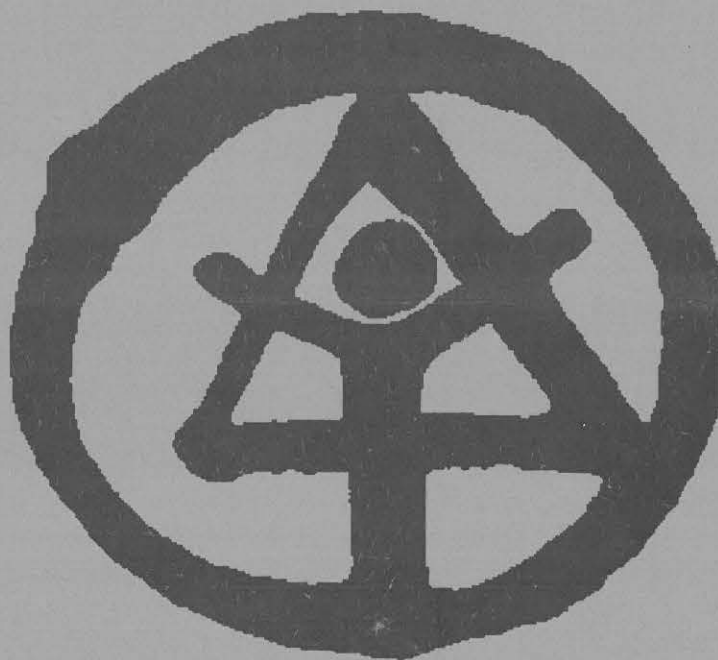


INSTRAW Presence at



HABITAT II  
Istanbul, Turkey

3-14 June 1996

1996 E  
ENV-GLO

**United Nations  
Conference on Human Settlements  
HABITAT II**

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# THE ANATOMY OF HABITAT II

## "THE U.N. CONFERENCE OF PARTNERS"

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE	PARTNER'S FORUMS	DIALOGUES FOR 21 CENT.	UN SYSTEM ACTIVITIES	NGO & ACTIVITIES	SPECIAL EVENTS	EXHIBITION BEST PRACT.	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
3/6 TO 14/6	30/5 TO 10/6	4/6 TO 10/6	3/6 TO 13/6	30/5 TO 10/6	3/6 TO 10/6	1/6 TO 13/6	27/5 TO 14/6
PRE-CONF. CONSULTATIONS	WACLA CITIES' ASSEMBLY	1 HOW CITIES WILL LOOK	DDSMS ECA ECE UNICEF	9 YOUTH ACTIVITIES	FORUM ON HUMAN SOLIDARITY	BEST PRACTICES VIDEOS & VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETINGS	OPENING FESTIVITY
PLENARY  GENERAL DEBATE  HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT	NGOs & CBOs	2 FINANCE	UNCTAD UNDP LINEP UNFPA	REGIONAL NGO SESSIONS	WISDOM KEEPERS MEETINGS		INTERNAT. MUSIC FESTIVAL
	ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE	3 WATER	UNCHS (HABITAT) UNCHR UNU	ISSUE- ORIENTED SESSIONS			YAPI KREDI YOUTH FESTIVAL
	WORLD BUSINESS FORUM	4 EMPLOYMENT	INSTRAW UNITAR UNRISD ILO	COOPERATION SESSIONS	S-G SPECIAL INITIATIVE ON AFRICA	10 UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES' EXHIBITIONS	EXHIBITION PLAST. ARTS PHOTO, ARCH.
	PROFESSIONAL AND RESEARCHERS	5 TRANSPORT	FAO UNESCO WORLD BANK ITU	HABITAT II FOLLOW UP SESSION	WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY & AWARDS		CLASSICAL BALLET
COMMITTEE 1  WORKING GROUP	FOUNDATIONS	6 LAND AND RURAL / URBAN	WMO IFAD UNIDO UNFEM	HUNDREDS OF NGO WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, EVENTS	BEST PRACTICES AWARDS CEREMONY	14 NATIONAL AND NON- GOVERNMENTAL EXHIBITIONS	CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES
COMMITTEE 2	PARLIAMENTARIANS	7 ENERGY	UNCRD IDNPD UNV UNHCR				ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES
	LABOUR UNIONS	8 CITIZENSHIP					BEYOGLU FESTIVAL
		9 COMMUNICATION		42 GENDER FOCUSED EVENTS	HUAIROU COMMISSION	TRADE FAIR "Good Ideas for Better Cities"	SPORTS & FASHION SHOWS
		10 HEALTH					CLOSURE FESTIVITIES

## INSTRAW'S ACTIVITIES

HABITAT II 3-14 JUNE 1996  
ISTANBUL, TURKEY

DATE	ACTIVITIES	INVITING INSTITUTIONS
June 4 (Tuesday)	Afternoon: from 1 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. "Living Longer Living Better" NGO Committee on Ageing at the NGO Forum	NGO Committee on Ageing Vienna NGO Committee on Ageing
June 5 (Wednesday)	From: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. "The Future of Urban Employment" at the Marmara Hotel	ILO, UNCHS-Habitat
June 6 (Thursday)	Informal briefing of International Agency Group on Women	DAW - Chaired by Ms Angela King
June 7 (Friday)	INSTRAW Statement, Committee Hearings of the Conference	
June 10 (Monday)	INSTRAW Press Conference at 11:00 a.m. in the Media Center	
June 11 (Tuesday)	From: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. "Women and Human Settlement in Conflict Zones"	INSTRAW, UNCHS (HABITAT) at Technical University-Gumus Suyu Campus-Blue Hall

★ Please note:

The date for INSTRAW's Statement at the "General Exchange of View", 3-11 June, has still to be announced.



Official Conference

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT  
ACTING DIRECTOR

**INSTRAW**



United Nations International Research and  
Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON  
**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**  
**HABITAT II**

Istanbul, 3-14 jUNE 1996

Introductory Statement by  
**Martha Dueñas Loza**  
Acting Director

# INSTRAW

## STATEMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, HABITAT II

ISTANBUL, 3-14 June 1996

### I. BACKGROUND TO HABITAT II

The objective of this Conference is to raise global and national awareness on the positive roles of cities and towns as centers of major social, cultural and economic activities; to stimulate partnerships for more effective resource mobilization and investment; and to improve the environment in which people live through new, more effective investments in shelter and urban development;

Habitat II is the culmination of a four year series of conferences organized by the United Nations that began with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992.

Part of the value of these Conferences for women has been to firmly establish their concerns as an integral part of the international agenda. The WOMEN's AGENDA has been more clearly articulated and integrated into the world development priorities.

In 1975, at the start of the UN Decade for Women, the Plan of Action of the Mexican Conference referred to the special role of women in human settlements. Official recognition came in the 1976 UN Habitat Conference in Vancouver. Ten years later at the Nairobi Conference, documents stressed the need for women to participate in and benefit from plans, programmes and projects related to the development of human settlements. The resolutions adopted in Nairobi, published as *The Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, called for a number of major changes in policy and practice.

(1) *The enrollment of women in architectural, engineering and related fields should be encouraged, and qualified women graduates in these fields should be assigned to professional policy-making and decision-making positions. The shelter and infrastructural needs of women should be assessed and specifically incorporated in housing, community development, and slum and squatter projects (paragraph 209).*

(2) *Women and women's groups should be participants in and equal beneficiaries of housing and infrastructure projects. They should be consulted on the choice of design and technology of construction and should be involved in the management and maintenance of the facilities. To this end, women should be provided with construction, maintenance and management skills and should be participants in related training and*

educational programmes. Special attention must be given to the provision of adequate water to all communities, in consultation with women (paragraph 210).

(3) *Housing credit schemes should be reviewed and women's direct access to housing construction and improvement credits secured.* In this connection, programmes aimed at increasing the possibilities of sources of income for women should be promoted and existing legislation or administrative practices endangering women's ownership should be revoked (paragraph 211).

(4) *Special attention should be paid to women who are the sole supporters of families.* Low cost housing and facilities should be designed for such women (paragraph 212).

The Earth Summit continued with this policy approach to integrate women's needs in human settlements. Chapter 7 of Agenda 21 continues:

(1) *Generate employment for the urban poor, particularly women,* through provision, improvement and maintenance of urban infrastructure and services and the support of economic activities in the informal sector such as repairs recycling, services and small commerce [7.16.b(i)]

(2) Institutionalize a participatory approach to sustainable urban development, based on continuous dialogue between the actors involved in urban development (public sector, private sector and communities), especially women and indigenous people [7.20(a)]

(3) Establish appropriate forms of land tenure which provide security of tenure for all land-users, especially indigenous people, women, local communities, the low income urban dweller and the rural poor [7.30 (f)]

(4) Provide direct assistance for human settlement development at the community level inter-alia by (7.77 9d):

(i) Strengthening and promoting programmes for social mobilization and awareness raising of the potential of women and youth in human settlements activities;

(ii) Facilitating coordination of the activities of women, youth, community groups, and non-governmental organization in human settlements development;

(iii) Promoting research on women's programmes and other groups, evaluating progress made with a view to identify bottlenecks and needed assistance.

As recognized in the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, social change and progress or sustainable development are linked to and dependent on the advancement of women. By recognizing this fact, we acknowledge that women are agents of social change. However, given the fact that the majority of the world's women do not have access to affordable and secure

housing, their struggle to gain housing rights takes on increasingly importance. Consequently, a wide range of other economic, social, political and cultural activities indispensable for the development process are reduced in meaning and scope.

How can sustainable development be achieved if those that have been identified as agents of the development process are not able to participate, to use their creativity, to explore and use their potential? For women to be agents of change in a sustainable development process at least a minimum level of social and economic security is needed. An adequate habitat provides that minimum level of security. The denial of the right to an adequate habitat constitutes, therefore, an obstacle to sustainable development itself.

In September 1995, in Beijing, the Fourth World Conference on Women in its Platform for Action stressed that women's expertise and needs should have an impact on housing and in the development of settlements in both rural and urban areas.

The poorest sectors of society, that is, the social group already disproportionately denied other rights related to an adequate standard of living, are the most frequent victims of this denial of socio-economic opportunities. Women constitute more than 70 percent of the world's poor and the number of rural women living in absolute poverty has risen by nearly 50 percent during the last two decades.<sup>1</sup>

"In the world of the urban and rural poor, it is the women who are most often than not the poorest of the poor, and this is why one can speak with some justification of the 'feminization of poverty' in the third world, a condition that is most shockingly visible in the slums and squatter settlements which are a prominent feature of the urban landscape in developing countries".<sup>2</sup>

## II. CREATING SPACE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND NEW STANDARDS

The United Nations has set development standards through the creation of international covenants, protocols and conventions. Furthermore, global plans of action have been developed in order to meet these standards. The principal fora for developing and agreeing to these global plans of action are the U.N. World Conferences, which during the 1990s have touched every aspect of human and sustainable development processes from different perspectives and with different emphasis. Furthermore, and particularly since the 1992 World Conference on Environment and Development, these fora have served as a space where state representatives and civil society have met to inform, to discuss, to demand, to negotiate and to make commitments.

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<sup>1</sup>UNDP, Human Development Report 1995, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.36.

<sup>2</sup>Remarks by Executive Director of HABITAT, opening address of the Seminar to promote the Participation of Women in All Phases of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.

Environmental sustainable development, which is the overall common goal, cannot be achieved unless women, as real and potential agents of social change, are given at least a minimum level of social and economic security. The lack of an adequate habitat is one of the most pressing problems faced by humanity.

The right to habitat is a fundamental human right. The definition of this right is not equivalent to the right to adequate housing or shelter, which is the most common formulation. The right to adequate habitat goes far beyond the four walls and a roof over one's head.

UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION HABITAT RIGHTS INCLUDE:

- access to public services such as potable drinking water, electricity, sewage disposal, drainage, heating or cooling (when necessary), roads, health services, public space;
- access to land;
- affordable housing and access to housing credit;
- adequate housing standards;
- popular participation and control over housing resources;
- guarantees against any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse in housing;
- security of tenure of protection from forced eviction from lands or dwellings;
- specific housing rights entitlement of traditionally excluded groups, such as women, migrant workers, the disabled or ill, the elderly, and the ethnic minorities;<sup>3</sup>

As we approach the 21st century, however, this basic human aspiration, has for a variety of reasons, become unattainable to a growing number of the world's citizens. Research conducted by the United Nations, by research institutes and by non-governmental organizations has identified the global habitat crisis caused by: poverty; structural adjustment programmes and debt; the failure of government and development policies; environmental disasters and degradation; armed conflict; discrimination in the housing sphere; the withholding of information crucial to housing; exploitation in the housing sphere; housing speculation and concentrated land

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<sup>3</sup>UN doc. R/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/15, annex, paras 1-12; Scott Leckie, "The Right to Housing" in Eide, Krause and Rosas (eds.) Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, 1995, p.108. See also, General Comment N.4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing [Article 11 (1)] of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

ownership; the criminalization of "the informal housing sector"; forced evictions; and the dramatic perpetuation of homelessness.<sup>4</sup>

As we here in Istanbul conclude a series of UN World Conference, we should make some reflection about how to put the ambitious plans of actions into practice. Although governments have the main responsibility in this regard, although governments through their state apparatus have an obligation to respect, promote, protect and fulfill the right to an adequate habitat and other development goals, we must be realistic in a time when government expenditures are shrinking and the market mechanisms are on the rise. We must also listen to the voices of civil society, represented by a broad variety of organizations and group interests, including women's organizations, who increasingly demand space and opportunities to attend their basic requirements as well as those of their families instead of new standards alone.

Creating space means a recognition of the fact that a large proportion of the State obligations associated with economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to an adequate habitat, are in fact negative in nature, implying the duty to the State not to intervene in certain social processes. Creating space means that the official "legality" should not be employed by the State to deny citizens the ability to fulfilling their own needs when the State is unwilling or unable to do so. This would apply to the right to housing in the so called "illegal" occupation. The creation of space can lead to improvements in the habitat situation of citizen by simply allowing people to create solutions to their own problems.

Allowing space for personal and community initiatives related to the realization of the right to adequate habitat does not mean that the State no longer has the obligation to respect, to promote, to protect and to fulfill this right. However, it does mean that initiatives brought forward by organized groups in civil society aimed at satisfying citizens' needs should not be discouraged by states or viewed as a threat to social stability.<sup>5</sup>

### III. EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

A. *Empowerment of women* implies entrusting women with the intellectual, emotional and educational as well as material means to exercise control over their decision and the resources which are important to them. Empowerment means generating or building capacities to exercise control over one's life.

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<sup>4</sup>See Scott Leckie, "The right to Housing" in Eide, Krause and Rosas (eds.) *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995; UN Doc.E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/15; Scott Leckie, "When Push Comes to Shove - Forced Evictions and Human Rights", Habitat International Coalition, 1995

<sup>5</sup> See United Nations document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/16, paras 187-194, where this argument is developed in relation to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

To empower women, at least to a minimum level of social and economic security, an adequate habitat that provides that minimum level of social and economic security is needed.

Individual empowerment can transform into collective empowerment, through collective organization (civil society) based on a common purpose and common identity. However, for this collective empowerment to take place, a space is needed.

**B. *Sustainable development*** can be defined as economic development based on a sustained yield or renewable resources and in addition, as a process of cultural and social change which secure human welfare while maintaining the natural resource base.<sup>6</sup>

Environmental management is needed in all settlements to provide water, protect public spaces, remove wastes, and protect air and water quality. Rapidly growing urban centers are a particular challenge for environmental health. Urbanization is usually associated with the development of a more productive economy, and it can bring major benefits to health and the environment, the concentration of population and business lowers the unit cost of piped water and health services, sanitation, energy and the collection and treatment of household and commercial wastes. Despite some slowing of the growth rates in many major cities in recent years, population growth still outstrips the ability of local authorities to provide even minimal levels of these services. Local governments are often hampered in their efforts by a weak revenue base, poor financial management, few trained personnel, and by budget cutbacks that cause a further decline in the coverage and quality of water, sanitation, energy, refuse collection and health care services and programmes.

Women are often excluded from such programmes. With little or no formal training, women have a more difficult time entering paid employment; when they do, income levels quite often are low. Women's access to land, to credit and to technology is limited and although they have traditionally been the main builders and maintainers of the home, men dominate the modern approach to shelter design, planning and construction. Governments should ensure women's access to security of tenure by removing existing obstacles to their signing contracts or deeds together with their male partners or without them.

Much of the housing in both the rural and urban areas of developing countries lacks the most basic requirements for health. More than 2000 million people live in life-threatening and health-threatening housing and living environments.<sup>7</sup> Most of the poor have incomes that are too low to enable them to afford better housing with adequate space, security and services. Fear of eviction is a constant worry for most tenants and inhabitants of illegal settlements. The risk of infection, particularly from pathogens associated with excreta, is high. Most illegal settlements have one rudimentary water supply system and no sewers or drains. An estimated 30-50% of the solid wastes generated in urban areas in developing countries is left uncollected.

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas-Slayter, Polestico, Esser, Taylor and Mutua, "A Manual for Socio-Economic and Gender analysis: Responding to the Development Challenge", ECOGEN 1995, p.15

<sup>7</sup> WHO/EHE/92.1, page 15



In most of the settlements and slums that poor dwellers are forced to inhabit, there are very few services, no water supply, sewerage, garbage removal or electricity; roads and transport facilities are poor, medical care is inadequate, there are few schools.

Women as income earners, home makers and quite frequently heads of households, fulfill a crucial role as contributors to the solutions of human settlements problems which should fully be recognized and reflected with their equal participation in the elaboration of housing policies, programmes and projects and in the incorporation of their specific interests and capabilities in human settlements policy formulation.

### *Vision*

There is a need for a "vision" of gender sensitive human settlement. Urban and regional planning needs to include women as well as men if human settlements are to be responsive to women's perspective on the use and function of private and communal living and working space. Coordination between the agencies which provide employment, energy services, water, sanitation, waste recycling, health, child care, transportation, education, and training, needs to be undertaken to ensure that the burden of domestic chores is lessened.

Human settlements need to be constructed allowing for equal opportunities in employment and income-generating enterprises for both women and men, with adequate access to transport and markets. A vision of gender-sensitive human settlement must also encompass a shift in responsibility sharing for domestic tasks between women and men. It would necessitate a shift from centralized government planning, implementing and control to an integrated sectorial planning mechanism, and a decentralized implementation system at the local government and community levels.

Nearly one third of households worldwide are now headed by women. Female-headed households predominate in the poorest neighborhoods of cities and towns and on the most fragile and marginal land in the countryside. Many of these female-headed households are due to male migration to cities for employment. Other factors include widowhood, civil strife, population displacement because of natural and/or human made disasters.

Based on these facts, we can only conclude that the development of international norms and standards has gone far beyond the resulting improvements which have been made in the daily lives of women worldwide. It is precisely the closing of this gap which is at the heart of the mandate and work of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

## **IV. HABITAT AND INSTRAW's WORK**

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, INSTRAW, is an autonomous institute established in 1976 within the framework of the United Nations. As mandated by its Statutes, INSTRAW also raises awareness on women's issues worldwide and assists women to meet new challenges (Statute of INSTRAW 1984, Article

1). The Institute's research addresses the obstacles to the political, economic and social empowerment of women and attempts to identify the means through which those obstacles can be overcome.

Building on the Institute's research, the training component is directed primarily towards the policy-making level and the research and academic institutions. Finally, networking is INSTRAW's third major activity. The Institute works to assist the efforts of intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations by publishing and disseminating research findings and training activities and promoting cooperation between relevant agencies both within and outside of the United Nations framework (*Statute of INSTRAW* 1984, Article VIII).

Through its research, training and networking activities INSTRAW contributes to the empowerment of women by creating space for information, for dialogue and for capacity-building.

The goals and principles of Habitat II are addressed in an integrated and holistic approach in INSTRAW's research and training programmes:

- the feminization of poverty is a consequence of women's unequal access to economic opportunities. Research conducted by INSTRAW and other demonstrates that credit is an important mechanism for making financial resources available to women.
- the need for statistics and data desegregated by sex in all developmental areas is a prerequisite for sustainable development. INSTRAW's research programme in this area focuses on the need to measure and value unpaid work. However, to date little progress has been made in this area. Housework, childcare, elderly care, and non-market activities are still regarded as not having economic value. When women's roles and contributions to the national economy are not reflected in official statistics and indicators they remain neglected in policy design and development programmes.
- INSTRAW's programme on women, environment and sustainable development encompasses the main pillars of human settlements: water energy, waste management, sanitation. Through its training programme, the Institute has prepared three multi-media training packages and trained more than 600 people worldwide, with the aim of reaching women that are largely absent from the managerial positions where decisions regarding the environment and natural resources are made. Women are marginalized even further as a result of their lack of access to information, technology and economic resource. In particular, women in rural areas of developing countries often do not have the necessary information to make sound choices on technologies appropriate to their circumstances, when it comes to environmental concerns.

Additional gender-specific information on access to land, credit, technology will change traditional thinking and stereotypes and allow policy makers to see that men and women have different gender roles and responsibilities and that development policy decisions can affect each differently.

On behalf of INSTRAW I take the opportunity to extend to Habitat's Secretary-General and his staff our warm appreciation for the preparatory process and successful conduction of the Conference.

To conclude, allow me, Mr. President, to express through you our deep gratitude to the City of Istanbul, its charming citizens and the Government of Turkey for their welcoming hospitality.

Panels NGO Forum  
Living Longer, Living Better

AGEING: A CHRONOLOGICAL PROCESS IN LIFE  
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS ARISING FROM IT  
ACTING DIRECTOR

**INSTRAW**



*AGEING: A CHRONOLOGICAL PROCESS IN LIFE,  
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS ARISING FROM IT*

Prepared by Martha Dueñas Loza  
Acting Director

Presented at the panel

*LIVING LONGER, LIVING BETTER*

organized by the NGO Committee on Ageing  
Istanbul, Turkey  
Tuesday, June 4, 1996

## **LIVING LONGER, LIVING BETTER**

panel organized by the NGO Committee on Ageing  
Istanbul, Tuesday June 4, 1996

### **AGING: A CHRONOLOGICAL PROCESS IN LIFE, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS ARISING FROM IT**

KEY WORDS: stages, phases, multidisciplinary,  
interinstitutional, comprehensive, holistic  
understanding, interdependence, reciprocity,  
solidarity, mobility, potential burden, threaten,  
instant analysis, rushing conclusions, distort  
reality, low flat rate/transparency, redefinition  
of human being's value as opposed to value of  
money, elderly's dignity as opposed to burden.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The topic of this panel is: "Living Longer, Living better". My comments will briefly dwell upon: "Aging: a chronological process in life, social and economic questions arising from it".

As a first attempt to address this complex question, the presentation will be composed of two parts: the first part will include a brief description of what can be considered the three stages and three phases for the purpose of this analysis, in order to see the scope of the multidisciplinary issues and the interinstitutional aspects that must be analyzed to reach a comprehensive and holistic understanding and will also incorporate some preliminary conclusions and recommendations. It may well be that a deeper analysis add some phases and, eventually, define better the three stages.

The second part will refer to the international institutional response within the United Nations system, and particularly what INSTRAW has done so far. It will also include General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions pertaining to the ageing process as well as a bibliographic reference.

## PART I

Reading different articles on this subject, I sometimes have the impression that the elderly have always been old and that we, "the young", have always been carrying them as a burden. It should be clear that as individuals and as members of a social group our cultural richness and ability exist thanks to the preceding generations. It is then, that the saying 'to protect the health of future generations, to build-up peace for the children of our children' may have a meaning.

AGING is not an isolated process that suddenly afflicts human society. In my understanding the question can be analyzed on the basis of three stages, and three shared characteristics. Gender as a concept should be fully reflected in the analysis of the stages and characteristics of aging.

### Three stages:

A) **INDIVIDUAL:** Aging is an individual chronological process that starts the very first day of our lives. For a person -female or male- it is an individual long term situation, during which a life-cycle learning and training process takes place, some crucial and some trifling decisions are made; duties are discharged; responsibilities are assumed; taxes are paid; religious, social and cultural values are respected and transmitted.

B) **SOCIAL GROUP:** The basic social group comprises the nuclear and/or the extended family, clans, tribes. This stage is a short to medium term process (one generation), involving the interaction of several individuals and different generations.

C) **SOCIETAL ISSUES:** For society (neighborhoods, towns, cities, countries), it is a medium to long term question that requires planning ahead of time. Anthropological, geographic and sociological studies, demographic analysis and indicators are good tools that will help planners and politicians to understand, reflect and decide on critical issues ahead of time.

### Three phases:

As an individual can simply not survive, and much less live, completely alone its entire life, his/her existence depends on other individuals of the same species as well as of other species. Therefore, the existence of human life can be understood through three phases common to all living creatures.

### Three shared characteristics of the three phases:

1) In the life cycle, **INTERDEPENDENCE** is not an unique characteristic of the human condition. The present level of development is based on the sequential cumulative enrichment of thousands of years. **INTERDEPENDENCE** at present can be found in the environmental issues, in the economic system, (international trade and globalization are examples), in the social and cultural systems as well as in the political one. **INTERDEPENDENCE** is an individual experience, in as much as it is a collective one.

In addition to interdependence, **reciprocity** is probably one very important element to be found both in the interdependence phase and at the solidarity one.

2) A second characteristic is **SOLIDARITY** among individuals and among generations, which constitutes the very survival mechanism that has made human life possible. Breaking down or disrupting these interdependence and solidarity processes creates contradictions, despondency and attrition.

3) A third characteristic is **MOBILITY**, individual and/or social. Mobility is a force that bestows dynamism, facilitating individual growth and social progress. One of its impact is very well reflected in the situation of elderly living in urban and in rural areas, each area with its own set of characteristics, problems and opportunities. Loneliness, isolation, abandonment, are some of the negative aspects affecting the soul, mind and health of the elderly, motivating a great level of destitution. Destitution, unfortunately, also experienced by infants, children and teenagers.

Disruptions occurring in these processes can be focalized in time and in space. They can be of different nature: punctual or occasional; concrete or diffuse; local or global. However, the methods of addressing these contradictions, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions, as well as the methods and practices used by societies to solve them. Experience shows that it is quite important to find solutions well before these contradictions become an insoluble problem, thus preventing societal crises.

Some of these social and economic contradictions are the result of a society's evolution within the requirements originated by the industrialized system. These means that employment issues, division of labour and work opportunities, which are of a very different nature from those experimented by the individuals, the family and by society before the industrialized revolution - and are evolving in unpredictable ways as a response to the industrialized system - are deeply affecting the interdependence,



solidarity, mobility phases as well as family structures and society.

This new process brings a very different dimension to the sense of solidarity, reciprocity and interdependence for the population at large, and in particular, for those at the beginning and at the end of the life cycle (that is, street children and abandoned elderly).

An example of this contradiction is the following: on the one side, medical and pharmaceutical progress in treating human sickness and healing, and the medical and genetic scientific research that has save so many lives, prolonged lives spans. On the other side, the rest of the financial and societal infrastructure is built on the basis of very well delimited time frame.

Basically the question of aging and the fate of older populations has been widely ignored as a chronological process that every individual and every social group goes through, and as a process that has social, economic, cultural and political implications. Some of the basic assumptions regarding old-age and well being have proved not to be accurate.

These assumptions are:

- a.- the elderly are integrated in the family structure who will provide for them. Old parents give their possessions if they have any, to their adult children who in turn will care for them until the last day.
- b.- industrialized societies with their welfare structures, will protect their workers through social security schemes.
- c.- the private sector has sufficient resources to finance a secure and protected last stage.

In this type of assumptions it is easy to see the dichotomy resulting from the process of societal evolution and the financial structures. It was taken for granted that economic growth and industrialization would bring solutions to the main challenges of development, therefore aging was not consider an issue.

The general tendency of western social and economic institutions to analyze the question of aging as a financial, medical and social security problem, and presenting the elderly as a potential burden, is becoming much too frequent: "burgeoning elderly populations threaten to overwhelm government benefit programmes in the developed nations, but demographers differ on how

great the challenge will be".<sup>1</sup> This type of instant analysis and rushing conclusion distorts reality by ignoring the historical roots of the current situation and subordinates long-term explanations and understanding to short-term distinct monetary interests.

While on the one hand, as has been recognized, "the lengthening of life expectancy for the global population has been one of the greatest triumphs of humanity", this triumph can be turned into ashes as societies struggle to find solutions to the resulting financial costs.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, western Christian society is based completely on the shortness of life as opposed to eternity, on labour contracts, merit, wages, pension plans, insurance coverage.

It is somehow surprising that the plethora of demographic analysis and population statistics have paid so little attention to the obvious correlation existing between population growth, health and medical findings and subsequent prolongation of life expectancies and aging. Therefore, careful study on population ageing should be done in conjunction with, and as an integrated component of human reproduction issues and other demographic phenomena, within the scope of the concept of gender.

The very significative changes in understanding, policy decisions and investments on improved nutrition, medical technology, sanitation and public health implemented in the last fifty years have produced very important changes in life expectancy as reflected in the United Nations demographic indicators on life expectancy at birth:<sup>3</sup>

LOCATION	1950	1995
World-wide	46.4	64.4
Industrialized countries	66.5	74.4
Africa	37.8	53.0
Latin America	51.4	68.5

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<sup>1</sup>. American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, Vol.273 July 1996.

<sup>2</sup>. Eileen Crimmins, demographer at the University of Southern California (USC).

<sup>3</sup>. "The World Population Plan of Action, 1994 Report, DESIPA, United Nations ST/ESA/SER.A/152, Table 1, page 33

As life expectancies increase world wide and birthrates are slowly decreased, the proportion of the population that is old is expanding rapidly, swelling the potential economic burden on the young. Meanwhile, existing systems of financial security for the elderly are headed toward collapse. In the industrial countries, escalating costs threaten to overwhelm public pension plans. In some developing countries, urbanization, increase mobility, famine, and war are eroding extended families and other traditional means of support.

The elderly who are protected by a social security system constitute one category; the elderly with access to their own private funding schemes are another category. These two categories are frequent in industrialized societies and in the affluent social sector in developing countries. However, in all countries there are a large number of elderly without any financial security and most of them must depend on their children's support.

The elderly living in the informal economic sector, mainly in developing countries, represent quite a different category. Elderly refugees, migrants, victims of social/civil violence and war, elderly living in extreme poverty are categories that do not have any type of security scheme.

While most analysis on the problems of older populations are concentrated on the industrialized societies, a similar demographic transition is taking place in developing countries (see annex I).

According to the International Labour Office: "The elderly are now living 10, 20 or even more years on their pensions -if such pensions are available. This poses some general questions. How can a shrinking active population provide protection tomorrow for a growing number of non-working people? How can the cost of pensions and health care be borne?".<sup>4</sup>

According to Thomas Juster <sup>5</sup>, the Health and Retirement Study is "one of the most ambitious and expensive social science projects ever undertaken, the survey is the first to track both the medical and economic conditions of middle-aged Americans as they move closer to retirement and, ultimately, the grave". This project began in 1992.

So far the general analysis and available literature related to elderly basically reflects their situation as an economic

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<sup>4</sup>. The ILO and the Elderly, 1992. International Labour Office, Geneva. ISBN 92-2-108222-9.

<sup>5</sup> T. Juster, economist and survey research specialist, University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, American Association for the Advancement of Science, July 1996.

question and as a -financial- burden. The World Bank emphasizes that: "pension systems should be restricted to paying low flat rate benefits, while the bulk of mandatory retirement provisions (i.e., the earning related component) should be entrusted to private commercial pension funds"<sup>6</sup> (see annex 2).

The World Bank reports do not mention how low flat rate benefits can reflect the level of economic contribution and financial input made by any person during his/her economically active years. Neither do they reflect the fluctuations affecting rates and capital; or do they mention the inflation patterns that affect private pensions funds; nor the financial and institutional changes governing this sector. The World Bank reports do not elaborate on the necessary measures to impede bankruptcy of these private commercial pension funds.

It would be quite sobering to know the real motivation behind these propositions for interinstitutional financial transfers of life pension's savings to be managed in the present level of deregulated financial markets! Besides which, the private commercial funds are managed by a generation prototype whose interests in life (golf, surfing) do not necessarily incorporate those of older generations of much different economic and social background.

Questions such as transparency, accountability, the interest of the commons and ethical matters are at stake. As massive and prolonged unemployment is becoming the norm among all ages, the fact that the elderly are becoming poorer does not make them a social priority. However, ignoring the social, economic and environmental questions related with them will dramatically erode the foundations for sustainable development and ultimately for peace.

Three main questions arise from the pension system:

- 1.- related with REDISTRIBUTION mechanisms;
- 2.- related with SAVINGS schemes; and,
- 3.- related with INSURANCE systems.

The criteria recommended is based on the impact on the aged and their impact on growth. Social aspects are more related with the questions of access to housing, security within the neighborhood, medical assistance, loneliness, sickness. etc.

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<sup>6</sup>. "Averting the old age crisis", policies to protect the old and promote growth" World Bank Policy Research Report, Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-520996-6.

Because there is a reinforced tendency to political and institutional management under the scope of the 'law of increasing error supported by the law of decreasing scrutiny', the macro questions (globalization, privatization, etc) related to social, economic, political and cultural aspects of any given society/country are assumed to be the key of absolute happiness, regardless of the impact on older generations or in younger ones.

Nevertheless, the impact projected by macro questions on older generations is not subject of analysis and/or evaluation and much less reflected in policy decisions, legislation, institutional matters, nor in national accounts, or in social and economic indicators. Therefore, we run the risk of overgeneralizing and thus distorting a complex and diverse reality and creating misunderstandings.

Unfortunately there is no mention, no reflection, no quantification of the contribution made by the older population when they were not old, therefore ignoring their accumulated value throughout the years; ignoring their contribution to the pension system according to the rules applied when the system was created. Ignoring also their contribution to the present level of well being, to the present level of social, economic, political and cultural development.

There are several examples of significant decisions to take care and protect the elderly, as the case of the Nordic countries. The problem remains the lack of specially designed empirical studies focussing on the interdisciplinary aspects, or the institutional questions, and much less on the social and economic issues of aging, as a national, regional and global situation.

## CONCLUSION

AGING is a genetic process producing some degree of physical decline. This unavoidable situation must be treated with dignity, with realism and with compassion. Human life can not be valued only through economic output. Human life can not be measured only under the scope of economic productivity. Social and economic activity, cultural and political participation can be enriched with the experience and knowledge of older generations. Younger generations have a lot to learn and to benefit from their elders.

The diversity of the elderly population presents a complex reality, and it seems that society is not sufficiently prepared to address this issues. The International Plan of Action on Aging states: "Policies to meet the challenge of a growing, healthier and more active elderly population -based on the view of the ageing of



society as an opportunity to be utilized- automatically benefit the ageing persons, materially and otherwise. Similarly, any effort to ameliorate the quality of life for the elderly, and meet their diverse social and cultural needs, enhances their capacity to continue interacting with society. In this sense, the developmental and the humanitarian aspects of the question of ageing are closely intertwined" <sup>7</sup>

Retirement, old-age benefits, health protection, standards concerning elderly workers, employment and training questions, equality of opportunity and treatment, housing, have all been subject of analysis by the International Labour Office since 1952 as well as old-age insurance in industry and in agriculture, since 1933, <sup>8</sup>.

The political, social, cultural, economic institutions and systems have been created to protect human life and to facilitate a development process for the well being of mankind. The perversity of the present system is that human needs and well being are subject to economic interests and political theories, corporations and enterprises benefits disregarding that ultimately enjoyment is life enhancing and suffering is life diminishing.

Careful analysis and quantification should reflect the level of economic, social, political and cultural in-put and contribution made while the present elderly were young. Analysis of the situation of elderly persons as consumers, in opposition to the criteria of burden should also be undertaken.

The elderly quite often are used for medical experiments. This arises not only ethical questions, but has very critical financial implications for the medical system. Instead of swelling the economic potential, governments should redefine the costs and practices of health care in its entirety, thus placing in its proper context the valuable role that each generation has in life and changing the perception that the elderly are "swelling the potential economic burden of the young".

To this end, governments should make people's needs their main priorities. Changes in cost of pharmaceutical research and production; changes in cost of practices and medical services; changes in housing and transportation and labour systems are necessary. Redefining and giving new dimensions to the social objectives and economic practices are fundamental steps to attain human well-being and full implementation of human rights.

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<sup>7</sup>. "International Plan of Action on Aging, para 31 (f), endorsed by the General Assembly Res. 37/51"

<sup>8</sup>. The ILO and the elderly, *idem*.

Promote analysis and better understanding of the role the elderly can play in organizational and political activities, their contribution to the political empowerment process, particularly in the case of women. This process should aim at a better understanding of how to potentiate their knowledge and know-how and their expertise through meaningful experiences.

The elderly share a common denominator - the process of aging, but their enjoyment of their last years will depend on how society responds to their needs and the ways and means society has responded during their productive years. This assertion can have contrasting examples such as the elderly, mainly females, living in extreme poverty and those living in luxury retirements.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to advance the understanding of the situation of the elderly the following recommendations should be considered:

- 1.- To address the process of aging in a holistic and integrated manner, keeping in mind that the younger generations, in turn, will also become older in a not too distant future;
- 2.- The elderly, children and younger people have a very critical role to play in any given society, therefore the notion of "dependency" and "burden" should be deleted of the documents and analysis of this issue;
- 3.- The elderly in urban areas have specific situations, set of problems and opportunities dealing with shelter, right to ownership, access to services such as electricity, safe water, sanitation, health care, leisure, transportation, credit. How to address these questions will depend on the ways and means accessible to them;
- 4.- The elderly in rural areas have very specific sets of problems, less opportunities, particularly in enjoying adequate basic infrastructure (roads, housing), less security in services (health, sanitation, electricity, safe water, credit, food security) right to ownership;
- 5.- Migration and related issues have a very negative impact on the elderly, representing societal questions that should be properly analyzed;
- 6.- The situation of elderly victims or exposed to natural disasters should also be carefully analyzed;

- 7.- Technological innovation can have positive and/or negative consequences and impact on older generations. Computer technologies, E mail, internet may become a communication barrier between older and younger generations, the resulting isolation may become alienating and dangerous;
- 8.- The impact of globalization and the drastic changes in the financial and service institutions, such as privatization of social pensions, social security and medical services for the elderly should be measured;
- 9.- Economic and financial activities within the formal structure of society, as well as within the informal sector, and occupational income generating opportunities for the elderly should be considered.



## PART II

### INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

This part will briefly refer to INSTRAW's activities and the United Nations undertakings regarding the process of ageing.

#### INSTRAW's Activities on Elderly Women

1982-1983

Participation in the United Nations University project, "Household, Gender and Age"

INSTRAW participated in the preparations of the United Nations University project entitled "Household, Gender and Age". It was a long term project with a medium term perspective (1982-1987). The second consultative meeting took place in Rome, in April 1982. INSTRAW prepared a position paper on women and the hidden economy. The Institute also assisted the coordinator of the project to identify research institutions and individuals in Africa, Asia and Latin America who could make a possibly contribute to the project.

1987-1989

Statistics on mid-life and elderly women

During 1987, INSTRAW developed a statistical data base on selected variables on mid-life and elderly women in Latin America and the Caribbean, using a US\$ 10,000 grant from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). The data was required as the major input for the Consultative Group Meeting on Midlife and Older Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Current Situation and Policy Implications, held in Washington D.C., 18-20 October 1988, jointly organized by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and AARP and co-sponsored by INSTRAW and the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

Follow-up activities of the meeting included the collaboration with the newly established United Nations International Institute on Ageing to set up of a computerized network on information

exchange to be carried out in co-operation with ECE. INSTRAW was invited to attend the first meeting in Acapulco, Mexico, in June 1989, in conjunction with the World Congress of Gerontology.

The data base on ageing women developed by INSTRAW was also used by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in preparing the documentation of the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Economic and Social Development, held in Guatemala in 1988.

During a second national encounter of geriatrics and gerontology in Santo Domingo, in November 1988, INSTRAW also presented an overview on aging women in Latin America and the Caribbean to assist organizations in the Dominican Republic in developing proposal for external financing.

#### 1990-1991

##### Productive Aging: Dominican Republic

In 1990, INSTRAW agreed to provide advisory services to the project developed and proposed by the College of Arts and Sciences of Kansas State University on productive aging in the Dominican Republic. This pilot project explored the potential of elderly Dominicans to enhance their contributions to the social and economic development of the country and to develop opportunities to expand their income-generating and services activities. INSTRAW provided technical and advisory support in the drawing up of the workplan design of the sample and the questionnaire. The survey was carried out to ensure that information equally important to women and men is collected and that gender analyses are made.

##### Methodological Study for Improving Statistics on Aging

In resolution 44/76 of 8 December 1989 on elderly women, the General Assembly invited INSTRAW and the Statistical Office of the Secretariat to "pay specific attention to elderly women in their efforts to improve methodology for data-gathering on women". During 1990, a study was carried out with the Statistical Office as well as with other UN bodies, to review and propose measures for improving the concepts relevant to: a) elderly women's position in family formation and household; b) elderly women, learning and education; c) elderly women's economic activity and labour force participation; d) elderly women's economic and social support; and, e) health status of elderly women. The result of this study is compiled in INSTRAW's publication "The Situation of Elderly Women: Available Statistics and indicators" published by INSTRAW in 1993.

### United Nations System

Recognizing the need to call attention world-wide to the serious problems besetting a growing proportion of the population of the world, the United Nations General Assembly decided, in resolution 33/52 of 14 December 1978, to convene a World Assembly on Ageing in 1982.

The Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing held in Vienna, Austria, 26 July to 6 August 1982 (resolution 37/51). In 1992, the Assembly adopted a practical strategy for the decade 1992-2001 entitled "Global Targets on Ageing for the Year 2001" (resolution 47/86), which primarily aims at strengthening the capacities of countries to deal effectively with the ageing of the population and with the special concerns and needs of their elderly, and to promote an appropriate international response to the issues of ageing through action for the establishment of a new international economic order and increased international technical cooperation, particularly among the developing countries themselves.

On 12 July 1985, a hearing before the Special Committee on Aging of United States Senate, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session was held in New York. The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:05 a.m. at the Mount Sinai Medial Center, Stern Auditorium, Annenberg Building, Fifth Avenue and 100th Street, New York. A report on this hearing called "The Graying of Nations II", was prepared (see Annex 3).

In 1990, by resolution 45/106, the General Assembly designated 1 October as the International Day for the Elderly.

On 16 December 1991 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 46/91 containing the United Nations Principles for Older Person to add life to the years that have been added to life and one year later adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (resolution 46/91). Governments were encouraged to incorporate its principles into their national programmes whenever possible.

The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna prepared a study called "The World Ageing Situation 1991" in response to General Assembly resolution 41/96.

In its resolution 47/5 of 16 October 1992, the General Assembly decided to observe the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. In its resolution 48/98 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to

draft the conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the Year to be submitted at its fiftieth session, through the Commission for Social Development. This report has been prepared in response to those resolutions and in keeping with Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on the observance of international years and anniversaries.

In 1993, the United Nations published an occasional paper series no.4 under the name of "Older Persons in the Family: Facets of Empowerment", based on a paper presented by a representative of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations at Vienna, at the International Conference on Population Ageing, held in San Diego, California, 17-19 September 1992.

In 1994, the United Nations contribution to the International Year of the Family was occasional paper series no. 13, "The Elderly and the Family in Developing Countries".

After the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995), the United Nations published a special double issue of the Bulletin on Ageing devoted to elderly women. Among its articles are two outstanding ones: "Social and Economic Security Needs of Older Women in Asia" and "Older Women: Caregivers and Recipients, a Caribbean Perspective".

Observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 is the next stage in the evolution of the United Nations programme on ageing. In elaborating the conceptual framework of a programme for the Year, four dimensions emerged:

- (1) the situation of the elderly;
- (2) the life-long individual development;
- (3) multi-generational relationships; and
- (4) the relationship between development and the ageing of populations.

The General Assembly adopted resolution 50/141 - declaring 1999 International Year of Older Persons: Towards a Society for all Ages, (25 December 1995).

General Assembly and ECOSOC Resolutions

- **Economic and Social Council resolution 1751 (LIV) of 16 May 1973** - on the aged and social security.
- **General Assembly resolution 3137 (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973** - on the question of the elderly and the need for well-designed policies and programmes for the aging.
- **General Assembly resolution 32/132 of 16 December 1977** - on the International Year and World Assembly on Aging
- **General Assembly resolution 33/52 of 14 December 1978** - in which it was decided to convene a World Assembly on Aging to call world-wide attention to the serious problems besetting a growing portion of the population of the world and to provide a forum to launch an international programme of action aimed at guaranteeing economic and social security to the elderly, as well as opportunities for them to contribute to national development.
- **General Assembly resolution 33/52 of 14 December 1978** - World Assembly on the Elderly - took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the problems of the elderly and the aged (A/33/265).
- **General Assembly resolution 35/129 of 11 December 1980** - Problems of the elderly and the aged - Paragraph 3 - decides to change the name of the World Assembly on Aging in view of the interrelatedness of the issue of aging individuals and the aging populations as defined by the Secretary-General's draft programme.
- **General Assembly resolution 37/51 - of 3 December 1982** - Question on Aging - by which it endorsed the International Plan of Action on Aging, adopted by consensus by the World Assembly on Aging, held in Vienna 26 July to 28 August 1982. Paragraph 3. Affirms that aging should be considered in the context of economic, social and cultural development, as well as in the context of international strategies and plans.
- **"International Plan of Action on Ageing"** from the Report of the World Assembly on Aging, 26 July to 6 August 1982 - endorsed by General Assembly resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982
- **General Assembly resolution 38/27 - of 22 November 1983** - Question on Aging - Paragraph 14 invites the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental



organization concerned to continue to be actively involved in a coordinated manner, in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

- General Assembly resolution 39/25 of 23 November 1984 on Question on Aging
- General Assembly resolution 40/29 of 29 November 1985 - Question of Aging - recognizes that the dramatic increase in the number and proportion of older adults has serious socio-economic implications and is resulting in an increasing need for research and training at all levels. Appreciating the attention given to the question of elderly women by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the United Nations Decade for Women; Equality, Development and Peace and the inclusion of this issue in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Paragraph 7 invites the United Nations Development Fund for Women to give due consideration to projects aimed at benefiting elderly women.
- General Assembly resolution 40/30 of 29 November 1985, which emphasizes that the elderly must be considered an important and necessary element in the development process at all levels within a given society, and reaffirming also that developing countries, in particular, need assistance in order to implement the Plan of Action.
- General Assembly resolution 41/96 of 4 December 1986. Paragraph 7 requests the Secretary-General, as recommended in his report (A/41/631), to review the world aging situation every six years on the basis of a comprehensive study identifying the major trends and suggesting concrete measures for action.
- General Assembly resolution 42/51 of 30 November 1987 - Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging and related activities - Paragraph 3 welcomes the establishment in Malta of the International Institute on Aging in pursuance of recommendation 57 of the Plan of Action.
- General Assembly resolution 43/93 of 8 December 1988.
- General Assembly resolution 44/67 of 8 December 1989.
- General Assembly resolution 44/76 of 8 December 1989 - invited INSTRAW and the Statistical Office of the Secretariat to pay specific attention to older women in their efforts to improve methodology for data-gathering on women.

- General Assembly resolution 45/106 of 14 December 1990 - in which it recognized the complexity and rapidity of the ageing of the World's Population and the need to have a common basis and frame reference for the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons, including the contribution that older persons could and should make to society. Paragraph 4. Endorses the recommendations of ECOSOC in its resolution 1989/50 that an ad hoc working group of the Commission for Social Development be convened at its 32nd session, in 1991, to monitor the activities for the 10th anniversary. Paragraph 15. Designates 1 October as International day of Elderly.
- Annex: "United Nations Principles for Older Persons adopted by the GA in its Res. 46/91 of 16 December 1991  
Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and related activities.
- General Assembly resolution 47/5 of 16 October 1992 - decided to observe 1999 as The Year of the Older Persons. Annex "Proclamation on Ageing"
- Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/22 of 27 July 1993 - in which the Council invited Member States to strength their national mechanisms on ageing, inter alia, to enable them to serve as national focal points for the preparations and observance of the Year.
- General Assembly resolution 48/98 of 20 December 1993.
- General Assembly resolution 49/162 of 23 December 1994 - on the integration of older women in development.
- General Assembly resolution 50/141 of 21 December 1995  
Paragraph 10 invites INSTRAW and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and other relevant research institutes to consider preparing studies on the four facets of the conceptual framework, namely, the situation of older persons, lifelong individual development, multigenerational relationship between the ageing of populations and development, and requests INSTRAW to continue its research on the situation of older women, including those in the informal sector. Paragraph 14 decides that henceforth the term "older persons" should be substituted for the term "the elderly".

The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat has been designated the United Nations Focal Point on Ageing.

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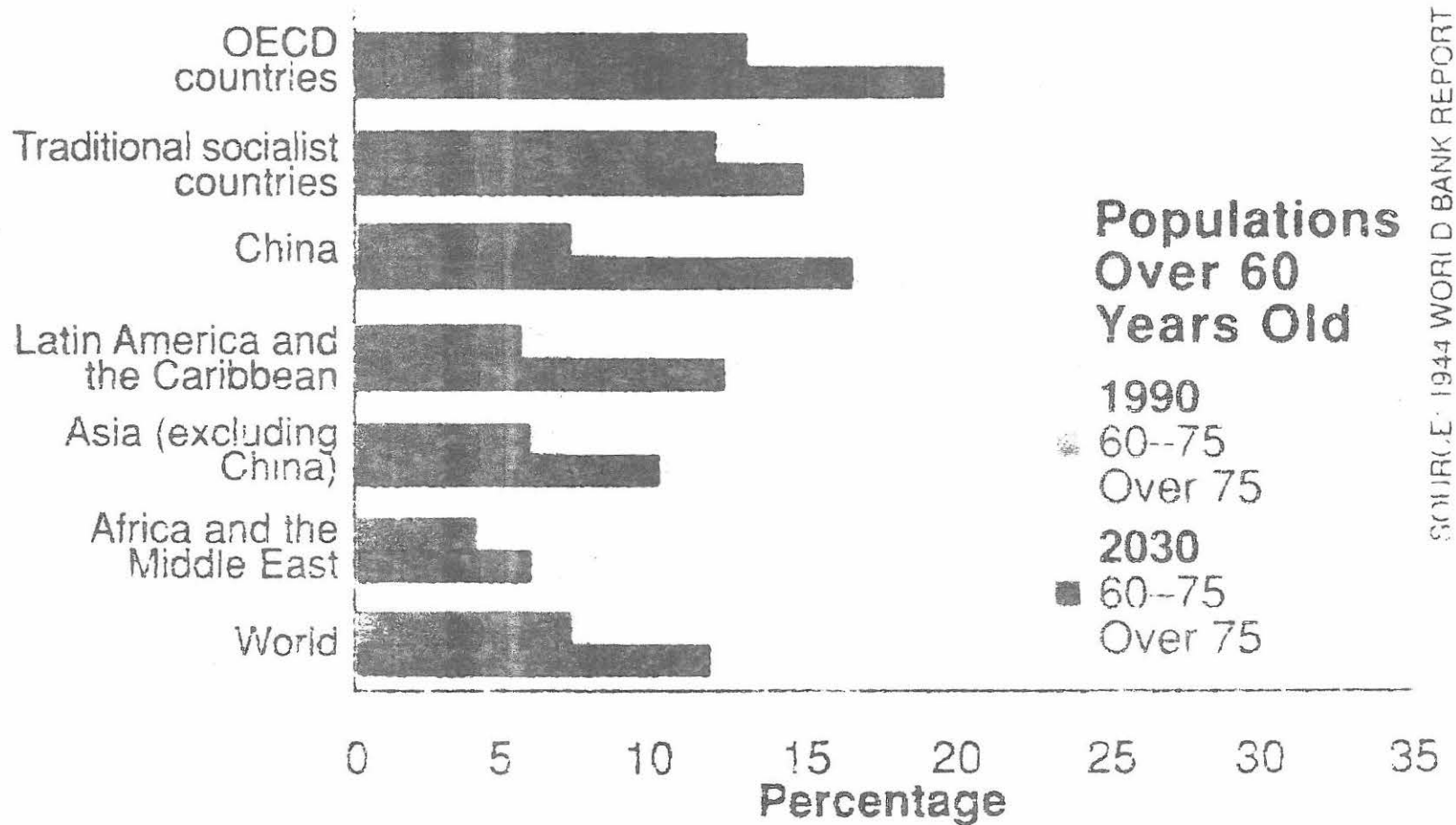


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**Phase transition.** Longer life, lowered fertility are dramatically transforming population profiles worldwide.

## ANNEX II

DICTIONARY OF ECONOMIC. GRAHAM BANNONCK. R.E. BAXTER AND EVAN DAVIS, Fifth Edition, 1995.

Flat yield. A yield on a fixed-interest SECURITY calculated by expressing the annual INTEREST payable as a proportion of the purchase price of the security. It omits any allowance for the difference between purchase price and redemption price (► REDEEMABLE SECURITIES.)

Rate-of-return regulation. A form of regulation, common for public UTILITIES in the USA, under which firms are not allowed to earn above a certain RATE OF RETURN. Under such a regime, price rises are capped to levels at which the target rate of return will be earned. This price will invariably be lower than the price which a profit-maximizing monopolist would charge. (► AVERCH-JOHNSON EFFECT; PRICE REGULATION; REGULATION.)

Rate of Technical substitution (RTS). The increase in production of one commodity and economy can achieve by cutting the production of another commodity by one unit. If a country could transfer resources from making one spoon to make two forks, the rate of technical substitution between spoons and forks is two. The rate of technical substitution between commodity A and B usually diminishes as production of A increases. If, at production of twenty aircraft and twenty million loaves of bread, society can produce a million loaves with equal ease to one aircraft and ten million loaves, the production of one aircraft will require a much larger sacrifice in terms of loaves. Graphically, the RTS is the slope of the TRANSFORMATION CURVE. Mathematically, it is the ratio of the MARGINAL PRODUCTS of producing two items. (► ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY; MARGINAL RATE OF SUBSTITUTION.)

Rates. ► LOCAL TAXATION

Local taxation. TAXATION levied by (or for) local rather than central government. Until 1990 rates were proportional to the estimated rentable value of business and domestic properties (though not farms, which were exempt). Rates were often criticized as being unrelated to income, and there were many anomalies in the valuations which had not, in any case, been re-estimated since 1973. The contribution of central government to local authority finance had risen to the point where local electors, it seemed, had insufficient incentives to vote against increased expenditure.

In 1990 (in England, earlier in Scotland) rates were replaced by the Community Charge, a flat-rate tax levied on all adults, with some exemptions and rebates for those with very limited means. This tax became known as the poll tax ( LUMP-SUM TAX) and required costly compilation of new registers of residents and massive changes to billing systems, since under rates there was only one bill to each household while under the new system all eligible individuals had to be billed separately. The new tax aroused such widespread hostility that in 1991 the government was forced to announce that it would be replaced by a Council Tax in 1993. In the meantime increased grants, funded by higher VALUE-ADDED TAX, were to be paid to local authorities so as to keep poll tax rates down. At the time of writing details of the Council Tax have yet to be finally established, but it will be based upon property values with rebates for persons living alone. Local taxation in the UK remains highly controversial, though both the major political parties are committed to a return to some form of property-value tax base. Business rates have been retained but are now set by the government on a uniform basis across the whole country, though the amount paid will reflect the local value of commercial property.

Internationally there are greater differences in the forms of local than national taxation. In the USA the states levy a SALES TAX. In France the principal local tax on business is based on the rentable value of buildings and equipment but also includes a PAYROLL TAX. In West Germany, regional government levies local business profits, assets and property taxes.

# ANNEX III

CHART 1  
PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION  
OVER AGE 60

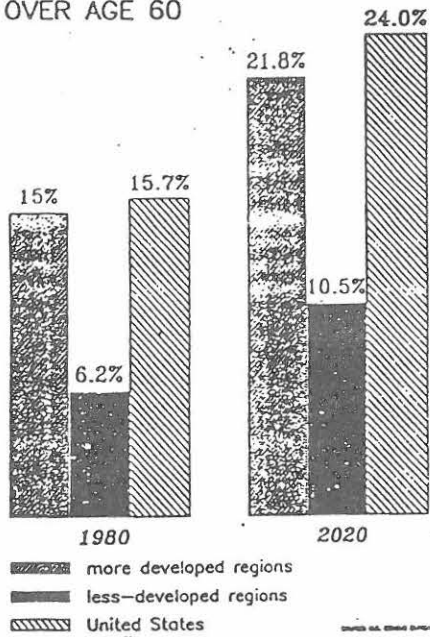


CHART 2  
MALES PER 100 FEMALES FOR THE  
POPULATION AGE 60 AND OVER

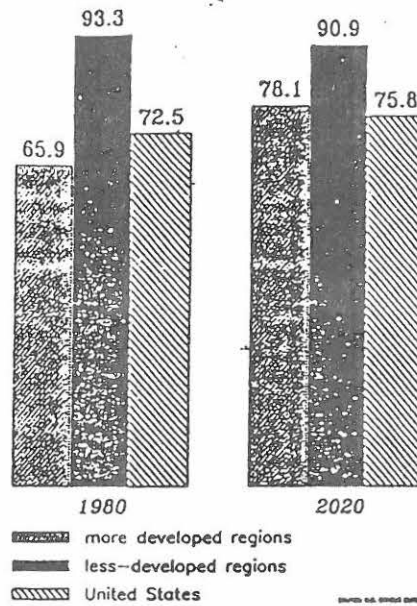


CHART 3  
PERCENT OF ELDERLY POPULATION  
WHO ARE AGE 80 AND OVER

The "Old-Old"

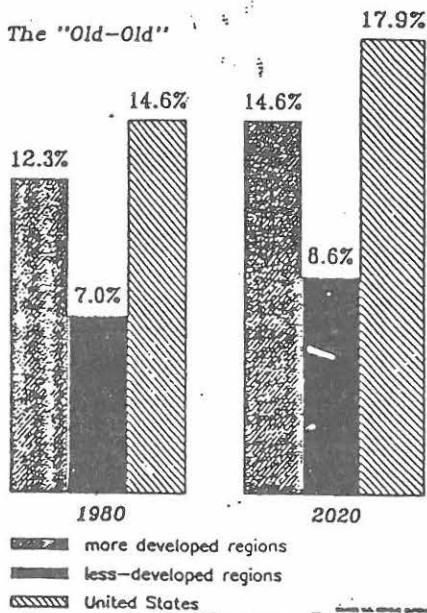
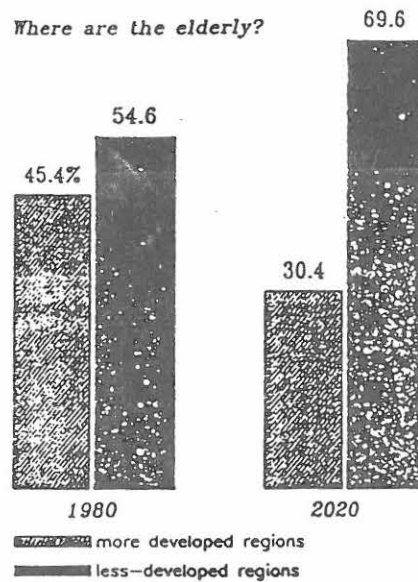


CHART 4  
PERCENT OF THE OVER AGE 60  
POPULATION BY REGION

Where are the elderly?



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Dialogues:  
Water for Thirsty Cities**

**OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN WATER RESOURCES**

**INSTRAW**



**UNITED NATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN  
INSTRAW**

**Overview of Women's Roles in Water Resources**

**To be circulated at the Dialogue:  
Water for Thirsty Cities**

**United Nations Conference on Human Settlements  
HABITAT II  
Istanbul, Turkey - 14 June 1996**

**Martha Dueñas-Loza, Acting Director, INSTRAW**





## OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN WATER RESOURCES

### POLICY OVERVIEW

In 1976, the United Nations declared the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace to assess the role of women in society particularly as related to peace, equality and development. Global conferences were held in Mexico City in 1975, in Copenhagen in 1980 and in Nairobi in 1985 (Nairobi-Forward Looking Strategies, para's 224, 225, 226, 227). Within these global conferences, the important linkages between the role of women in development and the protection of the natural resources was recognized and explicitly stressed the importance of the total integration of women in the development process and emphasized women's participation in national and international ecosystem management and control of environmental degradation.

During the International Conference on Water and the Environment, held in Dublin, Ireland, from 26-31 January 1992, four guiding principles were adopted. Principle No.3 is devoted to women, and it states that "Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water".

The linkage between women, environment and sustainable development in the context of water resources has been reiterated in Chapters 18 and 24 of Agenda 21 agreed on at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The UNCED process affirmed women's key role in environmentally sound management. The two major documents adopted by the Conference, The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, both recognized the important role that women have in environmental management and sustainable development.

Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration states:<sup>1/</sup>

Women have a vital role to play in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieving sustainable development.

It has been recognized that without the integration of

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, Volume I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference.

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environment and women's impacts into development decisions, sustainable development will not occur. The Earth Summit in Rio also recognized the close link between poverty and environment, and called for concerted action to reduce global poverty and improve the global environment.

The Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, China, 4 to 15 September 1995. This Conference adopted a Platform for Action, concentrating on "twelve critical areas of concern" identified as obstacles to the advancement of women. One of the twelve areas is "Environment and Development" under which water resources is an important component.

However, current development planning and projects do not always take into consideration the holistic nature of human activity and thus ignore women's experience, knowledge and administrative and managerial skills. Often development practices have had unexpected side effects due to the lack of consultation and participation at the local level, especially women. An important contemporary issue is to ensure that policy makers and planners recognize the medium and long-term economic benefits of including women in the solution to environmental problems. In fact, difficulties in adopting strategies to minimize environmental impacts are expected to continue until women, and sustainable development are seen and taken as the indispensable foundation for long-term economic and social growth.

The water resources management models of the past will have to be modified. The role and place of water in the socio-economic system varies from country to country: therefore, there is no standard solution. Efforts must focus on two parallel goals: improving everyday life and living conditions for populations, and long-term planning for an environmentally sustainable future.

### INSTRAW ACTIVITIES IN THE WATER SECTOR

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), an autonomous entity within the framework of the United Nations, was established in 1976 with the objective to stimulate and assist the advancement of women and their integration in the development process, through research, training and dissemination of information. In view of its catalytic role, INSTRAW develops and utilizes networking, as appropriate, in carrying out its functions at the national, regional and international levels. The Institute carries out its activities in close collaboration and coordination with institutes, organizations and other bodies within and outside the United Nation system.

INSTRAW is the major advocate for women, water supply and

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sanitation within the United Nations system. Since 1982 INSTRAW gave a priority to its programme on women, water supply and sanitation. The main objective of the programme is to increase the awareness and sensitize planners, senior officials, trainers, engineers and experts in charge of water supply and sanitation policies, programmes and projects of the need and "how-to" involve women in an integrated manner in WSS planning, management, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. In order to achieve its objective INSTRAW programme consists of three clusters, namely:

- 1- policy design and coordination;
- 2- research, training/capacity building; and
- 3- information.

## 1- Policy Design and Coordination

This area of activity involves strengthening collaboration/cooperation with relevant international agencies, councils, commissions and committees by participating in and providing substantive contribution to relevant meetings, sessions, conferences and seminars.

INSTRAW has been involved since 1982 in the United Nations inter-agency collaboration and coordination in area of water supply and sanitation. INSTRAW and UNICEF assumed in 1982 jointly the responsibility of the Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women and the IDWSSD within the United Nations Steering Committee for IDWSSD. Since 1989, INSTRAW and PROWESS provide secretariat services for the Task Force. The Task Force emphasized the need for programmes and activities to enhance women's participation at all stages and levels. During the Decade, INSTRAW in cooperation with other UN bodies and agencies played a crucial role in promoting women's roles and activities in the water sector which was recognized by various international forums and conferences.

In 1992, INSTRAW was designated by the United Nations Steering Committee for Water Supply and Sanitation, as the lead agency on women, water supply and sanitation to prepare in cooperation with PROWESS, UNDP, UNICEF and DESD, new strategies for the Task Force on women, water supply and sanitation in 1993.

INSTRAW participates regularly at the Commission on Sustainable Development, Inter-secretariat Group for Water Resources of the Administrative Committee of Coordination and Interagency Steering Committee for Water Supply and Sanitation. The Institute presents substantive inputs on the role of women in water resources management. The Institute contributed to the Chapter 18 of Agenda 21, Protection of the Quality and Supply of Fresh Water Resources: Application of Integrated Approaches to the Development, Management and Use of Water Resources as it

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relates to women.

INSTRAW and PROWESS were mandated by the Collaborative Council for Water Supply and Sanitation in 1991 to be the lead agencies for the working group on gender issues and water supply and sanitation. During the Collaborative Council meeting held in Rabat, Morocco, from 7 to 10 September 1993, the activities of the working group were presented.

INSTRAW participated in the International Conference on Water and the Environment: Development Issues for the 21st Century, held in Dublin, Ireland. One of the four main principles was devoted to women, namely: "Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water".

INSTRAW in cooperation with UNICEF organized a panel on "Women, Water and Environmental Sanitation" at the NGO Forum, Fourth World Conference on Women. INSTRAW in cooperation with DDSMS organized a special session on "Women and Natural Resources Management" during the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, September, 1995.

INSTRAW will continue to be the major advocate for women, water supply and sanitation in the United Nations system and will continue to provide substantive inputs, strategies, guidelines and innovative training methodologies to enhance women's role in the water sector.

## 2- Training

Since 1986 up to date INSTRAW developed three multi-media training packages on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation. The innovative training packages were developed in cooperation with ILO-Turin Centre and former Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS). The training package was updated with a new modular unit on Women and Waste Management. The training packages are aimed at senior officials of Ministries of Education, Health, Planning; development planners and provincial authorities in charge of water supply and sanitation projects; engineers, trainers; and representatives of non-governmental and women's organizations. The training packages are based on modular participatory training methodology supplemented with audio-visual materials and applicable for various target groups. The training packages contain training text, a user's guide, a trainer's guide, a lesson plan, additional reading, a bibliography, a key-issue checklist for group work and evaluation forms.

INSTRAW in cooperation with various United Nations bodies and agencies organized from 1986 till 1994 ten national and interregional training seminars on the basis of the training packages in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, Thailand, the Gambia, Nigeria, Guyana, Ecuador and Namibia. More than 500



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participants were trained and the evaluation showed that the training methodology is most useful and applicable for different target groups. All the reports from the seminars are available from INSTRAW.

## 3- Public Information

INSTRAW's research and training programmes routinely have a public information component, i.e. leaflets, brochures, posters, proceedings, substantive reports, newsletter, etc.

## Water Resources

Fresh water is considered a renewable resource, but there are limits on supplies available. In many countries and regions shortages of fresh water are the main obstacles to human settlements, agriculture, farming and industrial production. Some of these shortages including seasonal/annual variations in supplies lead to poverty and soil degradation in the more exposed areas. Many cities and agricultural regions are now drawing supplies from underground water aquifers at a rate far above their natural rate of recharge. Water is a prerequisite for human survival and for sustainable development. It is one of the main pillars of environment. Current and projected problems with freshwater resources arise from the pressure to meet the agricultural, human settlement, food and industrial needs of a fast-growing global population.

Of the water resources on earth, only 2.5% of the total is surface freshwater. Of this small percentage, 69% is contained within glaciers and permanent snow cover, 30% is fresh groundwater, 0.9% is classified as soil water, ground ice or swamp water, and only 0.3% is the proportion of the world's freshwater that is renewable for human consumption and use <sup>2/</sup>.

Over recent years, international concern over the state of the world's water resources has deepened. It has been recognized that water is an increasingly scarce and finite resource. International consensus has been reached that the growing water scarcity and misuse of freshwater poses a serious threat to sustainable development.

In 1990, 28 countries with populations totalling 335 million experienced water stress or scarcity. By 2025, it is projected that from 46 to 52 countries will fall into this category and the number of people affected could be as low as 2.782 billion or as high as 3.290 billion, depending on the population growth rates. For many countries, the population growth rate will determine

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<sup>2/</sup> Engelman, Robert and LeRoy Pamela. Sustaining Water: Population and the Future of Renewable Water Supplies. Population and Environment Programme. Population Action International. (1993).

whether the country experiences water stress or water scarcity (Engelman & Leroy 1993).

Misuse of water is widespread. Small communities and large cities, farmers and industries, developing countries and industrialized economies are all mismanaging water resources. Surface water quality is deteriorating and groundwater sources are polluted by surface water and irreversibly damaged by intrusion of sea water.

Cities are unable to provide adequate drinking water supplies. Waterlogging and salinization are diminishing the productivity of irrigated land. Decreasing water flows are reducing hydroelectric power generation and pollution is threatening fish and wildlife habitats.

Deterioration of water quality is a particular threat to developing countries where hundreds of millions of people lack access to clean drinking water and the vast majority of sewage is discharged into surface waters without waste water treatment. In many developing countries, river pollution from raw sewage is thousands of times higher than recommended safe limits for drinking and bathing.

In both urban and rural areas, water sources are being threatened. In urban areas, the vast population pressures on virtually non-existent basic infrastructural services, run-off collecting toxic compounds from sewage, vehicle exhaust and industrial pollution severely degrade water quality. In rural areas, deforestation and degradation of agricultural soil alters the water cycle, threatening the continuity of river and groundwater recharge and increasing dangers of flooding. Chemical inputs from agricultural run-off into surface waters and eventually into groundwater sources are poisoning domestic water supplies. In rural areas, the lack of proper human waste disposal places billions of people at risk of water and sanitation related diseases such as diarrhoeal diseases, schistosomiasis, malaria, and river blindness. Boiling of water for consumption is a safe and effective means of disinfection, particularly through use of renewable sources of energy. However, it does not address the wider environmental sanitation problems such as wastes filtering into water sources which then serve as paths of disease transmission. Thus, while water is necessary for life, it is also the source of disease and death in many developing countries.

For the 1 billion people in developing countries who do not have access to clean water and the 1.7 billion who lack access to sanitation, these are the most important environmental problems of all. Providing access to sanitation and clean water would not eradicate all diseases, but it would be the single most effective means of alleviating human distress.

Access to safe water remains an urgent human need in many



countries. Part of the problem is contamination; tremendous human suffering is caused by diseases that are largely conquered when adequate water supply and sewerage systems are installed. The problem is compounded in some places by growing water scarcity, which makes it difficult to meet increasing demand except at a significant escalating cost.

Access to uncontaminated water has barely kept pace with population growth. Official WHO figures suggest that between 1980 and 1990 more than 1.6 billion additional people were provided with access to water of reasonable quality. In fact, however, many of those who officially have access still drink polluted water. At least 170 million people in urban areas still lack a source of potable water near their homes, and in rural areas, although access has increased rapidly in the past decade, more than 855 million are still without safe water.

### WOMEN AND NATURAL RESOURCES - OVERVIEW

Women, particularly those living in the rural areas of the developing countries, play a major role in managing natural resources - soil, water, forests, and energy. Women, as childbearers, family caregivers, consumers, food producers, fuel and wood gatherers and users, and as field, forest, factory and office workers, are primary beneficiaries, managers, and often preservers of natural resources. Because of their daily tasks in the care of family and community, women in developing countries effect and are closely affected by their environment.

It is poor women, more than another vulnerable group, who have a special relationship with the environment by virtue of the daily tasks which they perform. Close daily contact makes women, more so than men, familiar with properties and uses of natural resources. Women are aware before any other group when natural resource bases are changing or are being dangerously depleted. Women represent a valuable source of information about local environment.

Poverty often requires women to exploit natural resource in order to fulfill family needs rather than to conserve them. Where resource bases are declining, women are the ones who end up searching further and further for wood or water. It is women who are most easily marginalized onto unproductive lands. Increased time and labour burdens translate into stress, ill-health and malnutrition. Entrenched impoverishment forces women to exploit the resource bases, often against their intuitive knowledge regarding the long term well-being of their local environment.

The principal victims of environmental degradation are the most under-privileged people, and the majority of these are women. Their problems, and those of the environment, are very much interrelated. Both are marginalized by existing development policies. Because of the complex cycles of poverty,

inappropriate development and environmental degradation, poor people have been forced into ways of living which further induce destruction. Women often have no choice but to overuse natural resources to barely survive.

Environmental degradation of local environments is one factor that restricts the ability of women to overcome poverty. This circular relationship between poverty, resource degradation and women's roles in environmental management shows how the interests of poor women and the goals of sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. Environmental degradation is not a result of poverty - it is a result of overuse and abuse of exploitation of natural resources. Actions designed to conserve natural resources and rehabilitate degraded and polluted environments can simultaneously give women back their control over scarce resources and are also a means to a better livelihood.

Likewise, programmes which aim at improving the status of women and which lead to the empowerment of women to take control over their own productive and reproductive lives would lead to sustainable environment practices and development. The empowerment of women, is thus a crucial first step in restoring women's capacity to care for the natural resources.

#### Various Roles of Women in the Water Sector

The primary role women play in the management of domestic water supply is well recognized. Women are the primary collectors of water; they determine which water sources are to be used, the quantity and hygienic condition of water available. It is well known that women's interest in participating at an early stage in the procurement of a new or improved water system is high and more and more success stories of long term sustainable projects with effective women's participation are coming to light every day.

Women also play a pivotal role in environmental sanitation. They take primary responsibility for the hygienic operation and maintenance of sanitation facilities. Women, as the primary household food preparers are responsible for food hygiene and are the first teachers of children to assure their good habits in all aspects of hygiene. It is women's behavior in water collection, storage, utilization, waste disposal, human waste disposal, and solid waste disposal, as well as in food handling and hygiene practices which determines the state of health and well-being of the entire family and household.

In spite of the importance of women's involvement in environmental protection and development, their role and participation in the planning and management of water resources are far from reaching desired levels. Their water related work has been taken for granted and its economic and social value are greatly underestimated. Therefore, there is an urgent need to

reconsider development strategies and activities in order to benefit from the participation of women in the planning and development of water resource management.

The main constraints with which women are confronted in achieving full integration and participation in water resources management are: lack of education and training; lack of participation in planning, programming and projects; lack of information and awareness raising methodologies; lack of financial means; and lack of choice in the various types of technologies.

One of the main reasons for these constraints is that policy-makers, planners and project managers lack both a comprehensive data base on women's involvement in the sector and the capacity to plan for, and implement appropriate interventions to promote women's participation.

What is needed is a structural and attitudinal change in institutions including new integrated management systems in human, financial and natural resources. One of the ways to achieve this is through increasing attention to women in human resource development. At the heart of the human resource development is training and research. Integrating women into that training and research is the goal to which INSTRAW is committed. It is important to make explicit provision, within the section of institutional arrangements for water resource management, to help countries incorporate women in research and training as well as capacity building. It is important that governments be enabled not only to desegregate by gender the specific monitoring indicators already identified but also have the capacity to identify new and crucial gender sensitive indicators in the future.

## Various Uses of Water and Impacts on Women

The rural poor, mostly women, rely directly on rivers, lakes and unprotected shallow wells for their water needs. They are the least able to bear the cost of simple preventive measures such as boiling water to make it safe for drinking. This is because the fuel to boil that water must be gathered or purchased. As environmental degradation intensifies, gathering fuelwood becomes more time consuming and buying its equivalent becomes more expensive. In many cities, in peri-urban areas, many poor households must buy water from private vendors, a very expensive option.

Water is needed in households for personal hygiene, sanitation, waste disposal, child care, crop growing and food processing, yet supplies commonly are inadequate and unsanitary. Only 25 per cent of people in urban areas have access to an in-house or courtyard source. This limited access forces women and children to spend eight or more hours every day fetching polluted water from supplies that become increasingly distant because of

frequent drought conditions. In fact, it has been determined that the nutritional level of children is often negatively related to the distance the mother must walk for water. Poorer women who spend more time on income-earning activities have less time for water collection and often have to accept water of lower quality, which threatens their health and welfare.

With increased development, the contamination of surface water and groundwater in developing countries has also increased. Surface water is contaminated by sewage and chemical pollution from industrial toxic wastes. In developing countries, 95 per cent of urban sewage is discharged into surface waters without treatment. Exposure to bacteria, parasites and viruses from raw sewage in water supplies results in a more serious public health threat than exposure to toxic contaminants in developing countries. This is especially true for children who develop diarrhoea from bacterial, viral and parasitic infection contracted through water, food and contact with fecal matter. Diarrheal diseases alone kill between five and six million children each year and is the leading cause of death among children in developing countries.

Exposure to industrial chemical pollution also seriously affects the health of women and children in developing countries. Marine organisms consume heavy metals and synthetic organic chemicals that accumulate along the food chain in predatory fish. Mercury in contaminated seafood ingested by pregnant women has been linked to cerebral palsy in infants and exposure in utero to polychlorinated biphenyls from pregnant women eating fish from contaminated waters are associated with poorer short-term memory functioning in childhood on a dose-response basis.

The costs of water pollution include the damage it does to fisheries, which provide the main source of protein in many countries, and to the livelihoods of many rural people. Fish are often contaminated by sewage and toxic substances that make them unfit for human consumption. Sewage contamination of seafood is through responsible for a serious outbreak of hepatitis A in Shanghai and for the recent spread of cholera in Peru.

Fresh water is essential to health not only for its part in production but also for domestic consumption and use (drinking, cooking, washing, laundry). A high proportion of life-threatening and health-threatening infections are transmitted through contaminated water or food. Nearly half the world's population suffer from diseases associated with insufficient or contaminated water. Schistosomiasis (200 million people infected through contact with contaminated fresh water) and guinea-worm (10 million infected through drinking water containing the microscopic disease vector) are two water-borne diseases. Insect vectors breeding in water transmit malaria (267 million infected), filariasis (90 million infected), onchocerciasis (18 million infected), and dengue fever (30-60 million infected every year). (WHO/EHE/92.1, 1992, page 8). Most of the diseases



associated with water are communicable. They can be classified in four categories: waterborne, water-washed, water-based, and water-related.

Waterborne diseases are the largest single category of communicable diseases contributing to infant mortality in developing countries (1500 million episodes of diarrhoea and some 4 million deaths per year) and second only to tuberculosis in contributing to adult mortality, with 1 million deaths per year.

## CONCLUSION

At the national and international levels, government and non-governmental organizations, women's groups, and international agencies have critical roles to play. Three points should be made concerning their approaches to women's participation in water resources management. First, it should be part of an integrated approach in the management and support of sustainable water activities; second, women's issues are an integral part of community and national development concerns, and the emphasis on women's participation does not imply that activities should be carried out by women only. Third, it stresses the need for both men and women to address the issue.

The twenty-first century calls for a holistic approach towards the development and management of water resources, which is a prerequisite for the effective sustainable development of nations. We have entered an era where policies will have to be reformulated for all water and sanitation activities to ensure sustainable development and adequate utilization of water resources. Such a holistic approach implies the development of human societies, economies and the protection of natural human societies, economies and the protection of natural ecosystems on which the survival of humanity depends. This includes not only the need to look at the water cycle but also at intersectoral needs, ecological issues, alleviation of poverty and diseases, sustainable rural and urban development, and protection against natural disasters.

## WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

1. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Nairobi, Kenya, 9-13 November 1987. INSTRAW with assistance of ILO.
2. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23-28 November 1987. INSTRAW in collaboration with ECA, UNICEF and UNDP.
3. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Kadugli, Sudan, 16-21 January 1988.

INSTRAW in collaboration with UNICEF.

4. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Mogadiscio, Somalia, 13-18 February 1988. INSTRAW in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and UNICEF.
5. Regional Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, held in Bangkok, Thailand, 23-27 January 1989. INSTRAW in cooperation with ESCAP.
6. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Lagos, Nigeria, 10-16 May 1989. INSTRAW in cooperation with ZONTA International.
7. Interregional Workshop on Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Banjul, the Gambia, 2-6 September 1991. INSTRAW in cooperation with UN/DESD.
8. Interregional Workshop on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Bangkok, Thailand, 21-25 September 1992. INSTRAW in cooperation with ESCAP and UN/DESD.
9. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Georgetown, Guyana, 31 January - 4 February 1994. INSTRAW in cooperation with Red Thread Women's Programme.
10. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Quito, Ecuador, 27 June - 1 July 1994. INSTRAW in cooperation with IECAIM.
11. National Training Seminar on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Windhoek, Namibia, 20-25 November 1994. INSTRAW in cooperation with DDSMS and Ministry of Water Affairs.



Dialogues  
The Future of Urban Employment

THE FUTURE OF URBAN EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF CREDIT IN GENERATING EMPLOYMENT FOR  
WOMEN LIVING IN URBAN AREAS

**INSTRAW**



**UNITED NATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN  
INSTRAW**

**The Future of Urban Employment for Women:  
The Importance of Credit in Generating Employment  
for Women Living in Urban Areas**

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## THE FUTURE OF URBAN EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN: The Importance of Credit in Generating Employment for Women Living in Urban Areas

### Prevailing Elements and Future Perspectives

Throughout history, economies have incessantly increased their degree of monetization. In many developing countries until a few decades ago an important part of the economic exchange was still made directly, without the intermediary of monetary currency. This situation has changed radically and as a result, the pressure for generating a monetary income to satisfy basic needs has also increased.

The spread of urbanization has also played a role in the pressure for monetary income. In countries that are predominantly rural, a natural economy prevails but also coexists with urban sectors within the same country. However, due to the continuous expansion of urbanization, the economies are becoming more homogeneous in terms of the needs created by urban life. As opposed to what occurs in the countryside, the satisfaction of urban needs such as fuel, water, housing, transportation, etc. all involve a monetary cost. (INSTRAW/ICRW, 1995).

These factors have put added pressure on women in urban areas to engage in paid employment or other types of productive activities in order to generate a monetary income. Although women have always contributed with their work to the survival and well-being of their families, they were traditionally responsible for household work including the social and sexual reproduction of the family. Thus, women's full-time engagement in the domestic sphere, limited their possibilities for participating in the economically productive sphere.

Recently, however, the strain of economic recession and the economic restructuring process which most of the developing world has undergone, has meant further pressure to increase the family income. Therefore, women have been forced to join the labour market in order to contribute to the family income, while at the same time maintaining their reproductive role within the family.

Furthermore it is acknowledged that, due to multiple factors that will not be analyzed here, the number of households headed by a woman has progressively increased to an average of about one third of the total of households. As a result, women have engaged in paid employment, not only to provide extra income to cover a share of the household's expenses, but to support themselves and their families as an increasing number of women become their families' sole bread-winners.

The above-mentioned double role of women - reproductive and productive - has submitted them to many actual or perceived gender-biased differences that negatively affect their participation in the labour market. Women still confront a series of constraints that restricts their access to job opportunities in the formal labour market, which is marked by a pattern of sexual discrimination. To mention only one relevant factor that conditions women's insertion to the labour force, there is the gender bias in education. Illiteracy is higher among women, access to formal training and education was always been more limited for girls and women, and their acquired skills are less suitable for formal employment. Furthermore, women are trained/educated in the so-called 'female' careers or skills, which usually involve lower-paid jobs.

Therefore, "women have been crowded into particular segments of the labour market, where the relative imbalance of demand and supply serves to reinforce wages settlements lower than in other parts of the employment structure. So many factors interact to maintain the male-female differential and pattern of labour market segmentation and the educational and life-cycle decisions which women make - or have made for them - on the basis of it, which serves to perpetuate the inequitable gender order. Also, "...there is ample evidence, for example, of calculated actions of employers to prevent women from building expectations of long-term employment and the seniority wage structure and career progression possibilities that might be associated with it." (Joeke/UNRISD, 1995).

To a large extent, studies have looked at the specific conditions in which women participate in industrial work, whether in factories or as outworkers. "Low wages, unskilled work, long working hours, sexual harassment, and monotonous or repetitive work are some of the aspects which literature agrees are commonplace for women industrial workers". (Acero/UNU, 1991). These working conditions described for the traditional industrial work that women perform, are usually worse when referring to those industries in Export Processing Zones, where short-termed contracts, lack of social security, prohibition of worker's organization, and job insecurity are a generalized situation.

It should be noted though, that the growth experienced by the international trade in the last decades has significantly favoured the participation of women in formal employment, since women are the preferred labour force in the export industries. There is an important concentration of women workers in those areas of relatively labour intensive operations in the industrial sector, in both the North and South. The fundamental reason for this concentration is that women are paid lower wages than men. "Hence women are the source of the lowest of low-wage labour

available and the mobilization of women into the export sector in developing countries can be logically interpreted as the ultimate expression of the forces of comparative advantage" (Joeke/UNRISD, 1995).

Apparently no comprehensive studies have been conducted to assess the future of employment for women. However, various case studies and empirical evidence (Joeke/UNRISD, 1995), suggest that the effects of globalization of the economy and the changes in services employment - linked to new technologies in telecommunications - could favourably influence the employment opportunities for women in the future.

Meanwhile, although the growth in export manufacturing in developing countries and the increase of services employment in the tertiary sector in the North have had a highly significant gender impact in raising the level of women's participation in waged employment in the modern sector, it has failed to improve the terms of women's insertion to the labour market.

### The Role of Credit in Generating Urban Employment for Women

As discussed above, it is a fact that women need to generate an income to support themselves and their families. It has also been analyzed that, due to actual and/or perceived gender biases, women are in an disadvantaged position to participate in paid employment opportunities and that the conditions in formal paid employment that are accessible to women, are inadequate for their needs, working skills and potentials and their domestic/ family responsibilities.

For this reason, a large number of women in developing countries - but also in the North - are engaged in income generating activities in the informal sector, where women are overrepresented and they work to make a living with different degree of success. A large proportion of women operate as self-employed in micro-enterprise businesses, which allow them to reconcile their domestic and their productive activities. Furthermore, women owned-micro-enterprises frequently constitute a source of employment for other women.

The situation of women in the informal sector both in rural and urban areas has been studied exhaustively during the past decade. From many studies evidence shows that in initiating and operating a micro-enterprise, women face a widely-generalized constraint which is the lack of access to institutional credit, under the conditions that they actually need. Sometime ago, women and the poor only had access to informal sources of credit, such as pawn-brokers, middle-men, relatives, etc., given they

lacked the collateral required by formal banking. Since the 1980s a large number of credit schemes have been developed and implemented - by funding agencies and NGOs- to deliver credit to the poor from which women have largely benefitted. Many of these intermediate micro-finance institutions have designed credit programmes that have proven very effective in reaching women, by significantly reducing the gender-based constraints. However, the size of programmes, their reach, and the funds available through these alternative sources of credit are limited and only satisfy less than 10% of the need for credit in the informal sector.

### Conclusions

The future perspectives of employment for women in urban areas could be seen with optimism, if the internationalization of trade -and consequently of new technologies- continues to expand and the globalization has a positive and pervasive influence in the demand for women's skills, that will increase the employment opportunities for them in the formal labour market. However, policy measures should be taken to ensure this. It is being generally accepted that the conventional economic policy is not enough to positively affect the situation of women in the labour market. Therefore, gender sensitive policy and decision-making is necessary at the international level (including UN relevant agencies), at governmental and non-governmental levels, including women's organizations and the civil society in general.

In spite of the desirable increase in job opportunities for women in the formal labour market, policy-making should not neglect the significant participation of women in the informal sector and the crucial importance of credit for creating and supporting women's income-generating activities as self-employed. In this particular regard, all actors mentioned above should be involved in ensuring that women micro-entrepreneurs meet their credit needs.



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Dialogues  
Energy for the 21st Century

LINKAGES BETWEEN ENERGY AND GENDER EQUALITY

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INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN  
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**LINKAGES BETWEEN ENERGY AND GENDER EQUALITY**

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## LINKAGES BETWEEN ENERGY AND GENDER EQUALITY

### I. BACKGROUND

#### Policy Issues

One of the major initiatives of the United Nations system in the field of new and renewable sources of energy (NRSE) was started in 1981 when the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy convened in Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi Programme of Action (NPA) was adapted for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy. The NPA, which represents a basic framework for action in this area, states that while each country has primary responsibility for promoting the development and utilization of domestic new and renewable sources of energy, international co-operation is indispensable to assist and support national efforts. It was agreed that the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action was to be carried out in a decentralized manner and that it required the participation of all concerned. With respect to concerted international action, the Programme defined the following priority areas:

- a) Energy assessment and planning;
- b) Research, development and demonstration;
- c) Transfer, adaption and application of mature technologies;
- d) Information flow (and public information);
- e) Education and training.

The Nairobi Programme of Action gave recognition to women when it stated that:

"The energy transition must include consideration of the social dimensions, including the role of women as agents in and beneficiaries of the process of development, in view of their special burdens as producers and users of energy, particularly in rural areas".<sup>1/</sup>

The Nairobi - Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS), paragraphs 218-223 also stressed the need to involve women at all levels of decision-making and implementation of energy programmes and policies.

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, Nairobi, 10-21 August 1981, United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.81.1.24

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Within the United Nations system, an Intergovernmental Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy was formed. The responsibilities of the Committee were to promote international co-operation, short and long-term strategies to review the work of the United Nations system with respect to energy and to mobilize financial resources. The coordinator convened meetings of the Inter-Agency Working Group on NRSE within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). At the Ninth Session of the Inter-Agency Group on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (NRSE), held in New York 1990, INSTRAW was given the lead role to coordinate, within the United Nations system, the activities on the theme Women and New and Renewable Sources of Energy, particularly in the areas of research and training. The Committee had a mandate to report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action (NPA).

In 1987, the United Nations convened a high-level meeting of experts to review and assess the implementation of the NPA. The experts recognized that the pace of implementation of the NPA was slower than anticipated, mainly due to the fact that the price of oil declined and consequently the interest in development of NRSE decreased. Following the collapse of oil prices in 1986, energy prices had stabilized at a much lower level and with renewed strength in the world economy, there had been substantial growth in the demand for energy in the developed countries, and at an even faster rate in the developing world. At the same time energy investments had been cut substantially. Other constraints identified were difficulties in dissemination of material. It was also pointed out that inadequate attention was given to cultural, social and institutional aspects of energy development, including insufficient involvement of women in the planning and implementing of NRSE projects and programmes.

At the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy presented the Secretary-General's Report on the Implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action for the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy(A/AC/218/1990/9) in the areas of energy assessment and planning, evaluation, research, development and demonstration, integrated rural energy development, energy and industrialization, human resources, information flows and new project proposals. The significance of this report was that it was used as one of the background documents for the preparation of the Chapters on Energy in Agenda 21, as adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development(UNCED). A high level group of experts also convened a meeting at United Nations Headquarters to prepare a report on energy, environment and development for UNCED.

The ECOSOC resolution 1989/12 of 22 May 1989, entitled "Co-ordination of Programmes within the United Nations System in the Field of Natural Resources", under which ECOSOC inter alia requested the Secretary-General to Submit to Committee on Natural

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Resources at its Twelfth Session scheduled for March 1991, an updated report containing an overview of activities of the United Nations System in water, mineral and energy resources, identifying organizations or units within the United Nations system which are mandated to carry out work in those fields and assessing the extent to which guidelines provided by the Committee on Natural Resources. INSTRAW under its mandates on women, water supply and sanitation and women and new and renewable sources of energy reported to the Committee on Natural Resources .

During the ECOSOC session in 1993 it was decided that the Committee on Natural Resources should become an expert group meeting rather than an intergovernmental body. It was also decided that the Committee on Natural Resources should cover water and minerals and a new Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development was formed. The two Committees report to ECOSOC and to substantive sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. INSTRAW participates and contributes substantively to both Committees.

## UNCED - WOMEN AND ENERGY

### SOCIAL SUMMIT - POVERTY ERADICATION

The UNCED Conference placed energy concerns mainly in the context of climate change and atmospheric protection, as well as sustainable management of natural resources. Energy policy has been considered as part of gender, science and technology for sustainable development as well as for environment concerns(see Annex).

Advancement of women is a cross-cutting issue throughout the social and economic dimension of Agenda 21, as well as in the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

New perspectives in the energy sector, new approaches to gender issues, a better understanding of the complexity of poverty eradication, are especially conducive to:

a) reorienting energy research, policy considerations and indigenous capacity building, incorporating gender specific considerations on a number of issues such as:

a.i. demand analysis and management, recognizing that the objective of the energy system is to provide energy services (cooking, cooling, refrigeration, lighting, heating, transportation) and focusing on how these services can be best provided, rather than looking for solutions of infrastructural and technical nature alone;

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a.ii energy transition from traditional forms of energy (animal dung, wood, charcoal) to more efficient and clean fuels and technologies, due attention to decentralized renewable systems oriented towards self-reliance, particularly disperse rural population;

a.iii. development of sustainable objectives in energy supply, management and planning, technological leapfrogging and training, and full recognition of the gender specific questions by group, by sectors (groups = farmers, street vendors, micro-entrepreneurs/sector = rural, urban);

a.iv. a new paradigm of the economic, technical, institutional and legal structures with considerations to gender equity in aspects such as: land tenure, property and inheritance rights, local financing schemes and access to credit, commercialization and trade including fiscal considerations for the different groups and categories, temporary financial incentives.

## II. WOMEN AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

Today the development of clean, reliable and diversified energy sources has become a major area of concern in all countries. It is one of the most critical issues in relation to developmental and environmental policy. There is a growing awareness that present energy sources are not sustainable either ecologically, or economically. Energy production also creates the potential for environmental change, including the pollution of air, water and land. Some energy sources and their use threaten massive changes in global climatic conditions, with severe consequences for development.

In developing countries, women provide much of the human energy required for subsistence needs, and are, at the same time, the primary users and providers of household energy. They have a small share in the modern centralized production and distribution of energy, particularly in the urban setting. In the developed countries, women influence patterns of use and the amount of energy consumed. In both cases, however, women pay the consequences of declining energy resources and rising prices.

Women as users of renewable sources of energy technologies can provide valuable inputs for the application of technologies adapted to local conditions which are appropriate for household and primary community needs. Considerations about energy plantations, biomass collection and agricultural waste for energy purposes can become a very important source of work for rural women. To this end, it is necessary that adequate research and desegregated data collection be carried out in order to permit a better understanding of women's



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energy needs, as well as women's potential contribution to the implementation of rural renewable energy systems.

Many women in developing countries are also engaged in a number of income-generating activities, frequently related to the informal sector of the economy, which require the utilization of some kind of energy services. Such operations are often run by women in what has come to be called the informal sector, on a full, part-time or seasonal basis, balanced with household responsibilities. Their energy needs are ignored and undervalued by policy and decision-makers, and left out of research and development objectives. Among women's typical informal sector enterprises are food-processing activities, pottery and brick making, beer brewing, catering and a myriad of other crafts. "Street food"- vending, that is so prevalent in many developing countries, has to be cooked and sold mainly by women.

Energy-consuming tasks should be clearly identified by type, quantity of energy consumed, time spent and performer-gender (i.e. gender of the person who performs the task) to match appropriate technology to specific end-uses, thus obtaining the best results. Incentives by financial institutions should be provided to women in rural areas for increased access to credit in order to obtain and maintain relevant and sound energy technologies.

There has been little documentation on the impact of energy pricing policies on the poor, or on the differential impact on women and men. The impact on women and their households of high energy prices and fuel substitution have not been well explored. It is known that in some African cities more than 30 per cent of the income of poor households is spent on fuel. The effect of energy subsidies on the poor should also be examined further. In practice, the benefits of energy subsidies usually go to middle or upper income groups because the poor use very little of the commercial fuels that are typically subsidized (kerosene, LPG and electricity). The poor may be forced to buy smaller quantities of fuel or even black market supplies at even higher cost.

Women's needs, interests and constraints are often overlooked in resource management programming. Women need to be included as both participants and beneficiaries in all energy policies, programmes, not only at the rural project level, but also at the national level where energy conservation, management and programming and pricing are analyzed.

Women are confronted with several problems in achieving full integration and participation in energy-related activities, including: 1. lack of education and training; 2. lack of participation in energy planning, programming and projects; 3. lack of information and awareness raising methodologies; 4. lack of financial means; and, 5. lack of access to choice with regards to various types of technologies.

To enable women to participate more easily in energy programmes and projects, it is crucial that the planning of secure energy services must give appropriate consideration to women's needs and requirements both in urban and rural areas. Urgent attention should be given to improving the efficiency of current utilization of energy and measures for saving energy in all sectors of rural activities - domestic, agriculture, rural transportation, etc. In urban areas, women's energy needs in the household, for domestic activities as well as in economically productive activities, particularly in the informal sector need to be given appropriate consideration.

The structuring and implementation of policies to reach out and involve women in the energy sector is a prerequisite for environmentally sound and sustainable new and renewable sources of energy programmes. Many NRSE programmes fail, however, to provide adequate training to community members, particularly women, who, either voluntarily or for small compensation, carry out local maintenance and management. This problem reflects the relatively recent change from centralized, agency-managed systems to more decentralized, participatory approaches, as well as the limited number of evaluations of the functioning and efficiency of local facilities.

### III. INSTRAW RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

#### Research on Women and Energy

The energy sector thinking has undergone dramatic evolution in the past two decades, spurred by oil prices in the 1970s and by the recognition that huge amounts of energy will be required to fuel Third World population and economic growth. The most important change is the realization that energy, environment, poverty eradication and development are far more intimately intertwined than was believed even a few years ago. These changes have made women's issues in the energy sector more visible and relevant.

#### New Perspectives on Gender

Gender paradigms have also undergone considerable evolution over the past two decades. In the 1970s the approach was "women in development" - WID - , the aim was to integrate women into the existing development programmes through affirmative action, and the fulfillment of quotas and target groups.

In the late 1980s, INSTRAW and several social scholars realized that development can not be focus on isolated groups or isolated individuals no matter how dramatic their conditions may be. As a partial response to the limited success of WID, a new "gender and development" - GAD - approach evolved, and rather than focusing on women alone, looks for an integrated - women and men -

approach, on the understanding that the distinct culturally and socially defined roles and tasks for both women and men at the household and at the community level constitutes the basic factor on which any development process must be based.

So far, the understanding of how the new gender perspective could/should influence the institutional changes as well as the policy decision-making process has been applied as a compensatory representative character. The general discussion of WID and GAD and the open developmental literature, concentrates its attention on questions of: compensation, trickle-down, donor-recipient as a permanent underlying derivational thinking.

### Gender and Environment

The emerging new analysis of gender and environment issues underline that women and men related to the environment and to natural resources differently. Their knowledge, needs and interest are different. This assertion is even more evident in rural areas in developing countries. However, production and consumption patterns in the industrialized sectors of developing countries, are not incorporated in any WID or GAD approach and much less in any environmental and developmental theory. And yet, women as consumers, specially of resource base/energy intensive products, constitute an economic distinctive category.

Ecofeminism and developmental approach in the 1990s have asserted that women are naturally more caring about the environment. gender analysis for the rural areas of the third World has shown that the burden of environmental degradation often falls disproportionately on women because of their responsibility for subsistence. This one sided approach, denies the de facto impact on the resource base resulting from the present polluting production/consumption patterns. (Jackson, 1993 Cecile, "Doing what comes naturally? Women and Environment in Development" World Development 21 (12)).

Women are not an homogeneous category, their interest in natural resources, environment and sustainability issues will vary by as many variables as all other social, political, cultural and economic characteristics, thus depending on a microanalysis of individual/local material realities (idem).

### Women and Energy

In INSTRAW's understanding and experience, women's needs for energy vary depending on whether they are in urban/rural industrialized societies or in developing countries; their stage of economic development and whether they are economically active and have access to information and technologies; as well as their involvement on different sectors of economic and social activity.

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While conventional energy paradigms virtually define women's concerns out of the capital intensive, monetized, expert dominated energy sector, (Cecelski, E. 1992, Women, energy and environment--FIAS), the new scope of the energy sector have given new visibility to women issues. Women are seen as the main energy and natural resources consumers, as well as managers. The Nairobi Plan of Action adopted in 1981 first and, the Rio Conference after, highlights five sections suggesting gender-energy related issues with high relevance to energy policy and research:

- i. energy transition, as a two fold process: a) unquantified human energy(time-use and unpaid work) to an appropriate valuation of human non-marketable and non-income generating activities, b) from fossil fuels to more efficient fuel technologies resulting from the use of renewable sources of energy;
- ii. health externalities, indirect impacts on health of fuel scarcity, (bacterial sterilization, decreased nutritional status, clean indoor air);
- iii. sustainable transport systems;
- iv. forestry, deforestation and desertification;
- v. rural electrification - promotion of renewable energy sources, decentralized small-scale units and self - reliance processes.

The existent research on women, energy and environment is scattered in literature on women's work, household energy, social forestry as users and collectors of biomass and victims of energy scarcity and deforestation, women as passive recipients of rather often obsolete technology (mainly cookstove programmes), and virtually excluded from energy decision-making and management.

this type of alienating research focusses only in one category of rural women in developing countries. However, the impact of the energy transition to more efficient fuels to be used in both traditional activities in industrialized and developing societies is not even mentioned, and much less the role of women as active participants in the innovation process from fossil fuels to cleaner, safer, ecologically sustainable and more efficient technologies.

The large share of national investment of the energy sector in developing countries is not sufficient to meet basic needs and amenities. Investment and imports for the energy sector are large enough to have macroeconomic impacts and fiscal ramifications and yet, energy consumption of developing countries is one-fifth that of industrialized countries. The well-being of society depends on decisions involving energy-economy interaction and energy pricing



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policies that depend upon considerations of the rate of return on investment in the energy sector. These questions are addressed in macro level policies and decisions, while gender energy related considerations remain at the micro level of technological, institutional and financial interventions.

As long as the productive and reproductive spheres of social and economic activities of the genders are different, time -use, un-paid work and unquantified human energy are not properly recognized, gender-bias energy policies will not be solved.

INSTRAW is trying to find the elements to better understand gender energy specific related issues, by analysis of sectoral breakdowns of unpaid work, of the share of non-commercial energy use for gender through time-use. INSTRAW will continue to conduct research and policy analysis in order to understand the correlation between access to reliable energy services and safe water and fertility rate, morbidity and mortality; to develop new concepts and methodologies for energy-gender related data, as for example: the indirect impact of the external debt payment burden in the cost per kilowatt/hour correlated to per capita service investment; gender -energy consumption patterns; technological leap-frogging alternatives to promote the so-called clean technologies whose implementation and use should not represent an additional burden for rural women, but rather, tools for improving their living conditions, thus constituting an effective way to eradicate poverty.

INSTRAW is firmly convinced that macro-level energy policies will give attention to women's needs and requirements only on the basis of gender specific data and statistics that realistically reflect women's unpaid work and contribution to the economic growth and social well-being.

**Dialogues**  
**Cities, Communications and the Media in the Information Society**

**WOMEN, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS**  
**OVERVIEW OF INSTRAW'S CONCERNS**



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**Women, Media and Communications  
Overview of INSTRAW's Concerns**

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Cities, Communications and the Media  
in the Information Society**

**United Nations Conference on Human Settlements  
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**Martha Dueñas-Loza, Acting Director, INSTRAW**

## **Women, Media and Communications**

### **Overview of INSTRAW's Concerns**

#### **Introduction**

The growth of cities and the globalization of the world today has made face-to-face communications increasingly ineffective for communicating expeditiously across wide distances and to a wider audience. The communication needs (individual and collective) of the world today have led to the development of sophisticated communication technologies and services and to the development of a mass media ever more pervasive and far reaching. Planet Earth is surrounded by a dense web of communication channels which have converted it into a "global village". Our age is often referred to as the information age and we are living in the information society.

What is the role of women in this new information society? What access do women have to the mass media and to new communication technologies? How has the mass media affected women's self-esteem, violence against women, women's empowerment? How can the new communication technologies contribute to enhance women's role in the development process? More specifically, how can mass media and new communication technologies contribute to assist women in urban environments? How can they contribute to the empowerment of women? These are some of the questions which INSTRAW has addressed in its programme "Women, Media and Communications" and which will be briefly discussed below.

#### **Women and the Mass Media**

During the past decades there has been much concern about the discrepancy between the media's treatment of women and men and their respective realities. Men and women, it has been pointed out, are not only covered differently by the media, but the coverage is frequently both unrealistic and unfair (INSTRAW 1995). Women are most often depicted as sex objects, passive, dependent and often incompetent and dumb, while men are portrayed as active, adventurous, powerful, sexually aggressive and largely uninvolved in human relationships (Wood 1994). These stereotypical views not only deny the existence of alternative role models and situations, but help sustain them.

Urban environments are the sites of most of the world's crimes. The proliferation of pornography and violence in the mass media not only reflect, but sustain violence against women. As urban centers are the recipients of most mass media, the violence already existing in them is further reinforced by mass media content and programming. Violence, and fear of it, has become a part of many women's lives; not only because they suffer from it directly, but also because they are constantly confronted by it in the media. While the media is flooded with scenes of violence against women, there is little to help women know what to do to avoid or prevent such violence (INSTRAW 1995).

Concerned about the media's portrayal of women, INSTRAW prepared a handbook "Content Discontent" targeted at media people, including those in communication schools and

decision makers in the media. The handbook aims at contributing to a more gender sensitive media. It presents arguments and issues concerning the power of the media and the misrepresentation of women in it. It also offers practical suggestions on how a fairer portrayal of women might be achieved.

INSTRAW has also been concerned about how the media can assist development, specifically women and development. In 1988, INSTRAW held an expert group meeting on "Communications for Women in Development". The objective of this meeting was to review the potentials for development purposes of already widespread technologies (such as radio, television, film, video, sound-slides and multimedia training packages) and to look at new possibilities for expanding the use of computers for databases computer-assisted learning, teleconferencing and electronic publishing, to name only a few items on the ever-growing list of new technologies.

As a follow-up to this expert group meeting, in 1991 INSTRAW received funds from the Government of Italy for a project on "Development of Communication Materials for Women and Development". The main objective of the project, which was implemented in three countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, was to reinforce local women organizations and strengthen their capability to use communications as a strategy to promote and accelerate the participation of women in development. The project was divided into two phases. The first phase consisted of research on the image and the participation of women in mass and alternative media, while the second phase consisted of concrete ameliorative actions. The activities carried out in each country differed and responded to the most pressing concerns identified in each of the country studies and to the resources and expertise of the three executing organizations. The actions ranged from the production of a pilot TV programme in Colombia to the preparation, in Argentina and the Dominican Republic, of diverse communications materials for dissemination and for training. These materials targeted media people (professionals and students), women organizations and public figures (such as women politicians) that make use of the media.

In order to change the ways in which women are portrayed in the media and to promote programming that can assist women's development concern, more women need to work at the decision making level in the media. Studies conducted by INSTRAW in Latin America and the Caribbean revealed that women's participation in terms of employment in the mass media is rising, although their participation in this sector is less than other employment sectors in the three countries studied. It also revealed that women are far less represented in management than in reporting across almost every media category. Therefore, women are clearly not in a position to set agendas on gender or other issues. As reporters, women are most often assigned to cover traditionally female areas such as fashion and cooking. Editorial, sports, police and trade union association beats remain male preserves. As to the working conditions of women in the mass media, INSTRAW's studies revealed that women's employment situation in the media unfavorable in terms of salaries and other benefits, promotions, etc. and are vulnerable to sexual harassment. Women reporters often claim that their work is censored more than men's. Women, however, are not always aware

or willing to acknowledge discrimination against them in the workplace. Despite this, all three country studies reported the existence of a few very popular female news broadcasters and commentators with highly non traditional views speaking on behalf of women's rights. These, however, are reported as exceptions to an otherwise low and compromising profile of women in the media.

Professional women in the media have made some gains in promoting a women's perspectives in the news and to focus on women in developing countries. The Women's Feature Service is one noteworthy example of this effort. But women and men working both in management and in rank-and-file in the media need to be trained on gender and development issues in order to ensure that women issues are adequately considered. INSTRAW has sought to make a dent in this aspect.

A mass media committed to women and development issues would seek to share women's concerns with the wider public. Women are often the most affected by development issues, such as poor housing, lack of water and sanitation, rise in the price of essential goods, lack of health services, poor and unequal working conditions, sexual harassment, to name just a few. These issues, however, are hardly reflected in the media. Convinced of the power of the media, INSTRAW is committed to making the media more sensitive to women and development issues and in this way contribute to women's empowerment and to sustainable and equitable development.

### Women and New Communication Technologies

The advent of personal computers and of computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies is bringing about an economic and social transformation comparable to those facilitated by the printing press or by industrialization. As Negroponte (1995), Toffler (1980), Naishitt (1994) have pointed out, ever more powerful and affordable computers, connected to worldwide telecommunication networks, are changing our world in profound ways, by allowing all forms of information (text, graphics, audio, video, soon tactile stimuli) to be converted into digital form (a series of zeroes and ones) and sent anywhere on Earth nearly instantaneously. Telecomputing allows both national and international communication at a fraction of the cost of fax technology or long distance telephoning. It has the permanence of a letter or printed document, but none of the delays and costs associated with the use of postal services. It allows NGOs that share similar goals, but are located in different cities or countries, to exchange experiences, coordinate lobbying efforts, obtain and share timely information, and communicate more effectively with the media. In a world where globalization and regional trade agreements are eroding the significance of national borders, CMC enables groups in civil society to add their voices to the international debate and to promote their interests. Finally, CMC greatly facilitates both the carrying out and the dissemination of research and is a valuable training tool.

There is a rich and growing body of research on women and CMC technologies (Truong 1993, We 1993) and on the use of these technologies as empowering tools for

women's organizations (Sallin 1994, Uncapher 1991, Morino 1994, INSTRAW 1995). In 1995, INSTRAW initiated research on what the new communication technologies meant for women, specifically for women in developing countries; how are women involved in the development and use of these technologies; how are women being affected by their development; whether these technologies are being effectively used for delivering social services to women; whether they are being used for conducting research on women, for training women or promoting sustainable and equitable development; what potentials do they have for the empowerment and the advancement of women (INSTRAW panel "Women, Media and Communications: Models for Global Reach NGO Forum on Women. Huairou, China. 7 September 1995).

INSTRAW's research on women and new communication technologies suggests that computer mediated communications have a great potential for the advancement of women by promoting networking among them, making it easier to carry out the research to help understand their situation and facilitating the training that will empower them. Women, however, face many obstacles in the use of the new technologies. Sexual stereotypes discourage women from learning to use digital tools. New communications media such as the Internet are male bastions where women are often sexually harassed (INSTRAW 1995b).

Preliminary research done by INSTRAW and others on CMC technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean suggests that many women's organizations do have access to the technology required, have an "account" with a network or can easily get one and have often received training in the use of these technologies. However, they do not employ CMC regularly and do not seem to be fully aware of how CMC can serve to empower the organization in reaching its goals and amplifying its impact. Some attribute this to the fact that the manuals which are provided to these organizations are frequently oriented to a general (albeit technically literate) user. They focus exclusively on procedures, are visually uninviting and difficult to consult, contain no motivational messages or examples of how the technology can further the organization's work, and thus do not contribute to increase the use of CMC by the staff of these organizations.

In 1996-1997, INSTRAW will conduct research in Latin America and the Caribbean to identify how women organizations and institutes can make the maximum use of computer mediated communications to conduct research, training, education, information sharing, development work and advocacy for the advancement of women. On the basis of the research findings, INSTRAW will design and produce "user-friendly" manuals for women's organizations and institutes working for the advancement of women on how to make the maximum use of these technologies in their daily work. To test the manuals prior to their finalization, INSTRAW will hold two national workshops in the region.

It is hoped that women's access to and use of new communication technologies will facilitate their access to essential information, education/training and dialogue. Women's access to and use of new communication technologies will allow them to have solid opinions on issues affecting them and the development process and to make informed choices.



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## Habitat II Istanbul, Turkey 3-14 June 1996

"HABITAT is not just about inadequate housing and decaying infrastructure, not just about dangerous streets and environmental neglect and much more. In the final analysis, HABITAT II is about willingness of society to meet the need of humanity, the needs we all share with our neighbours in this 'global village' we call home."

Habitat II Secretary-General, Wally-N'Dow

## WOMEN AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN CONFLICT ZONES

**Round table 11 June organized  
by INSTRAW and HABITAT at the  
Second United Nations Conference  
on Human Settlements**

In 1995, there were 30 on-going major civil conflicts in the world. The refugee population has grown 500 per cent since 1970, compared to a 20 per cent growth in the world population, registering over 15 million refugees in 1995. This number does not include the internally displaced persons who are estimated at 26.5 million in 1994. Since 1980, over two million people have died as an immediate result of natural and man-made disasters. In the year 1995 alone, more than 300 million people have had their homes or livelihoods destroyed directly by disasters. Although statistics on the sex distribution are rarely collected, scattered evidence indicate that more than half of the victims are women and children.

By the turn of the century, one half of all the world's people will live in cities, a number estimated to rise by two thirds for the year 2025. The stress of this rapid urbanization is overwhelming and the seriousness of the global housing crisis is reflected in the fact that, by a conservative estimate, more than 100 million people live in a state of absolute homelessness, while more than one billion people reside in desperately inadequate housing conditions which threaten their health, safety and dignity.

Among the structural causes of the global habitat crisis, economic disparity and civil conflict have been identified by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities as two of the 12 most important ones. As we approach the 21st century, there seems to be a rise in the global denial of the right to habitat due to these causes. The poorest sectors of society, that is, the social group already disproportionately denied other rights related to an adequate standard of living, are the most frequent victims of this denial of socio-economic opportunities. Women are estimated to constitute more than 70 per cent of the world's poor.

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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN



## Habitat II Istanbul, Turkey 3-14 June 1996

"HABITAT is not just about inadequate housing and decaying infrastructure, not just about dangerous streets and environmental neglect and much more. In the final analysis, HABITAT II is about willingness of society to meet the need of humanity, the needs we all share with our neighbours in this 'global village' we call home."

Habitat II Secretary-General, Wally-N'Dow

## WOMEN AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN CONFLICT ZONES

Round table 11 June organized  
by INSTRAW and HABITAT at the  
Second United Nations Conference  
on Human Settlements

In 1995, there were 30 on-going major civil conflicts in the world. The refugee population has grown 500 per cent since 1970, compared to a 20 per cent growth in the world population, registering over 15 million refugees in 1995. This number does not include the internally displaced persons who are estimated at 26.5 million in 1994. Since 1980, over two million people have died as an immediate result of natural and man-made disasters. In the year 1995 alone, more than 300 million people have had their homes or livelihoods destroyed directly by disasters. Although statistics on the sex distribution are rarely collected, scattered evidence indicate that more than half of the victims are women and children.

By the turn of the century, one half of all the world's people will live in cities, a number estimated to rise by two thirds for the year 2025. The stress of this rapid urbanization is overwhelming and the seriousness of the global housing crisis is reflected in the fact that, by a conservative estimate, more than 100 million people live in a state of absolute homelessness, while more than one billion people reside in desperately inadequate housing conditions which threaten their health, safety and dignity.

Among the structural causes of the global habitat crisis, economic disparity and civil conflict have been identified by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities as two of the 12 most important ones. As we approach the 21st century, there seems to be a rise in the global denial of the right to habitat due to these causes. The poorest sectors of society, that is, the social group already disproportionately denied other rights related to an adequate standard of living, are the most frequent victims of this denial of socio-economic opportunities. Women are estimated to constitute more than 70 per cent of the world's poor.

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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Despite the magnitude of the crisis, relatively scarce coverage has been given to the impact of civil conflict on women's habitat. The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which focused on sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world and adequate shelter for all, presented an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and to identify policy-oriented research priorities on the situation of women whose habitat has been dramatically changed due to human-made conflicts.

INSTRAW and Habitat organized a round table to address some of the complex dimensions of international and intra-state conflicts; the impact of conflicts on women's habitat; the crucial need of empowering women in order to achieve sustainable human settlements development; and research needs and priorities related to the topics. The composition of the round table was balanced between researchers, practitioners, politicians and United Nations agencies. The regions of the America (South), Africa, Asia and Europe were represented.

INSTRAW will publish the proceedings of the round table in the second quarter of 1997.

## **Women and Human Settlements in Conflict Zones**

### **PROCEEDINGS Table of Contents**

#### **Welcoming Address**

*Selma Acuner*, Vice President  
INSTRAW Board of Trustees

#### **Background to the round table**

*Martha Dueñas-Loza*, Acting Director, INSTRAW

### **Part I - Changing patterns of conflict as we approach the 21st century**

#### **Armed civil conflicts and women - issues for policy and programme development**

*Dr. Debarati Guha-Sapir*, Professor, Department of Public Health, Université Catholique de Louvain and *Emanuela Forcella*, Researcher, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters - CRED, Bruxelles

Globalization, fragmentation and conflicts  
*Dr. Yakin Erturk*, Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences-Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara

### **Part II - Impact of conflict on women's habitat**

**Beyond the war** - *Mirela Mulalic*, Architect, Norwegian Peoples' Aid (NPA) Office, Sarajevo

**Living in Jerusalem** - *Jihad Abu Znaid*, Coordinator of Women and Housing Project, Palestine Human Rights Information Center (PHRIC), Jerusalem

#### **Genocide in Rwanda**

*Christine Nyinawumwami*, Director of Cabinet, Ministry of Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Rwanda

**The impact of armed conflict on the elderly**  
*Mechta van den Boogert-Selhorst*, International Council of Women (ICW) and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS)

### **Part III - Strategies for securing an adequate habitat for women whose lives and habitat have been affected by conflict**

**Women and housing in post-apartheid South Africa** - *Dr. Sue Parnell*, Senior Lecturer, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

**Civic initiatives for peace in Urabá, Colombia**  
*Gloria Cuartas*, Mayor, Apartadó, Colombia

**Strategies to assure habitat for women affected by conflict in Burundi** - *Hon. Victoire Ndikunana*, Deputy, National Assembly, Former Minister for Women's Affairs, Government of Burundi

**The habitat situation of the Palestinian women**  
*Muna Z. Budeiri*, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East - UNRWA, Amman

**Peace is more than an end to war: Community Fora** - *Samantha Reynolds*, Regional Programme Manager, United Nations Commission on Human Settlements, Habitat, Mazar, Afghanistan

### **Part IV - Identification of research needs and priorities**

**Women and human settlements in conflict situations - a framework for research**  
*Eva Irene Tuft*, Research consultant, INSTRAW

## DID YOU KNOW?

\* In 1950, only 30 per cent of humanity lived in cities, compared to 45 per cent in 1995. By the year 2000, every second human being is expected to live in an urban area.

\* By 2015, the 10 largest cities in the world will be in Africa, Asia and Latin America; nine of them will be in developing countries. These are: (figures in millions)

Bombay, India	27.4
Lagos, Nigeria	24.4
Shanghai, China	23.4
Jakarta, Indonesia	21.2
Sao Paulo, Brazil	20.8
Karachi, Pakistan	20.6
Beijing, China	19.4
Dhaka, Bangladesh	19.0
Mexico City, Mexico	18.8

The only city in a developed country in the top ten is Tokyo, Japan, with a projected population of 28.7 million.

Source: UN Chronicle,  
Spring 1996, Volume XXXIII  
No. 1

\* Poverty has a direct negative impact on the quality of human settlements. At least 600 million urban dwellers in Africa, Asia and Latin America live in life -and health-threatening housing due to poor conditions stemming from poverty.

\* The cities with the worst housing problems, according to 52 key housing indicators, include Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where 79 per cent of the population is homeless or lives in substandard housing; Jakarta, Indonesia, with 54 per cent; and Bogota, Colombia, with 50 per cent.

\* Income generated from housing projects stimulates private growth: for every dollar invested on home construction -which requires materials, transportation, marketing and labour- three dollars are added to the national income. Moreover, low-cost housing generates more income than high-cost housing.

\* Urbanization is not a bad thing, poor human management is. Urbanization contributes to national economic and social development, leading to improvements in living standards for a considerable part of the world's population. Most countries with high rates of urbanization during the last decade also experienced economic growth. Poorly managed cities, however, lead to the deterioration of living conditions, and urban poverty results when Governments fail to plan for population increases and provide the required infrastructure, services and jobs.

\* Mainstreaming a gender perspective in human settlements issues will facilitate the emancipation of women and the process of their empowerment.

## MONITORING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Eva Irene Tuft, INSTRAW, in United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Norwegian Institute of Human Rights. *Manual for Human Rights Field Officers*. Oslo: NIHR 1997.

"Monitoring the Rights of Women" is part of a training manual requested by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and elaborated by the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights. The manual will be used as a tool in the preparation of stand-by forces and

experts doing short-term assignments for the High Commissioner in the areas of human rights monitoring and investigation.

The chapter, in addition to presenting an approach towards monitoring the rights of women, is aimed to create more awareness of the situation and rights of women in human rights monitoring in general, as a cross-sectoral assessment independent of types of monitoring.



The chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Monitoring women's human rights situation
  - ❖ Definitions
3. Interdependence between all human rights and its relevance for women
4. Identification of international human rights obligations
5. Elimination of discrimination

- ❖ Elimination of discrimination in the enjoyment of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights
  - ❖ Elimination of discrimination in public and private
  - ❖ Elimination of discrimination in customs and practices
  - ❖ Gender-based violence against women
6. Governments' capacity versus their willingness to promote women's rights
  7. Monitoring women's rights in difficult circumstances such as armed conflict

The manual is currently in press.

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## MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION - THE COLOMBIAN CASE -

Eva Irene Tuft, INSTRAW, in International Peace Research Institute (PRIO). *Political Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution: The Impact of Gender Difference*. London: Sage Publications 1997.

"Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Conflict Resolution - the Colombian case -", was written for and presented at the Expert-Group Meeting on *Political Decision-making and Conflict Resolution: The Impact of Gender Difference*, at INSTRAW Headquarters, Santo Domingo, October 1996. The Expert-Group Meeting was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in cooperation with INSTRAW and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The meeting was a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, particularly Chapter IV G and E of its Platform for Action. The report resulting from the meeting will be submitted by DAW to the Commission of the Status of Women at its 41st session in 1997.

"Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Conflict Resolution - the Colombian case -" addresses what it means in practice to mainstream a gender perspective in the

resolution of conflicts in light of a concrete historical experience; the Colombian conflict resolution process culminating in 1958 and the civil conflict which has evolved since then. The study argues that the Colombian paradox of democracy and extreme levels of political violence has its roots in the narrow scope of the conflict resolution process in the late 1950s. Secondly, that mainstreaming a gender perspective in the resolution of the current civil conflict requires a historical analysis of the conflict, and thirdly, that the concept of conflict resolution must be expanded to include other processes apart from official peace negotiations between the armed parties of the conflict. Finally, it presents an *integrationist* and an *agenda-setting* approach to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the resolution of conflicts, by drawing parallels to the women-gender- development debate.

The book will be published in the last quarter of 1997.

INSTRAW, Santo Domingo  
PI-40- 2000- February 1997