the manufacturing sector.

23. The industries surveyed - textiles and clothing - employ a higher proportion of women than the manufacturing sector as a whole. In Colombia, women account for over 60 per cent of those employed in the two industries (31 per cent in textiles and 78.1 per cent in clothing, according to the latest data). In Indonesia, the most recent estimate was 67 per cent for the two industries (of which 96 per cent was in clothing and 34 per cent in the least "feminized" sector, knitting). In Tanzania, the proportion of women employed in the textile and clothing industries was estimated at 11.5 per cent in 1971: however, this percentage is now likely to be higher. In the formal sector (TEXCO) women represent only about 2 per cent of the labour force.^{1/}

^{1/} A project for training of women in the garment industry was initiated by the government following the findings of this study in the United Republic of Tanzania. The project was implemented by UNIDO in mid 1983.

24. Whereas the employment situation of women in the textile and clothing industries in the three countries surveyed is better than in the manufacturing sector in general, their earnings in those industries reflect a regularly observed pattern. In Indonesia, the rate paid per unit of production to women workers is equal to that paid to male workers, yet female weekly or monthly earnings are lower. The lower average payment is caused by the differences in status, occupational composition within the industries, number of hours worked, overtime payments, bonuses etc. Relatively few women are found in high status/high pay occupational categories, they work shorter hours, even on a full-time basis, and rarely qualify for extra payments and premia.

25. In Colombia, wages for men and women in the textile sector were reported to be equal in principle, and above the manufacturing average in 1979. However, the leading export-oriented branches with high-productivity employed few women. On the other hand, in branches where female employment was predominant, wages tended to be low. They were particularly low in the clothing industry, where the number of women employed was highest.

26. Precise information on female wages in the textile and clothing industries in Tanzania is not available. This paucity of information derives from the fact that even in urban centres most women work in the informal sector. Women enjoy only limited access to the formal sector since the modern sector is mainly reserved for those who have a certain education. This prerequisite excludes most women whom, moreover, the employers tend to regard as less reliable workers than men. For women, the informal labour market, thus, remains the principal means of livelihood.

27. The relative importance of the textile and clothing industries differs in the three countries. In all three, textiles is the most important manufacturing branch, at least in terms of employment. However, whereas Colombia has been a major textile and clothing exporter for a number of years, Indonesia and Tanzania are net textile importers.

28. The Colombian textile and clothing industry expanded rapidly in the early 1970s, and growth peaked in 1976. Investment and employment as well as foreign and domestic sales took on considerable importance. At the time the study was carried out, however, the industry was passing through a recession. Under the development model elaborated after 1976, the sector is expected to maintain its level of production, yet lose its relative importance. New emphasis will be placed on the production and export of durable consumer goods, particularly household appliances. The textile and clothing industries are to cater mainly for the home market, export prospects depending on the possibilities offered by the Caribbean market, and on the diversification of production and the development of non-traditional lines.

29. In the present unemployment crisis, which is not limited to the textile and clothing sectors, but extends to the manufacturing sector as a whole, women are in a particularly difficult position since present practices would appear to discriminate against them. In the generally difficult economic situation, female unemployment is not regarded officially as a priority problem that requires immediate solution.

30. Unlike Colombia, Indonesia and Tanzania are net textile importers. Indonesia has a well developed weaving industry and exports cotton fabrics: it imports yarn (particularly synthetic fibre yarn) and synthetic fibres. Under the Repelita development plans, domestic output is expected to replace most types of textile imports to an increasing degree. For women workers, who already constitute a large proportion of those employed in the industry, this development strategy and its impact on the growth of textile and clothing production should offer increased employment opportunities. If the education and training level of female workers can be increased, new avenues should open, not only in terms of numbers employed, but also in terms of improved occupational status, which at present is generally low.

31. At the time the case study in the United Republic of Tanzania was carried out, the modern textile industry was still in the early stages of development. It processed only a relatively small portion of the country's

cotton crop, most of which is exported. As more of the cotton crop is processed domestically and textile output increases (it is expected that, due to new investments, by 1985 as much as 60 per cent of the cotton produced will be locally processed), women should benefit from growing employment opportunities in the textile industry. The extent to which this will come about depends firstly on the progress achieved in women's education and training, and secondly on the growth and diversification of the manufacturing sector as a whole and its effects on general employment.

CONCLUSIONS

32. As stated in paragraph 10 any conclusions drawn after the completion of only three small pilot studies must by their very nature be tentative. Further in-depth research would be needed in order to arrive at a realistic picture of the situation, at a more definite set of conclusions, or indeed at recommendations for an effective programme of action. Given this reservation, and bearing in mind the ideal of the major role that women can play in global economic development, particularly in the developing countries, the following statements are made.

33. As the pilot studies in Colombia, Indonesia and Tanzania indicate, the textile and clothing industries are of cardinal importance to the employment of women in many countries and great potential exists for expanding and making such employment more remunerative. The assumption that in a number of countries the textile and clothing industries are no longer catalysts of industrial development cannot be generalized, and it should not be permitted to jeopardize the urgent need to ameliorate the present and future position of women in these industries. The question arises as to the concrete measures that should be taken, in respect of the foreseeable future as well as long range strategies.

34. The current report on these case studies identifies specific local problems and indicates avenues for possible immediate action. As for long-term measures the observation is made in these preliminary studies on the advisability of establishing links and undertaking forward planning so that immediate action taken to upgrade the contribution of women in these sectors is simultaneously geared towards the achievement of a position where women and their abilities are flexible and susceptible to change. Steps should be taken to ensure that the effective performance of women in the sectors studied can also be absorbed by other dynamic and promising industrial sectors which are bound to develop during the evolution of our modern and rapidly changing world. It is felt that the concentration of efforts on improving the participation of women in the textile and clothing sectors, if taken in isolation from future prospects, is bound to have a more significant impact on the immediate and medium term than in the long term. Long-term plans should be broader in scope and aim at enabling women to make an effective and equitable contribution to economic development, in general, and to the process of industrial development, in particular.

35. Another fundamental point made in the pilot case studies is that a major constraint on the increased and rewarding employment of women, not only in the textile and clothing industries but also in the whole manufacturing sector, are traditional views and cultural bias against women working outside the home, particularly in the rural areas. This also holds true for women's participation in the service sectors. This is a fundamental problem which will take a long time to overcome, unless tackled in a common endeavour and in parallel by women, local and national entities and the international community. International efforts, such as the studies covered by this report, should be systematically aimed at encouraging governments, within the framework of their national development plans and policies, to take practical measures to accentuate the economic value of women's work, upgrade the educational level of women and increase their employment opportunities. Some

steps have already been taken, sporadically. Action in this direction would be more effective, however, were it started during the formulation of economic development plans, and implementation promoted through specific industrialization plans. The pilot country studies, show that some initial action has been taken in this direction in certain instances and the key question arises on how to proceed further.

36. A major constraint, closely linked to the above, are employers' attitudes governed by women's relative lack of specialized skills. Experience and training were mentioned in all countries studied as the most important prerequisite for hiring more women and, even more so, for upgrading their position. Thus training is again identified as the most likely avenue for prompt improvement of the situation. The country studies identify a number of locally in-built factors, including attitudes by women themselves, which may hinder the creation and/or utilization of training opportunities, and some suggestions are made in this respect.

37. Another basic barrier to increased and better employment of women, which was emphasized in the case studies, stems from the difficulty of combining full-time work outside the home with family responsibilities. Measures facilitating part-time work would obviously help many women (some with valuable experience and skills), who at present are prevented from undertaking paid employment. Although this approach might solve some immediate problems, it might contribute little to upgrading the overall impact of women's work, especially on women themselves. In general, part-time jobs enjoy only low status, and part-time workers are not often considered for promotion.

38. At least part of the problem might be overcome by encouraging governments to promote, and assist in, the establishment of small plants on a co-operative basis, particularly in rural areas. In such plants more flexible arrangements could be made to accommodate women workers with family responsibilities. A movement in this direction is incipient in some countries.

39. Finally, the case studies stressed the common need for appropriate child-care facilities at the factory level. Specific suggestions on this topic were also made in the country reports, although it is realized by all concerned that the economic factors involved in establishing such amenities as well as their feasibility and viability would need to be studied individually and in conjunction with specific local circumstances. As in other instances the willingness and ability to act on the part of local decision-makers are decisive.

40. It is emphasized that only on the basis of adequate primary field research, would it be meaningful to generalize findings and recommendations, especially for the long term. More extensive field studies would permit one to draw up a systematic plan for surmounting difficulties which may be common to a number of situations, thus ensuring better access, better training, and consequently better integration for women in these industries. Meanwhile, some of the specific suggestions might be considered for action at the local level as an initial approach.^{1/}

^{1/} For instance, the Colombian study specifically identified the introduction of guaranteed technical training for women during the working day, and the launching of a system of financial incentives or job promotion for those involved. Technical training should not merely train women workers in their speciality, but prepare them for more responsible tasks within the firm, such as quality control, marketing, and personnel management. Courses should be organized to familiarize women with their contractual rights and duties, where contract work exists, and with their rights under State legislation, which, in parallel, should be more strictly observed by employers.

B. FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES. A desk survey of present female participation in this industry and two pilot case studies in Sierra Leone and Thailand.

41. Having been one of the earliest production activities known to humanity, food processing, which was physically less demanding than hunting or tree-felling, came to be performed traditionally by women. Even today, in the home or informal sector, it is considered a typically female activity.

42. The food-processing industry, however, does not employ women to the same predominant degree as the textile and clothing industries. Although certain food-processing branches tend to have a large proportion of women workers (fruit, vegetable and fish canning and preserving, chocolate and biscuit manufacture), other branches (vegetable oil and sugar refining) and particularly the beverage industry employ mostly men.

43. In North and South America, the proportion of women employed in the food-processing industry, taken as a whole, is generally below the average for the manufacturing sector. In the African and Asian countries, the picture varies a great deal depending on the structure of the industry. In the newly industrialized countries of South-East Asia, the number of women workers in the food processing branch tends to be relatively high.

44. In many countries, the industry has not been growing as fast as total industrial production: a few exceptions occur, however, such as the United States. It appears that the consumption of processed foods is highly income-related, keeping pace with the per capita increase in Gross Domestic Product. It is to be expected, therefore, that with progressive development, the demand for processed foods will grow in both developed and developing countries. Since developing countries enjoy a comparative advantage in the more labour-intensive food production lines, new employment opportunities are likely to arise in the food-processing sector. The question thus arises as to how women can play a greater and more important role in this area of industrial development.

45. Food-processing is a largely heterogeneous industry, characterized by wide economic, technological and organizational differences between branches. These differences affect the employment structure as well as the employment opportunities for women. In fruit and vegetable canning, in fish and seafood preserving, in confectionery and in biscuit-manufacture, women can make use of their domestic cooking skills. They usually require only a very short period of training. The work is not physically demanding, although it tends to be performed in an unpleasant, tiring environment, marked by heat, a high degree of moisture and an above-average rate of industrial accidents. In sugar factories, grain mills or breweries the work is of a different kind. It demands a considerable amount of physical strength (if the plant is not mechanized) or it requires technically qualified manpower, at present mostly male (if production is largely automated).

46. In most countries, earnings in the food-processing industry are lower than average for the manufacturing sector, while earnings in the beverage industry are higher. The pay differential between men and women is smaller in both the food processing and beverage industries than in the manufacturing sector as a whole.

47. Large transnational corporations play an important role in the food processing sector. To a large extent, they determine the employment pattern in different areas and in different branches. Female participation thus depends in part on their employment policies.

48. Certain food-processing branches are characterized by high seasonal fluctuations of production. Seasonal fluctuations in employment seem to affect women more than men, because the branches with high seasonal fluctuations are those which employ a large proportion of women (fruit canning, fish processing). Furthermore, women frequently belong to the low category of workers employed on a casual basis. Thus, while food processing may in the future offer increased employment opportunities to women, many of the newly created jobs are likely to be both casual and seasonal, leading to frequent spells of unemployment.

49. The case studies carried out in Sierra Leone and Thailand attempted to assess the possibilities of and constraints upon the increased and more effective participation of women in the food-processing industries. In Sierra Leone, 76 per cent of the male workforce and 81 per cent of the female workforce are engaged in agriculture. Only 6 and 4 per cent of the male and female workforce respectively belong to the manufacturing sector, while a high proportion of food processing activities is carried out in the traditional sector. Women appear to play an active role in the latter sector especially in rural areas. They are engaged in such typical occupations as rice milling, baking, oil processing, fish processing, and the preparation of garri and foofoo.

50. The women's scope of activities is limited to the local market, because they are handicapped by a lack of technology and managerial skills, as well as by an absence of capital. Raw material supplies pose problems sometimes. Production in the traditional sector could be improved in terms of both quantity and quality and thus satisfy a larger share of the domestic market. However, the study points out, given the present infrastructure, it would be unrealistic to envisage more ambitious projects such as production for export, because of the low productivity and the low production capacity of the agricultural sector on which the traditional sector depends for its supplies.

51. In the modern food processing and beverage sector of Sierra Leone women represent 11.5 per cent of the workforce (1981). The main reasons for the relatively low level of female employment appear to lie mainly with the high male unemployment rate and the low standard of female education. For most jobs employers prefer to hire men. They object to women's reluctance to accept over-time work and shiftwork, which they ascribe to women's lack of physical fitness and to their high level of absenteeism. Finally, traditional social attitudes discourage married women from taking paid employment outside the home.

52. Apart from the lack of education and training facilities for girls and women, guidance on available employment opportunities is also lacking. The reluctance of some employers in large enterprises to take female apprentices and employees can be expected to disappear in the future, once women possess the basic educational requirements. They will also have to acquire the training and discipline needed to form a workforce ready to take up available employment opportunities. This, however, is a long-term prospect.

53. In the small informal sector, the future outlook for an effective contribution by women in Sierra Leone appears brighter, depending as it does upon increasing research activities on appropriate technology and the provision of extension services to promote local female entrepreneurs. The location of industries, seasonal availability of raw materials, and linkages between small and large industries will naturally play an important role.

54. Thailand has a well developed, formal food-processing sector. The country is a large food exporter: food, both processed and non-processed, accounts for about half of its exports. The main food processing activities are grain milling (rice and maize), fruit and vegetable canning, fish and seafood preserving, sugar refining, edible oil extraction and the preparation of animal feed.

55. The food industry can be expected to develop considerably. In the current five-year-plan (1982-1986) emphasis is placed on the development of the food and other agro-based industries, which can benefit from the supply of readily available domestic resources.

56. Female participation in the labour force in Thailand is among the highest in the world: women account for a large proportion of the employees in food and beverage industries (42 per cent in 1977). The number of women employed tends to be higher in rural areas than in urban centres. In rural Thailand food processing is a predominantly female activity. The typical female food processing worker in Thailand has a poor, mostly rural background and little education. In many cases, she has moved to urban areas in search of a job.

57. The lower average level of women's education is one of the factors determining the generally low occupational status of women workers. This in turn leads to the low level of their wages. Although the principle of equal pay is embodied in Thai legislation, it would seem that, in practice, only in the public sector are men and women paid equally. In the private sector, women's earnings are low - particularly those of unskilled workers, many of whom are young migrants and left with no option but to accept short-term, unstable employment at a low wage. Since Thailand has surplus labour, most employers prefer hiring men unless they can be sure of not having to comply with labour laws. Workers in the food and beverage industries work long hours, and women tend to work longer hours than men.

58. For women workers in Thailand, the main problem is not that of taking up employment in the manufacturing, food processing or any other sector, but of improving their occupational status, wages and working conditions. Stricter application of labour legislation and better means of control would doubtless benefit women workers and facilitate their entry into more permanent and higher grade jobs. Their contribution to the development of the food-processing industries would then become more meaningful.

CONCLUSIONS

59. In view of the present high level of unemployment among men in the countries studied, specific policies and practical measures directed towards increasing employment opportunities for women will have to be very carefully planned so as to maintain and/or strengthen the principle and objective of the equitable distribution of benefits. Although in both Sierra Leone and in Thailand women enjoy equal rights and are protected from discrimination by national legislation, their position on the labour market is weak. It may well remain so as long as progressive development fails to absorb, at least to a certain extent, the existing surplus of male labour.

60. A practical approach to starting the improvement of women's participation in the development of food-processing industries would be to find and develop opportunities to integrate them into the middle and higher-level occupations and activities. This could be done, for instance, by identifying training opportunities applicable to both sexes, and by ensuring equality of access. Furthermore, facilities should be set up to promote food-processing activities in rural areas with a surplus of female labour. Guidance should be given on appropriate technology, and information provided on credit and marketing mechanisms. Such activities could be established on a co-operative basis, which could provide more flexible working arrangements than other types of plants, and this would be of particular benefit to women workers with family responsibilities. Specific suggestions for local action are contained in the country reports.

61. The need for child-care facilities close to the place of work (or close to home), should be given the attention it deserves and consideration should be given to the establishment of facilities subsidized by the enterprise and/or by the Government.

62. Finally, it would be essential to encourage positive attitudes towards the education, training and employment of women both in the mass media and among the public in general.



