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THE CHANGING AND CONTEMPORARY ROLE OF
WOMEN IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

1. A society which is seriously committed to raising levels of living needs to consider women not as marginal to the development process but as essential human resources for generating balanced development.
2. If all of the persons who are involved in the human tasks of survival and creation of a better life are allowed to share the opportunities available to apply scientific knowledge and technological advances, development will be achieved at the most rapid rate possible. Conversely, if some persons are left outside the stream of this knowledge, the pace of development will be slowed down for the whole society. And the latter is particularly true if the outsiders play a major part in economic production, and are at the same time the persons who bear the chief responsibility for the health and well-being of all the people.
3. So, whether one holds a pragmatic or a humanistic view of development, the participation of women is necessary. From the pragmatic approach, one sees that the most serious problems of development defy solution without the active participation of women. Can hunger and malnutrition be banished without the women, who grow most of Africa's food, and who breast-feed the babies and prepare the meals for the whole family? Can illiteracy be abolished without the women who are the first teachers of children, and whose own level of education affects the progress in schooling of both boys and girls?
4. The pragmatic approach to development also dictates that all available human resources must be mobilized to reach the goal. Countries at war involve everyone - the women go to the assembly lines, and both men and women go to the battle fields. Africa is at war against the cruelties of nature and the inequalities of the global situation, and all of her people must be called upon to fight; there is no sense in leaving half of them with primitive tools, or worse still, idle.
5. The humanistic approach to development is expressed in the definition: "Development is development of people toward their greater freedom and well-being". ^{1/} Not half of the people, but all of them; all must participate in the tasks of nation-building and share in its fruits.

^{1/} J.K. Nyerere, Freedom and Development, Dar-es-Salaam, Government Printer, 1968.

6. The gap between the rich countries and the poor countries is often and honestly discussed, from economic, social and moral perspectives. It is measured and attempts are made to determine the factors which impede the poor countries from catching up with the rich ones, and to find ways to right the balance. The humanistic approach to development identifies another gap, between the various sub-groups - the haves and the have-nots - within societies, and their relative opportunities to participate in the tasks and benefits of the growth of their countries. Women form one of these sub-groups - which cut across all other sub-groups as well.

7. The pragmatic and the humanistic approaches lead to the same conclusion: the necessary participation of women in development. But such a generalization is not enough. Just as development itself is measured by various economic and social yardsticks, the participation of women can be measured - although it seldom is.

8. One method of measurement used in this paper is based upon the continuous differentiation and specialization of roles in the society, which is an accepted indicator of development. As development proceeds, tasks which had previously been performed by a single person, or a group such as the peasant family, are separated and increasingly assigned to specialists. If this process is happening to only selected groups in the society, imbalanced development occurs.

9. Therefore, this article looks at the division of economic labour by sex in traditional sectors of the society, and attempts to contrast it with that in modernizing and modernized sectors, to discover whether women are sharing in the specialization of roles.

10. A second measurement is the extent of women's opportunities to provide support for themselves and their children, when custom or circumstances make maternal support a necessity. Children may depend upon a male or a female household head, but both the pragmatic and the humanistic concepts of development stress the primary importance of the health and welfare of children and youth.

11. The impact of change on economic production, as well as on family well-being, is discussed, since these are the material and the human factors of development. With this picture of the trends vis-a-vis women which become visible after a decade of development, and analysis is attempted, and a projection of the possible consequences for development if present patterns continue is risked. Finally, the article reviews some of the actions of women themselves, through their organizations, and describes some areas of need for policies, research and action, to bring women into the main stream of development.

12. There is no doubt that any effort to generalize about situations in the forty-one countries of Africa is hazardous. In fact, generalizations about a single country in the region are difficult. But they are

nevertheless necessary as means of increasing understanding of the role of women in development, vis-a-vis that of men. However, it should be recognized that particular undertakings - policies, studies and action programmes - need to be based on the conditions of an individual country, or a region within the country.

CHAPTER I

The traditional division of labour in rural African societies

13. African women have always taken part in economic activities, both inside and outside their homes. And they still do. In this Chapter, the quality and quantity of women's work is examined in three major areas: agriculture, commerce and the household.

Work in agriculture and animal husbandry

14. Even in very early African societies, women were providers. Although it is commonly believed that in hunting and gathering societies, women waited for men to bring home the food before the family could dine, that is not the whole story. In all such societies, outside the Arctic, the men hunted and women did the gathering. This holds true for the contemporary Bushmen societies of Botswana. Among the Bushmen: "Vegetable foods comprise from 60 to 80 per cent of the total diet by weight, and collecting involves two or three days of work per woman per week... Although men's and women's work input is roughly equivalent in terms of man-days of effort, the women provide two to three times as much food by weight as the men." 1/

15. In most contemporary rural African societies, women participate heavily in agriculture. An example of the traditional division of farming labour comes from Kivu Province in Zaire (Table 1). It is typical of much of Central, East and Southern Africa, and some parts of West Africa:

1/ The Observer, London, 1 October 1972.

Table 1

Division of rural labour in Kivu Province, Zaire

	<u>Unit of Production</u>	<u>Work</u>
Women	1.00	Ploughing, sowing, upkeep of plantation, transport of produce, carrying water, preparation and transport of firewood, marketing, beermaking.
Men (in the rural areas all the time)	0.30	Care of banana trees, clearing land when necessary and help with the cultivation of new fields; certain other jobs.
Children aged 5--9:		
Boys	0.00	No contribution.
Girls	0.05	Help with weeding and carrying water.
Children aged 10--14		
Boys	0.15	Looking after cattle; help with weeding.
Girls	0.55	Help mother with all agricultural work.
Old people over 55:		
Men	0.05	Very little work; some jobs in banana groves.
Women	0.20	Help with light work in the fields.

Source: Analyse de la malnutrition au Bushi, published by Oeuvre pour la lutte contre le bwaki et la protection de l'enfance, as quoted by David Mitchnik in The Role of Women in Rural Development in the Zaire, OXFAM, Oxford, 1972.

16. A study in Sierra Leone (Table 2) is limited to farm work, and excludes time spent on food processing, water and wood portage, and marketing, which are usually women's tasks. Considering the hours needed for these additional jobs, it is remarkable that women have 50 per cent of their time remaining for work in the fields.

Table 2

Actual time devoted to farm work, by age group per working day

	<u>Age group 10-14</u>	<u>Age group 15-59</u>	<u>Age group 60 and above</u>
Male workers	65 per cent of the time	90 per cent	75 per cent
Female workers	45 per cent of the time	50 per cent	65 per cent

Source: A.K. Mitra, Integrated Development of the Agricultural Sectors, Sierra Leone (Resource Management and Farm Planning, Report to the Government of Sierra Leone, FAO, Rome 1971).

17. When the total units of production are considered, Tables 1 and 2 show similarities. Other information comes from Tanzania and Gabon: In traditional areas of Bukoba, Tanzania, men work 1,800 hours per year in agriculture; women work 2,600 hours. 1/ In Gabon, one researcher calculated that women work more than 200 days annually in the fields, while men spend only a few days in agricultural work. 2/ In Zambia, a recent survey shows that during the planting season, women spend nine hours daily in the fields. 3/

1/ Country Report on Tanzania for the Libreville Conference, Gabon, 1971.

2/ The Impact of Modern Life and Technology on Women's Economic Role, UNECA, 1972.

3/ Catherine Mwanamwambwa, Ministry of Agriculture, Zambia.

18. From numerous studies, such as those illustrated, a fairly consistent pattern appears. Men are almost universally responsible for the initial heavy clearing and stumping of the new fields. But from that time, women progressively share or take over the work of sowing, weeding and harvesting. They carry the produce to market.

19. It is not unusual for women to care for the chickens, sheep and goats, to milk the cows and keep the animal stables clean. In pastoral societies, the division of labour often dictates that men care for the transport animals, while women tend the domestic animals. The butter and cheese are prepared by women.

20. In North Africa as well as the other parts of the continent, women have important roles in economic life. They sow, clear away weeds, prepare and carry fuel, and spend much time in animal husbandry. 1/

21. There are areas of Africa where farming is strictly the man's work. Southern Dahomey, the cocoa areas of Nigeria, and the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria are examples; in those places women work in the fields only seldom, if at all. But available studies make it possible to estimate that women are responsible for 60 to 80 per cent of the agricultural labour in Africa.

The household

22. Then there are the household chores. Women bear and nurture children, and in remote areas where infant and child mortality rates are very high, a long series of pregnancies may be necessary in order to have two or three children living at adolescence. It is a wonder that mothers survive (and many do not) the combination of child-bearing and their other exhausting work.

23. That is not all, for women must also prepare food, cook, clean their houses, and attend to social obligations (funerals, weddings). Processing of food crops--both arable and tree crops--is women's work. In Tanzania, a sample survey shows that women average nearly three hours daily preparing food. 2/ In Ethiopia, "to produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day". 3/

1/ Hoda Badran, Arab Women in National Development. UNICEF, 1972.

2/ Report of a Study on Patterns of Living in South Mara Village, Ministry of Regional Administration and Rural Development, Buhare, Tanzania, 1970.

3/ Simon D. Messing, The Highland Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia, University of Pennsylvania, 1957.

24. Fetching water is also women's work, and in very many rural areas there is no water supply. A filled water pot may weigh as much as twenty kilos and be carried any number of miles, often over rough terrain. In Ethiopia: "The life of the rural woman is made especially hard by the establishment of settlements far from water holes or springs; for it is the duty of the woman to fetch water, no matter how far it may be ... the establishment of settlements is not at all, in most cases, influenced by water supply." 1/

25. Gathering fuel is women's work. The wood must be cut, and the wood or dung is carried long distances to home. Men in some societies cut and carry the larger wood, especially when quantities of beer will be brewed - but women can do it too. Children, especially girls, begin to help their mothers with these portage tasks when they are about six years old.

26. In summary, the facts about the traditional division of labour in African societies demonstrate, beyond any possible doubt, that women make a major contribution to the economies of the region. They show, too, that life for the rural woman is very hard; the strain on her physical strength and endurance must often be nearly unbearable. Sometimes women say so themselves. The only woman delegate to the FAO Seventh Regional Conference, after reminding the 150 male delegates that the Conference had already recognized that women produced most of Africa's food crops, said: "We want nurseries; we want child care centres. When we work in the fields, we have to work with babies on our backs. It is harmful for both mother and child." 2/

Division of labour in the modernizing rural sectors: the impact of innovations

27. Rural modernization has both positive and negative impacts on women's work. One needs only to recall the rural division of labour to realize that a water supply and a village grinding mill are great boons to women, and save them hours of back-breaking labour. Health centres and maternity hospitals alleviate physical and psychological pain. Communications systems make life easier and more remunerative for all. And so forth. The situation of women is improving.

1/ Mesfin Wolde-Mariam, An Introductory Geography of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 1972.

2/ Intervention of Mme Marie-Catherine Azizet, the only woman delegate to the FAO Seventh Regional Conference, Libreville, Gabon, September 1972.

28. But not all innovations have such a positive effect on the lives of women. When acreage under cultivation is increased, if women do the weeding (as they most often do), there is more weeding to be done. When family plots of land are split through inheritance, or children who used to help their mothers in the fields are sent off to school, or the husband accepts employment away from the farm, it can easily be seen, though it is seldom acknowledged, that the women's tasks must multiply, and so do their hours of wearisome labour. Some examples:

- Women's holdings for growing the family foodstuffs are becoming more fragmented. It often happens in areas of high population density that women must walk some miles from plot to plot. And usually each plot is so small that only cultivation by hand can be employed. 1/
- In densely populated areas, women must walk many miles up the hills into the forests to fetch loads of grass for feeding the animals, because there is no longer an open space for grazing. 2/
- Often the only type of innovations possible for the women farmers are those involving the use of (their own) additional labour, and not those involving the reduction of labour due to mechanization. 3/
- Women perform 55 per cent of the agricultural labour in a "traditional" village and 68 per cent of it in a village where "improved farming techniques" are used. (Central African Republic). 4/

29. When cash crops or animal husbandry are introduced, women add new jobs to their traditional work. Extension services are usually given to men, who may also monopolize the profits. For example:

- Poultry schemes which are introduced into a rural community, but are not accompanied by a water supply, result in increasing the burden on the women. It is estimated that 100 chickens need approximately 25 litres of clean water per day. The task of fetching extra water falls on the shoulders of the women. 5/

1/ Report of the ECA Evaluation Mission on Rural Animation and Community Development in Cameroon, UNECA.

2/ Chaggaland, Tanzania.

3/ Jane Mills, "A Study of Time Allocation by Rural Women and their Place in Decision-making", Makerere University, Faculty of Agriculture, 1967.

4/ Ester Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development, New York, 1970.

5/ Women in the Zaire, op.cit.

- The income from cocoa is monopolized by the men. The women, however, take part in a certain number of operations which contribute to its production... Inasmuch as this leads to the woman being permanently in the supplicant situation of dependence on the husband, much tension is created. 1/

30. A case study from Kenya shows that women themselves have rebelled against efforts for reform which did not take into account the existing division of labour and its returns. But this example of reaction is an isolated one. It probably became notorious because it hit the GNP. In central Kenya, women traditionally grew pyrethrum, and sold it to the Marketing Board. With launching of the Million Acre Settlement Scheme, only men became landholders, and members of the co-operatives. Pyrethrum production fell, and fingers were pointed at "those peasant farmers ... " Then a more careful look showed that the women were not always happy that (a) the co-operatives took a cut of the proceeds, which the Marketing Board had not previously taken; and (b) husbands, as landholders, and co-operative members, received the returns. 2/

31. The Cameroon case of the fragmentation of land holdings excepted, all of the examples given above centre upon the division of labour in agriculture, and point up the failure to anticipate the side-effects of the introduction of innovations.

32. The exception to this negative impact on women's labours is found with the switch to mechanization, which tends to drive female family workers and tenant farmers out of economic activity, if no substitute work is designed.

CHAPTER II

Division of Labour in Commerce and Wage Employment

33. Distribution of goods is another economic activity in which African women have been engaged for generations, in addition to production and processing of foods. Most of the marketing began by selling excess farm

1/ Some Old and New Bassa Co-operatives: Experiences in Cameroon, UNRISD, Geneva, 1970.

2/ Raymond Apthorpe in Two Blades of Grass, Manchester University Press, 1971.

produce, but today it ranges from petty to international trade. The market mammys and the "supermammys" of West Africa are legendary, but it is clear from Table 3 that these women have their counterparts in other parts of the continent.

Table 3

Participation in marketing according to sex

<u>Area</u>	<u>Male</u> (Per cent)	<u>Female</u> (Per cent)
Copperbelt (Zambia) (late 1950's)	59	41
Rhodesia (late 1950's)	majority in larger markets	majority in smaller markets
N. Somalia (late 1950's)	-	women dominate the open markets
Hausa (Nigeria) (late 1950's)	men dominate the public markets	women trade from their homes
Dakar (Senegal) (1959)	40	60
Brazzaville (Congo) (1963)	34	66
Nigeria (1963)	30	70
Ghana (1960)	16	84
Dahomey (1967)	11	89

Sources: Bohannon and Dalton, eds. Markets in Africa (Northwestern University Press, 1962); David Lucas, "Women in the Nigerian Labour Force" (African Population Conference, Accra, December 1971, UNECA M71-2985); "Participation of Women in Industry and Commerce in African Towns South of the Sahara", (E.C.B.14.URB 14, UNECA).

34. Table 3 is admittedly incomplete, but it illustrates the important role of women in marketing in West and Central Africa, and in nomadic Somalia. In East Africa women do marketing as well; in Ethiopia for example, they carry much of the farm produce, including cash crops, on their backs to the market.

35. Yoruba market women may walk fifty miles or more in a week, with a basket or calabash of goods on their heads. ^{1/} In the cash crop areas of Zaire, women walk up to 25 km. to market, hauling produce on their backs which may weigh 30--40 kg., and a baby is often strapped to their fronts. These Zaire women are farmers, and may also sell the excess one-fourth of their food crops at the market. ^{2/}

36. Table 3 also shows that in the Hausa areas of Northern Nigeria, men dominate the public markets. But the secluded Muslim women are not idle in their houses: "This strict rural house-seclusion of women occurs no where else in Muslim West Africa ... Yet, women are much given to employing each other for payment, both on ordinary domestic tasks such as threshing, winnowing, grinding or pounding grains and on the processing of groundnut oil and locustbean cakes for sale ... There is a large trade in cooked foodstuffs prepared by secluded women ... About two-thirds of the sheep and goats are owned by women." ^{3/}

37. Women may keep the proceeds from sales of their own produce, in most societies. In the rural areas, this includes excess foodstuffs, processed foods, local beer, and crafted baskets, pots and other items. It may also include foodstuffs which ought to be used at home, but are sold because cash is badly needed. But when women lug coffee, rice, cocoa or other cash crops to market, they most often hand over the profits to their husbands on return home. Where marketing is a full-time occupation, as in West African countries, the woman's initial investment may come from her husband or parents, at the time of her marriage, or she may receive a small weekly stipend from her husband. Then she is on her own, for profits and losses.

The Impact of Modernization on Women's Work in Commerce

38. Women's traditional role in commerce is also affected by the introduction of innovations. It was noted at the Regional Conference on Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and

^{1/} B.W. Hodder, "The Yoruba Rural Market Ring" (Research Notes, No.12, Ibadan, Nigeria), 1959.

^{2/} Mitchinek, op. cit., page 4.

^{3/} Polly Hill, Rural Hausa, Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Women in African Countries that "Women traders and market women are in danger of being squeezed out by big commercial undertakings." 1/
A West African Conference added that "there are no noticeable new openings for women's employment." 2/

39. The facts illustrate the statements: Percentages of women among commercial persons in Dahomey decreased from 95 per cent to 89 per cent between 1961 and 1967. The percentages of females among petty traders in Nigeria decreased from 84 to 70 per cent between 1950 and 1963.

Wage Employment

40. The wage employment sector is significant, not for its present size in relation to the total populations of African countries, but for its potential growth, as industrialization proceeds in both the rural and urban areas.

41. Women who have high levels of education (secondary school and above), and preferably also some professional training, seem at present to have little difficulty finding employment. In many countries there are women magistrates and doctors, and in most countries the percentage of women among teachers, nurses, social workers and secretaries is significant and increasing.

42. But on the level of management and administration, these educated women make a poorer showing. In Ghana in 1967, women constituted 19 per cent of professional and technical persons, but only 4 per cent of administrative, executive and managerial workers. Table 4 illustrates this, and shows that little change occurred between 1960 and 1967:

1/ Regional Conference on Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and Women in African Countries, Rabat, Morocco, May 1971.

2/ YWCA West Africa Regional Conference, September 1970.

Table 4

Percentages of women among high level workers,
Ghana, 1960 and 1967

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sector and per cent female</u>	
	<u>Professional, technical and related fields</u> (%)	<u>Administrative, executive and managerial</u> (%)
1960	19.4	3.1
1967	19.1	4.2

Source: Year Book of Labour Statistics, 1967, ILO, Geneva. Labour Statistics, Government of Ghana, 1967.

43. Of great importance, quantitatively, is the trend that is appearing in employment of lowly educated and illiterate women, in skilled and unskilled jobs. Data from Kenya (Table 5) show an almost unvarying ratio of men to women in the industrial labour force over an eight-year period.

Table 5

KENYA - Percentage of women in formal sector wage
employment, by economic sector, 1963 - 1970

<u>Sector</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1969^{a/}</u>	<u>1970</u>
Agriculture	19	18	15	16
Manufacturing	6	6	5	6
Commerce	10	10	9	10
Transport	5	5	3	5
Services	16	16	22	20
All sectors <u>b/</u>	15	14	14	14

Source: Employment, Incomes and Equality, ILO, Geneva, 1972.

a/ Includes public sector.

b/ The coverage of these over-all figures includes a number of sectors in which very few women are employed, and which are not listed elsewhere in the table.

44. For our purposes it is most important to note from Table 5 that, despite the appearance of smartly dressed women leaving shops and offices at the end of the working day, the percentages of women in the industrial wage labour force are not changing in Kenya.

45. Data from Tunisia show a somewhat different picture between 1963 and 1966, illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6

TUNISIA - Percentages of women in the labour force by branch of economic activity, for 1963 and 1966

<u>Economic activity</u>	<u>Percentages of women</u>	
	<u>1963</u>	<u>1966</u>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2.9	1.8
Manufacturing	11.0	23.4
Construction	0.2	0.5
Electricity, gas, etc.	3.2	1.2
Commerce	1.8	2.9
Bank, insurance	13.4	-
Transport, storage	0.9	3.0
"Collectivités locales"	1.1	-
Services	8.7	10.0
Activities not adequately described	-	5.0
Unemployed	-	-
TOTAL	4.8	6.0

Sources: L'Emploi en Tunisie, Enquête emploi, 1964, Secrétariat d'Etat au Plan et à l'Economie Nationale, Tunis, novembre 1965, page 16.
Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1970, ILO, Geneva, page 69.

46. As shown in Table 6, in the manufacturing sector percentages of women increased from 11 to 23 between 1963 and 1966; nearly three times as many women as men were hired during that period of large growth of industry. In Tunisia also, the services grew eight-fold in those years, yet the percentages of women increased by only 1.3 per cent (from 8.7 to 10.0 per cent of all employees).

47. From the preceding tables, and labour force data of other countries,^{1/} we conclude that percentages of women in the industrial labour force increase almost exclusively when the total economy, or some sectors of it, is growing rapidly, or when jobs are implicitly or explicitly identified by employers, policy-makers and planners as feminine fields.

48. Few data on relative earnings by sex are available to us at this time, but it is believed that women dominate the low-income categories, as they do in other parts of the world. It is generally accepted, for example, that the majority of women wage earners in Ethiopia earn less than Eth. 50.00 (US \$25.00) per month.^{2/}

49. Some countries do not yet allow married women to have permanent and pensionable terms in civil service. Companies have been known to refuse to reinstate women workers following maternity leaves.^{3/} Additionally, many wage earning women are employed on a part-time, or day-labour basis, where wages are almost always inhumanly low.

Summary of Chapters One and Two

50. Women are not well represented in the modern sectors, even though they are so fully employed in the traditional sectors, where they may spend more hours daily in economic labour than do men, as shown above. The delegates to the Regional Conference at Rabat said: "The traditional role of African women in economic development is neither evident nor even acknowledged in the modern sectors of agriculture, industry, commerce and government."^{4/}

51. Three trends appear from this assessment of the impact of innovations on the lives and work of women. First, it is vividly clear that water wells, grinding mills, roads and other infrastructure must serve women in a very special way, as well as benefiting the whole society. But the second and third trends are not so positive. On the one hand, women's already exhausting jobs in agricultural production often

^{1/} ECA Country Reports on Opportunities for Vocational and Technical Training in the Context of Formal Education and Employment Possibilities, 1972 and 1973.

^{2/} Lars Bondestam, Prostitution in Addis Ababa, 1972, page 9.

^{3/} David Lucas, Women in the Nigerian Labour Force, African Population Conference, Accra, 1971 and informal information from a factory manager in Ethiopia, 1972.

^{4/} Report of the Regional Conference on Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and Women in African Countries, Rabat, Morocco, May 1971.

increase with the introduction of cash-crop farming, education for children, wage employment for men in the towns, and so forth, but their access to incomes to alleviate their situation changes only slightly or not at all. On the other hand, mechanization of agriculture can drive women out of economic productivity, with no substitutes offered. Also, women are being pushed out of traditional marketing. But relatively little compensation is made for uneducated women through employing them in the modern sector. It is mostly educated women who participate in the progressive specialization of work.

52. Neither oppressing women with additional labour, nor forcing them out of economic activity and into a position of dependence makes much sense for development - but these things appear to be happening.

CHAPTER III

Major social factors affecting women's employment

53. Women's meagre earnings, when they have them, are almost never luxury incomes. They are spent on necessities. In some societies, it is customary for women to contribute, often the major portion of support of themselves and their children, and to give additional help to members of their extended families. But the existence of female heads of households, either de jure or de facto, may be the most critical social factor explaining women's absolute need for incomes. Migration can create female-headed households, as do polygamy, separation, divorce and death. Opportunities for education and training affect women's chances to have incomes.

Family necessity

54. Although marketing has its social aspects, and women enjoy the camaraderie of their work, it has its economic imperatives as well. In West Africa "trading must be an unwilling option for some at least of the many who depend on it for their living." 1/ In Ghana the

1/ Report of the YWCA West Africa Regional Conference, Accra, 1970.

(women) traders "showed a universal tendency to invest their profits in the business up to some arbitrary level after which they utilize their profits in diverse ways. The majority invested their profits in the education of their children." 1/

55. Wage employed women also have family responsibilities. According to a sample survey in Nigeria, over 73 per cent of the wage-employed women take care of children, and support their parents, parents-in-law and other relatives. 2/

56. The migration of men for wage employment mentioned earlier often makes women de facto household heads. Women stay behind in the rural areas, where their tilling of the land provides social security for the whole family, should the husband or father lose his job through unemployment, ill health or retirement. Sometimes a portion of the man's wage is sent back to the farm- but often the mother is left to try to make ends meet. Kenya offers an extreme example of female-headed households in the countryside. There, the 1969 census showed that about 525,000 rural households were headed by women. At a rough estimate, 400,000 of these- or about a third of all rural households- could be households whose male head was away in town. The remainder were polygamous households and households in which the husband had died or was living elsewhere in the rural areas. 3/

57. About a third of adult male Malawians are working outside the country, and the effect on women's responsibilities is obvious. In Botswana, where both migration of men and motherhood outside of marriage are common, a village study showed one-third of households headed by women. Additionally, some male heads were residing in South Africa, working in the mines, at the time of the enumeration, and women were left as de facto household heads. 4/

58. As a consequence of the custom that they grew the food in the subsistence economy, women of polygamous marriages can be left as providers in the monetary economy. Such women often say "we need

1/ Florence Aleeno Sai: Market Women in the Economy of Ghana, M.A. Thesis, Cornell University, 1971.

2/ Report on the Survey of Working Women with Family Responsibilities, Federal Ministry of Labour, Lagos, 1971.

3/ Employment, Incomes and Equality, ILO, Geneva, 1972.

4/ Report on Village Studies, Moshupa, Manyana, and Molepolele, Gaborone, 1972, page 140.

a small but regular income to take care of our children". In Mali, on the national level, 16 per cent of the families depend upon women. 1/

59. Few economic data are available on the condition of female headed rural households, but what exists is not encouraging. In a Botswana sample survey, households with male heads produced an average of 1.9 bags of sorghum compared to 1.2 bags for female-headed households. 2/

60. Migration of women also creates households with female heads. Ethiopia, Madagascar and Tanzania have a higher rural to urban migration among females than males. 3/ In Ghana, although males have, in the past, had a higher rate of migration to towns than females, "this situation may be passing". 4/

61. The most recent urban survey in Ethiopia shows a sex ratio of 90 males to 100 females. 5/ This is due in part to the high divorce rates in Ethiopia, and the custom that women who do not remarry in the rural areas and/or who may be tired of the work there move to the towns. Thus there may be a low instance of female-headed households in the rural areas, but probably a very high instance in the urban areas of Ethiopia, where a survey of factory workers shows that, out of the 55 workers interviewed, 37 support parents or relatives. Of the 11 divorced women, only one gets alimony for the support of her children. 6/

62. In urban areas of Kenya, "when the same criteria are used in defining unemployment for men and women, it is clear that women are much harder hit than men. Unemployment rates of 5 to 10 per cent for male household heads represent a serious human and social problem, but unemployment rates of 10 to 17 per cent for female household heads are more serious." 7/ In Kampala, elite women, apparently

1/ Enquête démographique dans le Delta Central Nigerien, Résultats Sommaires, République du Mali, Mission socio-économique du Soudan, 1956-1958, pages 42 - 44.

2/ Report on Village Studies, op.cit., page 152.

3/ Study on the Equality of Access of Girls and Women to Education in the Context of Rural Development, UNESCO, 1972.

4/ John C. Caldwell, African Rural Urban Migration: The Movement to Ghana's Towns, London, 1969.

5/ Urbanization in Ethiopia: Statistical Bulletin No.9, Addis Ababa, 1972.

6/ Women Factory Workers in Ethiopia, Gloria Triulzi, 1972.

7/ Employment, Incomes and Equality, op.cit.

influenced by the instability of many marriages, are engaging in businesses, as a kind of social security for themselves and their children. 1/ In Ethiopia, the survey of women factory workers showed that the most frequent reason for not stopping work was to increase the family income (21 out of 55); the next was to be independent from the husband (16 out of 55) ... As one woman put it: "You never know when your husband is going out with a younger woman." 2/

63. As shown by the latter quotation, even when the household head is an employed male, the deprivations and insecurities of life in slums and shanty towns may dictate that two incomes are needed for survival or at least to create a decent human life for a family. Everything costs money in the town, it did not in the village.

64. In the parts of Africa where urban marketing is not a female tradition, the wife may suddenly become economically non-productive and, worse still, dependent, when the family moves to town. It is often said that men in towns prefer to have their wives stay at home and they fear to have them go out to work for other men. Such an assumption is questionable, at least for low income families. According to one study: "The loss of the productive economic function of the Muganda woman in the urban setting is felt not only by women who must be the sole support of the family. This economic loss seems to out-weigh any disapproval of the Kibuli men ... it must be remembered, though, that Kibuli is a very poor area where lack of money is an ever present problem. Whether this attitude would be held by men who are in higher economic brackets cannot be assumed." 3/

65. A similar study in Dar-es-Salaam comes to the same conclusions. It has been suggested, also, that an additional value of employing two bread-winners per family would be to ease the stress and costs of urban infrastructure. 4/ This seems worth exploring.

1/ Isis Ragheb Southall, Elite Women in Uganda, Ph.D. Research, Makerere University, 1972.

2/ Women Factory Workers in Ethiopia, Gloria Triulzi, 1972.

3/ The Muganda woman's Attitude Toward work Outside the Home, Margaret Byangwa, Makerere University, 1968 (?)

4/ Ester Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development, New York, 1970.

66. Whether single or married, the chances for uneducated women to support themselves in the towns are very slim indeed. In pursuit of economic independence, women brew and bake, as they did in the countryside. Some girls resort to prostitution; some have unwanted children who wander the streets. In Addis Ababa, "unless a girl can find a regularly paid job in town, prostitution may be an alternative for surviving. Although an estimate of the exact number of prostitutes in Addis Ababa seems meaningless in the sense that only a small portion of them can be reached and helped, ... it is suggested that the number of prostitutes is put at 15,000." 1/

67. In Kenya, "the worst of all possible circumstances from the point of view of seeking work (in urban areas) is to be young, uneducated and female. As with unemployment, one's chances of staying below 200 shs. (US\$30) per month are greatest if one is uneducated and female." 2/

Chances for education

68. "Jobs abound for women, but they aren't qualified", said a Nigerian delegate to a recent conference in West Africa. 3/ And as we have already shown, work also abounds for women, particularly in agriculture, animal husbandry, marketing, and food-processing. Qualified or not, women do this work.

69. Education and training are critical social factors influencing women's work - both in traditional areas and in wage-employment. Female qualification affects the output of national production, and strongly influences national development.

Literacy and formal education

70. Women still constitute the vast majority of illiterates in the region, with the exception of Lesotho. And they form the majority of students in literacy classes in most countries. In formal education, the percentages of girls are increasing, as shown in Tables 7 and 8:

1/ Lars Bondestam, Prostitution in Addis Ababa, March 1972. Note: other estimates are far higher.

2/ Employment, Incomes and Equality, op.cit.

3/ Daily Times, Lagos, 24 May 1971.

Table 7

Percentage of girls among students in primary schools

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year and percentage</u>	
	<u>1965</u>	<u>1969</u>
Lesotho	-	60
Botswana	56	53
Swaziland	48	48
Gabon	46	48
Madagascar	-	46
Zambia	44	44
Equatorial Guinea	44	-
Congo Republic	41	44
Ghana	42	43
Cameroon	39	43
Kenya	37	41
Niger	42	40
Tanzania	37	39
Tunisia	35	39
Egypt	39	38
Malawi	39	-
Algeria	38	-
Upper Volta	33	-
Uganda	38	38
Sierra Leone	36	37
Senegal	36	-
Sudan	35	-
Ivory Coast	39	36
Zaire	32	36
Libya	28	34
Nigeria	33	33
Dahomey	31	-
Guinea	31	-
Morocco	30	33
Burundi	29	32
Liberia	27	-
C.A.R.	26	32
Gambia	29	31
Togo	29	31
Ethiopia	28	31
Mali	32	29
Chad	19	24
Somalia	21	22

Table 8

Country and percentage of enrolment

Percentage of girls among
students in secondary schools

Year	0 - 9%	10 - 19%	20 - 29%	30 - 39%	40 - 49%	50 - 59%
1969	Chad (8)	Burundi (10)	Togo (20)	Egypt (32)	Swaziland (43)	Lesotho (52)
		Mali (14)	Zaire (21)	Zambia (33)	Botswana (46)	
		CAR (16)	Ivory Coast (21)	Nigeria (33)		
		Libya (17)	Gambia (24)			
		Niger (19)	Cameroon (25)			
		Somalia (19)	Liberia (25)			
			Ghana (26)			
			Ethiopia (26)			
			Sierra Leone (27)			
			Gabon (27)			
			Morocco (27)			
			Sudan (27)			
			Kenya (28)			
			Congo Rep. (28)			
1965	Chad (6)	Somalia (10)	Mali (20)	Nigeria (30)	Botswana (43)	
	Burundi (9)	Libya (12)	Upper Volta (21)	Algeria (31)	Swaziland (45)	
		Zaire (13)	Togo (21)	Madagascar (39)		
		Niger (16)	Gabon (21)			
		Ivory Coast (16)	Ethiopia (22)			
		CAR (16)	Cameroon (22)			
			Sudan (23)			
			Congo Rep. (23)			
			Morocco (24)			
			Tanzania (25)			
			Liberia (25)			
			Ghana (25)			
			Uganda (26)			
			Senegal (26)			
			Rwanda (27)			
			Kenya (27)			
			Zambia (28)			
			Malawi (28)			
			Equatorial G. (29)			
		Egypt (29)				
		Dahomey (29)				

71. On the average in African countries, girls now constitute an average of 30 per cent of primary school students, where data is available. On the secondary level, the enrolment of girls has doubled between 1964-1965 and 1968-1969 in Libya, raising the percentage of girls among the student body from 12 to 15 per cent. In Nigeria, the number of girls at secondary schools increased by 129 per cent during 1960-1966. Other countries show less rapid change, but similar patterns, giving an average of 25 per cent of girls among secondary students. It appears that attitudes toward educating girls are gradually changing.

72. But the drop-out rate for girls remains higher than that for boys, at both primary and secondary levels. There is often a severe decrease of girls in mid-primary school, another at the end of primary, and still another before secondary school is completed. Girls' chances for survival through university are thus extremely limited.

73. The division of rural labour described earlier in this paper accounts in large part for the failure of girls to continue their education, or in fact, in many cases, to be enrolled at all. Young girls must help their mothers at home and on the farm; they carry water in smaller pots behind their mothers. Boys are often excused from home tasks when they are studying, and they thus have the chance to do homework after school. Girls may be removed from school because of pregnancy or for early marriages. When family finances for school fees are sparse, boys receive preference. This partly traditional and partly new cultural pattern persists despite studies which show that the performance of children in school correlates positively with the education of the mother, but bears little or no relationship to the education of the father. ^{1/} Thus the woman's education has a direct effect on the next generation, as well as on present agricultural production and distribution of goods.

74. At university level, percentages of women are still quite low, as shown by enrolment data in Table 9:

^{1/} A study by Anthony Somerset in Uganda.

Table 9

Percentage of women among students in universities and other higher studies in selected African countries, 1967-1969

<u>Year</u>	<u>Country and percentage of women</u>		
	<u>0-10%</u>	<u>10-20%</u>	<u>20-30%</u>
1969	Ethiopia(8) Ivory Coast(6)	Zambia(17)	Botswana(24) Liberia(20) Uganda (20)
1968	Swaziland(10) Cameroon(4)	Mauritius(11) Zambia (16) Liberia (19)	Algeria(22)
1967	Dahomey(1) Rwanda(1) Zaire(4) Mauritius(5) Cameroon(6) Congo B. (7) Ethiopia(8) Burundi(9)	Ghana (10) Mali(10) Tanzania(14) Nigeria(13) Malawi(13) Morocco(13) Ivory Coast(15) Kenya(17) Sierra Leone(18) Liberia(19) Zambia(19)	Tunisia(20) Algeria(23) Egypt(23)

Note: Data does not necessarily include students studying outside their countries.

Sources: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1969 and ECA Country Reports.

75. As seen from Table 9, young women constitute well below 20 per cent of university enrolments, in countries where data are available. The North African sub-region leads in female registrations. While data for analysis are not sufficient, it is clear that women tend, as yet, to choose subjects in the arts fields, and to neglect the scientific and business fields, even though the latter may offer greater opportunity for employment. Some examples:

- At Haile Selassie I University (Ethiopia) women represent only about 8 per cent of the student body and 4 per cent of the teachers. During the academic year 1969/1970, out of 489 freshmen enrolled in the Arts stream, 62 were women; in the Science stream, only 21 out of 211 students were women; and in the Physical Science stream only 3 women were enrolled out of a total of 339 students. 1/

- Women at universities are found to concentrate on subjects (e.g., Arts, Biological Sciences) for which there is less demand than for, say, graduates in Business Administration. In 1966-1967 only one registered engineering student out of 773 was female. Yet the number of women currently enrolled in subjects such as pharmacy and medicine must indicate that these professions will absorb substantial numbers of women in this decade. 2/

Vocational training and technical support

76. In summary, the enrolment of women and girls in formal education streams is showing considerable improvement, despite setbacks caused by wastage throughout the system. But in vocational and technical training, and in access to technical support, women lag very seriously behind men. Table 10 shows percentages of girls in total enrolments in technical and vocational education in African countries, as of 1968:

1/ Towards Full Employment in Ethiopia: the Necessary Role of Women, UNECA, 1972.

2/ Women in the Nigerian Labour Force, David Lucas, University of Lagos, 1971.

Table 10

Percentages of girls in total enrolments in technical and vocational education in Africa

<u>From 0 - 10%</u>	<u>From 10 - 20%</u>	<u>From 20 - 30%</u>	<u>From 30 - 40%</u>	<u>From 40% and over</u>
Upper Volta 3	Ghana 10	Zaire 21	Ivory Coast 33	-
Nigeria 4	Somalia 14		Senegal	
	Mali 15	Malawi 24.5	Dahomey 37.5	
Congo (Brazzaville) 7.5	CAR 17	Cameroon 28.5		
	Guinea 19.5			

Source: UNESCO Report to United Nations Commission on Status of Women ECOSOC/E/CN.6/498 of 2 January 1968.

77. But this table is deceptive, because it hides important information on the content of programmes. The stricter definition of vocational training as intended "to equip a person with skills for some economic return either in the wage sector of the economy or through own-account or family production and services" ^{1/} is not totally applicable to these data. This fact provides a more stark assessment of the situation than is shown in the table. The "vocational" courses offered to girls and women in these institutions (Table 10) are most often in "feminine fields" - sewing, housecrafts, child-care, embroidery - which frequently have high rates of drop-out and are seldom utilizable on the labour market. ^{2/}

^{1/} Our definition.

^{2/} Comparative Study on Access of Girls and Women to Technical and Vocational Education (ED/MD/3, UNESCO, Paris, 20 December 1968) page 89. This is a highly useful document although it admits to being preliminary and limits itself to vocational training for young women (maximum age 30). The ECA Country Studies, now in final stages of preparation, will give more complete data.

78. Factual information on employment of girls trained in these fields is becoming available. For example, an Ivory Coast study of 81 respondent recipients of the Certificat d'aptitudes professionnelles in childcare showed one-fourth unemployed, 23 per cent continuing studies, one-fourth having become teachers and the remainder working in other sectors of the public service. Of 48 respondents holding the CAP in dressmaking, 23,5 per cent have no employment, 19 per cent are continuing studies, 24 per cent are teaching and the remainder working either in the private sector or in other sectors of the public service. 1/ A study of a secondary school in Uganda which has adopted triple stream education - academic, commercial and home economics - notes that "academic girls seem to have more trouble getting jobs than commercial girls ... Home Economics girls seldom get jobs but are well paid when they do". 2/

79. While more research is needed, experience strongly indicates that the Ivory Coast and Uganda studies are typical of employment patterns following "vocational" training in fields most commonly offered to girls and women in Africa, and that there may be a failure "to distinguish clearly between home economics training for the home and family and vocational training for gainful economic activity". 3/

80. This situation is also changing, but far more slowly than that of formal education. The Arab Republic of Egypt, for example, has increased its enrolment of girls in agricultural colleges by 400 per cent in a decade; by 1970, one of every six students was female. In Tunisia, one of every four students in lower secondary agricultural education was a girl in 1968. 4/ Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Sierra Leone now offer agriculture extension training on the certificate level for women. In 1972, 400 Kenya women received co-operative training, through a special series of seminars.

1/ Ibid., page 85.

2/ David R. Evans and Gordon Schimmel, The Impact of a Diversified Educational Programme on Career Goals; Tororo Girls School in the Context of Girls Education in Uganda, University of Massachusetts, 1970.

3/ Ada Bailor, Address to the Rabat Conference.

4/ Employment and Vocational Training for Women in the Arab Countries, ILO, 1969.

81. But it remains true that most training for women, in most countries, is in fields related almost exclusively to their home responsibilities. Such training is essential to some aspects of raising family levels of living, but it is not enough. As the delegates to the Rabat Regional Conference said: "while stressing the importance of training girls and women for better home and family life, there is a parallel necessity for vocational training, for engagement in gainful economic activities". 1/ Rabat Recommendation No.5 states: "that equal access to vocational training and retraining at all levels by both sexes should be the goal and should lead to achieving their full participation in the economic and social life of the country, according special consideration to appropriate agricultural technology".

82. Women may be too exhausted to care enough about better cooking, and they may have precious little money to budget: "There is a profound contradiction between the woman's condition as the chief agricultural producer and the rudimentary nature, sometimes the non-existence of technical and co-operative means designated more specifically for them. The agricultural extension service is almost totally directed to export crops and thus to men. Rural activities programmes for women are oriented more towards their functions as mothers and wives than as agricultural producers. In these conditions it is perfectly obvious why there are growing frustrations on the part of women about their status and participation." 2/

83. The contradiction is profound indeed. Women have a clear need for incomes, but the major rewards of the monetary economy seem to be reserved for men, as do most of the opportunities for the training and technical support which would increase their economic productivity. Hope lies in part with the increased enrolment of girls in formal education, and its eventual impact on women's chances for employment, and in part with the gradual awakening of planners, aid-givers, and women themselves to the fact of women's lag in participation in the modern sectors.

1/ Report of the Regional Conference on Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and Women in African Countries, Rabat, 1971, pages 15-16.

2/ Rural Co-operatives and Planned Change in Africa, UNRISD, Geneva, 1970.

CHAPTER IV

The consequences and causes of neglect

84. The present situation of women makes little sense, either from the pragmatic or from the humanistic approaches to development. It fails to direct all of Africa's human resources toward the goals of the Second Development Decade, because it leaves so many women outside the possibility of sharing in the specialization of roles which is identified as an indicator of development, and the chance of supporting themselves and their children, when such is necessary.

Some consequences which no planner would choose

85. The current trends, estimated from the facts given in this paper, appear to be leading to some consequences which no planner would choose. In summary:

- (1) Economic productivity is depressed: Two-thirds of agricultural labour in the region is given by women, yet their means of production, processing, and distribution often remain primitive, due to their lack of training, extension services and opportunities for credit and co-operative activity. This situation must hold down production, yet it is often perpetuated by curiously unrealistic planning. Most women bear their burdens in silence, and their potential productivity remains an unknown factor for development.
- (2) One-half of the available labour force may be driven out of economic production: The introduction of innovations such as mechanized farming eliminates labour - intensive production, leaving persons who formerly participated economically without productive work, unless alternative activities are found. Vast numbers of these people are women, who are not being absorbed into the wage labour force, in the modern sectors of the economy. As stated by a Consultant to the International Monetary Fund: "Economies that are still 'pulling themselves up by their bootstraps', and families that are living in sub-standard conditions simply cannot afford to let productive members of the labour force be withdrawn or forced out ... It is small profit for a developing economy if the gains made in male productivity are neutralized by losses in the productivity of females." ^{1/}

^{1/} M. de Vries, Finance and Development, No. 4, 1971.

- (3) The rural - urban imbalance is exacerbated, at a time when agricultural production is the primary emphasis of African Governments: The flow of young men to towns deprives the countryside of strong and often literate manpower and leaves women in unmanageable situations, overwhelmed by work in the fields and at home. And, worst of all, these women have little opportunity for training or other support, to increase their productivity. This failure to compensate for the rural-urban exodus comes at a time when "agriculture is the largest industry in most African countries and therefore national rates of growth and development are determined by it more than by any other factor ... A priority development goal ... is to transform and modernize the rural sector through appropriate measures for improving the output of agriculture." 1/
- (4) The social goals of development may be retarded: The goals of the Second Development Decade emphasize economic welfare, or higher levels of living, over the rather bare economic objectives of an increased GNP which characterized the First Decade. Our examination of the heavy tasks of women, their working conditions, the often miserly returns on their labours, and the paucity of opportunities for relevant training and other assistance make the hopes for the improvement of the quality of life move further from reach. The contradictions of the present situation were illustrated by the Executive Secretary of ECA: "There is no point in teaching women to embroider pillows with 'sweet dreams' when the malaria mosquitoes won't let our people sleep." 2/ One of the most conspicuous and serious social effects of overlooking women's interests is that part of the coming generation is neglected. Children of female-headed households or of polygamous marriages suffer when their mothers cannot find wage employment, or are paid at low income levels. Children whose mothers' agricultural tasks are enlarged as a result of the fragmentation of land holdings, or increase of lands under cultivation, or migration of their husbands to towns may be deprived of the basic economic and psychological necessities. They may never get to school, and their mothers may be too exhausted to give them proper care.

1/ Africa's Strategy for Development in the 1970's, UNECA, February 1971.

2/ Robert K.A. Gardiner, Executive Secretary, UNECA, addressing the ECA/FAO/SIDA Seminar on Home Economics Development Planning, Addis Ababa, March 1972.

- (5) Opportunities for development are missed: A case study from Uganda illustrates the point that encouragement of women's activity may have both economic and social effects:

Failure had been the result of previous attempts to form a Consumer Co-operative Society in Acholi, Western Uganda: financial difficulties caused the project to collapse. Then the wife of a civil servant in the area got an idea: a woman's co-operative society. Its purposes were many: to eliminate the greedy middle-man, and thus to save poor farmers from starvation in bad harvest years; to keep within the district the returns from sales of beans, peas, millet, cassava and cotton, and trade of sugar and oil; and to allow women to share the profits of their agricultural labours (formerly, marketing was the man's job, and even though women contributed very much of the labour, the men kept the profits). This Consumer's Co-operative Society is, this year, celebrating its first birthday, and, beyond its existing agreements with the Produce Marketing Board to buy, store and resell produce to members (and to non-members, at a higher price) and to trade in cash crops and staples, the Society is negotiating to purchase two acres of land for poultry farming. It has plans for breeding dairy cattle, for vegetable farming, for commercial production of maize, and establishment of a bakery. Husbands are beginning to pay the membership fees for their wives, to whom passbooks are issued. A question often asked by husbands is: "What if I divorce my wife? Who gets the passbook?" To allay their fears, but also as an indirect method of stabilizing family life, the local chiefs have answered: "When your divorce case comes before us, we must know why you are divorcing your wife. The non-guilty partner will be given the passbook". The Society sees in this procedure an indirect way to discourage polygamy, and works closely with the local Family Planning Officer to explain the benefits of having one wife and of adequate spacing of children, who can all be sent to school through the Society's savings. A founding member of the Society has observed: "Women are sincere and arduous with money. You can always trust a woman with money, she won't run away with it; chances are that she will double any amount entrusted to her. Husbands sometimes drink away one-fourth of the money, leaving very little for the family". ^{1/}

^{1/} Isis Ragheb Southall, Makerere University, 1972.

The underlying cause: the persistence of attitudes

86. Factual statements projecting the possible consequences of present trends, such as those given above, may not be sufficient to effect the changes necessary to provoke planning for the full use of women as human resources for development. Attitudes - of both men and women, of nationals and expatriates - nourish the persistence of established and imported patterns, whether or not these are based on realities. And attitudes are hard to change.

87. The attitudes of men towards women, and of women towards their own role derive from both historical and contemporary influences, as has been discussed elsewhere by ECA. ^{1/} They arise from the necessary division of labour in a subsistence society, and are often perpetuated through evolved beliefs. They are also introduced by foreigners such as missionaries, traders and businessmen who bring subtle values from their own cultures. And, as is clear from our recording of the low rate of participation of women in modern sector employment, attitudes adhere to the scientific and technological innovations and the newly introduced systems of education and training.

88. Many of the prevailing attitudes of both sexes create barriers to realistic planning. Consequently, planners may overlook or misjudge women's work. Some of the more conspicuous of these attitudes are:

- (1) The attitude that productive tasks in subsistence sectors cannot be valued: It is increasingly recognized that there ought to be a means of placing values on subsistence labour and production, where all activities are directed toward survival, and a decent human life. Should subsistence labour be valued, the nature and enormity of women's work will necessarily be revealed and recognized - for example, provision of water and fuel, food production and processing, and distribution of food and goods.
- (2) The attitude that the active labour force for development is predominantly male: Despite the realities of women's labours in the traditional sectors, the extraordinary oversight of failing to list women as "economically active" persists in some African countries. This gives a false base to planning for employment. In Algeria, for example, 109,453 women, and 2,455,000 men are recorded as economically active. In Ethiopia 3.3 per cent of females and 89.9 per cent

^{1/} "women: the neglected human resources for national development" in the Canadian Journal of African Studies, 1972, UNECA, Women's Programme.

of males are identified as the active population in rural areas, although the existing documentation on the division of rural labour totally contradicts this estimate. ^{1/} Fortunately, many countries have already corrected this error, but it still persists in others.

- (3) The attitude that "employment of women will take jobs away from men": Such an assertion begs the question, for two reasons. First, there are the facts of women's present economic contributions and their need for incomes, often as household heads, as described earlier. Second, the question of employment in the Africa region is not to any great extent a question of wage jobs. For some generations only a relatively small proportion of persons will find employment in the slowly growing wage sectors of most countries. Therefore, perhaps up to 80 per cent of the people will need to generate their livelihoods either through self or co-operative employment, or through the informal sectors of employment, including very small industries, businesses and services. And it is in these areas that women have been and are heavily employed. The question thus becomes one of improvement of the output of productive labours of all persons.
- (4) The attitude that African women's work has traditionally been limited to the home: Both men and women are heard to say that "women's work is in the home", even though, as shown in the body of this paper, the statement is absurdly unrealistic for Africa. Women have always worked both inside and outside their homes. The persistence of this attitude is shown by the nature of most training programmes for women, which concentrate on the "feminine fields" such as sewing and embroidery, and thus suggest that these are the only areas of work for women. An irony here is that weaving, tailoring and sewing are often masculine tasks in the region; the men learn their trades through apprenticeships.
- (5) The attitude that relieving the burdens of women will leave them idle: Provision of a water supply will relieve women of perhaps a two-hour walk at dawn, for the day's water. Water portage, besides being exhausting, is an uneconomic activity. A two-hour walk by 100 women means 200 hours of labour which might be put to activities with more returns. An analogy is use of a primitive plow, which does not turn the soil properly, and is hard to pull, and contributes to low yields. The labour input-output ratio is low.

^{1/} Towards Full Employment in Ethiopia: The Necessary Role of Women, UNECA, 1972.

With water nearby, women might spend the newly available hours working in agriculture, learning new methods of processing food, or studying nutrition, child-care or literacy, or participating in self-help activities, such as building health centres, roads and so forth, which improve production and raise community levels of living. This is in addition to the fact that a local water supply makes numerous other activities possible - irrigation of crops, chicken-raising, coffee-cleaning, etc.; and women may become involved in these. What should be kept in mind when introducing labour-saving technology is its objective of allowing time for more profitable activities, and the consequent need to introduce these alternatives.

89. These are but a few of the attitudes which blur the vision of women's actual work for development, and consequently hinder achievement of a realistic assessment of the potential consequences of the continuation of present trends. We have noted possible effects of allowing the present situations to be perpetuated: economic productivity is depressed, one-half of the labour force may be driven out of economic production, the rural-urban imbalance is exacerbated, the social goals of development may be retarded, and opportunities for development are missed. But there are promises of new perspectives on women's role.

CHAPTER V

Policy and Action Implications

90. Women themselves, individually and through voluntary organizations, are working to provide for their needs, and modernize their work for development. Following discussion of women's own initiatives, in conclusion to this paper, there are proposed some further policies and strategies drawn from the recommendations of conferences of African women and from studies and experience of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

91. A large proportion of the self-help labour in Africa is provided by women. In parts of Zaire, it is the women who give the family service for self-help road building, one day each week. In Gabon, women are constructing a local airport, entirely by hand. In Lesotho, women are estimated to build 90 per cent of the roads, under the Food-for-Work Programme. In Kenya, women are responsible for about 80 per cent of the self-help labour; they have established 5,000 rural nursery centres, among numerous other activities.

92. Women join with men, or band together themselves for purposes of self-help. All countries in Africa have at least one women's organization, and in most countries, there is a proliferation of them. These groups vary from the small rural mutual aid society to supply quick services or money for weddings and funerals, to the national association with branches throughout the country, which is often attached to the ruling political party or to a Government Ministry. Churches have active women's clubs, and youth clubs are numerous. Additionally, there are the national branches of international organizations such as the YWCA, Girls Guides, Scouts, Zonta, University Women, Soroptimists and Consumer Societies. These groups establish literacy and other adult education programmes, organize and market handicrafts, provide pre-school creches and nursery centres, collect money for scholarships for girls, propose legislation (or object to it, as the case may be) to improve the legal status of women, organize self-help construction, and so forth. Sometimes they affiliate with a national council of social services, if such exists, or with a national council of women's organizations, or both.

93. In the rural areas, women have traditionally joined forces for mutual assistance. Information groups evolved so that work might be undertaken in small groups, rather than in isolation. Reciprocal service is the essential base of these organizations, and no written rules exist. The groups may have five to ten members, and have the same membership for only a season. Similar associations plan social activities. The evolution of these groups in modern times has led to formation of co-operative activities, such as the famous corn mill societies of Cameroon, which have added a higher degree of organization, credit, and business rules to traditional practices. 1/

94. In areas where marketing has been the women's business, strong associations of women have grown up, so that women may obtain cash on credit without the heavy interest charged privately. Some organizations also regulate trading practices, to stabilize prices and discourage extreme competition; ostracism and perhaps loss of the market stall are readily available punishments for offenders. These market societies may buy in bulk for their members. In Southern Nigeria, women have associated for production, and an outstanding example of this activity is a Women's Union, with 80,000 members, which operates a weaving corporation, subsidizes a maternity and child welfare clinic, and conducts literacy classes. Voluntary associations also exist for the organization and protection of prostitutes. 2/

1/ Women and Rural Institutions, UNECA, 1972.

2/ For a more thorough picture of voluntary associations, see Kenneth Little, West African Urbanization (Cambridge University Press, 1966), and his forthcoming book on African Women in Towns.

95. Women participate in political parties, they are elected to local offices and to Parliaments, and they are often credited for their contributions to the struggles for liberation of their countries. They have greater or lesser strength as members of trade unions, the weakness of their participation in wage employment naturally affects their membership in industrial unions. The associations of market women in West Africa are outstanding for wielding political clout from an economic base.

96. But despite this diversity of associations, women's participation with men, and in their own organizations, does not on the whole carry the strength of that of men. An important reason for this is the lack of self-assurance, which we noted when discussing attitudes, and which is partly due to women's lag behind men, in formal and non-formal education, training and other access to the tools of modernization. For example, women sometimes hesitate to join co-operatives together with men, for fear of being cheated, because of their ignorance of the workings of the organizations (at times, also, women are not allowed to join). Another reason is that women, particularly in the traditional sectors, are so heavily taxed physically and psychologically that they have little time or energy to put to changing their situations.

97. Women's organizations have very substantial accomplishments on their records, and they are potential vehicles of greater change. But in many cases they have appropriate objectives and goodwill, without the necessary specialized skills. Their increased effectiveness is likely to depend on the policies of Governments, on involvement of highly trained younger women in their activities, on use of technical resources available outside the organizations, and in general, on a rising national level of consciousness of women's work for development.

Policies and strategies for change

98. The following list of strategies for change, which the ECA Women's Programme has identified from recommendations of regional conferences of women, discussions with Governments, and its own research and experience, is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. As noted in the introduction to this article, action programmes must suit national and local cultures and circumstances. The following four areas for concentration are taken from the ECA Five-Year Programme for Women, 1972-1976, with its revisions. ECA views the needs of women from its Africa regional perspective, so concentrates on research and actions which are relevant to many countries, albeit with local adjustments. Thus the four areas are: (1) national machinery, inevitably needed to assure the consideration of women in planning for development; (2) assembling of information and original research needed to form factual bases for action; (3) training and action programmes; and (4) use of the mass media to heighten consciousness of what women are doing for their countries' development.

(1) National machinery to promote and influence Governmental and voluntary actions in the integration of girls and women within the context of national development: 1/

Governments' commitment to involve women together with men in the tasks and rewards of development demands the creation of national machineries to implement the policies. This may be achieved through the formation of national commissions on the role of women in development, and technical women's bureaux in Government ministries to backstop the commissions. Since African Governments plan their economies through national machinery, the commissions and bureaux can appropriately be integral parts of that machinery.

National commissions consist of leading men and women with experience in such fields as government service, policy-making, development planning, employment, social development, education and training and other aspects of public life; representation of rural area women should be guaranteed. The functions of these commissions include:

- (a) the examination and evaluation of the present contribution of women to the various sectors of development in the light of national needs and priorities;
- (b) the study of specific areas where women's participation should be initiated or strengthened;
- (c) the development and promotion of action programmes and legislation to integrate women in all sectors of national development;
- (d) assistance to governments in formulating requests for international technical assistance available through the United Nations system and bilateral organizations; and
- (e) working in partnership with government authorities at all levels and in close co-operation with non-governmental agencies, especially women's organizations.

1/ The substance of this section is taken from the Special Recommendation of the Rabat Conference, op.cit.

In order to assure the effectiveness of the national commissions, Governments should consider setting up permanent secretariats or technical women's bureaux within an appropriate Ministry - for example - the Ministry of Development Planning.

(2) Information and research

Assembling of information in a meaningful way and undertaking original research are both necessary, to devise a factual base on which to plan projects and programmes. Present research on women is hidden in diverse places - books, articles, dissertations, research papers and governmental publications which touch on the subject. But there are great gaps in some areas, in particular those which are needed to assess the impact of innovations on women's role. The ECA Five-Year Programme on Pre-vocational and Vocational Training of Girls and Women, 1972 - 1976, lists numerous research priorities, including:

- (a) In rural life: Comparative studies of the impact of innovations on the labours and productivity of rural women, directed to specific areas, such as: (i) the possibility of creating or providing labour-saving technologies to increase productivity and decrease labours - for grinding, winnowing, weeding, water-portage, storage, food preservation, transport to markets, etc.; (ii) potential markets for small-scale industries, for food preservation, handicrafts, etc.; (iii) land use and consolidation of holdings; (iv) availability of small loans, and (v) transformation of traditional associations for modern activities;
- (b) In commerce: Availability and types of training to modernize the work of traditional market women (co-operative and loan societies, access to credit, bookkeeping methods, assessment of market fluctuations, etc.); availability and types of training for the young educated women, for entrepreneurship;
- (c) Small-scale industries, including service industries: Survey of needs and markets in the informal sector of employment, for hotel-keeping, chicken raising, bee-keeping, upholstery, etc.;

- (d) Wage employment: Extent of wage employment possibilities for women; data on absenteeism, availability and use of maternity leaves, frequency of job changes, level of responsibility, opportunity for promotion, equal pay for equal work, etc.; attitudes of employers, supervisors, fellow workers and women themselves toward women workers and supervisors; assessment of the value of "protective" and other legislation; services for working mothers; responsibility of working women for support of self, children, others;
 - (e) Evaluation of current training programmes for women: Follow-up of trainees to see if they have jobs; assessment of methods of training; proposals for income-oriented training programmes,
 - (f) Tracer studies of school-leaver girls: To describe and assess the situation of school-leaver girls in both rural and urban areas: their migration, residence, means of support, continuing education, use of achieved education, and so forth. To evaluate existing vocational training programmes for school leaver girls from the perspective of their relevance to preparation for participation in national development.
 - (g) Review of legislation on marriage and inheritance;
 - (h) Review of literacy programme materials, including functional literacy, to determine their relevance to women's actual lives;
 - (i) Examination and analysis of family planning programmes, to assess their relevance to women's real needs, e.g. their incorporation with programmes to raise women's earning capacities, lessen their labours, improve health and thus increase the chances of successful pregnancies and survival of infants and children.
- (3) Training and action programmes: In policy, women should be included with men in all training and services relevant to their traditional activities, and modern potential. At times, however, special programmes for women may be called for.

Training and action programmes should (i) be carefully planned, with attention to markets for labour and/or goods, and (ii) lead to incomes, in most cases. The training for

co-operatives held in 1972 in Kenya is a good example of a clear and felt need which was met; earlier pilot training programmes under the auspices of the International Co-operative Alliance had met with enthusiastic response. Another example is the ILO/UNDP project in Swaziland, the Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO) and its related organizations, which, among other activities, train women who are already skilled in basketry, for mass production of car seats. Poultry and small-animal raising projects have met with success in numerous countries. The YWCA in Ghana has trained school-leaver girls to set up catering services for school and business lunches.

Other possibilities for projects and training include those mentioned under research, for the research could form a preface to or a part of the programmes. For example:

- (a) Pilot rural development projects, preferably to be incorporated into existing integrated rural development schemes, for labour-saving technology, small-scale processing industries, improved marketing, teaching about co-operatives, etc.
- (b) Training courses for trainers, such as ECA's Itinerant Training for Trainers in Home Economics - (East and Southern Africa, 1973; francophone and anglophone West and Central Africa, 1974) - a course intended to raise the consciousness of home economists, to an awareness of women's need for training and assistance in agriculture, co-operatives, etc.
- (c) Courses for national planners, on how to integrate women into national development planning. (This was proposed by the UN Expert Group Meeting on Women in Development, June 1972, under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Lewis).
- (d) Internships for college men and women, perhaps during the holidays preceding their final year, on qualitative and quantitative data and its analysis, as bases for planning for women's integration in development.
- (e) Training courses for women leaders, on data, analysis and methods of integrating women in all sectors of the economy. These would preferably be held on the national level.

(f) Projects for handicraft and small businesses: ECA/ILO and World Y.W.C.A have scheduled a workshop on women's participation in handicraft and other small industries, for 1974. It has been pointed out in the body of this text that women most often retain their incomes from their own produce, including handicrafts. Also, handicrafts may be produced at home, during free hours.

(4) The mass media

Until the level of consciousness of women's present enormous work for development in the region is raised, there can be little expectation of any major efforts to examine the profound contradictions which exist. Current attitudes will prevail, and chances to double the productivity and halve the labours of women may be missed. The method of raising consciousness is simply to focus attention on women's tasks, and the needs of women and children in the context of national development. What are women doing in agriculture, self help, commerce, child care? And how can they do it with higher productivity, for the sake of development? Towards this end, is proposed:

- series of professionally-planned radio broadcasts, which may be adapted to practical situations in the various countries of the Africa region, and to donor countries abroad;
- newsletters ^{1/} to exchange experiences among women and their organizations, including small stories of what women are doing, what programmes are especially valuable, etc.;
- film series on women in all their activities, at all levels, to be circulated in Africa and abroad.

^{1/} Publication of African Women by ECA, commenced in January, 1974.