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Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

THE ARUSHA FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
AFRICAN WOMEN BEYOND THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Regional Intergovernmental Meeting for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace/Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development which met in Arusha, 8-12 October 1984, adopted a resolution entitled "Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for African Women". Paragraph two of that resolution requested all African Governments to take appropriate steps to harmonize their national development plans with the objectives and integrated approach of the Arusha Strategies.
2. The Arusha Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of African Women beyond the United Nations Decade for Women are long-term plans for the advancement of African women, principally as agents in development, upto and beyond the year 2000. They incorporate and elaborate on the Lagos Plan of Action's recommendations on women and development. However, it is obvious that the context in which the strategies were elaborated has somewhat changed from that of the Lagos Plan of Action. Africa is experiencing serious economic and social setbacks exacerbated by drought and famine. Thirty-five African countries, those south of the Sahara in particular, are affected by desertification resulting from severe drought that has caused loss of human life and large-scale population displacements. Resources must be channelled to a few critical sectors of African economies to propel them out of the abyss they have fallen into.
3. According to the strategies, the sectors where attention must be given to women both in the analysis of the prevailing situation and in the measures taken are agriculture and food production, desertification, health, education and human resources development, industry and the environment. The strategies also deal at length with the problems of refugee and displaced women in Africa and peace and anartheid in South Africa and Namibia.
4. The strategies are the result of a careful analysis of the progress made and obstacles encountered by African women in trying to realize the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. A widely accepted view at the Conference was that women's development in Africa was inextricably bound to the problem of peace and Africa's development in general, and no significant progress could be achieved for women outside the overall development strategy of the region. The Arusha conference concluded that the "overall development strategy currently being envisaged for Africa should have as its central concern the objective of equality for all, men and women, as a precondition for development. In the Decade that is just ending the centrality of women in development was not a fact; analysis of various development plans and projects showed that full utilization of this human capital (women) has not been seriously undertaken, though some awareness of its potential was evident. This is the reason for the modest progress made in the past ten years.
5. The impediments to recognition of women are varied and complex; they have their roots in the cultural, historical and colonial past of the African continent. Only a concerted and integrated approach is likely to enhance the contribution and visibility of women. Paragraph three of the resolution mentioned above called for all future meetings dealing with the development of Africa especially in the key

areas of environment, agriculture, industry, science and technology, water and energy, human resources development including employment, health and education - to include women's subjects in their agenda and take into account the Arusha Strategies.

6. Nationally the meeting agreed that planning Ministries and national Machineries for women would play pivotal roles in implementing the strategies. Increased representation of women in policy-making bodies was considered to be of equal importance. With regard to resources the strategies concede that the "worsening economic and social conditions in Africa continue to place severe limitations on available resources and affect women most heavily". The resolution mentioned above, while appealing to OAU and ECA to intensify their efforts to mobilize financial and technical resources within the region for the promotion of women in the spirit of collective self-reliance of the Lagos Plan of Action, also urges the United Nations and the donor agencies to increase their level of financial and technical assistance to women's programmes at national, subregional and regional levels.

7. Finally the Arusha meeting was anxious to monitor progress: the resolution "calls upon the OAU and the ECA to convene a regional meeting to review and appraise the implementation of the Arusha Strategies not later than 1990 and again before the year 2000". Thus among the first steps that should be taken is the popularization of the Arusha Strategies through national and regional workshops, publications and the media.

Five-year plan

8. The attached five-year has been drawn up to help planners at national subregional and regional levels to apply the Arusha Strategies in their programmes for the advancement of women. It is not meant to be exhaustive. Since the Strategies apply to the long-term, an attempt has been made to identify recommendations relevant to the urgent needs of the region which should be put into effect in the next five years and can be easily monitored.

PLANNING AND POLICY-MAKING

The Problem

9. Development planning and policy-making determine future action by allocating resources for the achievement of given objectives. Ideally, plans are drafted, policy is formulated to achieve not only economic growth but social progress. The ultimate aim of development planning is to improve the conditions of living of the entire population. It is self-evident that if national plans and policies are to be effective they must take into account the needs and the economic potential of women, who constitute more than one half of the population in Africa.

10. The Arusha Strategies enumerate a number of obstacles to participation by women in development planning and decision-making in the last decade. National institutions, which have a pivotal role to play in this respect, often lack the power or the technical skills required to monitor changes in the situation of African women. It is therefore recommended that the following critical steps be taken in the next five years.

Action Plan

(a) Countries should make full use of existing national, subregional and regional research centres (such as statistical offices) to collect relevant data and information needed for the planning and elaboration of strategies for the improvement of the status of women and their participation in the development process;

(b) In view of the centrality of women in development, planning ministries should establish a framework for incorporating women's needs and issues in development plans and strategies and for monitoring progress in their implementation, in close collaboration with national machineries;

(c) In order to ensure the effective implementation of the overall development strategy, short-term and long-term arrangements should be made for increasing the representation of women, specially those in rural areas at grassroot level, in policy-making bodies;

(d) Schools and training institutions, centres and adult education programmes should incorporate leadership training in their curricula with emphasis on the part both men and women should play in decision-making. Suitable teaching material should be revised or devised for this purpose;

(e) Governments which have not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women should do so;

(f) In view of the pivotal role which national machineries could play in the enhancement of women's positions and opportunities, it is imperative that these bodies be placed in strategic locations where they can monitor national trends, seize all relevant occasions to advance women's interests and work to implement the Forward-Looking Strategies;

(g) National machineries should set realistic targets based on a genuine appraisal of women's priorities especially at grassroot level for the utilization in overall planning.

Regional Activities

OAU and ECA should:

(a) Expand their regional-level activities including the dissemination of information and technical assistance to facilitate experiments on intervention modalities that are most likely to promote women's contribution to increased productivity;

(b) Take steps to widen the social and economic surveys of Africa to provide data for the integration of women in development towards the year 2000;

(c) Provide for the collection and analysis of data in appropriate regional statistical and information centres and facilitate the incorporation of new information pertaining to women in the research programme of the activities of the African Household Capabilities Survey Programme;

(d) Increase their assistance for the training of women in techniques of development planning and in key economic and social fields with special emphasis on exchange of technical experts and experience within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action;

(e) Co-ordinate better their regional and country-level activities and prepare their assistance programmes in consultation with national machineries at donor roundtable negotiations especially in key areas which have the potential for multiplier effects to improve the situation of women.

B. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION, IMPACT OF DESERTIFICATION ON WOMEN'S CONDITION

The Problem

11. Over the past two decades the food and agriculture situation in most parts of the Africa region has deteriorated sharply, with poor productivity, falling per capita consumption of food and increasing unemployment and misery. The situation has been aggravated by desertification, severe drought and large-scale population displacements. Increased attention needs to be paid to improving women's productivity in agriculture and the goal of self-sufficiency in food production.

Action Plan

(a) Promote integrated solutions such as national food policies diversified according to specific national regions for the improvement of self-reliance on food production instead of palliatives or fragmented remedies;

(b) Dissemination of information to rural women through national information campaigns using all available media and established women's groups; exposure of local populations to innovation and creative thought through open air films, talks, visits among areas of similar demands, demonstration incentives to scientific and technological innovation; participation of women farmers in research for information campaigns; and involvement of women in technical co-operation between developing countries for information exchanges;

(c) Research and experimentation on food production and storage techniques which improve traditional knowledge and introduce modern technology;

(d) Improved methods of reducing post-harvest food loss and of preservation and conservation of food products;

(e) Reallocation of land resources with priority on food production, especially of staple foods;

(f) Access of women to training programmes at different levels and types of skills and widening the range of methods and technologies used for agricultural productions;

(g) Greater attention to planning, development and management of water supply in rural areas, both for irrigation and domestic consumption with special remedial measures to relieve women's burdens in fetching water by the construction of wells, bore-holes, dams and locally-made water catchment devices sufficient for all irrigation and domestic needs, including those of livestock;

(h) Training women to take responsibility for the management of hydraulic infrastructure, equipment and its maintenance;

(i) Involvement of women in the mobilization and distribution of food aid in countries affected by drought;

(j) Organization and utilization of women in the fight against desertification through large scale afforestation campaigns (planting of woodlots, collective farms and seedlings).

Action by international organizations

(a) International organizations should assist women in all areas indicated above, monitor regional changes and report periodically on the progress made;

(b) International donors, including the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), should give greater attention to the applicability of their research on household production for food crops and particularly the role of women in decision-making and in the process of technology transfer.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICA

The Problem

12. There is a close link between industry and agriculture, and the fall in production in the agricultural sector has had adverse effects on manufacturing in Africa. Industry needs a thriving agricultural sector as a major supplier of its raw materials and as the principal market for its output. The weak technical position of women in agricultural production is a contributory factor to the present unsatisfactory situation in industrial development. Problems in the region's industrial development reflect the dependent nature of African economies and the need to promote transformation industries based on domestic agricultural production. The region still has a low industrial base.

13. The major obstacles to an industrial take-off are energy problems, a lack of raw materials for key industries and shortage of qualified personnel, and limited domestic markets. In so far as women are concerned, national industrial strategies have provided few employment opportunities for women, thus underutilizing their human resource potential for industrial development. Discriminatory practices toward women in recruitment and promotion policies have had the same effect. The lack of education and technical training has prevented women from entering the industrial labour force or kept them in low-skilled and unstable jobs. Labour legislation has also tended to inhibit women's full participation in industry, especially in the private sector. At present women's underemployment in industry is exacerbated by high levels of unemployment. The very limited employment possibilities for women in the formal sector, the tendency to choose capital- rather than labour-intensive industries, discrimination against women by employers,

the segregation of women workers in the least skilled and lowest paying jobs and the lack of interest shown by trade unions for the problems of women workers constitute major obstacles.

14. A lack of motivation to enter industrial employment (often due to the nature of the work and working conditions) together with women's own self-imposed discriminatory attitudes to entering certain occupations have also been major obstacles to progress.

Action Plan

15. It is obvious that in the next five years only a small proportion of the above problems can be tackled; the following actions are suggested:

(a) Necessary institutional machinery or operational focal points should be promoted for the increased involvement of women in industrial policy-making at the national level. These policies should ensure equal job opportunities for men and women in industries and adequate training of women at all levels of production;

(b) In addition Governments should take steps to increase equitable participation by women in industry, including:

- (i) Applied studies to show how alternative work arrangements, worker benefits and services can increase women workers' productivity and reduce gender-differentiated labour costs;
- (ii) Equal access to and participation in adult education and in-service programmes which teach not only literacy but saleable income-generating skills;
- (iii) Equal priority in the development of technologies that will relieve women's work burdens in the home and at the workplace;
- (iv) Promotion and up-grading of local crafts and other small-scale and traditional industries;
- (v) Ratification of ILO conventions and standards relating to women workers. Ministries of labour and national women's machineries should disseminate information to young girls on emerging career opportunities. National employment services should fill existing positions without regard to sex. Where inequalities still exist, Governments should pass legislation to ensure women's equal pay for equal work.

International Action

(a) The considerable experience and expertise in industrial development accumulated by some African countries could very usefully be shared with others. Within geographic regions, selected national industrial institutions, plants and workshops could become training centres or centres of excellence for the training of women;

(b) Regional and subregional finance and development institutions such as the African Development Bank and the Economic Community of West African States should be encouraged to finance industrial projects and enterprises set up by women to transform local agricultural and fishery products;

(c) Regional training and research institutions should establish target quotas for women candidates in all their courses. They should design and implement regular training programmes especially for women in industry as well as in handicrafts;

(d) International organizations should set up projects to assist women's activities in the informal sector with the following objectives:

- (i) To identify old and new products and processes enabling women of different educational levels to participate effectively in production;
- (ii) To undertake an evaluation of problems women face in gaining access to training programmes in non-traditional fields.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Problem

16. The Strategies dwell on the importance of human resources development, stressing that "the rate and direction of economic growth depends on the speed with which the population of working age acquires the know-why and know-how as well as other means for exploiting the natural resources base to meet domestic needs". Misguided human development policies have intensified the problem not only of male unemployment but also of female, accentuated existing biases against the education and training of girls.

17. Policy makers must be made aware (a) that talent is not distributed by sex and any policy that ignores the largest part of the national pool of talents is suicidal; (b) the focus should be on rural areas where the bulk of natural resources are found and where the larger proportion of women and girls live.

18. Realistic planning should consider the impact of its policy in rural areas, and the morbidity rate of women, which prevents them from full participation in economic activities, should be improved.

Action Plan

(a) The removal in primary education and upwards of elements in the curricula, textbooks and teaching methods which introduce or consolidate gender discrimination;

(b) The reform of curricula and teaching/learning processes and of the design of tests and examinations at every level to facilitate the understanding of science and mathematics, to provide more adequately for independent thinking and to encourage inventiveness particularly in regard to girls;

(c) The design of special measures for reducing the high rate of drop-out of girls, particularly talented girls as well as talented boys, within each educational level and at the junction of educational stages;

(d) Special consideration to be given to extension of opportunities for self-help and self-education to more women and girls at the grassroot level;

(e) Women should be involved in the planning and delivery of public health care services. Health education campaigns should address the need for the involvement of men in family health. Measures should be taken to reduce the rate of fertility and the rate of infant and maternal mortality and to extend the very low life expectancy of African women.

Regional Activities

(a) Exchanges of information and experience for a system of scholarships and training for women;

(b) Setting up or strengthening of African consultancy services utilizing the expertise of women in various fields.

APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA REFUGEE AND DISPLACED WOMEN

The Problem

19. Apartheid and the problem of refugees and displaced women are closely linked. Apartheid, according to the Strategies, is "a brutal and unique form of colonialism where there is no special separation between the colonizer and colonized and race determines the political, economic and social position of different members of society". Apartheid stands against the themes of the Decade. Women in South Africa and Namibia suffer from the same political, cultural and social obstacles that women in independent Africa suffer from. But any attempt to alter these conditions is obstructed by the regime's priority of maintaining the divisive apartheid system. Women's advancement, attainment of equality and peace cannot be achieved while apartheid rule exists. The apartheid system has caused thousands of refugees from South Africa and Namibia to flee to other countries. Other causes of refugees are political instability, social, cultural and ethnic conflicts in African countries, inter-State conflicts and the legacy of colonialism.

Action Plan

National level in independent Africa

20. The women of Africa together with their Governments should renew their commitment to the eradication of apartheid and support to their struggling sisters in all possible ways. To this end women and women's organizations should keep themselves constantly informed of the situation of women and children under apartheid, disseminate information widely and build up awareness in their countries about the situation. Women's organizations should undertake concrete programmes to support women and children victims of apartheid, particularly to those who have become refugees. In particular:

(a) Women and their organizations should pressurize their Governments to sever all links -- political, military, economic, diplomatic, cultural and sports -- with the apartheid regime;

(b) Women and Governments of the front-line States should continue their laudable defiance of the apartheid regime and give moral, political and material assistance to the exiles and refugees from South Africa and Namibia living with them;

(c) National women's groups and organizations should become more actively involved in the issues of refugee and displaced women through raising their own awareness and that of other people in the country and through the mobilization of emergency relief aid as well as developmental assistance, including the expertise of local women to meet the needs of refugees;

(d) Local peoples should be educated to the situation of persons newly placed in their midst. All these efforts should be carefully co-ordinated with the Governmental machinery responsible for refugee matters and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Women's organizations should make concrete efforts to help women and children in refugee camps.

Regional level

(a) Urgent steps should be taken as necessary to strengthen and co-ordinate the activities of the Liberation Committee and the women's programme in OAU, the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) of ECA and the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) so that they can mount a major programme of research, seminars, workshops and other forms of technical assistance to help the oppressed women of South Africa and Namibia overcome their many handicaps under apartheid;

(b) Regional African non-governmental and intergovernmental women's organizations, such as the Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO), the subregional committees on the integration of women in development (SRCs) and the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC), should make the issue of women under apartheid a priority issue for all their meetings and conferences and condemn it in unequivocal terms. They should also exert strong pressure on member States to implement sanctions and other measures recommended by OAU and the United Nations;

(c) The OAU remains the appropriate machinery for consolidating the spirit of co-operation among African States and finding solutions to the problems threatening their security and peace, including the refugee question;

(d) There is an urgent need to undertake regional studies to collect accurate data on refugee and displaced women and to carry out feasibility studies for planned programmes. In this regard efforts must be co-ordinated among the OAU Liberation Committee and women's Programme, PAWO, ATRCW and the Association of African Women for Research and Development. This would place the problem of refugee and displaced women within the broader context of women and development in Africa.