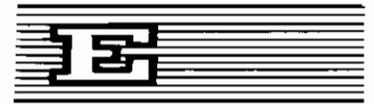


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Multinational Programming and Operational  
Centre for North Africa (MULPOC)

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Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)

Inaugural Meeting of the Subregional Committee on  
the Integration of Women in Development

WORK PROGRAMME AND PRIORITIES: REVIEW OF  
ATRCW ACTIVITIES AND PROPOSALS FOR INTEGRATING  
WOMEN IN THE NORTH AFRICA MULPOC WORK PROGRAMME

(1981-1983)

## INTRODUCTION

1. Resolution 4 of the Regional Conference on the Implementation of National, Regional and World Plans of Action for the Integration of Women in Development held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in 1977, requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to take necessary action to establish subregional committees on the integration of women in development within the framework of existing Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (MULPOC) and at the regional level, an African Co-ordinating Committee.

2. This request was but one among the many requests and recommendations on the creation of an organized machinery to ensure the integration of women which member States of the United Nations have been making ever since this august assembly became conscious of the fact that half of humanity was not being fully utilized for development. For example, the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year adopted in Mexico requests the regional commissions to stimulate interest in the Plan, provide national governments and non-governmental organizations with the support they require and establish appropriate machinery for this purpose.

3. The establishment of subregional committees will therefore complete the structure which the ECA is assisting African governments to create beginning from the national level with the national machinery for the integration of women in development as the focal point, through the subregional committees composed of representatives of the national machinery of each member State in the subregion to the Co-ordinating Committee at the Africa regional level composed of representatives of each subregional committee, the Pan-African Women's Organization, the Organization of African Unity and the current officers of the regional conference.

4. The Nouakchott resolution assigns to the subregional committee in general, the responsibility of providing leadership within the subregion on measures for integrating women in development. Each committee has, for example, powers to identify the needs of women in the subregion and request the ECA to take appropriate action. It should also review on-going or planned projects for the subregion and request that issues related to women's roles be incorporated if this has not been done.

5. This paper presents a brief review of recent activities of the ECA African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW). It also examines the current work programme of priorities of the MULPOC of North Africa and proposes some strategies for integrating women's components in this programme. It finally suggests additional activities for accelerating the participation of women in measures designed for the elimination of absolute poverty.

## REVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF ATRCW

6. In 1973 when the ECA Women's Programme started its itinerant training courses in home economics and other family-oriented fields, the first series of workshops were held in six countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. In the following year, 1974, the first series of the three-day seminars on the establishment of national commissions and women's bureaux were again held in four countries of the subregion according to official requests received.

7. Similarly, the first Task Force Volunteer, a national of a West African country, served in Lesotho for six months in 1976 training women groups from Southern Africa in tie-dye and batik printing techniques.

8. Since then, many similar activities of ATRCW have been undertaken in other subregions of Africa, especially in Central, West and North Africa.

### Training Seminars

9. The United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 2059 (LXII) of 1977 underlines the need for organizing training programmes for women related to planning, evaluation and management of development projects. This need has also been voiced by many women from Africa. The ECA has obtained assistance from the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and Development for the organization of training workshops for women on the preparation and implementation of project proposals. The first of these workshops was held in Lusaka, the second in Yaounde and the third in Niamey immediately following the meetings of the subregional committees on the Integration of Women in Development. It is hoped that a similar subregional workshop can be organized in North Africa following the establishment of the Subregional Committee.

10. Women in many African countries make handicrafts such as baskets, pots, mats and others, either for use within the home or for sale at the village market or in nearby urban areas. Handicrafts are a good source of income for women which is worth expanding. The craft however needs to be studied carefully to determine the use of the handicrafts, both locally and abroad, to improve their quality and to consider transforming them into small-scale industries, including the organization and establishment of stable marketing outlets and so forth.

11. In November 1978, the ATRCW organized a seminar in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, on women and handicrafts for French-speaking African countries on the model of the ILO/ECA/YWCA/SIDA Workshop on Participation of Women in Handicrafts and Small Industries which was held in Kitwe, Zambia, in December 1974. Many French-speaking countries were invited to send participants. The participants had to develop plans of action for the promotion of women's interest in handicrafts. They had at their disposal the findings of a study, which was conducted on the role of handicrafts in national economy and how women can best utilize this resource. The new ECA/ILO Unit for Handicrafts and Small-Scale Industries started its activities in August 1978 and will be able to assist member States.

12. At the beginning of 1979, two workshops took place in the North Africa MULPOC subregion. The first was the regional workshop on the development of day care centres in Africa which was held in Tunisia, in February 1979, where delegates from Tunisia and the Arab Libyan Jamahiriya together with representatives from the other four MULPOC subregions discussed the role of day care centres in improving the access of women to economic opportunities and their integration in development.

13. The second was a national workshop for rural women leaders held in Sudan, in February 1979. This was a follow-up of the 1976 workshop for the training of rural women leaders organized in Khartoum. The workshop brought together rural women leaders from all areas of the Sudan to provide an opportunity to describe their concerns, problems and needs and to suggest possible solutions to their most pressing problems, so that a training curriculum for leaders can be planned which reflects actual situations and rural peoples aspirations.

14. After the study of women's co-operatives in Egypt, Libya and the Sudan a national workshop on the findings of the study was organized in Sudan, in October 1979, entitled: Participation of Women in Development through Co-operatives. A member of the Co-operative Training Centre in Cairo, Egypt, was also invited to share her experience at the seminar. The main objective of the workshop was to discuss problems faced by women in the organization of co-operatives, the training needs of women in co-operatives and the types of co-operatives needed in the small-scale and handicrafts sector.

15. The workshops detailed above are those for which funds have been obtained and implemented. Many other workshops are envisaged to take place within the countries of the subregions as requested during this period. For example, the Centre would be willing to look for funds with which to assist governments and government-recognized women's organizations to organize workshops on specific needs in the manner in which it assisted the subregional section of the Pan African Women's Organization with the organization of a workshop on cooperatives.

#### National Machineries

16. As has been noted the seminars on national machineries for the integration of women in development have been held at the request of countries. Many countries have however established national machineries on their own initiatives. ATRCW would be happy to give technical assistance to any country which is interested in establishing a new machinery or wishes to strengthen the capabilities of its existing machinery. This assistance may take the form of an advisory mission undertaken by the staff of the Centre, consultancy services of varying duration or provision of some needed money required for a project to get underway. For example, the Centre has obtained funds from the Voluntary Fund for the Decade to strengthen the capabilities of the Kenya Women's Bureau and to undertake and analyse research findings on various women's groups in Kenya.

17. The staff of the Centre will visit a number of countries in the sub-region at their request with a view to identifying and formulating projects which could be implemented jointly with the governments. Requests for technical assistance can be submitted to the MULPOC with copy addressed directly to the headquarters in Addis Ababa.

#### Research

18. The Centre itself engages in secondary research and conducts surveys on the roles of women in development. It also supports primary research undertaken by national consultants on various topics relevant to women.

19. The Centre would be happy to consider proposals for joint research from the countries of the subregion.

#### Task Force Volunteers

20. Another activity which the Centre is promoting for the Africa region is the African Women's Development Task Force. Under this project, the more fortunate women are being encouraged to share their skills with their sisters who are less fortunate in an effort to bring the education, training skills, leadership qualities, experience and goodwill of women in one African country to the service of the other. While many African women with a variety of skills (e.g. teachers, nurses, nutritionists, home economists, adult educators, community development workers, doctors and agriculturists) have indicated their interest in offering their services, needs in member States matching these skills have not yet been adequately identified. In the near future, the staff of the Centre will undertake identification missions to the different countries of the region including this subregion.

21. Possibilities within this project are many and varied. The project not only promotes self-reliance among African countries called for by the New International Economic Order but also encourages technical co-operation among them. The Centre hopes to obtain money within this period to enable a group (groups) of women from the subregion to visit and learn on-the-job the techniques of organizing and managing small-scale industries and businesses such as catering, food preservation, textiles etc. in other parts of Africa.

#### Appropriate Technology

22. Modern complex technologies are in a majority of cases out of the economic reach of most families in Africa. At the same time the traditional technologies used in the communities are usually characterized by low capital and labour productivities which do not generate the surplus needed for economic growth. <sup>1/</sup> In many rural communities, women are the providers of food for the family. They toil for days in the fields using primitive tools in order to be able to produce enough food for the family. Back at home, they spend hours each day fetching water and fuel, pounding or grinding the grains and then cooking the food in a situation hazardous to their lives. All these activities could be made more productive and less burdensome by the introduction of appropriate technology.

<sup>1/</sup> "Appropriate Technology for African Women" UNECA, ATRCW, 1978.

23. Because of this, the Centre is assisting member States with the identification and implementation of programmes and projects relating to appropriate technology for women.

#### Communication Activities

24. The activities of ATRCW will be less fruitful if the Centre does not have regular means of communication with women of the region. The "Rural Progress" newsletter caters for the exchange of information on activities related to rural development with respect to women of the region.

25. Other publications are concerned with general activities of the Centre or with specific projects. These include information brochures, reports on studies, posters, annotated bibliographies, manuals on appropriate technology, child care, family life and nutrition. The preparation of other manuals for use of specialists in training is also in progress. The Centre's documents are furnished free of charge upon request.

26. The Centre sponsored a study tour for Anglophone women journalists in September 1978. A similar study tour is planned for Francophone countries.

#### INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE NORTH AFRICA MULPOC ACTIVITIES

27. The ECA Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) evolved from the United Nations Development Advisory Teams (UNDATs) which were established to assist governments in their efforts to attack absolute poverty in Africa. This evolution was a direct response to the recommendation by the Joint UNDP/ECA Evaluation Mission on UNDATs in Africa undertaken in September 1976. The recommendation was made by the mission in recognition of the fact that a team whose main objective was to assist governments with finding solutions to development problems had to be operational for effectiveness.

28. The establishment of UNDATs in Africa constituted an attempt by the UN to find a solution to a problem which had been expressed in various international forums namely that there was a need for an integrated approach to African development problems. The Regional Conference on Integrated Approach to Rural Development held in Moshi, Tanzania, in 1969 for example, reached the conclusion that "the nature of rural development and size of the problem of promoting economic and social progress in rural areas required that action be taken on several fronts simultaneously and not independently of each other". <sup>1/</sup> Thus the out-look of UNDATs was intentionally interdisciplinary and multinational.

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<sup>1/</sup> "Integrated Approach to Rural Development in Africa", UN Sales No. E/71.11.k2.

29. Team members of the UNDATs advised and assisted the governments concerned with:

(a) the formulation, harmonization and implementation of policies, programmes and projects in the context of national integrated development framework;

(b) the formulation, harmonization and implementation of policies, programmes and projects for multinational co-operation;

(c) the identification of needs for technical co-operation and external findings in the light of development situations, aims and resources, with the preparation of and the carrying out of review of technical co-operation programmes;

(d) the building up of local competence and structure in the tasks mentioned in (a), (b) and (c).

They were also required to assist, on request, the UNDP resident representatives in each country on such matters as were referred to them.

30. These are still the objectives of the MULPOCs and therefore the North Africa MULPOC should be able to assist member States in the subregion with the development and implementation of complementary solutions in each level of the attack on absolute poverty. These solutions, it is submitted, must include a specific focus on women's roles, if many of the conditions associated with poverty such as malnutrition, ignorance, disease are to be eliminated. Introducing the Plan of Action for UNDATs in Africa to member States and friends of ECA in 1974, the Executive Secretary expressed an agreement with the findings of UNICEF studies in Central and West Africa 1/ that some of the most serious and urgent problems which still await solutions include:

(a) high mortality/morbidity rate particularly in the 0-4 age groups;

(b) inferior status of the majority of women and girls, a group frequently ignored by planners and whose education is handicapped from childhood;

(c) deficiencies in food and nutrition, with particularly serious consequences for the 0-4 age group;

(d) unemployment and underemployment of young people;

(e) migratory movements of young people to towns from the interior of the country; disparities between rural and urban areas, regions and social groups. 2/

1/ See "Children, Youth, Women and Development Plans in West and Central Africa", UNICEF Report of the Conference of Ministers held in Lomé Togo, 1972.

2/ "Attack on Absolute Poverty in Africa: The Role of the United Nations Development Advisory Teams" (UNDATs), Op. Cit., p.4

31. Many of these urgent problems cannot be eliminated without the full participation of women who have the responsibility of looking after children as well as providing food for the entire family especially in the rural areas.

32. An examination of the work programme and the composition of the team members of the North Africa MULPOC reveal that little attention has been paid to women as a group and how they can contribute towards realizing the objectives of the programmes. It has to be stated, however, that the Yaounde MULPOC is the only one which paid attention to women by undertaking a study on the role of women in the marketing of food crops. 1/

33. The team members of the MULPOC are composed of: an administrator a trade economist, a statistician and an administrative assistant. This composition as it is presently deprives the states in the subregion of the services of specialists in such fields as nutrition, child development, foodcrops production by women and in services related to the integration of women in development.

34. Some of the reasons adduced to justify this oversight are (a) the constraint on financial resources and (b) member States themselves have identified the priority areas as stated in the work programme. The crux of the problem, however, seem to point to the fact that the decision-makers, whether within ECA or within member States, are predominantly males who until recently were not sensitive to the important role women can play in development and tended to "deprioritise" any activity which is regarded by the community as "women's roles".

#### Agriculture

35. The stated policy of the UNDATs was to promote reallocation of sources of agricultural labour in Africa. 2/ It is hoped that this reallocation will not overlook the fact that women's heavy participation in agriculture is the result of their assigned role as food providers by the society. Much too often, in an attempt to encourage men to take more interest in agriculture, the agriculturalists lay more emphasis on cash crops without foreseeing the effects this will have on the level of food production. Because cash crops require more attention and inputs, all available labour and financial resources are usually marshalled for this purpose, thus either completely neglecting the food crops or, as in many cases, the women in addition to tending the food crops are required to assist the men with the cash crops.

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1/ Study on the marketing of food crops by the Bayam-Salam, UNDAT, 75.

2/ See "Attack on Absolute Poverty in Africa: The Role of the United Nations Development Advisory Teams" (UNDATs), Op. cit., p. 20.

36. The MULPOC should, as a matter of priority, embark on measures aimed at encouraging both men and women to take interest in modern methods of producing food crops which improve the nutritional status of the community. While it is realized that the production of cash crops for foreign markets is more preferable in terms of their ability to generate foreign markets it is submitted that the production of crops which directly contribute towards the elimination of malnutrition, and disease would in the long run constitute a much greater investment.

#### Manpower Development

37. The development of manpower resources is one of the identified priority needs for which MULPOC's assistance has been requested. This is also a crucial need of the women of the subregion because they lag far behind in all activities connected with education and training.

38. The education and training opportunities for women in many African countries consist largely of subjects which either prepare them for motherhood and housewifery or lead to those employment sectors which are connected with their functions as mothers and which are often already saturated. In many cases, the women themselves are not willing to seize all the opportunities offered either for education or training in areas other than the accepted "women's fields". The right kind of preparation is crucial if women are to participate fully in all fields of remunerated employment. Lack of training in certain fields may set off a vicious circle whereby women do not apply for certain jobs because they have no proper training and this in turn leads to these jobs areas being occupied predominantly by males and so labeled "men's work".

39. Primary education is the basis for all modern vocational preparation, yet throughout Africa illiteracy is higher among women than among men. Data on secondary school enrolment indicate a higher drop-out rate among girls than boys.

40. The reasons why fewer girls attend school than boys and why they leave school after a shorter period than boys, include social and economic factors such as lack of facilities, financial limitations on the part of the governments and individual families, social traditions and attitudes towards the role of women in society, and the high rate of drop-outs among girls in order to help in the family, to marry or because of an unwanted pregnancy. As yet, little is known about plans to reintegrate and train girls who have had to interrupt their schooling.

41. In most African communities, in their up-bringing, girls are taught to consider marriage and children as the primary goals. Parents with insufficient financial means definitely favour an education for boys rather than for girls. The reasons for such an attitude is that in most societies a boy is considered the future bread winner and as such is given the first opportunity for learning in order to be able to better his chances of employment. It has to be recognized, however, that this situation is changing now.

42. Another contributing factor to the limited number of women receiving education, especially technical education, is the fact that the chances offered to them are often fewer than those of boys. In this connection it has been noted that the system of having sex-segregated schools is a big contributor to the existing inequalities in education, both quantitative and qualitative.

43. It is clear therefore that if the existing situation is to be corrected, compensatory measures will have to be taken in order to bring women and girls to the required level. A deliberate effort must be made to give more opportunities to women in the institutions offering education and training at secondary levels and above.

44. Among the specific projects already approved for implementation by the MULPOC, the following could be included to ensure that the problems related to women are adequately considered:

(a) The meeting of Vice-Chancellors and Permanent Secretaries of the ministries of education should have as one of the agenda items a discussion on measures to increase the number of women in the universities and to encourage them to diversify fields of study.

(b) The functional manpower planning units, when established, should have as one of their terms of reference, a specific request to review national manpower requirements and supply by sex in order to show more clearly skills in which women should be encouraged to develop.

(c) The proposed consultancy service centre, when established, should include a roster of qualified women and field of specialty, in this regard the Women's Centre would be happy to assist with the identification of qualified women consultants.

#### Women and Decision-making Bodies of MULPOCs

45. The governing body of the North Africa MULPOC is a council composed of ministers from all the member countries. This council meets once every year to review the progress of the implementation of the work programme and to approve additional proposed activities. To assist the council with the detailed examination of the content and feasibility of each project proposed, a committee of senior officials of member States usually meets a few days before the council. Since the inauguration of the UNDAT in this subregion, few women have attended the meetings of the committee of officials.

46. Past experiences therefore amply demonstrate that unless women participate in the process of decision-making, their problems and needs will not be seriously considered. This Subregional Committee should consider instituting a machinery through which it will ensure that its decisions and recommendations are given appropriate attention during the meetings of both the committee of officials and the council of ministers. In this connection it might wish to appoint representatives to participate in the committee and the council on equal basis with the other delegates.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

47. The above review of activities of ATRCW and what could be done within the framework of the approved work programme of the North Africa MULPOC, obviously has not touched upon many of the needs of women. This committee should identify and prioritize these needs as well as propose the course of action which should be taken. The priorities might include the following:

(a) As members of the MULPOC team are expected to have intimate knowledge of the problems of each of the member countries and to familiarize themselves with the progress there on a regular basis, they would appear to be the best source of advice and assistance in the task of integrating women in development. Therefore, the terms of reference of each team member should, in addition to those required for the specific post, include specific request to devise measures, advise and assist governments with integrating women in his/her sphere of competence. For example, a trade promotion expert should include in the work programme measures which he/she will take to integrate women in the trade sector.

(b) In addition to responding to specific requests made either by individual countries or by the subregional committee, ATRCW's main role should be to backstop the team members of the MULPOC with the required expertise and information on the model of co-operation already established between the MULPOCs and other ECA Divisions/Sections. For this purpose the Centre should designate an officer to be responsible for the co-ordination of MULPOC and ATRCW activities in the subregion.

(c) The activities and capabilities of the present team members may not allow them to attend effectively to all developmental needs of women. It is therefore advisable to provide an additional member of team to act as the secretary of the subregional committee on the integration of women in development and be responsible for devising new programmes and projects. Such a person may have the following functions and qualifications:

Post Coordinator of Women's Programme

Category and level: P-4

Organizational location: North Africa

Duty station: Tangiers, Morocco

Functions: Visit on a regular basis the countries of the subregion in order to assist them in planning and requesting assistance for implementing projects for the integration of women in development  
Establish contacts within each country and with them, determine the needs and sources of assistance

Assist the countries in developing projects for the integration of women in development

Serve as the Secretary of the Subregional Committee on the Integration of Women in Development.

Qualifications:

Advanced degree in Economics, Sociology or Education and Training;

Experience in planning, monitoring, follow-up, evaluation and in government administration;

Willingness to travel;

At least 5 years experience and interest in women and development essential;

Demonstrated ability to work effectively with government personnel at all levels.

Languages:

Good knowledge of French and a working knowledge of English.

Work Programme and Priorities for 1981

I. Studies

- Report to member States on the project for integrated rural development with focus on appropriate technology and handicrafts.
- Report to member States on the survey of traditional technologies.
- Report to member States on the study of national development plans to determine to what extent they include women.

II. Conferences, meetings, workshops, training seminars, expert working groups

- Consultancy services to strengthen national machineries.
- Inaugural meeting of the subregional committee on the integration of women in development.

Suggested programme for 1982-1983

- Strengthening of national machineries for the integration of women in development.
- Strengthening of technical competence of leaders of those machineries, in planning, identification and evaluation of projects.
- Exchange of knowledge and experience among countries of the subregion through African Women's Development Task Force Programme.
- Study on the legal status of women.
- Training on the technology for rural women.
- Introduction of production and marketing cooperatives for women.
- Introduction of income generating activities.
- 2nd meeting of the subregional committee on the integration of women in development of the North Africa MULPOC.