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**Twelfth Meeting of the Africa Regional
Coordinating Committee for the Integration of
Women in Development (ARCC)**

23 - 25 April 1991

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Note on

- **Progress made in the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on
Participatory Development:
the Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s**

- **The implementation of Guidelines for the Incorporation of Women's Concerns in
National Development Plans by
National, Subregional and Regional Mechanisms**

Progress in Implementation of the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: the Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s

1. The eleventh meeting of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in development ARCC, which was held in Tripoli 6 - 8 May 1990, discussed at length measures for the implementation of the Abuja Declaration. The Declaration, it may be recalled, was adopted by the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development and on the implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of women held in Abuja, Nigeria 6 - 10 November 1989. The sixteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in its Resolution 684 (XXV) endorsed the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the conference as set forth in the Abuja declaration and in Operative Paragraph 5.

"Urges member states to fully implement the recommendations of the Abuja Declaration by integrating women as an essential part of their recovery and long-term development programme."

As a follow-up to this resolution the ECA circulated copies of the Abuja Declaration to all member states of ECA and the Executive Secretary in his communication dated 5 June 1990, in line with the recommendations of the Eleventh meeting of ARCC, suggested to member states that in addition to actions suggested at national level in the declaration, the following additional mechanisms would facilitate the implementation of the Declaration:

- (a) Wide-dissemination of the declaration, utilizing all communication media for its publicity and to the extent possible translation of the declaration in national languages;
- (b) National machineries or focal points for women in development to work out strategic plans for the implementation of the targets given in the Declaration. For instance, if the target in education is to achieve a 40% enrolment of girls at university level by the year 2000 -- what steps need to be taken now, at primary and secondary levels? The same applies to the target of 20% female enrolment at university level in science and technology and so on;
- (c) Organize national workshops to discuss the content and implementation of the declaration;
- (d) An individual or an organizational unit to be entrusted to study and to align the provisions

of the Declaration to existing policies and measures; this same unit would monitor the implementation of the Declaration and provide periodic reports on progress made to all concerned;

2. It may be recalled that the Abuja Declaration discusses progress made since the Arusha Conference in 1984, gives an overall picture of the situation of African women and in chapter (iv), "Facing the 1990s" defines targets to be achieved in various sectors by the year 2000. The Roles to be played by national, regional and international organizations in achieving these objectives and targets are spelt out.

The Declaration is to be reviewed and assessed fully during the fifth Regional Conference on Women in Development scheduled for in 1994. However, in an effort to disseminate and monitor progress being made in the implementation of the Declaration the ECA, in the course of its missions to Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda gathered useful information on the work being done by national machineries concerned with women's advancement to promote the Declaration. The activities undertaken by these countries include (a) national workshops to sensitize women on the provisions of the Declaration (b) Translation of the Declaration in local languages (c) Commentaries and references to the declaration through the media. In addition, staff members of the ECA during their participation in international and regional meetings have seized the occasion to publicize the Declaration and disseminate its contents.

3. As one year has already passed since the adoption of the document, all concerned should intensify their efforts to realize the targets set in the Declaration which will have an important bearing on the advancement of African women.

Implementation of Guidelines for the Incorporation of Women's Concerns in National Development Plans by National, Subregional and regional machineries

4. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985) makes the following assertions concerning women and development planning:

"The incorporation of women's issues in all areas and sections and at the local national, regional and international levels should be institutionalized. To this end, appropriate machinery should be established or strengthened and further legislative action taken. Sectoral Policies and plans should be developed, and effective participation of women in development should be integrated both in those plans and in the formulation and implementation of mainstream programmes and projects and should not be confined solely to statement of interest with the plans or to small-scale transitory projects relating to women."

This provision clearly indicates the centrality of women in development programmes as opposed to placing them in the peripheries of development strategies. This view has been endorsed by the UN General Assembly resolution 42/178 (1987) which "urges governments ... to include measures for the involvement of women, both as agents and as beneficiaries, in their national development plans, and to review the impact on women of development policies and programmes".

5. Why this emphasis on Development Planning? It has been said that human needs are unlimited while the means to satisfy those needs are limited. Hence, the necessity to plan carefully by governments so that scarce resources at their disposal yield maximum benefit to the community. Though planning varies from country to country "accelerated economic growth, and structural changes are thus the two main factors expressed or implied aims of development planning". It is a well known fact that, roughly, two types of planning are currently in use: (a) in the developed countries of Western Europe and America the allocation of both material and human resources to the needed uses are made through economic systems that are based on market mechanisms. This is the laissez-faire theory of economic policy which advocates non-interference by the state in the affairs of the national economy. (b) to most countries of Africa, however, "material resources and the availabilities of infrastructure as the basis of further industrialization are on a very low level of development. In this respect the application and pulling of such resources together, for the efficient and rapid transformation of African societies to modern stage of development requires the responsibilities of national government through the application of planning mechanisms on the basis of known economic facts"

This latter view is widely held in the region as a means of achieving rapid development. In any case there is a general consensus that areas of development that should not be left to the private sector but should be subject to public instrument are, such infrastructural sectors including

transport and communication, power, education, health, heavy industries as well as consumer industries. The question is how far these state allocations to these sectors in development planning are gender-responsive, taking into account the needs as well as the contribution of women.

6. Available information indicates that the treatment of women in development planning has been to view them (a) as recipients and passive actors in decisions that affect national priorities and allocation of resources (b) as many national plans are drafted on a sectoral or project basis, the tendency has been to allocate small welfare type of projects in these sectors for women. (c) On the other hand during the implementation of plans, when large projects are formulated, women are often again excluded because these prospects are strictly based on cost-benefit analysis and efficiency characteristics; prospects with social goals and priorities whose benefit may not be immediately apparent and could benefit women enormously are often neglected. Thus the current sectoral approach to women in development planning is not the complete answer to the problem. It has been said that "Since the concerns of women transcends many of these sectors it is not an exaggeration to say that women have been excluded from the development process in a political and technical sense: they have not participated in the decisions that affect both sexes." This is the basis for the concern of gender and development planning in ECA.

7. In November 21-24, 1988 the ECA organized an Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on Guidelines for the Incorporation of Women's Concerns in National Development Plans in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The group reviewed in depth (a) the state of National Development Plans in Africa (b) data problems in development planning specially due to growth of the informal sector where women predominate (d) the proposed ECA guideline on Developing Planning and Women which was in the course of being published.

8. In 1990 and early 1991 the ECA published and distributed the final version entitled "Guidelines for the incorporation of women's concerns in National Development Plans" to all member states, in particular to national machineries concerned with the advancement of women and to ministries of planning, commissions of African states. The objective of the guideline is to sensitize policy makers of the need to formulate gender-responsive planning so that the effective utilization of women's role, and the resources they represent contribute to the development and transformation of African societies. The six chapters in the guideline include a discussion on: why

and how to integrate women in development planning; methodological issues; selected planning models of integrating women's issues in development planning. A useful glossary of technical terms is also part of the Guideline.

This note is prepared to invite the comments and preliminary views of ARCC members on the utilization of the Guideline, as ECA will subsequently distribute a formal questionnaire to member states on the extent the guideline has been used in planning exercises in the Africa region.