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**DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
ON ITS TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION**

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CHAPTER II. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda on the programme activities for international Women's year to be celebrated in 1975 (E/CN.6/576) at its 601st, 602nd and meetings.
2. In introducing the report, the representative of the Secretary-General said that the draft programme had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 3010 (XXVII) and was based on the replies from 20 Governments, five specialized agencies and 23 non-governmental organizations. She drew the Commission's attention to the organization of the programme which elaborated the significance of the Year including its central theme, "Equality, development and peace", specific objectives of the Year, activities at the national, regional and international levels, and finally, suggested topics for research and seminars. She further pointed out that the programme was as broadly based as possible and aimed at providing countries with a choice of activities which they could undertake on a realistic basis. It was important for members to realize that the success of the programme would depend to a large extent on adequate funding.
3. Many representatives were convinced that the Year had far-reaching international significance for women and for society as a whole. The celebration was especially timely since, despite the comparative improvement in the status of women in several parts of the world, many handicaps still existed. Several representatives felt that one of the prime functions of the Year was to draw attention to those inequalities which still existed. They expressed wide support for the comprehensive nature of the draft programme contained in document E/CN.6/576 and particularly, for the excellent guidelines which it proposed for implementing the objectives of the Year on the national, regional and international levels. Some representatives welcomed the fact that both women and men were urged to participate

in the programme at all levels and that the participation of men was essential to the success of the Year.

4. The central theme, "equality, development and peace" was considered to be an appropriate reflection of the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 3010 (XXVII) and in other United Nations instruments relating to the status and condition of women. Moreover, some representatives thought that the programme adequately illustrated that the Year will provide an opportunity not merely for appraising progress so far made with respect to the achievement of equality for women and the implementation of their fundamental human rights, since the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945, but also for planning for their future needs in long-term programmes. In reality, the Year was felt to mark the launching of a new stage in the development of women's role in society and to stimulate new initiatives at the national, regional and international levels.

5. Although comparatively few Governments had replied to the Secretary-General's request for comments on the proposed programme, several representatives stated that this in no way indicated a lack of interest in the Year. Indeed, from the experience in their countries, a number of steps had already been taken, in some instances at the highest level, to set in motion machinery for organizing activities for the Year. In some countries, for example, interministerial committees had been established to plan the preparations; in others, special seminars were being organized and obsolete laws reviewed.

6. In commenting on part II of the draft programme entitled, "Specific objectives", some representatives stressed particular aspects of the problems facing women. Those specifically mentioned included the elimination of unemployment, underemployment and illiteracy, the provision of appropriate educational and training opportunities as well as vocational guidance for women and girls, the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, better conditions of work for the working women and the need for reconsidering the attitudes towards traditional roles of women and men in society. The question of attitudes was discussed by a number of representatives who pointed out the need not only to change traditional societal attitudes but also to imbue women themselves with a feeling of confidence by equipping them to fill important roles in society.

7. Some members also pointed out the necessity of eliminating obstacles to over-all development caused by racism, racial discrimination, colonialism and imperialism. The opinion was expressed that reference should be made to the role women might play in the programme of activities for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination contained in General Assembly resolution 3057 (XXVIII). Some representatives also felt that it was important to draw the attention of Governments to the need to publicize and ratify certain existing international instruments relative to women and to consider the elaboration of a draft declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency or in time of war or of the struggle for peace, national liberation and independence as well as the adoption of a convention on the elimination of discrimination against women.

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8. With regard to the achievement of world peace, the view was expressed that women could more effectively contribute to its achievement and maintenance if their status was improved.

9. During the discussion of measures to be taken at the international level, several representatives supported the idea of holding a world-wide conference or symposium as one of the focal points of the Year. In the opinion of some representatives such an international conference should be held in consultation with Governments, specialized agencies and interested non-governmental organizations, to examine progress made in the field of equality for women and to consider future programmes for enhancing the contribution of women to development, particularly in the context of the Second United Nations Development Decade.

10. Several representatives emphasized the importance of publicizing the goals and objectives of the Year. Such promotional and educational activities were regarded as essential to the success of the Year, particularly for the majority of women who lived in rural areas or who were educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged. It was also pointed out that an exchange of information between women of developing and developed countries could be valuable and would promote greater understanding and solidarity among women irrespective of the degree of development of their countries, and meaningful assistance programmes could thereby be developed.

11. The studies and surveys contained in the annex to the draft programme were generally endorsed. In that connexion, it was suggested that the findings of existing studies should be disseminated as widely as possible and particularly among universities and social science institutes in order to remove further obstacles.

12. It was generally agreed that one of the key factors in the success of the Year and of long-term programmes was to ensure adequate funding. Women's organizations were unable to provide the necessary funding and they should urge political leaders not only to support the Year in principle but to provide adequate funding. In this connexion, several representatives remarked with regret that the Year was inadequately funded under the regular budget of the United Nations, that no extrabudgetary funds were available, and that there was a great discrepancy between funds allocated to International Women's Year and other Years, notably, World Population Year.

13. Another important factor for the implementation of programmes for the Year and beyond related to co-operation among the United Nations bodies and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A special effort should be made during the Year to explore every channel of communication and to discuss problems relating to women as widely as possible. It was felt that the resident representatives of the United Nations Development Programme had a unique role to play in this regard and should be encouraged to have greater contact with non-governmental organizations on the national level.

14. The representative of the ILO made a statement in which she outlined the proposed contribution of the ILO to International Women's Year. Among the many

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activities planned was the inclusion of the question of equality of opportunity and treatment for women workers in the agenda of the 1975 International Labour Conference. In addition, a special issue of the International Labour Review would be devoted to women and the main themes of the Year, and plans had been approved for further study of the question of equal remuneration with special attention to equality of opportunity and treatment for women and for revised recommendations on professional guidance and training. She pledged the full support of the ILO in giving technical material and expertise.

15. The representative of UNESCO spoke of steps taken by that body to prepare for the Year. A special task force had been established and the work of the Section for Equal Education Opportunities for Girls and Women for 1975 and 1976 was designed to fit the theme of International Women's Year. Three special projects would investigate the relationship between the education, training and employment opportunities open to women; the working mother and her role in early childhood education; and women's efforts for peace. UNESCO also intended to work jointly with the ILO to pinpoint obstacles facing girls at the primary school level and to devise strategies for overcoming those problems.

16. The representative of the World Health Organization said that his Organization hoped to make a positive contribution to the Year. He further informed the Commission that there would be a special issue of World Health devoted to the theme of the Year and a background paper on health and nutrition in relation to the integration of women in various development sectors including the rural sector.

17. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations described programmes scheduled for the Year. These included promotion of special agricultural and rural development activities in the field and the issue of a Ceres medal depicting a distinguished woman. An interdisciplinary task force in which women participated to ensure that their needs were taken into account had also been established within the FAO secretariat.

18. The representative of the Economic Commission for Africa described the Women's Programme of the Human Resources Development Division of ECA which was a very comprehensive one. Three projects which had direct relation to the Year concerned national commissions on women and development and women's bureaux, the African Women's Volunteer task force, and the Pan-African Women's Centre for regional training.

19. The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund said that his organization also supported the objectives of the Year and looked forward to working closely with the organizers of the Year at Headquarters since a number of the planned activities coincided with UNICEF's ongoing programmes.

Establishment of a Working Group and consideration of its report

20. At its 602nd meeting on 15 January 1974, the Commission decided to establish a Working Group to elaborate further details of the draft programme (E/CN.6/576) and to strengthen its provisions, taking into account suggestions made by members

in the general debate and those submitted in writing. The Working Group was composed of the representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Belgium, Byelorussian SSR, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, Philippines, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America.

21. The Working Group held meetings on 16, 24, and January 1974. At its first meeting, the Working Group elected Mrs. Erika Daes (Greece) as Chairman and Mrs. Blanca Stabile de Machinandiarena (Argentina) as Rapporteur. It made a number of suggestions and amendments which appear in document E/CN.6/WG.1/CRT/1 for amending the draft programme contained in document E/CN.6/576.
