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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-eighth session of the Commission/
nineteenth meeting of the Conference of
Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
3-6 May 1993

**REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE
AFRICA REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE
INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
19-21 April 1993

ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The African Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) held its fourteenth (14th) annual meeting at the Headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 19 to 21 April 1993.
2. The meeting was well attended with almost full representation from twelve (12), of the fifteen (15) member States of ARCC as follows: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tunisia, Uganda, Zaire and Zambia. Other non-ARCC member States who participated as observers were: Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The African National Congress (ANC) of the Republic of South Africa was, for the first time, represented at the meeting by three observers.
3. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO) attended as ex-officio members of ARCC, while the African Development Bank (ADB) and the League of Arab States, as regional organizations, also attended as observers.
4. Representing the UN family were the following UN agencies: Habitat, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNHCR, WHO and the World Bank.
5. The following non-governmental organizations also participated in the meeting, namely: the African Women Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), BAHAI International Community, Ethiopian Women Entrepreneurs Association (EWEA), Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices affecting Women (IAC), International Federation of Business and Professional Women, and Somalia Aid and Development (SOMAID North).
6. The full list of participants is attached to this report as Annex 2.

OPENING CEREMONY (Agenda item 1)

7. The President of ARCC (Madam Aishatu Ali Ismail, Nigeria) presided over the opening session extending a welcome to all ARCC members, other participants and observers attending the 14th meeting of ARCC. She then invited the Minister-in-charge of Women's Affairs, in the Prime

Minister's Office of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (Madam Tadelech Haile Mickael) to officially open the meeting.

8. In her opening address, the Minister noted that improving the lives of African women in general, as well as that of Ethiopian women in particular, was a most critical issue for the African continent. Women have been organizing for action on a variety of fronts for centuries and there has been a noticeable increase in women's initiatives and projects in recent years. It was thus exciting that African women were also engaging in dialogue on specific issues of their own, using networks such as ARCC to advance their cause. However, what is required is to move more into action, paying particular attention to rural women, and giving special attention to government programmes and projects aimed at the full integration of rural women in development. The rural women of Africa constitute the greatest majority of the population engaged in agriculture. As more and more flee the countryside for jobs in the cities, many of these women have to assume responsibilities as heads of households.

9. Yet these women are denied access and control of the land they till, and other resources that the society values. The Minister highlighted present discriminatory attitudes and practices which are deeply entrenched and which block the rural women's legitimate rights to land, health-care, education, and voice in their community and in government. Pointing to current efforts by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia to come out with a specific policy on women to enhance their participation in development, the Minister urged African governments to adjust their development strategies so as to help the millions of poor rural women in Africa.

10. After acknowledging the role of ARCC in promoting regional networking among African women for their advancement, the Minister formally declared the 14th meeting of ARCC open.

11. The Officer-in-Charge of the Commission (Mr. Ali B. Tall), was then invited by the ARCC President to deliver the official statement of the ECA Executive Secretary, who was away from Ethiopia on other duties. The statement of Mr. Layashi Yaker, Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the ECA touched on several key issues needing the close attention of ARCC.

12. The statement gave a brief review and appraisal of the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on participatory development: the role of women in Africa in the 1990s. The overview revealed that the situation of women has deteriorated, especially in most countries of Africa where economic stagnation or negative growth, continued population increase, the growing burden of debt and its servicing have constrained opportunities for women to improve their conditions. In the spheres of employment, health, access to productive resources, decision-making, science and technology, the status of women has even regressed. "Today, the majority of the poor, both in rural and urban communities, are women...", the statement continued.

13. While not much has been achieved in the area of peace to promote the role of women in international cooperation and the strengthening of peace, some gains appeared to have been made with regard to the health of women even though fertility remained high. The Executive Secretary therefore urged ARCC to consider programmes that could address women's health throughout their life cycles, and to promote appropriate programmes in nutrition and family planning, as well as those against sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and the like.

14. On the agenda of the ARCC meeting itself, the Executive Secretary's statement urged ARCC to devote as much time as possible to seriously consider the agenda for the forthcoming Fifth (5th) African Regional Conference (1994), preparatory to the World Conference on Women (1995). He requested ARCC to critically examine the agenda and regional preparations with a view to recommending them to the ECA Conference of Ministers for endorsement. He further urged ARCC members, as representatives both of their countries and their sub-regions, to ensure that the recommendations and resolutions passed by ARCC and the ECA Conference of Ministers regarding the regional preparatory activities for Africa's conference are widely disseminated throughout the sub-regions in order to stimulate sensitization and effective preparations in member States.

15. Regarding the preparation of national reports for the regional and global conferences, he reminded participants of the necessity to ensure that the reports would be practical-oriented and analytical with supporting statistics and relevant data. The Executive Secretary's statement concluded with an invitation to ARCC participants to attend the forthcoming meetings of the ECA Conference of Ministers whose theme, "Taking Africa into the twenty-first century: implementation

of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and Agenda 21" would be of much significant concern to women.

16. Following upon the delivery of the Executive Secretary's statement, the ARCC President thanked both the Ethiopian Minister-in-charge of Women's Affairs for her opening address and the representative of the Executive Secretary for the delivery of the official statement. She assured them that the concerns expressed by them will be held foremost in the deliberations of ARCC during the next three days. She further expressed appreciation for the support demonstrated and hoped that the same will be forthcoming to back up the preparations for both the regional and global conferences on women in 1994 and 1995, respectively.

ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 2)

17. Chairing this 14th meeting of ARCC, the President tabled for amendment and for adoption, the provisional agenda and work programme. Regarding the programme of work, the delegate of Rwanda requested for the working times for the morning and afternoon sessions to be clearly indicated. The meeting therefore adopted the following working hours:

Morning session - 9 - 1 p.m.

Afternoon session - 3 - 5:30 p.m.

The agenda (below) and the work programme (with the amendment to the working hours) were then adopted:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report on the Activities of the ECA Women in Development Programme during the period April 1992 to April 1993
4. Report on the meetings of : The Board of Trustees of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of

Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

5. Progress report on the implementation of the Abuja Declaration
6. Progress report on the establishment of the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs and the African Bank for Women
7. Note on the Preparations for the Fifth Regional Conference on Women (Dakar, 1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)
8. Report on Violence against women in Africa
9. Progress report on the ATRCW Communication network project: consideration of strategies for improving the flow of information on gender issues in Africa
10. Any other business
11. Adoption of the report.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ECA WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME DURING THE PERIOD APRIL 1992 TO APRIL 1993 (Agenda item 3)

18. Under this agenda item, the representative of ECA gave a general overview of activities conducted towards the implementation of resolutions of the ECA Conference of Ministers, as well as those executed under the ECA work programme. The activities had essentially focussed on increasing women's participation in the formulation of development strategies, improving the skills and opportunities of women, establishing an improved communications network between ATRCW and member States and coordinating activities with other organizations involved in the advancement of women. As part of these activities, advisory services had been rendered, training seminars organized, and research conducted with a view to building up the capabilities of member States to expand their knowledge and resource base.

19. The report also briefly described the projected 1994-1995 work programme on the advancement of women. The forthcoming programme stresses the empowerment of women in the economic sector through promotion of women's entrepreneurship and the securing of better access to resources both in the formal and informal sectors. During the 1994-1995 biennium, priority

would also be accorded to the preparations for the Fifth Regional Conference on Women preparatory to the World Conference on Women in 1995.

20. In the discussions which ensued, participants stressed the need to continue with the training of women for management positions. Clarification was sought on the relations between ECA and national associations of women entrepreneurs. Some participants wondered whether the idea of a Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs was not premature. It was noted that African women entrepreneurs themselves had requested the immediate establishment of the Federation which would help to reinforce their economic and entrepreneurial activities as well as facilitate trade across national borders.

21. Clarifications were also given regarding the conference on women in the peace process which would be organized at the instance of Uganda in August 1993 to review the situation of women in Uganda. Plans had been made to table the conclusions of that conference at the Regional Conference in Dakar, 1994.

REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (INSTRAW) (Agenda item 4, part 1)

22. Under this agenda item, the ECA Secretariat briefly presented a report on the thirteenth (13th) Session of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (working document E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/4) which was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 15-19 February, 1993.

23. The report provided a brief summary of discussions held on issues relating to the implementation of the Institute's work programme for 1992 and to the future functioning of the Institute; the appointment of INSTRAW focal points in some of the countries, including Zimbabwe; activities related to the International Year of the Family (IYF), 1994; and cooperation with regional commissions for the World Conference on Women. With regard to the question of INSTRAW

cooperation with regional commissions, the Board agreed to strengthen collaboration for the implementation of joint programme activities for the coming World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. INSTRAW was in the process of preparing specific proposals on how this collaboration could be elaborated and this would be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee scheduled to meet in June 1993, where ECA would participate on behalf of all the regional commissions. The ARCC meeting took due note of the report which was not discussed in view of the tight time-table of ARCC.

REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (Agenda item 4, part 2)

24. The report on the 37th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was discussed together with other documents related to the preparations for the World Conference on Women, presented under agenda item 7.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABUJA DECLARATION ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFRICA IN THE 1990s - A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE (Agenda item 5)

25. Under this agenda item, the ECA Secretariat presented a progress report on the appraisal and assessment of the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: the role of women in Africa in the 1990s - a Regional Perspective (working document E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/5). The ECA representative informed the meeting that the report was the first review of the overall implementation of the Abuja Declaration and it was intended for presentation to the forthcoming ECA Conference of Ministers in line with its resolution 684 (XXV). She pointed out that the report was based on information and data made available by member States and contained in various reports submitted by member States to the meetings of the ECA Subregional Committees for the Integration of Women in Development, to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and also presented at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Additional information had been obtained during field missions undertaken by the ATRCW.

26. The ECA representative pointed out in particular, that although legal barriers to equality had been removed in most countries, de facto discrimination on the grounds of sex still continued and that further measures were necessary for guaranteeing equal rights for women. Such measures will include increasing women's awareness of their rights and ensuring the effective implementation and enforcement of the progressive legislation adopted in many African countries. The report provided examples of positive and successful measures and actions undertaken at the national level aimed at the eradication of de jure and de facto discrimination of women in the society.

27. The report also briefly analyzed the progress achieved at the national level in such areas as education, science, technology, employment and the position of women in industry, agriculture, informal sector, service sector and environment. In particular, the report pointed out that much of women's agricultural labour is still overlooked while in the industrial sector, the majority of them are concentrated in a narrow range of light industries, electronics, and food processing. At the same time, large numbers of women are engaged in informal sector activities. With regard to women's involvement in environmental problems, the report reviewed some of the national projects initiated by African governments and noted that their success would depend very much on women's awareness and participation in the decision-making process.

28. In the area of peace, the report reviewed the present position of African women in decision-making and governance at different levels and their role in conflict resolution. In particular, the report pointed out that even though the presence of women in parliaments had increased, women were still in the minority in decision-making positions. At the government level, African women constitute only 2.9 per cent of the total number of government officials at the ministerial rank.

29. The report also highlighted the major activities undertaken by ECA to implement the Abuja Declaration. Summarizing, the report focussed on ECA's efforts in promoting the entrepreneurial spirit and activities of African women. Recent efforts directed at developing an information and communication network on gender and development in order to facilitate and improve the flow of information and data at the regional, subregional and national levels were also noted. The report concluded by noting that although much had been done and achieved in raising awareness and improving women's education and employment, women were still being marginalised in the process

of overall development. Much more therefore needed to be done.

30. The meeting took note of the report but did not discuss its contents for lack of adequate time.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND THE AFRICAN BANK FOR WOMEN (DOCUMENT No. E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/6) (agenda item 6)

31. Presenting this agenda item, the representative of ECA referred to resolution 736 (XVII) of the ECA Conference of Ministers which requested member States to promote the establishment of national associations of Business Women and Women Entrepreneurs. That same resolution also requested ECA to facilitate the establishment of the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs and to explore the possibilities of establishing an African Bank for Women. Accordingly, ECA had spared no effort to lay the ground for establishing these two structures which would enable women to play a more significant role in the economies of their respective countries.

32. With regard to the Federation, it was reported that preparations were well advanced towards the holding of an inaugural meeting which would be held in Accra, Ghana, from 1 to 3 June 1993, under the auspices of the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) and the Ghana Women Entrepreneurs Association (GAWE). The First Lady of Ghana will formally inaugurate the Federation whose inauguration is expected to be attended by more than twenty-five (25) national associations. The main issues to be tackled during this inaugural meeting would be the consideration of the conceptual framework for the Federation, review of statutes, internal rules and regulations, as well as the strategies and plan of action for the Federation. As a warm-up to the official inauguration, the Ministry of Trade (Ghana) is planning a debate on the liberalization of intra-African trade and commerce, and the role of women in this process.

33. ARCC members were further informed that official invitations to the inaugural meeting were being prepared for despatch to member States before the end of April 1993. The ECA representative therefore exhorted all participants to furnish ECA with any pertinent information

relating to national associations of women entrepreneurs in their countries.

34. Regarding the study on the establishment of an African Bank for Women, ECA reported that it recruited the services of a financial expert to analyze existing facilities, the accessibility of these facilities to women, and the need for a specific banking structure which could meet women's concerns in trade and commerce. The prime objective of this study was to identify a means to provide financial services to women in support of their various economic activities.

35. The ECA representative informed the meeting that the study considered the possibility and options of facilitating the establishment of a specialized financial institution which could be approved by African Central Banks. According to the study, the proposed financial institution could be set up at the subregional and regional levels to be supported by a system for adequate communication and financial transaction facilities. The report also noted that the institution would benefit by being placed within a free trade zone. The CFA and PTA zones were identified as structures that already provided facilities at the subregional level. Recommendations of the study included ensuring women's control of the institution by granting them majority shares, providing information and training to women on the functioning and viability of financial institutions. An in-depth study on the bank was also recommended.

36. During the general discussion on the issue, the various delegates expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the ECA to have the Federation established. Delegates from North Africa promised to furnish additional information regarding the North African sub-region in order to complement ECA's report. While the conclusions of the study were deemed relevant, ARCC members expressed the wish to have the full study made available to them so that they could study and make appropriate observations on the subject.

37. Furthermore, the delegations underscored the need for the proposed financial intermediary institution for women to benefit from the services of the African Development Bank (ADB) through negotiating for the establishment of specialized services within the Bank. The need to involve and ensure direct benefit to rural women in all these efforts were highlighted. The meeting was informed that there was already cooperation in this area with the ADB.

REPORT ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE (Agenda item 7)

38. Under this agenda item, three working documents were presented, namely: (i) the Report on the 37th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/4); (ii) Note on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/ECA/ATRC/ARCC.XIV/93/7(i)); and the Report on the Regional Inter-Agency Meeting to coordinate the preparations for the Fifth African Regional Conference preparatory to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Addis Ababa, 4 and 5 March 1993 (E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/CRP.I). A fourth document reporting on the Franco-African Conference on Women and Development (E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/7(ii)) was distributed for information only. All the documents dealt in depth with the measures to be taken with a view to preparing adequately for the World Conference on Women which would take place from 5 to 14 September 1995 in Beijing, the People's Republic of China.

39. The ECA representative recalled that the World Conference would constitute the second and final review of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies of 1985 to indicate progress made with regard to the advancement of women. The attention of the meeting was drawn to the Conference theme of Action for Equality, Development and Peace as well as to the Conference agenda which comprised the following six items:

- (a) The report of the Secretary-General on the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;
- (b) The Platform for Action;
- (c) The Update of the World Survey on the role of Women in Development;
- (d) The Update of the World's Women;
- (e) Outcome of the interregional consultation on women in public life and of regional

preparatory meetings; and

- (f) Updated compendium on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

40. It was noted that the preparations for the Conference would be conducted at the national, regional and international levels. Participants dwelt at considerable length on the national preparations for the World Conference. They expressed concern that the preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies would be a costly exercise. They therefore appealed to ECA and to funding agencies to assist member countries to raise the needed resources to compile their reports. It was also a matter of concern to participants that UNDP allows member States to use whatever assistance it would render to them in accordance with the needs and wishes of the countries concerned.

41. The representative of the UNDP highlighted the commitment of her organization to ensure a greater role for women as contributors to, and beneficiaries of development. She stated that UNDP is committed to engaging governments and assisting them to integrate and promote women's issues in their development policies and programmes and is keen about mainstreaming of women's issues in country programmes and projects for the 5th cycle. Regarding the preparations for the World Conference, she stated that the field offices have been instructed to assist member States and in this regard she advised participants to make contacts with the respective UNDP offices for consultations. She made assurances that UNDP looks forward to working with governments, regional commissions, multilateral and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations in the preparations of the World Conference as well as in the implementation of the Plan of Action which will follow.

42. The discussions which followed revealed the diversity of structures responsible for coordinating preparations for the conference. For instance, Zambia and the Congo had already set up national preparatory commissions. Tunisia already had a permanent commission on women while Cameroon was using the existing focal points to establish a national committee. Algeria expected to set up a preparatory committee during the month of June. The secretariat reminded

participants that their national reports should reach the Division for the Advancement of Women and the ECA, as the regional focal point, by February 1994, at the latest.

43. With regard to the planned meetings of experts to be held in order to prepare the African Plan of Action, ECA was requested to ensure that member States were represented at all the meetings.

44. Participants finally debated at length, the provisional agenda and themes for the regional conference preparatory to the World Conference. A working group made up of Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Zambia, UNICEF and ECA was set up to review the proposals from the inter-agency meeting which had been tabled before ARCC for consideration. ARCC finally adopted the agenda and conference themes listed below. It was also agreed that issues relating to elderly, widowed or abandoned women, AIDS victims and other issues not specifically covered in the agenda and thematic outline could be considered under the item on equality and social issues (as necessary):

**DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN,
DAKAR, SENEGAL, NOVEMBER 1994**

1. Report of the outgoing Chairperson of the Fourth Regional Conference on the integration of women in development.
2. The African Woman Today: an overview assessment of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies.
3. Priority areas for the twenty-first century
 - (a) Women in the peace process;
 - (b) Equality, education and social issues;
 - (c) Women empowerment;
 - (d) Women, environment and sustainable development.

4. African Platform of Action.
5. Consideration and adoption of the report.

**THEMATIC OUTLINE FOR THE AGENDA OF THE FIFTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON
WOMEN, DAKAR, SENEGAL, NOVEMBER 1994**

1. WOMEN IN THE PEACE PROCESS

- 1.1 Wars, political conflicts and civil strife in Africa
- 1.2 Women, a bridge to peace
- 1.3 Refugee, returnee and displaced women

2. EQUALITY, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ISSUES

- 2.1 Women's rights
 - 2.1.1 Legal literacy
 - 2.1.2 Violence against women
 - 2.1.3 Dissemination of information for and about women
- 2.2 Gender and culture
 - 2.2.1 Socialization processes and gender relations: the girl child
 - 2.2.2 Cultural and traditional attitudes and practices
 - 2.2.3 Education: issues beyond equal access
- 2.3 Impact of endemic diseases and other health-related issues on women

3. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- 3.1 Women and economic policies in Africa
 - 3.1.1 External debt crisis
 - 3.1.2 Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)
 - 3.1.3 Regional integration

- 3.2 Women in the economic spheres in urban and rural areas
 - 2.2.1 Access to employment
 - 2.2.2 Improving women's management and production capacities in the informal sector
 - 2.2.3 Entrepreneurship development
 - 2.2.4 Access to training, skills, technologies, factors and means of production and markets

- 3.3 Political empowerment of women
 - 3.3.1 Women and the democratization process
 - 3.3.2 Women in governance, politics and decision-making
 - 3.3.3 National machineries and emerging women's organizations and institutions

4. WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Women's access to and management of natural resources
 - 4.1.1 Drinking water and sanitation
 - 4.1.2 Land tenure and food security
 - 4.1.3 Sustainable shelter
 - 4.1.4 Energy and forestry
 - 4.1.5 Women and disaster management

- 4.2 Environment policy analysis, support and training

45. Having adopted the above agenda and thematic outline, ARCC requested the ECA Secretariat to formally transmit them to the ECA Conference of Ministers for its endorsement. ARCC further agreed to send a letter of congratulations to the Secretary-General of the World Conference on Women (being the first African woman to hold such a position and to assure her of ARCC's and the region's support). ARCC also decided to send a memorandum of appreciation and thanks to the UN Secretary-General for the honour done Africa in his appointment of an African woman to head the preparations for the World Conference. The ECA Secretariat was assigned responsibility to prepare the letter and memorandum for signature by the ARCC President.

REPORT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AFRICA (Agenda item 8)

46. Under this agenda item the ECA Secretariat presented a report on Violence against Women in Africa (working document E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.XIV/93/8). The report analyzed some of the aspects of this negative phenomenon pointing to the extent of violence against women, the problem of legal definition of violence, causes of violence, its consequences and attitudes towards violence against women and its victims. In particular, the report noted that violence against women is an extreme violation of basic human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that it is a spreading reality in many African countries. The report provided a number of tentative recommendations to be considered by African governments aimed at reducing and eliminating violence against women in their societies.

47. During the discussions which ensued, the participants expressed their deep concern about the seriousness of the problem in their countries and pointed to an acute need to develop and implement effective measures aimed at its eradication. After a thorough consideration of the proposed recommendations, the following amendments were made and adopted by the meeting:

- (a) Para 33 - to add the following sentence: "Women's organizations, associations and groups whose members are subjected to violence should be given the right to initiate necessary civil actions against the offender on behalf of their members and

as such the organization should be granted the status of a complainant instead of an individual woman-victim of violence".

- (b) Para 37 - " African Governments are also urged to: (a) Find ways...(d) Provide..."
 - To change paragraph symbol (a) to (b), symbol (b) to (c), symbol (c) to (d) and symbol (d) to (e) accordingly, in order to align the subparagraph numbering of this paragraph
- (c) Para 37 (a) (xii) - to formulate it as follows: "Ensure that the submitted complaints are fully and properly investigated by the concerned authorities and the complainants are protected from any adverse effects of their lawful actions"
- (d) Para 37 (c) - to replace "Assist in the establishment..." with "Facilitate the establishment..." and further without any changes.
- (e) Para 37 (d) - to replace "Establish..." with "Facilitate the establishment of..." and further without any changes.

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ATRCW COMMUNICATION NETWORK PROJECT:
CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION ON
GENDER ISSUES IN AFRICA (Agenda Item 9)**

48. Introducing Document No. E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC XIV/93/9, the ECA representative indicated that her presentation was organized in three parts. The first part represented a progress report on the ATRCW Communication Network Project (ITA/90/III) which was initiated by the Centre in April 1992. She briefly outlined the objectives of the two-year project which is being

implemented with bi-lateral funding from the Government of Italy. She referred to previous declarations and recommendations which had been made in major regional and global strategies such as the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies and the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development regarding the need to provide greater accessibility to information and data on women in Africa. This need had also been clearly articulated at the sub-regional coordinating meetings of ARCC in 1992 which had all adopted resolutions highlighting, as one of their priority concerns, the need for an improved networking and flow of information and data on women in Africa. Accordingly, the coming into effect of the Communication Network project was not only opportune, but provided an operational base from which to systematize the identification, collection, processing and dissemination of information and data emanating from the work of the ATRCW itself, and for making information resources readily available and accessible through appropriate communication channels to the ever-increasing body of information seekers and implementors of women's programmes in the region.

49. The ECA representative then highlighted some of the major activities which had been undertaken up-to-date, focusing on efforts already made to identify target groups such as FEMNET and other media groups. She also informed the meeting about the arrangements which had been concluded with the Union for National Radio and Television Networks in Africa/ Programme Exchange Centre (URTNA/PEC) for ATRCW's co-sponsorship of the 1st African Television Programme Festival competition in which the ATRCW will provide cash awards for the best three television/film productions covering women's issues and concerns in Africa, and highlighting African experiences. As part of this arrangement, programmes competing for prizes as well as non-competition programmes on agreed themes of interest to women will be made available by URTNA for exchange among African broadcasting organizations. The screening opportunities thus offered will help sensitize women's groups in the region about issues of critical concern to African women in the period leading up to the Regional Conference and beyond.

50. Plans were also afoot to organize, jointly with the Pan African News Agency (PANA), a competition to adjudge the best investigative reporting and feature articles on women's issues using the NFLS and the Abuja Declaration as parameters for assessing and reviewing Africa's performances to date in different sectors. It was hoped that this competition would help provide

some objective analysis on some critical areas of concern to women. An African Women's Features Service, to be managed and offered by PANA, will be negotiated and should come into effect soon. Under the project, repackaging activities as well as other information awareness - creation materials such as leaflets, brochures, booklets, posters etc. are also being planned to focus on some of the major themes which are scheduled for consideration at the forthcoming regional conference (1994).

51. In order to stretch the resources of the project and ensure greater impact in project implementation, the project's planned activities during 1993 - 1994 will focus on outputs which can directly enhance the information and communication support to the Regional Conference in 1994. As a strategy for ensuring the development of more permanent infrastructures for information and communication on gender and development in Africa, the projected activities are being organized into those activities which will be directly needed during the intermediate phase of 1993-1994 to support the Regional Conference; and those longer-term strategies (1994 and beyond) which will ensure the solid foundations for regional information networking and communication and thus improved routine flows of data and information on gender issues.

52. Some of the planned activities to be undertaken during 1993-1994 included:

- the setting up of a new conceptual framework on gender issues in Africa through appropriate national, sub-regional and regional consultative processes involving NGOs, grass-roots groups etc. ;
- information strategy, mechanisms and activities composed of finding out what information resources currently exist; identifying institutions/centres which generate information and data; finding those personalities with capabilities to deal with gender-related issues. As part of this, national resource/documentation centres will be developed or strengthened to collect available documents, data, reports and other information resource materials/films, audio-visual materials, tapes etc. Data bases will also be established to facilitate collection and processing of information and data. Bibliographies, directories and other state-of-the-art products will be prepared. At the regional level, directories, chart-book, data sheets will also be compiled. The

ATRCW Roster of African Women Experts will be expanded to highlight women working in different sectors. A special biographical listing will be compiled to highlight the contributions of African women in their countries. It is hoped that this "roll-call of Africa's distinguished daughters through time" will receive sufficient inputs from member States who will provide profiles on women who have made substantial contributions to the development of their respective countries.

- communication strategy and activities to directly inform and sensitize women's groups in the region and enhance their participation, through establishment of appropriate communication channels and linkages and networking especially with women's mass media groups. In support of this, gender-sensitization workshops and seminars will be organized at sub-regional and national levels. Media-women will be especially targetted to ensure their reporting on issues of critical concern to women. Additionally, a regional newsletter to provide up-to-date information on the preparations for the regional conference will be prepared. Promotion and publicity will comprise press conferences, press-releases, round-table encounters, pre-conference media briefings for newspaper editors, production of posters, banners and other publicity materials.

53. The ECA representative further pointed out in the third part of her presentation that the activities and outputs of 1993-1994 should help to lay permanent structures for establishing a regional information network, a data bank on women and gender-related issues, an African NGO network, and a network of African women in the media. She therefore appealed to member States to give their keen support to ensure the successful execution of the planned information and communication activities.

54. In the discussions which followed, participants noted with satisfaction the comprehensive range of planned information and communication strategies, mechanisms, activities and emphasized the need to ensure that the communication dimension was included at the inception in all preparatory activities to ensure adequate sensitization in member States. Women needed to become better informed in order to become actively involved in their own cause. The question of

training for nationals was raised by Malawi, as a way of assisting women to learn the appropriate techniques for processing and sharing information. Namibia advised the project to look into those issues which really discriminate against women and to make efforts to use its facilities to strengthen the image of the African woman. ECA (through the communication project) should coordinate with the OAU to bring about more positive considerations for the African woman, emphasizing also on the key role which women have played in Africa's political struggles.

55. The meeting subsequently endorsed the planned information and communication strategies and activities and pointed to the need for member States to institute vibrant national information campaigns which, jointly with the sub-regional and regional activities, will help consolidate the information and communication support for the regional conference.

56. Following the presentation on Agenda item 9, the African Women Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) was given the floor to make a brief presentation. At the last meeting (March 1993) of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in Vienna, the African Group requested FEMNET to serve as the convenor for the African NGO Forum in the events leading up to the Regional (1994) and World Conference on Women (1995). The FEMNET representative informed the meeting that in its preparations for coordinating the activities of the African NGOs, FEMNET plans to set up three (3) Advisory committees, namely:

- Regional Advisory Committee - to be composed of strategic NGOs which reflect the priority themes for the regional conference. The committee will also comprise key individual women who have a track record in advocacy for women's issues. The regional committee shall prepare guidelines to assist African NGOs;
- Nairobi Advisory Committee - will give support to the regional advisory committee and will comprise the FEMNET management committee as well as other key individuals;
- Dakar Advisory Committee - will act as a satellite committee for the Regional Advisory Committee and coordinate the registral arrangements in Dakar.

57. The FEMNET representative further informed the meeting that in order to ensure full participation of women from all walks of life, FEMNET will work through its twenty-four (24) focal points in thirty-six (36) African countries. These focal points will access concerns and issues at national and sub-regional levels; facilitate national and sub-regional reflections, and assist in documenting women's concerns; and promote networking to facilitate participation at Dakar and Beijing ensuring that attendance is as representative of various categories of women as possible. The focal points will also coordinate national meetings which will feed into the Dakar meetings.

58. She also highlighted those joint programmed activities to be organized by the ATRCW and FEMNET and indicated FEMNET's requirements for equipment and other resources. A number of FEMNET documentation was also made available to interested participants.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 10)

59. Under this agenda item, the delegate from Zambia proposed that the ECA Secretariat should consider making arrangements for future meetings of the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) to start on Tuesday or Wednesday rather than on Monday in view of transportation problems faced by ARCC delegates to reach Ethiopia.

60. The delegate from Congo proposed that in order to ensure adequate dissemination of working documents prior to meetings, the ECA Secretariat should consider sending copies of documents to, for example Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Prime Minister's Office, national committee or focal point, UNDP local office etc. This will ensure that materials reach member States and that member are adequately informed.

61. The delegate of Tunisia requested the ECA Secretariat to distribute the list of participants of the ARCC meeting in order for the delegates to check it and to take a copy of the list with them.

62. In order to facilitate the drafting of resolutions for ARCC's consideration and adoption, the President of ARCC proposed a working group of ARCC members and observers to prepare a

resolution to cover the preparations for the Regional and World Conference on Women, as well as other agenda items discussed by ARCC. The committee comprised the following participants and observers who volunteered to serve on the working group: Algeria, Cameroun, Congo, Namibia, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, OAU, UNICEF, and FEMNET.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (AGENDA ITEM II)

63. The meeting considered its draft resolution entitled "Women in Development, the African Regional Meeting (1994) for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995). In view of time constraints, ARCC endorsed the substance and spirit of the draft resolution while leaving its final wording and refinement to be handled by those ARCC members staying on for the meetings of the ECA Conference of Ministers and the ECA Secretariat.

64. Having thus concluded its work, the fourteenth meeting of ARCC adopted its report with the necessary amendments.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

65. Closing the meeting, the President of ARCC thanked Madam Tadeletch for her keen support and participation in both the opening and closing sessions. She further expressed her appreciation to all participants for their active participation which had ensured a most successful meeting and exhorted them to carry this same spirit into the preparations for the forthcoming regional and world conferences on women by promoting and ensuring involvement and participation, particularly at the national level. On behalf of all ARCC members and other participants, Algeria expressed gratitude to the chair for the smooth and efficient conduct of the fourteenth meeting of ARCC.

Women in Development, The African Regional Preparatory Meeting (1994)
for the World Conference on Women: Action for
Equality, Development and Peace (1995)

The African Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC)

Having considered and adopted the report of its fourteenth meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 19-21 April 1993, submits the following omnibus resolution covering:

A. FIFTH AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE PREPARATORY TO THE
FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN (1995)

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,¹ endorsed by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985;

Recalling also resolution 35/4 of 8 March 1991, and 36/8 of 20 March 1992 adopted by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on preparations for the fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace;

Reiterating the need for a united, common African position at the World Conference;

Aware that many African countries have not yet seriously initiated national consultations

¹ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap I, sect. A.

for the preparation of national status reports regarding the implementation of the NFLS;

1. Calls upon African governments which have not yet done so, to establish national coordinating committees and/or to designate national focal points without delay in accordance with the Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/8 of 20 March 1992;
2. Urges member States of ECA to initiate preparations for their national reports as soon as possible and to ensure their submission to the ECA by the end of March 1994 and to the Secretariat of the World Conference in time to serve as contributions to the regional and global review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;
3. Calls upon the Secretariats of the ECA and the Organization of African Unity, as well as the Bureau of the African Regional Coordinating Committee to collaborate closely in the preparations of the Fifth Regional Conference for the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1994 in order to help define Africa's Plan of Action for consideration at the global Platform for Action to be staged at the World Conference in Beijing, China in 1995;
4. Calls further on the ECA Secretariat to ensure close liaison with the African Women Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), which is charged with responsibility for coordinating the African NGOs and convening the African NGO Forum in Dakar (1994) and Beijing (1995), in order to ensure the full participation of those strategic NGOs which reflect the priority themes for the regional conference;
5. Urges member States of ECA to institute appropriate information and communication campaigns at the national level which would harmonize with sub-regional and regional strategies for sensitization and awareness-creation among the various interested constituents in the Region;
6. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of Senegal for its offer to host the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference in Dakar, Senegal in November 1994.

B. WOMEN AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Aware that progress in the integration of women in development at the national, sub-regional and regional levels has been slow and seriously constrained by financial and other productive resources;

Bearing in mind Commission resolution 736 (XXVII) on women and access to resources in the 1990s which also urged member States to step up their activities to promote trade among countries for products produced by women, and also for the creation of the necessary policy environment at the national level for the operation of small and medium enterprises initiated by women;

Anxious that appropriate human capacity-building measures should be promoted for women to enhance their capabilities;

1. Appeals to member States, inter-governmental organizations and the international community to support subregional and regional women's programmes by according special consideration for assistance to those projects concerning women which could further promote women's full integration in development. The forthcoming pledging Conference of the UN Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) offers an ideal opportunity for such support to sub-regional and regional activities.

2. Calls upon African governments and their partners in development to give their fullest support to efforts to create the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs (FAWE) and an African Bank for Women as centrally-controlled institutions which could facilitate and enhance the economic empowerment of African women;

C. WOMEN AND PEACE

Bearing in mind Commission Resolution 737 (XXVII) on the role of women in conflict

resolution, adopted by the Conference on 22 April 1992;

Aware that the role of women in the peace process is one of the priority themes on the agenda for both the African Regional Conference (1994) and the World Conference (1995);

Noting also the concerns of the UN Secretary-General regarding an agenda for peace as expressed in his statement to the UN Security Council² and anxious that women as a group should actively participate in the new agenda for peace:

1. Urges again the Secretariats of ECA and the OAU to implement within the limits of the resources, resolution 737 (XXVII) which requested the ECA and OAU to assist the Uganda Government in the organization of the Conference on Women, Peace and Development due to be held in Kampala, Uganda 22-27 August 1993;
2. Requests the ECA Secretariat to submit to the regional conference of 1994, the highlights and recommendations of the Kampala conference as a case study along with other pertinent national cases which highlight the role of women in the peace process;

² BOUTROS-GHALI, B. - An agenda for peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping (Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992), United Nations: New York, 1992, 53 p.

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