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FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON W O M E N

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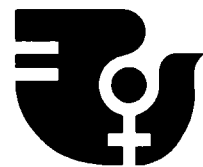
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ЧЕТВЕРТАЯ ВСЕМИРНАЯ
КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ ПО ПОЛОЖЕНИЮ
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PHOTOCOPY
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***ACTION* FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE**
4-15 SEPTEMBER 1995 · BEIJING, CHINA

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The Fourth World Conference on Women -
4-15 September 1995 - Beijing, China

The Platform for Action
critical Areas of Concern



**The Platform for Action
Critical Areas of Concern**

The Fourth
World
Conference on
Women
4-15
September
1995
Beijing, China



**Fourth World Conference
on Women**
4-15 September 1995
Beijing, China
Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

Dear Colleague,

I have the pleasure of presenting this press kit, assembled by the United Nations Department of Public Information in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, which will convene at Beijing on 4-15 September 1995.

The kit contains brochures, fact sheets and feature articles on key issues of the Conference. Also included are the press summaries of three important documents of the Conference and a pamphlet on the draft Platform for Action, which will be the main document for discussion and negotiation at Beijing.

The Beijing Conference will be part of a series of Conferences held by the United Nations in which women's issues have played a pivotal role, including the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995). Though each one of these conferences focuses on a particular theme, together they are part of a continuum, each reflecting the continuing incremental progress in the international community's consensus on major issues in the field of social and economic development.



In disseminating information about the Conference, the aim of the Department of Public Information has been to make use of all available channels in an attempt to reach as broad an audience as possible. In addition to mainstream and alternative media, we are working closely with grass-roots non-governmental organizations and with parliamentary bodies. The purpose of our information campaign, beyond publicizing the Conference, is to let the public know what can be done at all levels to advance the status of women.

We hope that the enclosed information materials will be of use to you in informing your audience of the continuing work of the United Nations on behalf of the world's women. We would very much appreciate receiving clippings of articles, editorials or reports on radio and television related to the Beijing Conference.

Yours sincerely,

Samir Sanbar
Assistant Secretary-General
for Public Information



**Fourth World Conference
on Women**

4-15 September 1995

Beijing, China

Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

Gertrude Mongella

Secretary-General, Fourth World Conference on Women

Gertrude Mongella, an educator, politician and diplomat from the United Republic of Tanzania who has served her Government in various ministerial capacities and as an international representative, was appointed Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women in December 1992 by United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Beginning in 1993, Mrs. Mongella has headed up the work of the Secretariat of the World Conference to be held in Beijing, China from 4-15 September 1995.

Since taking up her United Nations appointment, Mrs. Mongella has undertaken extensive consultations with heads of Government and State and senior government officials from around the world regarding the organization of the World Conference. In addition,

she has attended regional preparatory conferences and meetings with non-governmental organizations planning to attend the World Conference and an NGO Forum scheduled for 30 August to 5 September, also in Beijing.



Prior to her appointment to head the Secretariat for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Mrs. Mongella had an extensive and varied career in education, as a Minister of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, and as a representative of her country at the international level. Frequently, her work, both within the United Republic of Tanzania and in the international arena, focused on women's issues. Since coming to the United Nations, Mrs. Mongella has worked to shape the future of international efforts on behalf of the advancement of women through

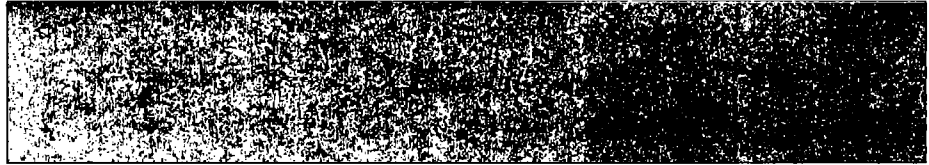


promoting action for equality, development and peace, the main themes of the World Conference.

Mrs. Mongella began her career as an educator. Following graduation from the University College, Dar-es-Salaam, Mrs. Mongella taught school, subsequently becoming inspector of secondary and teacher training colleges in Tanzania.

In 1975, Mrs. Mongella launched a career in public service, becoming a member of the East African Legislative Assembly. She subsequently held a number of ministerial positions, including Minister of State responsible for Women's Affairs (1982-1985), Minister of Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism (1985-1987) and Minister without Portfolio in the President's office (1987-





1991). At the same time, Mrs. Mongella was also a member of the Central and National Executive Committee of the ruling political party in Tanzania, and from 1982 to 1991 was head of the Social Services Department at Party headquarters.

During the period from 1981 to 1991, Mrs. Mongella also represented Tanzania at numerous international meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops, particularly on issues related to women, development and the environment. In 1985, Mrs. Mongella was vice-chairperson of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women in Nairobi, Kenya, and was the chairperson of the African group at the Conference.

In 1989, Mrs. Mongella was Tanzania's representative on the Commission on the Status of Women and led a delegation to present the country's report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in

1990. During the same year, she participated in an expert group meeting on women in political and decision-making positions in Vienna. In addition, from 1990 to 1993, Mrs. Mongella was a member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

At the end of 1991, Mrs. Mongella was appointed United Republic of Tanzania's High Commissioner to India.

Mrs. Mongella has maintained an interest in global environment issues, attending international conferences in 1991, the Global Assembly on Women and the Environment, the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet and the Conference on the Supportive Environment for Health.

Born on 13 September 1945, Mrs. Mongella is married and has four children.





**Fourth World Conference
on Women**

4-15 September 1995

Beijing, China

Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

AIDS: No longer a man's disease

While the city slept fitfully around her, Linda James, then 22, was wide awake. She was alone and five months pregnant. Her 4-year-old son had been hospitalized after her live-in boyfriend, since jailed, had brutally kicked the boy unconscious.

When the phone rang at 3 a.m., it was a police officer. "He said, 'We've got some bad news and we think you need to be tested'", recalled Linda, now 25. Her boyfriend, Charles, the officer said, had not only tuberculosis, but also the virus that causes AIDS.

"When I found out", she said, fingering a small cross she wears around her neck, "I passed out in the bathroom. I can remember the whole thing. It was hard."

Linda had known she could be infected. "At first, we were using condoms. Then he wanted to stop. I said, 'No.' He said, 'Yes.' Then after he hit me a few times, I gave in."

Linda had been faithful and drug free, but Charles was neither. Linda tested positive.

Facing a shortened future, infected by a partner who inflicted abuse and coercive sex on her, Linda is typical of many women in monogamous relationships who are being pulled, unsuspectingly, into the AIDS vortex.

A decade ago, women seemed at the periphery of the epidemic. Today, they are at the centre. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 18 million adults, and 1.5 million children have been infected with HIV. By the end of the century, between 30 to 40 million men, women and children will have been infected with HIV. Half of those infected will be women, their



cumulative number reaching 15 million by that time. The route of transmission is overwhelmingly through sex with men, WHO wrote in a 1994 report on women and AIDS.

"As local epidemics mature", the report states, "the net of infection is cast wider and wider, drawing in women with only one sex partner."

In Latin American countries, for instance, the women most at risk of HIV infection are married women whose husbands have many sex partners. In Malawi, 77 per cent of people with AIDS are married.

At Iris House in New York City, a service centre for women with AIDS, almost all the new clients contracted HIV as a result of sex with men, said Michelle Brown, social service director for Iris House.

Persistent inequities

In most cultures, infidelity is much more acceptable in men than in women, with men taking the risks and their wives and partners paying the



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price. "We may get it (HIV) because the man we are making love to is making love to God knows who, or is bisexual", said Brown. "Or the man we are making love to is a drug abuser."

Brown, from Trinidad, sees how the epidemic among US women increasingly mirrors that of developing countries where heterosexual sex has dominated the AIDS epidemic from the outset. Globally, persistent inequities make women vulnerable to a disease intimately tied to social and personal domination by men.

One 1991 study of 258 truck drivers in Nigeria revealed that although 78 per cent of the male drivers were married, only 5 per cent refrained from sex with other women. Most reported an average of six regular sex partners. Only 15 per cent said they used condoms regularly.

A UNDP study on AIDS in Africa and Asia included several women who said that they dared not deny a husband his "conjugal rights" even when they knew that he engaged in risky sexual behaviour. The same African and Asian women confessed unwillingness to broach the subject of condom use with their husbands.

Women, particularly poor women, are often dependent on men for support, with little control over the circumstances under which sex occurs. In many societies, girls are married at an early age to older men who have had many sex partners.

And women are "twice as likely to contract the disease through a single exposure as men", said Dr. Fathia Mahmoud of the Africa-based Society for Women and AIDS.

Because AIDS has been linked in the minds of many to casual sex, women who are committed to one partner may be lulled into a false sense of security.

One Iris House client, Yvonne, 49, diagnosed in 1986, had two former husbands who were intravenous drug users. The second one died of AIDS. Another client, who asked that her name not be used, contracted AIDS 10 years ago after she engaged in unprotected sex with her boyfriend; a divorced mother of 37, she had undergone tubal ligation and wasn't worried about pregnancy or disease. "I wasn't with a lot of guys, I didn't do that", she said.

Promoting awareness

Many transmit AIDS unknowingly. But when abuse and deception play a part, tremendous emotional damage is wrought. Linda's relationship left her with overwhelming fears for her baby, Linell, born HIV positive. She quit eating and became suicidal. "Some days I thought neither one of us would make it", she said.

Her anger at the boy's father consumed her. "Every time I saw this man, I would see black. I wanted him killed."

With counselling and classes at Iris House, Linda has revived. She's gained weight and taken control of her disease and her life. She recently married a caring man who has become legal co-guardian of her four children.

Newly confident, she has begun speaking out about AIDS and the need to inform and assist HIV-positive mothers and infants. She knows personally what health advocates have long articulated.

Education and awareness promote self-assurance and a sense of control over all phases of life. By informing women and encouraging safer sex with the use of condoms, thousands of others like Linda will live to see their daughters mature into women who control their own lives and health.





Fourth World Conference on Women

4-15 September 1995

Beijing, China

Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

Wanted: more women journalists

For seven years, Haitian photojournalist Marie-Yolande Saint-Fleur risked her life to capture the reality of poverty and human rights abuses in her country.

Eventually, she was forced to flee, seeking political refuge in the United States.

Saint-Fleur's bravery is undisputed and her work award-winning. But for most people, the image of a crusading photographer still leaps full-blown from the imagination as a man clad in a flack jacket.

Although women in the media worldwide have broken barriers and taboos, reporting from the front lines of war zones and the locker-rooms of sports arenas, they remain under-represented and under-recognized.



Women are still a minority presence within newsrooms and broadcast studios worldwide, despite immense progress made in the last two decades. It is a limitation that strikes at the very heart of the ability of news outlets to live up to their responsibility to illuminate the lives of all their readers and listeners.

"The press can't truly be free until women are included", said Barbara Cochran of CBS News, when she spoke at an awards dinner honouring Saint-Fleur and other women journalists in New York in October 1994.

Cochran's sentiment is reflected in the cold light shed by numbers. Studies conducted in 1993-1994 in selected countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America show that nowhere does women's share of media jobs reach 50 per cent.

In Africa, Asia and Latin America women repre-



sent on average less than a quarter of media workers. In Europe, women hold less than a third of the jobs in print and 36 per cent in broadcasting. Everywhere, women are underrepresented in editorial slots where content is controlled.

The statistical averages hide some success stories: women are 42.6 per cent of those employed in radio and television in Denmark and 46.5 per cent in radio in Botswana; women make up 46.6 per cent of the press in Namibia, where Gwen Lister is editor of *The Namibian*, one of the country's most influential dailies.

There are some stark disparities as well: women represent only 7.9 per cent of press employees in India; 6.8 per cent in Japan (excluding temporary staff); and 33 per cent in (the former Federal Republic of) Germany.

Still a male monopoly

While more women now work in the media, its management remains largely a male monopoly. Recent studies of 200 media organizations in 30



countries across four regions found only seven headed by women.

"Today, though blatant discriminatory practices have generally been abolished", reports Margaret Gallagher, well-known writer on gender and media issues and a consultant to the UN Secretariat, "women's access to media power continues to be hindered by a series of invisible barriers — attitudes, working conditions, work assignments, and so on — which can impede career development in subtle ways".

Indeed, the earnings gap between male and female journalists is expanding. According to recent studies by the International Labour

Organization, women journalists are poorly paid relative to men in Cyprus, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States, earning less than three quarters as much. But women journalists earn at least 90 per cent as much as men in Bolivia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ghana and Tajikistan.

Though more women are training for reporting jobs, men are still landing most of them. In two thirds of 70 countries surveyed in a recent study by the UN, women were more than 50 per cent of communications students. However, there are large disparities between the number of trained women and the number employed.

For about a decade, most journalism students in Costa Rica have been women, confirmed Amy Pérez, reporter for the Costa Rican weekly, *Rumbo*. "And this is being reflected in local newsrooms. But there are few in management positions or in high-level editorial jobs."

Echoing the experience of women journalists elsewhere, Latin American women say they are

judged differently than their male peers.

"We must do double the work and demonstrate double the capacity and effort to show that we are intelligent and capable", said Aurelia Dobles, a reporter for the Costa Rican daily, *La Nación*. Many women also face a double work-day, said Dobles, juggling work and family responsibilities.

Balancing between work and family

The male-dominated media management is often either ignorant or openly dismissive about the special needs of women journalists who have to balance their life between work and family. Usha Rai, who joined New Delhi's prestigious daily *The Times of India* in the 1960s, was the only woman on the reporting staff of the national daily. When she was expecting a baby and wanted to take maternity leave, she was told "the rule books had to be consulted for *The Times* had no tradition of maternity leave".

As for women on television, the expectations include looking good as well as working hard. Violeta Polanco of the *Telecorporación Salvadoreña*, who has reported from the front lines of El Salvador's civil war, recalled a time when she left a sick child to cover a story.

When she did her "stand up" on camera in the pouring rain, her makeup ran. "I knew that I had done good work", she said, "but they [the editors] told me the report was not good because I didn't look pretty."

Gender stereotypes also often relegate women reporters to "soft" stories perceived as women's news, rather than significant political and economic assignments considered "hard" news.

"Women's issues are covered in women's sections along with horoscopes and fashion, which is discriminatory treatment", said Blanca Rosales, Director-General of the daily, *El Mundo*, in Lima, Peru. "Few women are columnists or are on the editorial page."

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**Fourth World Conference
on Women**

4-15 September 1995

Beijing, China

Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

Forging peace in war's fire

Jasna Baksic Muftic's soft, steady voice did not skip a beat as she spoke of the death and devastation that have swept through her home in Bosnia. The patches of scalp that show through her paper-thin hair are a physical reminder of the horrors that have become her daily life.

"At the beginning of 1990, when I was expecting a baby, I could not even imagine that my little daughter would not be able to leave our house for two years", Muftic said at a gathering at UN Headquarters last year on her first trip outside the city since shells began exploding over three years ago.

"Our women have crossed the existential margins and now are living on that tiny line between life and death. Every new day is a personal victory over all the challenges of misfortune."

Muftic's words resonate for hundreds of thousands of women across the globe. Since 1989, 82 conflicts have erupted, each of which has claimed at least 1,000 lives, according to recent UN reports.

Urban landscapes have become ghost towns. Killing continues. Work stops. Suffering increases. Bosnia and Herzegovina. Angola. Rwanda. Afghanistan. The list continues. But the scenario remains the same.

Wars rip apart the fabric of society, affecting both men and women. However, it is the women who often are left to work on the front lines of peace, trying to mend, build and restore lives fractured by bombs and bullets.

Though women are known to have performed a variety of functions during war and in peace-keeping, especially as medical and administrative



personnel and in recent years increasingly as election monitors and peace negotiators, they have remained practically absent from all policy-making processes on war and peace issues.

Research in 45 countries shows that, though women's participation in the military as officers is no longer a novelty, in only 13 countries do they make up more than 10 per cent of service members. The combat role for women is open in only a few countries. In UN peace-keeping operations, too, women's presence is merely symbolic. During the period 1957-1989, there were only 20 women among a total of approximately 10,000 military personnel. In recent years, with growing expansion in peace-keeping and peacemaking operations, more women are getting involved, but very few of them are able to attain decision-making positions.

Making a difference

The question of women's participation in the military is still a controversial one. To many men and women, the military is "men's business". Such a



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notion is largely a result of social construction, separation between men's and women's roles and stereotypes as "the protectors" and "the protected". What is often overlooked, however, notes a recent UN study, is that the "military is an integral part of any political system". Since the military constitutes an important element of State order, all citizens, including women, should be concerned about the kind of military they have, it concludes.

Why is it important for women to become involved in the decision-making on military questions? Because, according to recent studies,

women would bring specific skills and abilities to the decision-making process which otherwise would not be applied. Their participation in such activities also constitutes their right as citizens of their countries.

Women can also make a significant difference. According to public opinion polls taken in western Europe and the United States, women are found to be less militaristic and more concerned with the preservation of peace

than men. In the Balkans, for example, women who have had close encounters with death have now gone on to help themselves and their "enemies". In the US, women office holders were found to be more opposed to militarism and more supportive of international organizations.

Rather than being passive victims, women often take the lead in peace movements. "Women tend to be consensus builders", says Karen Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director for Operations at Unicef. "They add a critical dimension to peace-keeping."

Whenever women have joined decision-making bodies in sufficient numbers, they have helped to create a more collaborative atmosphere, characterized by mutual respect, independent of prevailing political differences, and sought consensus or

acceptance rather than a win-or-lose solution, notes the *Second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000*. The 1995 UN report notes that women are involved worldwide in activities related to national reconciliation, humanitarian work and assistance to refugees. In its report to the UN, one country noted that through radio programmes, women have helped to foster peace and promote dialogue between two countries in war, Ethiopia and Somalia. Another country reported that, due to a women's campaign, one of its provinces had been declared a nuclear-free zone.

Women have also shown their leadership qualities during most difficult situations. In downtown Zagreb, refugee women from Bosnia and Herzegovina have bonded with displaced women from Croatia to form the Centre for Women War Victims, which offers counselling, aid and information on refugee rights and resettlement. The Centre helps women who need it: 64 per cent have been Muslim, 30 per cent Croats and 6 per cent Serbs.

In El Salvador, another country torn apart by many years of civil strife, women are helping other women to assimilate a violent past into a peaceful future. Teresa, who asked that her full name not be used, is an ex-combatant of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). She is typical of those still reliving the traumas of war as she tries to put her life back together.

"I spent 13 years with the FMLN", she recalled. "I would cook while my husband fought the war. I was afraid of dying alone."

Groups like Women for Life and Dignity have sprouted up since the cease-fire in 1991, providing loans and job training. With their help, Teresa now runs a tiny grocery shop and canteen.

Now, even though her husband abandoned her and their children when the war ended, she is at peace. "I'm going to make it on my own", she said defiantly.





**Fourth World Conference
on Women**

4-15 September 1995

Beijing, China

Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

Girls shoulder women's burden

Every morning at 3 a.m. 11-year-old Mary trudges to a bus stop where she awaits a vehicle carrying 70 children to a match factory in Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, in southern India. For the next 12 hours she will work applying chemicals to matchsticks and putting them in boxes.

She is determined that her younger sister will escape her fate. "I will somehow make enough money to send her to an English medium school, so she can learn to type and work in an office instead", she said.

In the village of Zacualpa in Quiche, Guatemala, Gabriela Pascuala, a 13-year-old Mayan, sits beside basketfuls of produce in the market. Gabriela, whose parents took her out of school to work at age seven, says her life would have been different if she had finished sixth grade.

Mary and Gabriela are among 86 million girls — 43 million more than boys — around the globe who have been deprived of a primary-school

education. According to United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, approximately 500 million children start primary school, but more than 100 million children, two thirds of them girls, drop out before completing four years of primary school.

The girls of today are the women of tomorrow. Their skills, energy and ideas are vital for the development and prosperity of society. Yet beginning early in life, girls in many parts of the world experience what UNICEF has called the "apartheid of gender". Their basic rights, not only to education, but also to nutrition, health care, equality and often even survival are denied.



"Discrimination does not start at age 18 when most societies grant majority to the girl and consider her an adult woman," said Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, at a meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board last year in May.

Prejudiced before birth

The United Nations has recognized that the status of the girl-child is central to the advancement of women. Agreements adopted by the UN — the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women — have succeeded in placing the needs of girls on the international agenda.

Yet girls everywhere suffer discrimination of some kind. Prejudice against girls often starts early, even before birth. Due to the strong preference to have sons, many girls are never born because of sex-selective abortions, or are neglect-



ed as infants. Infant and toddler girls in many countries receive less nutrition than boys, including shortened breast-feeding, and inferior health care with lower immunization rates, according to the World Health Organization. As a result, an estimated 60 to 100 million fewer women are alive today than would be expected from general demographic trends.

Exploitation of girls begins in childhood, when "women's work" starts out as girls' work. Many girls work harder and longer hours than their brothers. In Nepal, girls between the ages of 6 and 9 work 3.2 hours a day on average, compared to 1.7 hours for boys of the same age, according to a 1989 Government study. By contrast, girls spend only 2.1

hours each day reading and studying, while boys spend 4.8 hours with their books.

Early marriage, encouraged in many cultures, often leads to early pregnancy, with high risks to health for mother and child. Teenage girls give birth to 15 million babies a year, one of every five births, and represent over 25 per

cent of the estimated 500,000 women who die annually during pregnancy and delivery.

Sexually active adolescent girls are also exposed to risks of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. In the United States, for example, 42 per cent of girls have had sexual activity by age 16, and 59 per cent by age 17. Of the 12 million new cases of STDs reported in the United States in 1992, 25 per cent were among adolescents 15 to 19.

Teenage pregnancy not only endangers health, but also often marks the end of a girl's education.

For 15-year-old Teddy Nabadda of Kampala, Uganda, formal learning ceased in sixth grade when she became pregnant. Forced to eke out a living selling vegetables, her life was largely confined to the mud-and-wattle hut where she rented a room for herself and her infant.

Her story is repeated in hundreds of households in Uganda, where only 5 per cent of girls

reach secondary school, and early marriage and pregnancy are major reasons for dropping out.

Nabadda, however, has been given a chance to pursue an education through a programme run by the Kampala-based organization, Action for Development, which helps young mothers resume their studies.

Groups like Action for Development know that education is a proven path to achieving confidence, status and better job opportunities for girls. And there are reasons to be optimistic.

The proportion of educated girls has grown dramatically in the past 20 years, according to the UN. In some countries, especially developed ones and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, primary schools have already closed the gender gap.

Investing in girls

But unequal access to education persists due to customary attitudes and poverty, which force families to value girls as workers. Girls represented over 60 per cent of the 130 million out-of-school children in 1990. By age 18, according to UNICEF, girls worldwide have received on average 4.4 years less education than boys.

"Investing in girls and young women is one of the most important actions that we can take for the future", says Seema S. Chauhan, director of an international programme aimed at girls, sponsored by the US-based Center for Development and Population Activities.

Other non-governmental organizations around the world are achieving success in breaking the cycle of discrimination. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, for instance, runs schools for 135,000 girls, and the Association for the Protection of the Environment in Cairo, Egypt, builds literacy and income for girls of garbage-collector families.

Bridging the gender gap for girls is a key objective of the Draft Platform for Action, a blueprint for women's advancement to be finalized at the Fourth World Conference on Women. Full equality for girls, the UN says, is crucial to improving the status of women. Discrimination must be cut off at its roots.

Prejudice against girls often starts early, even before birth.





**Fourth World Conference
on Women**

4-15 September 1995

Beijing, China

Action for Equality:

Development and Peace

Putting violence on trial

Both the scene at the tiny police station in Belmont, Jamaica, and its outcome were discouragingly familiar

A 14-year-old deaf girl had been severely beaten by her stepfather. Although she had to struggle to put her hurt into words, the girl's predicament was clear to her worried aunt and a concerned neighbour.

They went to the police, who listened, but did not hear. "They said she couldn't testify — so what was the use", recalled the neighbour, Sally Landis, an attorney who handles domestic violence cases. "And they sent her home."

This grim scenario is replayed daily in countries around the world. But if Jamaica's

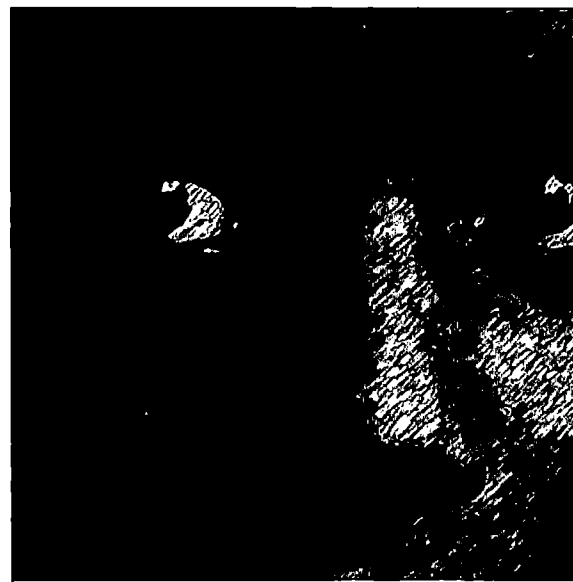
women's rights advocates have their way, it may soon be played out differently. After 10 years of tireless lobbying by advocates such as attorney Margarette

MaCaulay of Kingston, the male-dominated Jamaican parliament

passed the country's first Domestic Violence Act in April 1995.

Among other things, the law provides for orders of protection and prompt arrest, and gives judges the clout needed to remove an abuser from the home, says MaCaulay, who fought for the law as a representative of the Association of Women's Organizations in Jamaica. "In the new legislation", she says, "the police have pretty wide powers if an order is breached."

In most societies, gender-based violence has long been tolerated. Based on the popular belief that a wife is the property of her husband and that therefore he may do with her whatever he thinks fit, legal systems in some countries have recognized a husband's right to chastise if she is considered disobedient or in some societies even



kill his wife if she is thought to have committed adultery

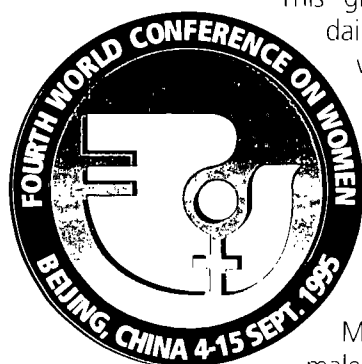
Very rarely are gender-based abuses reported or recorded. In the United States, according to a study published in *American Psychologist*, only 2 per cent of intrafamilial child sexual abuse, 6 per cent of extrafamilial sexual abuse and 5 to 8 per cent of adult sexual assault cases are reported to the police.

Male power, privilege and control

Most gender-based violence against women is linked to male power, privilege and control. Culture and tradition, which often are reflected in national laws, only help to perpetuate the idea of male dominance.

Among other things, excessive use of alcohol and drugs has been identified as a factor behind gender abuse. Economic and social factors, such as unemployment, economic stress, overcrowding and unfavourable and frustrating work conditions, also lead to gender-based violence.

Some researchers have argued that violence is actually a learned behaviour. Today's violent hus-



Most gender-based violence against women is linked to male power, privilege and control.

bands are yesterday's children of violent parents, they say. In fact, as one study in the US found, men who saw their parents attack each other were three times more likely to hit their wives and ten times more likely to attack them with a weapon, compared to those from non-violent families of origin.

Whether it erupts behind closed doors or on the streets, the violence that assails women everywhere remains a social scourge that destroys lives, impairs health and hurts entire communities. Despite its force to ruin lives, or perhaps

because of it, more and more women are finding the will to fight back. In countries around the world, changes are under way.

One powerful venue for change is the legal system, including the laws that shape it and the officials who carry them out. And it is here that women's rights advocates are pressing for justice.

By drafting new legislation, fighting for police training and prosecuting rape cases, women are demanding and getting justice from once indifferent criminal systems. In a majority of the countries, women have more than one non-governmental organization dedicated to the elimination of gender-based violence. These organizations provide services for survivors of abuse, work to change community attitudes and lobby for legal reform in North America, Europe, the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America and the Caribbean. There are fewer in eastern Europe, western Asia and Africa.

Pressed by women's organizations and aware of the abuse endured by women victims at the hands of callous officials, several countries are now trying fresh approaches to change faulty systems.

In the Philippines, for instance, all police stations in the country now have a women's desk

staffed by specially trained women officers whose job it is to listen to and investigate crimes of violence against women. Since 1993, 169 women's desks have been established and staffed by 276 policewomen.

"Female victims are more comfortable talking to women police who can better empathize with them", explains Commissioner Girtie Tirona, head of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

And in India, women's courts have been operating since October 1994 in the capital city of New Delhi to provide an environment that allows victims to testify openly.

But the scales of justice, long weighted in favour of men, are not yet balanced. The New Delhi courts are hampered, women prosecutors say, by laws that put an unreasonable burden of proof on the victim.

"Judicial proceedings should be modified so that the witnesses don't become the deciding factor", observes Public Prosecutor Usha Mann. "Only then will having a women's court serve any purpose."

Once laws are established to protect women, officials must be committed to carrying them out. And in countries where pervasive violence is fuelled by political brutality, reforming the officials who enforce the laws is a formidable task.

MaCaulay knows that the fist raised against women is too seldom restrained. And it will take more than new laws to make a difference. Fresh from their victory in parliament, Jamaican women's organizations began campaigning for follow-up programmes to train judges, prosecutors and police officers on how to enforce the new law, she said, "so that in every police station on the island there will be a person trained to deal with this".

The true goal, MaCaulay said, is to open not only the doors of police stations and courts to women, but also the closed eyes and minds of those within.





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Development and Peace

Economic reforms: "Triple jeopardy" for women

Twelve-year-old Bui Van Ly, whose small malnourished build makes him appear half his age, has had to scrounge and beg to survive for almost six years.

"I still have both my parents, but they can't afford to feed me", he said from a run-down shelter which houses as many as 100 children a night.

This happens to be Hanoi. But the growing cadre of the poor can be found on the sidewalks of Moscow, New York and Mexico City as well as in tiny rural villages in Egypt, Kenya and the Philippines.

When the cold war ended, hope arose that global tensions would ease and funds used to fuel the arms race could be reinvested in human development.

Instead, conflict and suffering has increased.

Today, 1.3 billion people live in destitution, with women and children bearing the brunt of poverty worldwide. A staggering 70 per cent of those living in absolute poverty are women.

The causes for this decline are complex, but some important elements can be identified. And when this issue is discussed, the economic tools known as "structural adjustment programmes", or SAPs, have become the subject of growing criticism.

Put into effect when a country's economy is afflicted by woes ranging from stagnation to inflation, SAPs can be strong, even bitter medicine in the shape of policy reforms intended to allow market forces to dominate changes in the economy.

During the early phases of this adjustment process, prices for food and necessities can soar while jobs are lost and social services are cut back as Governments strive to meet payments on foreign debt.



A closer look at both rising poverty and SAPs should start in the 1980s when a global and debilitating economic downturn was felt most acutely in developing countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for instance, gross domestic products grew by only 1 per cent, compared to 5.5 per cent in the 1970s. In Africa, 28 out of 45 countries in the sub-Saharan region suffered a decline in productivity.

SAPs: mixed results

Enter the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In the last 15 years or so, these international lending institutions developed SAPs as a means to help correct the troubled economies of countries seeking loans. Simply put, they imposed fiscal austerity, currency devaluation, trade liberalization, and the privatization of State-owned companies — all intended to foster growth and attract foreign investors.

In some countries, SAPs have been successful, if judged by major economic indicators. Such is the case with Brazil, which rose to the 10th largest



market economy after SAPs were implemented.

But in many countries, the equally important social indicators have not tended to show similar improvement. In fact, the IMF and the World Bank have come under fire as critics, such as activist Herbert José de Souza of Brazil, charge that these policies have had a negative impact on the poor, particularly poor women.

De Souza says that hard-pressed countries have been cutting spending on social services and slashing wages to meet the stringent terms of loans from the Bank and the Fund. In general, women are most vulnerable to any economic downturn. In 44 out of 66 studies by the International Research Center for Women from 1979 to 1989, female-headed households were poorer than their male counterparts. And women

who bear and care for children have a greater need for most types of health care which are often cut back in times of fiscal austerity. According to WHO, during the 1980s, 37 of the world's poorest countries significantly cut their health budgets in half.

"Their policies are causing havoc", said Barbados-based Peggy Antrobus, director of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era. "It can't be coincidence that over the last decade (when these policies took hold) you have increasing poverty and deteriorating services."

The World Bank points out it cannot control how Governments repond. "If you look at SAPs, you never find specific references that say, 'please cut back social spending'", said Mark Blackden, coordinator of gender programmes for sub-Saharan Africa for the World Bank in Washington, D.C.

The IMF, on the other hand, thinks that its loan policies focus on the larger economic picture, leaving the micro details to others. "We would tend to say that we are trying to improve the standard of living, but we're unable to target specific groups since we deal on the macro level", said Graham

Newman, assistant chief of information for the IMF in Washington, D.C.

Heavily burdened by debt, many countries are struggling just to meet interest payments. Such budgetary pressures can lead to disturbing results.

The external debt of the Philippines, for example, has ballooned to US \$35 billion while its standard of living has plummeted. As conditions at home worsened, thousands of women left the country to work as underpaid domestic servants in foreign homes. Many leave their own children to become nannies. Still others are pressed into work in the sex industry.

Remittances from the 3 to 4 million Filipinos who work overseas come to \$6 billion annually, supporting families and enabling the Government to pay \$1.8 billion annually in payments on loans from lenders, including the IMF and the World Bank. But a heavy price is paid by women who endure separation from their relatives and are often abused by their employers. Praised as the heroines of the Philippine economy, these same women find few defenders when their rights are violated.

Those who stay at home wage a different struggle. Because of the roles women play in society as producers, educators and caretakers, cut-backs on social spending affect them at every level. So when SAPs are carried out, women often encounter "triple jeopardy", says Antrobus. "They lose out on services, resources, and time."

Blackden concedes that policies of the 1980s were not simply "gender neutral", but "gender ignorant". But are SAPs to blame for the women's declining welfare? It depends whom you ask.

According to Lisa McGowan, an economist with the Washington, D.C.-based Development Group for Alternative Policies, the answer is yes. "SAPs have sacrificed an entire generation of people", McGowan said. "There's been untold misery that no one can make up."

Defenders say this assessment is too simplistic. "Have people gotten poorer?" Blackden asks. "Yes." But then he wonders whether they would have been worse off without these programmes.

"It's easy to shoot the messenger and assume whatever happens is our fault", Blackden countered. "But you have to look at who is responsible for doing what."

When SAPs are carried out, women often encounter "triple jeopardy". They lose out on services, resources and time.



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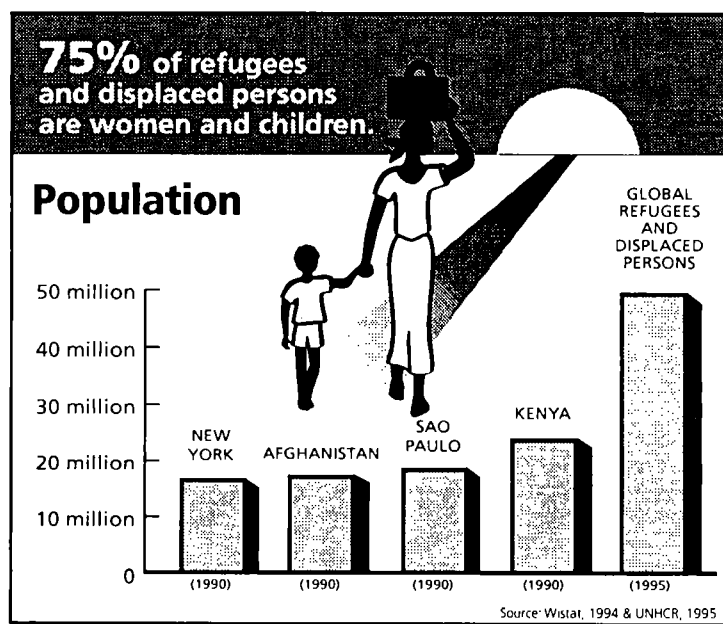
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Refugees



Reproductive Health

Approximately **500,000 WOMEN**, nearly all in the developing world, die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth every year:
1,500 EVERY DAY.

A woman's risk of dying in childbirth is **1 in 25 to 40**, in developing countries, but is only **1 in 3,000** in developed countries.

Source: 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development/



Environment

Nearly
92 MILLION WOMEN
in urban areas lack access to
SAFE DRINKING WATER
and more than
133 MILLION WOMEN
in urban areas lack proper
SANITATION



Source: The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics, United Nations, 1995

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*In many countries,
the girl child
is discriminated
against from
infancy through
her childhood,
and into
adulthood.*



Photo: UN/ 155722/John Isaac

*Women's rights
to the highest
standard of health
must be secured
throughout their
whole life cycle in
equality with men.*



Photo: United Nations

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Basic Information

- A brochure on the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW). It gives the background to the Conference and outlines the preparatory process involved.
- A pamphlet on the **Draft Platform for Action**, the main document to be adopted in Beijing. It summarizes the 12 "critical areas of concern" identified in the **Platform** and lists main recommendations proposed for removing the existing obstacles facing today's women.

Press Summary

- Summary of three UN documents prepared for the Conference. All three reflect the progress the world's women have made since the adoption in 1985 of the **Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women** to the Year 2000 and focus on obstacles they encounter in their search for equality.
- **i. The Second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.** Based on national reports submitted by 130 UN Member Countries and various UN organizations and in the light of the NFLS, it presents an analysis of women's advancement in key areas identified by the **Draft Platform for Action**.
- **ii. 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development.** Prepared by the United Nations Secretariat, the Survey analyses three central development issues — poverty, productive employment and economic decision-making.
- **iii. The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics.** A statistical source book, it presents comparative information on women and men in such areas as family, economic and political life. It provides numbers and analysis needed to help understand how conditions differ for women and men and how they are changing.



Features

- Six features illustrate types of discrimination women and girl children worldwide face both at home and in society. Based on real-life stories and interviews.

Fact sheets

- 10 fact sheets. Contain latest statistics drawn from the three key FWCW documents.

Graphics/ Photographs

- 13 camera-ready graphic illustrations and a selection of black and white photographs.



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Women and Poverty

To be poor is to be deprived of the means to meet basic survival needs. Women, because of their lower status, are more likely to fall into the crushing cycle of poverty.

Poverty on the rise

- From 1985-1993, the number of people living below the poverty line (the equivalent of US \$370 a year, according to the World Bank) increased by 20%, from 1 to 1.2 billion.²
- Over 70% of the people now living in absolute poverty are women, reports UNDP's Human Development Report 1995.³³
- The increase in poverty is paradoxical, given the strong global economic performance from 1980-1989:

The average annual rate of economic growth during this period was 3.2%, compared to 2.4% from 1965-1980.²

• The gap between rich and poor has increased: From 1960-1991, the share of the world's income for the richest fifth of the world

rose from 70% to 85%, while the share of income for the poorest fifth dropped from 2.3% to 1.4%.⁶

- In 1993, the world faced increasing famine: 800 million starving people and 34,000 children dying each day from need of food and medical supplies.²

Regional trends

From 1985-1990, the poor as a percentage of the total population remained high, and increased in a few regions: ¹ Sub-Saharan Africa (from 47.6% to 49.7%); Middle East and North Africa (from 30.6% to 33.1%); Latin America and the Caribbean (from 22.4% to 25.5%).

- In Sub-Saharan Africa, almost 50% of the population live in absolute poverty, surviving on less than US\$1 a day.⁸
- Poverty has surged in the transition economies of eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Baltic States; from 1989-1992, the percentage of the population living in poverty rose in Poland from 20.5% to 42.5% and in the Russian Federation from 27.1% to 77.1%.¹
- In the European Community at the beginning of the 1990s, 44 million people (or 18% of the population) were estimated to be living in poverty, with 10 million living in extreme poverty.²
- In the US, 33.6 million people (13% of the population) were estimated to be living below the poverty line in the 1980s.¹
- By the end of the 1980s, approximately 75% of all poverty in the US was concentrated among women, particularly single mothers and older African-American women. In the US, the number of families headed by poor women is rising by about 100,000 a year.¹

Female-headed households

The strong correlation between female headship and poverty results from the high dependency of children on mothers, inadequate remittances from absent men, and gender differentials in access to resources and productive employment.²

- Female headship varies by region and within countries. The highest proportions are found in the Caribbean (35%). Rates average between 20-24% in the majority of other regions (developed: 24%; Latin America: 21%; Sub-Saharan Africa: 20%; South-East Asia and Oceania: 17-18%); northern Africa, western Asia, and southern Asia: 12-13%.³
- In 44 out of 66 studies by the International Research Center for Women, from 1979-



1989, female-headed households were poorer than their male counterparts.²

- In Norway, 13% of all households headed by women are below the poverty level, compared to 5% of those headed by men.¹
- There is evidence that women heads of household provide their children with better nutrition and education than men heads of household.³

Urban poverty

Urban populations are growing at a rate two and a half times that of rural populations. At this rate the UN projects that more than half of the world's population will be urban by 2005, transferring the burden of poverty from rural to urban areas.²

- The urban population of developing countries is overwhelmingly young, which has an indirect impact on women in terms of domestic burdens, overcrowded housing, and a greater demand for child-care facilities and schools. In Africa, 41% of the urban population is under 15 years of age, and in Asia and Latin America, 30% is under 15 years.²

Women and land

Poverty among rural women is linked to issues of access and control of productive resources: land, labour, capital, technology, and extension services.²

- Although many developing countries have legally affirmed a woman's right to own land,

it is rare. Land titles in most countries are registered in the name of the male head of household, and women do not secure land tenure. Without the title to land, women lack the collateral needed to obtain credit.²

- Review of projects over the past decade reveals that technology can sometimes have negative effects on women: In Asia, some 375 million landless female labourers' seasonal menial work of weeding, hoeing, and milling is threatened by increased mechanization.¹¹
- Although women represent 80% of the food producers in some countries, only 5% of extension organizations' time and resources are allocated to women, and only 13% of extension workers are women.²

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Provide adequate social safety nets, and strengthen State- and community-based support systems.
- ▶ Formulate and implement specific economic, agricultural, and related policies in support of female-headed households.
- ▶ Revise laws and practices that limit disadvantaged women's access to ownership of land, credit, inheritance, natural resources, and appropriate technologies.

Burden of poverty falls on women

Female-headed households by region (%), 1980-1990

Region	1980	1990
Africa	20.6	18.2
Asia and the Pacific	14.9	17.2
Eastern Europe	23.1	—
Latin America	27.6	20.8
Western Europe	23.7	31.2

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Secretariat, from data contained in Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base (Wistat), version 3, 1994.





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Literacy and Education

Education is a basic human right which is essential for achieving the goals of equality, development, and peace. Educated women tend to raise healthier families, have fewer children, and be more productive in both the home and the workplace. Children of educated mothers are more likely to become educated too.

Global literacy

- According to UNESCO, literacy has risen in all regions of the world, but 885 million women and men, almost a quarter of the world's adult population, are still estimated to be illiterate. Sixty-four per cent of the illiterate are women.

Literacy gaps



Women in rural areas often have high illiteracy rates, in some countries two to three times that of women in urban areas.

- In Honduras, in 1988, of women aged 15-24, 9% in urban areas and 30% in rural areas were illiterate.³
- Generations of educational neglect have left high illiteracy rates, especially for older women in developing countries. Illiteracy rates among women 25 and above are typically two or more times those of women aged 15 and 24.³
- Among women over 45 years of age, illiteracy rates in developing countries were usually at least 50% in the late 1980s, and often exceeded 70% in Africa and Asia.³

Primary school

- Girls' primary-school enrolment has reached parity with boys' except in Africa and Asia. In 1990, the average ratios of girls to each 100

boys in primary school was: Africa (79); Asia and the Pacific (84); Latin America and the Caribbean (95); western Europe and other (95); eastern Europe (96).¹

College and university

- Women are increasingly entering colleges and universities. In 1990, the average ratios of women to each 100 men in tertiary education was: in Africa (32); Asia and the Pacific (84); western Europe and other (94); eastern Europe (104); and Latin America and the Caribbean (106).¹
- Increases have been dramatic in some countries: China's number of female postgraduates increased by 157% from 1985-1992.¹
- An increasing number of girls are entering fields once dominated by men. The average ratio of females to each 100 males in science and technology were, in 1990: Latin America and the Caribbean (80); Eastern Europe (74); Asia and the Pacific (70); Western Europe and other (67); and Africa (24).¹

Non-formal education

- As many children fall through the education net, non-formal education programmes become essential, especially for girls. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has created 4,500 experimental schools since its start in 1985. Out of the 100,000 children served by BRAC, 70% are girls from rural landless families.¹

Economic crisis hits education

The progressive trends in education adopted by many countries were reversed in the 1980s, particularly among those experiencing problems of war, economic adjustment and declining international assistance in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and a few other cases.³



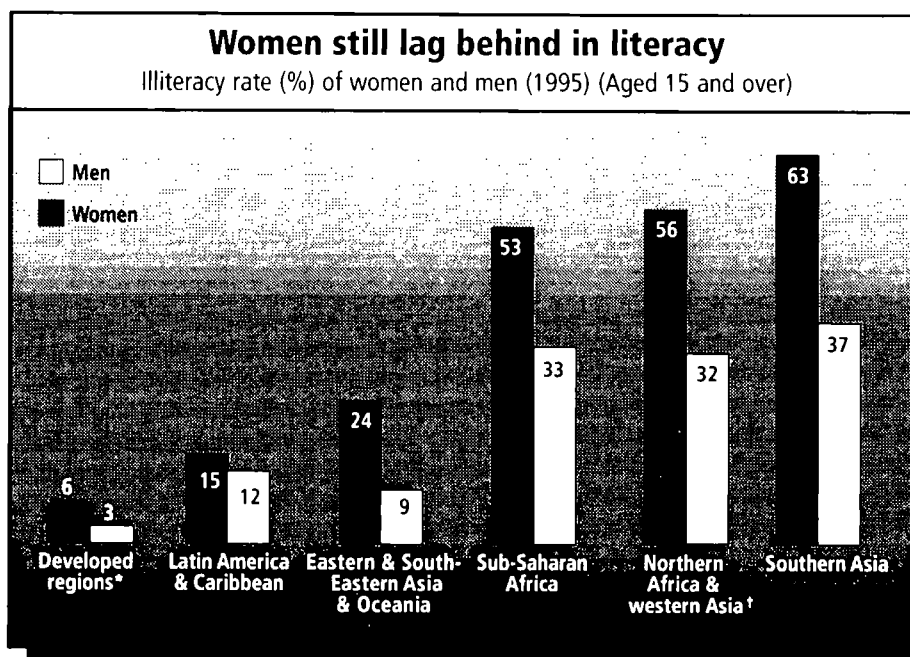
- An increase in per capita gross domestic product tends to improve female schooling and literacy. However, remarkable success can be found even in areas with low GDPs, suggesting policy can be more influential than the economy. In 1991, the per capita GDP in the Indian state of Kerala was below the country's average per capita GDP (Kerala: US\$ 200, India: US\$ 250), but the percentage of literate women in 1991 was 87% in Kerala compared to 34% for India countrywide.⁵

Population growth

- In many countries with rapid population growth, the planning of new educational facilities has not met the actual need. In Nigeria, the number of primary schools increased by 85% between 1975-76 and 1982-83, while the number of students increased by 140%.¹

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Eradicate illiteracy among women worldwide.
- ▶ Ensure the completion of primary education by at least 80% of children, with special emphasis on girls, by the year 2000.
- ▶ Create an educational system that ensures equal education and training opportunities.
- ▶ Develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free from sex-stereotypes for all levels of education.



* Approximations † Also includes Djibouti, Mauritania and Somalia Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Statistics on adult illiteracy, Preliminary results of the 1994 estimates and projections" (STE/16).





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Women's Health

The differences between women and men in their exposure to disease and their treatment stem from socio-economic and cultural factors that determine nutrition, lifestyles, and access to health services. This has led to a gap in preventive and curative services for diseases biologically tied to women.³

Life expectancy

- The average life expectancy is 79 years for women and 73 for men in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. By contrast, this figure for sub-Saharan Africa is 54 years for women and 51 for men.³



- Between 1970/1975 to 1990/1995, life expectancy increased for women and men almost everywhere. The greatest gains for women were in northern Africa, eastern, southern and western Asia and Central America (all by 10-11 years), while the smallest gain was in Eastern Europe (2 years).³

Health risks and causes of death

- The leading causes of death from middle age to early old age are, in developed countries, cancer for women and heart disease for men.³
- While communicable diseases account for only 5-6% of deaths among women and men in developed regions, they account for about 70% of female and male deaths in sub-Saharan Africa.³
- Women are becoming increasingly affected by HIV. Worldwide, the cumulative number of infected women is expected to reach 15 million by the year 2000. By mid-1994, about 40% of estimated cases of HIV were women.

Maternal mortality

The health of women 15-45 years of age is predominantly influenced by their reproductive and maternal roles. Despite progress in a number of areas, the morbidity and mortality rates related to reproductive health remain unnecessarily high in many parts of the world.¹

- Each year more than 150 million women become pregnant. According to WHO, 23 million of them (more than 15%) develop complications requiring skilled treatment.³
- Approximately 500,000 women die every year from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, or 1,500 each day.⁵
- Maternal mortality rates vary widely. An African woman's lifetime risk of dying from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth is 1 in 23, compared to 1 in 4,000 for women in North America.³
- Child survival influences the number of births a woman will have during her life. Improved child survival results from declining family size and better birth spacing. Women often cite poor infant survival chances as a reason for maintaining high fertility, and many studies confirm a positive association between fertility and infant and child mortality.³

Contraceptives and good health

Contraceptives enable women to limit and space the number of children they have, considerably improving the health of both women and children.³

- Levels of contraceptive use: eastern Asia (79%); other Asian and Pacific countries (42%); developed regions (72%); Latin America and the Caribbean (58%); Africa (18%).³
- Indicating an unmet need for contraception, among married women of reproductive age, from 1985-1989, many had more children than they desired: Peru (44%); Bolivia (42%); Egypt (37%); Tunisia (34%); Kenya (30%); Morocco (27%).³



- Concern about health complications is by far the most common reason why women stop using contraceptives — much more than lack of access, husband disapproval, social pressure, or religious beliefs.³

Reproductive health

- WHO estimates that globally 20 million unsafe abortions are performed every year, resulting in the deaths of 70,000 women.³
- The risk of death from an unsafe abortion is 100-500 times higher than if the same procedure were performed under safe conditions.³
- In developed regions, where abortion is most often legal, and safe health services are accessible, the risk of death from abortion is 1 in 3,700. In the developing regions it is on average 1 in 250.³
- Maternal mortality rates in central and eastern Europe, apart from Romania and Albania, are about twice as high as the European average. However, in Romania and Albania maternal mortality rates have fallen dramatically since the legalization of abortion.¹

Anemia and nutrition

- Globally, 43% of all women and 51% of pregnant women suffer from iron-deficiency anemia.¹
- Iron deficiency increases women's susceptibility to illness, pregnancy complications, and maternal deaths. It also reduces physical productivity and the capacity to work and learn.^{3,5}
- India, with an estimated 88% of pregnant women suffering from anemia,⁴ is one of the very few countries which have taken national action to eliminate iron-deficiency anemia. 1994 reports indicate that over 70% of Indian women are now being reached with at least 3 months' worth of ferrous tablets during pregnancy.⁵
- Malnutrition in girls is responsible for problems in childbirth, such as obstructed labour, fistulae, and birth asphyxia.¹

Access to health facilities

- Prenatal care has been increasingly included in primary health services, and is widespread in southern Africa, Eastern Asia, and the Caribbean (about 90% of women covered) and in Latin America (70%). But the coverage remains very low in South Asia (35%), a region which also has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality.³
- 59% of women in developing countries receive prenatal care, compared to 98% of women in industrialized countries.⁸
- 55% of births in developing countries are attended by trained health personnel, compared to 99% in industrialized countries.⁸

Ageing women

- The number of women aged over 65 years will increase from 330 million in 1990 to 600 million by 2015.¹
- Of these elderly women, many will suffer from chronic diseases associated with ageing, such as osteoporosis and dementia, and the diseases of neglect, such as malnutrition, alienation, and loneliness.¹

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Provide women with access to affordable, high-quality primary health care.
- ▶ Eliminate harmful or coercive medical interventions and inform women of their options in medical treatment.
- ▶ Close the gender gap in morbidity and mortality and reduce infant and child mortality.
- ▶ Enact legislation to alleviate and eliminate environmental and occupational health hazards.





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Women in the Global Economy

Rapid influx of women into the paid labour force has been one of the greatest economic changes over the past decade. However, many of the jobs open to women are underpaid, poorly regulated and short-term.

Global trends

- Using international standards defining economic activity, the ILO counted 897 million women aged 15 and over as economically active in 1994.³ It is estimated that women will make up more than half the labour force in most countries by the year 2000.²
- The average ratio of women to men (number of women per 100 men) in the economically active population is on the rise: 37 in 1970, 52 in 1980, 62 in 1990.²
 - About half of all economically active women in developing countries are in the informal sector. Studies of major cities in Latin America and Africa indicate that 25-40% of the informal workforce is female.²
- Over the past two decades, economic activity rates show increases for women in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa and eastern Asia, and all of the increases are large ones except in eastern Europe, central Asia and Oceania. By contrast, economic activity rates have declined for men everywhere except Central Asia.³



tions, there was a simultaneous downgrading of the occupations, pay, and status.³

- 75-80% of female workers in developed market economies are in the service sector, 5% in agriculture, and 15-20% in industry.²
- Most working women in developing countries are engaged in agriculture, sales, or service jobs, excepting the newly industrialized countries of South-East Asia, which have a growing number of women working in industry.²

The wage gap

While advances have been made in wage equity over the past 40 years, most women still earn 50-80% of men's wages.²

- Wage segregation is particularly marked in developing countries with export-led industrialization. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, women in Latin America earn on average 44-77% of men's wages.²
- The average wage of women working in manufacturing relative to men was, in 1990/91: 88% in Sri Lanka, 70% in Hong Kong, 56% in Singapore, 51% in Korea, and 43% in Japan.²
- Studies show that wage regulation systems can narrow gender differences in pay. A centralized process of wage determination with the intent of equal pay explains the high ratios in Italy. The even higher ratios in Nordic countries can be explained by centralized wage setting, a collective bargaining process, and a higher percentage of unionized workers (64-80%).³

Occupational segregation

- When women enter previously male occupations, the status of these occupations falls. A study in Europe found that in occupations where women were achieving high-level posi-

Women and economic decision-making

Though more women are working and being paid today, their number as economic decision-makers is still very low compared to men.

- Globally, women hold 10-30% of manage-



ment positions, and less than 5% of the very highest positions.²

- 1994 data indicate that in economic ministries including finance, trade, economy, and planning ministries and central banks, women constitute only 3.6% of the total positions. In 144 countries, there are no women at all in these areas and at these levels.²
- A 1993 study indicates that US companies have a slightly higher proportion of women managers (8 women for each 100 men) than non-US companies, which average one woman executive for each 100 male executives.²
- In the next generation of economic decision-makers, the pool of qualified professionals will contain increasingly large numbers of women. Globally, the ratio of women for each 100 men studying law and business at the third level has increased from 25 in 1970 to 102 in 1990.¹
- At the level of personal decision-making, many women enjoy working. An East German survey in 1991 found that only 10% of the women would definitely give up their jobs if they no longer needed the money.²

Getting even over time

Women's work is not well described by conventional data collection methods. Even within the international standard, housework is excluded from measurements of economic activity and production. One way to assess the different activities of women and men is through time use stud-

ies, capturing in sequence all activities over a fixed period of time, usually one or two days.³

- In most countries women work approximately twice the unpaid time men do — and in Japan, women work nine times as much.³
- Data covering three countries in Southern Asia indicate that women spend 3-5 more hours per week in unpaid subsistence work than men, carrying water and wood and growing and processing (primary agricultural products for their families), and an additional 20-30 hours more per week than men in unpaid housework.³
- UN estimates put the value of unpaid housework alone at between 10-35% of GDP worldwide.²

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay and for equal work of equal value.
- ▶ Amend laws to ensure that financial institutions provide services to men and women on an equal basis.
- ▶ Give rural women equal access to and control over resources, land, credit, property rights, development programmes, and cooperative structures.
- ▶ Eliminate discrimination in the workplace, especially on the basis of reproductive roles such as pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Women in management: slow progress

Ratio of women to men in administrative and management occupations by region, 1980 and 1990. Number of women per 100 men

Region	1980	1990
Africa	10	18
Asia and the Pacific	9	10
Eastern Europe	30	66
Latin America and the Caribbean	24	34
Western Europe and other	23	41
World	19	34

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, from data contained in the Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base (Wistat), version 3, 1994.





**Fourth World Conference
on Women**
4-15 September 1995
Beijing, China
Action for Equality,
Development and Peace

Violence against Women

Everywhere, and at all ages, women are victims of violence. In many countries one quarter to more than one half of women have been physically abused by a present or former partner.¹⁰

A global phenomenon

- Gender-based abuses are rarely reported. According to victimization surveys, only 2% of intramarital child sexual abuse, 6% of extra-marital sexual abuse, and 5-8% of adult sexual assault cases are reported to the police in the US.¹⁰
- In a study in Santiago, Chile, almost 75% of all assault-related injuries to women were caused by family members.¹⁰



- Of the murdered women in Canada in 1987, 62% died at the hands of an intimate partner.¹⁰

• Violence between intimates is often more injurious than street violence. In the US, more than 80% of all assaults committed by current or former spouses result in injuries, compared to 54% of assaults by strangers.¹⁰

- A three-month surveillance survey in Alexandria, Egypt, indicated that domestic violence was the leading cause of injury to women, accounting for 27.9% of all visits by women to area trauma units.¹⁰

Rape and sexual assault

- A 1993 study from Canada based on 420 women found that more than 54% of them had experienced some form of unwanted sexual assault before the age of 16.
- A random sample of 150 women in Trondheim, Norway, found 25% had been

physically or sexually abused by their male partners.¹⁰

- A support center for rape victims in Bangkok, Thailand, reported that 10% of its clients contract a sexually transmitted disease as a result of rape.¹⁰
- Throughout history, women have been subjected to rape as part of war: a European Community fact-finding team estimated that more than 20,000 women were raped in Bosnia in the first months of the war. Mass rape in recent years has been documented in Cambodia, Liberia, Peru, Somalia, and Uganda.¹⁰

Violence early in the life cycle

- A survey in Barbados revealed that one in three women was sexually abused during childhood or adolescence.¹⁰
- In Peru, a study at the Maternity Hospital in Lima found that 90% of mothers aged 12-16 years had been raped, often by a father, step-father, or other close relative.¹⁰
- Violence during pregnancy has been identified as a major reason for miscarriage and low-birth-weight children; in Costa Rica, 49% of a group of 80 battered women reported being beaten during pregnancy, 7.5% reporting miscarriages.¹⁰

Traditional practices

Female genital mutilation (FGM), a harmful traditional practice, can cause trauma, swelling, haemorrhage, obstruction of urine and menstrual flow, and risk of AIDS transmission. It can lead to life-long physical and psychological scars or serious injury and death.¹

- Each year an estimated 2 million girls suffer the practice of FGM in Africa and Asia, or as immigrants or refugees in Europe and North America.²⁹



- Dowry-related abuse is common in some countries. In India, official police records show that 4,835 women were killed in 1990 because their families did not meet the demands for money and goods by the fiancé's family.¹⁰

Emotional and psychological abuse

Those working with victims of domestic abuse report that women often consider psychological abuse and humiliation more devastating than physical assault.

- A study of 127 battered women in Ireland asked: "What was the worst aspect of the battering experience?" The top responses were: mental torture (30), living in fear and terror (27), physical violence (27), depression and loss of confidence (18), and effects on children (17).¹⁰

The hard costs

The World Bank has developed a way to estimate the economic impact of violence by counting every healthy year lost due to premature death as a Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY), with its value depending on the severity of the disability.

- According to World Bank DALY analysis, rape and domestic violence are significant causes

of disability and death among women of reproductive age worldwide.¹⁰

- In industrialized countries, gender-based victimization accounts for nearly one in five healthy years lost to women aged 15-44. The percentage is lower in developing countries due to the larger overall burden of disease.¹⁰

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Take measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- ▶ Enact and enforce legislation against perpetrators of practices and acts of violence against women.
- ▶ Train legal, medical, social, educational, police, and immigration personnel to ensure fair treatment of women victims of violence.
- ▶ Document incidents of all types of violence.
- ▶ Consider enacting legislation aimed at preventing sex-tourism and trafficking.

Violence against women Selected Countries (around 1990)			
Norway 25% of female gynecological patients have been sexually abused by their partners.	USA 1 in 5 adult women has been raped.	Thailand In the biggest slum in Bangkok, 50% of married women are beaten regularly.	Peru 70% of all crimes reported to police are of women beaten by their husbands.

Source: Lori Heise, Pacific Institute for Women's Health, 1992.



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Women and the Environment

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Sept. 1994) called for the participation of women on an equal basis with men in human development, economic growth, and environmental management to achieve lower population growth rates and sustainable development.³

- The urban poor often establish communities on hillsides, garbage dumps, swampy areas, and near sources of industrial pollution unsuitable for human settlements.²
- The percentage of urban women lacking access to sanitation services is estimated to be: Africa (20%), Asia (20%) and Latin America (14%).³

Women, men and the earth

- Both women and men are involved in environmental degradation, often exploiting whatever natural resources they can to survive.³
- Consumption also has a great environmental impact: Industrialized countries, with barely 25% of the world's population, use 85% of all wood products consumed, 72% of steel production, and 75% of energy.¹⁹

**The urban environment**

Rapidly growing cities are plagued by industrial pollution, poor working conditions, vehicular pollution, limited and contaminated water supplies, and deficiencies in solid waste management and sanitation.²

- Air pollution: London produces 1,200 tons of pollutants every year, Los Angeles 3,400 tons, and Mexico City 5,000 tons. In Bangkok, more than 40% of the city's traffic police report suffering from respiratory problems.⁶
- The rate of miscarriages in two industrial cities in the Ukraine with high air pollution was found to be twice the rate in a clean air control city. The rate of congenital anomalies was three times the control rate.²⁸

The rural environment

- 10-15% of the rural population of developing countries live in environmentally degraded or ecologically vulnerable areas.³
- Rural population pressure is greatest in Africa, where the overall rate of rural population increase is more than 2% per year.³
- Women in poor rural areas are disadvantaged in dealing with the environment when they have less education and training than urban women or rural men, and are excluded from traditional rural development programmes, credit, and other institutional support.³
- The median time spent collecting fuelwood by women in low deforestation areas is 0.5 hours, and it is at least 7 times that in highly deforested areas.³

Indoor pollution

Women in some developing countries spend much of their time cooking with bio-mass (wood, straw, or dung) in poorly ventilated areas, exposing them to high levels of indoor air pollution.³

- A study in Nepal found that women cook on average 5 hours a day, with indoor particulate concentrations in rural areas as high as 20,000 micrograms per cubic metre. As a result, acute respiratory infection and bronchitis are common. The WHO standard is 150-230 micrograms per cubic metre.³



Women manage the water

Throughout much of the South, women bear the primary responsibility for collecting, supplying, and managing water.²⁵

- The world's supply of water per capita is only one third of what it was in 1970.⁶
- The percentage of urban women lacking safe drinking water is: Africa (13-14%), Asia (13-14%), and Latin America (8%).³
- The percentage of rural women affected by water scarcity is: Africa (55%), Latin America (45%), and Asia (32%).³

Women and natural resource management

- In Ghana, a project initiated in 1988 works with women farmers to plant trees in woodlots, alley-cropping orchards, farms, and along streams. The project has improved soil fertility and should reduce the need for expensive fertilizer. The woodlots will allow women to spend less time and money obtaining fuelwood.²⁵
- In rural Indonesia, a group of women launched a community awareness programme, including a radio broadcast about sanitation and health. Attracting a large listening audience, many installed latrines and improved the quality of drinking water, leading to a reduction in waterborne diseases.²⁵
- In 1990, a group of Honduran women trained women and men about deforestation and soil erosion, building wood-conserving stoves, planting trees in deforested areas,

and building outdoor lined sinks. Erosion was cut in half, and water quality improved.²⁵

The hard costs

As a result of deforestation and increased restrictions on public use of forests, women's income from selling forest products has decreased, constraining women's economic opportunities.³

- The deterioration of Europe's forests from air pollution causes economic losses of US\$ 35 billion a year. The estimated annual loss of agricultural production due to air pollution is (in billions of US\$): Italy (1.8), Poland (2.7), and Germany (4.7).⁶
- Studies in Uttar Pradesh, India, found that nearly 50% of poor women's income comes from common land, compared with only one eighth for that of poor men.³

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- Reduce risks to women from environmental hazards at home, work and other environments.
- Ensure that clean water is available and accessible to all by the year 2000.
- Create rural and urban training to disseminate environmentally sound technologies to women.
- Increase the proportion of women involved in programmes for natural resource management and environmental protection and conservation.

Much of a woman's work goes unrecognized

Time women spend collecting water in selected African countries
(hours/week)

Burkina Faso, Zintega Village	4.4	Kenya, villages	
Botswana, rural areas	5.5	Dry season	4.2
Côte D'Ivoire, rural	4.4	Wet season	2.2
Egypt	4.9	Nigeria, Oluwatedo Village	
Ghana, northern farms	4.5	Dry season	7-10.5
		Wet season	3.5-5.25

Source: The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics, United Nations, 1995.



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Politics and Decision-making

Despite the widespread movement toward democratization in the past decade, women have made little progress in attaining political power in legislative bodies, or achieving the target of 30% in decision-making levels set by the UN.

Women in government

- As of December 1994, only 24 women had been elected Heads of State or Government in this century, half after 1990. At the end of 1994, ten women headed Governments--a historically unprecedented figure.³
- On average, only 5.7% of cabinet ministers were women in 1994, an increase from 3.3% in 1987.³



- Between 1987 and 1994, the number of countries with no women in ministerial positions dropped from 93 to 59.³

- In six countries (Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, the Seychelles and Sweden) about one third of the ministers are women.³

- After the 1994 election in Sweden, women increased from one third to parity with men (52%) in ministerial posts.³

- Women are better represented at sub-ministerial levels (posts such as vice-minister, permanent secretary and deputy secretary and director). 23 countries have at least 15% women at this level, compared with 14 in 1987.³
- Of the 25 countries with no women at either the ministerial or sub-ministerial level in 1994, more than half are in Asia and the Pacific.³
- Some fields of decision-making are more

receptive to women: in western Asia, while there are no women in political decision-making positions in Government, 3.9% of decision makers in social fields are women; and in northern Africa there are no women in economic decision-making, but there are 16.7% in law and justice.³

Women in parliament

- Women's progress in parliaments is mixed: women's membership has declined in East and West Asia, and dropped sharply in eastern Europe after 1987 but turned up in some countries in recent elections. It increased slightly in Africa and Latin America, and somewhat more in developed countries.³
- Women's strongest parliamentary representation is found in northern Europe, particularly the Nordic countries, and is rising steadily.³

Women make a difference

If women are represented in sufficiently large numbers in the decision-making arena (constituting a "critical mass" estimated at 30-35% in decision-making bodies), they have a visible impact on the style and content of political decisions.¹

- In some countries (including Austria, Argentina, Colombia, Germany, the Nordic countries and Poland) women are voting differently from men, and in close elections determining the outcome. In Norway, women in one set of municipal elections systematically voted for female candidates, increasing the proportion of women in municipal councils by 50%.¹
- Women have expressed a preference for political parties with female candidates, and those representing women's interests, especially reproductive rights, social support services and participation in decision-making.¹



Women in the UN — The first 50 years

- 4% of delegates to the UN General Assembly in 1949 were women. By 1994, 20% of the delegates were women. The highest proportion were from the Caribbean (29%) and Latin America and the developed regions (22-24%). Delegations with the fewest women were from Eastern Europe (5%) and southern Asia, western Asia, and Oceania (8-9%).³
- Beginning in 1985, the General Assembly set goals for increased women's participation. The current goal is to have 35% women in the Secretariat by 1995, with 25% at the higher management levels. At the end of 1993, the number of women in senior management was only 13%.³

Women and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

With the exclusion from traditional avenues of power, women have gained access to power through alternative structures, particularly the NGO sector. Women's NGOs articulate their interests and concerns and place women's issues on national, regional, and international agendas.

- Collaboration has greatly increased between governments and women's NGOs in the decision-making process. For example, women's NGOs, which lobbied at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, helped draft the Declaration on Violence Against Women, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1993. It is the first universal legal instrument aimed specifically at combating violence against women.

Promoting women's participation

- Political parties in some countries have adopted quota systems for women (Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Venezuela) that ensure a minimum representation of women (from 20-50%) in political bodies.¹
- In 1992, the United Republic of Tanzania passed a law requiring at least 15% of all members of parliament to be women.¹
- Bangladesh attributes the increase of women in civil service from 17% of officers in the Secretariat in 1987 to 25.7% in 1991 and the increase as officers in the Directorates from 7.1% in 1987 to 19.6% in 1991 to the introduction of quota systems.¹
- In Argentina, a quota for women was established in 1991, to guarantee a minimum 30% participation in political parties.¹

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Take action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers.
- ▶ Monitor and evaluate progress on the representation of women at all levels in decision-making in the public and private sectors.
- ▶ Protect and promote the equal rights of women and men to political activities and freedom of association, including membership in political parties.



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Action for Equality,
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The Girl Child

Girls are at a higher risk of dying before the age of 5 than boys in a number of countries, despite their biological advantage of being more resistant to infection and malnutrition.

Childhood health

- More boys than girls are immunized and treated by hospitals.¹⁷
- In Colombia, only 75 deaths of boys aged 1-2 occur for every 100 deaths of girls.¹
- In Haiti, among every 1,000 children aged 2-5, 61 girls and 48 boys die.¹⁷
- In India, there are only 957 females aged 4 years or under for every 1,000 males in the population.¹

**Son preference**

The estimated loss in female lives represented by physical neglect of girl children is between 60 and 100 million worldwide.¹⁶

- While the standard "biological" sex ratio is estimated at 93-96 female births per 100 male, deviations have been found. In 1988-1989, 91 girls were born per 100 boys in India.³
- Son preference is more evident in higher-order births. Data indicate that the ratio of female to male births decreases at higher birth orders, suggesting that couples who already have children are less likely to accept another daughter.³
- In a poll of 640 families in one southern Asian community, 51% admitted to having killed a girl baby within a week of her birth.⁸

Harmful traditional practices

Female genital mutilation (FGM), a harmful traditional practice in some countries, can cause trau-

ma, swelling, haemorrhage, obstruction of urine and menstrual flow, and risk of AIDS transmission. It can lead to lifelong physical and psychological scars or serious injury and death.¹

- At least 2 million girls are believed to undergo FGM every year; approximately 6,000 per day. Girls most commonly experience FGM at 4-8 years of age.

Education

- Primary school enrolment for girls and boys from 1960 to 1989 more than tripled in Africa and doubled in Asia and Latin America.¹
- Almost half of the children of primary-school age in Africa are still out of school, the majority of them girls.¹
- In 1993, approximately 60% of the 130 million children aged 6-11 who were not in school were girls.⁸
- In 1990 southern Asian girls were found to spend on average only 1.26 years in school, a slight rise from 1.16 years in 1980.¹

A girl's working day

- According to a government study in Nepal, the work burden of girls in both the 6-9 and 10-14 age groups is much heavier than that of boys in the same age group in both rural and urban areas.¹⁸

Positive programmes for girls

- As of April 1995, 173 countries had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Genetic testing for sex selection has been banned officially in India under the 1994 Regulation and Prevention of Misuse Bill, and in China since January 1995.¹
- The seven-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has created programmes to raise the age of marriage and provide girls



with health care and other services, and declared 1991-2000 the Decade of the Girl Child.^{30, 32}

- Through the Organization of African Unity, in 1990 African nations adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, with a special focus on girls.³⁰
- Throughout southern Asia, a UNICEF-initiated multimedia campaign projects an empowering view of a little girl named Meena. Through television programmes, video and comic books, the Meena Initiative targets both parents and children in an effort to change negative images of girls.

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- Implement policies, plans of action and programmes for the survival, protection, development and advancement of the girl child.
- Set up educational programmes to sensitize adults to the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices on girl children.
- Eliminate discrimination against the girl child and the root causes of son preference and such unethical practices as infanticide and prenatal sex selection.
- Ensure universal and equal access to and the completion of primary education and eliminate the gap between girls and boys.

Unequal from childhood

Time use of children in rural areas
Number of hours spent per day in different activities

	INDIA, 1990				NEPAL, 1989			
	Ages 6-9		Ages 10-14		Ages 6-9		Ages 10-14	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Work	3.0	1.9	5.4	4.0	3.2	1.7	7.7	4.4
Non-subsistence	0.7	0.6	2.3	2.9	0.3	0.3	1.8	1.3
Subsistence	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.4	2.0	1.2
Household	1.4	0.7	2.3	0.6	2.2	1.0	4.0	2.0
Reading/studying	0.4	2.5	0.2	1.1	2.1	4.8	3.8	0.3
Leisure	1.3	1.5	0.8	1.2	—	—	—	—

Source: Compiled by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat from national studies.



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Human Rights

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights (June 1993) reaffirmed that human rights of women and the girl child are inalienable, integral, and indivisible parts of universal human rights.

Global trends

It may not be the content of the law which is the major obstacle to women's advancement for equality, but rather the commitment with which Governments adhere to the provisions of the laws, and the attitudes of the judiciary, law enforcement officials, and society at large.

- In the past decade a growing number of countries has supported the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which legally binds them to achieve equal rights for women in political, economic, social, cultural, and civil fields.² Adopted in 1979, as of May 1995 it had been signed by 139 governments.¹



Even though female infanticide has been outlawed by many countries, cases are still frequently reported.

- In many countries, lack of awareness of one's legal rights, and of how to exercise them, remains an obstacle to women's access to full and equal human rights.

**Dualistic legal systems
and ineffective laws**

In many countries society remains influenced and regulated by traditional customary and religious practices and regulations, often in direct conflict with the principles of international human rights standards and national laws.¹

- Several multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries have dualistic legal systems that perpetuate sex discrimination, especially in the area of personal and family law.¹
- In a number of countries, the right of inheritance to property, by cultural tradition and custom, still belongs to male heirs only, even when by secular law the rights could be shared equally between women and men.¹
- Despite international legislation, including the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, trafficking in women for prostitution continues. A growth has been reported in sex work trafficking among Eastern European women and from eastern to western Europe.³

Laws stacked against women

- Until a 1989 legal reform, a husband in Ecuador had the right to force his wife to live with him no matter how abusive he may have been.¹⁰
- Laws in Chile and Guatemala specifically exonerate a man who agrees to marry the girl he has raped; his marriage to the victim is perceived as restoring her and her family's honour.¹⁰
- In the secular laws of a number of countries, only a husband (and not the wife) can obtain a divorce on the grounds of adultery.¹

Legal literacy

Reports from Asia and Africa indicate that women are still often fearful, reluctant, not willing, or not comfortable in pursuing judicious settlements through litigation — especially on family disagreements.¹

- Legal literacy programmes and media strategies in many countries are effective in helping women understand the link between their



rights and other aspects of their lives.

- Women have been able to make important inroads in law at the third level. In 1990, the number of women enrolled per 100 men were: Caribbean (119), developed regions (103), Latin America (80), East and South-East Asia (75), North Africa (55), West Asia (43), sub-Saharan Africa (39), and South Asia (25).³
- Legal training is providing new opportunities for women to enter high-level governmental and political positions. The percentage of women in Law and Justice positions in government in 1994 ranged wildly from lows of 0% in East, Southeast and Central Asia and 0.9% in Eastern Europe, to highs of 22.2% in the Caribbean, 16.7% in northern Africa, and 14.6% in Central America.³

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- ▶ Create or strengthen national institutions for the protection and promotion of women's human rights.
- ▶ Develop a human rights education programme to raise awareness among women and men of women's human rights.
- ▶ Promote and protect the full and equal enjoyment by women and men of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinions, national or social origins, property, birth or other status.
- ▶ Ensure that women have equal right with men to be judges, advocates or other officers of the court as well as police officers and prison and detention officers.

Women make inroads in legal education

Average ratio of girls to boys in law and business in third-level education by region, 1970-1990 (Number of girls per 100 boys)

Region	1970	1980	1990
Africa	12	43	36
Asia and the Pacific	25	56	70
Eastern Europe	64	134	124
Latin America and the Caribbean	30	92	97
Western Europe and other	25	54	85
World	25	63	102

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Secretariat, from data contained in the Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base (Wistat), version 3.





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War and Peace

At times of national or international armed conflicts, women are affected in many ways. Though they may have no role in decisions leading to such conflicts and seldom are combatants themselves, women are often left to maintain families when social and economic life is disrupted.

Women casualties

- The casualties of war are increasingly women and children. About 90% of war casualties were military at the beginning of this century. About 90% of war casualties are civilian today.⁶
- Throughout history, women have been subjected to rape as part of war, most recently documented from Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia, Peru, Somalia and Uganda.¹⁰
- A survey by Rwanda's Ministry of Family and Women's Affairs in Kigali and several other prefectures estimated that between April 1994 and 10 April 1995 more than 15,700 women and girls aged 13-65 were raped, more than 1,100 gave birth and 5,200 had abortions.³¹



- More than 100 million uncleared land-mines are estimated to exist in the world, causing one of the three most serious public health hazards alongside malaria and tuberculosis in countries such as Cambodia.²²
- During 40 years of Soviet nuclear testing in Kazakhstan, on more than 2,000 square kilometres of prime agricultural land, 10,000 people were irradiated. By 1988, the incidence of cancer was 70% greater than the Soviet Union national average.²³
- Only one hour of the operating costs of a B-B1 bomber, US\$ 21,000, is enough to provide community-based maternal health care in 10 African villages to reduce maternal deaths by half in one decade.²⁴
- The export of major conventional arms shows a decrease from 1988 to 1992 (in millions of US\$, 1990):⁶

	1988	1992
USA	12,204	8,429
Former USSR/Russia	14,658	2,043
France	2,403	1,151
Germany	1,241	1,928
China	2,161	1,535
U.K.	1,704	952

The military industry's human cost

- The chances of dying from social neglect (malnutrition and preventable disease) are 33 times greater than the chances of dying in a war or from external aggression in developing countries. However, there is an average of 20 soldiers for every one physician in developing countries.⁶
- In 1990, around 1.5 million of the five to seven million people employed in research and development in industrialized countries were in the military sector.⁶

Diplomacy

Women continue to be largely absent among the highest ranks of the permanent missions to the UN. As of January 1994, seven missions out of 186 were headed by women; out of 240 delegates holding ambassadorial rank, only 11 were women; and in the Permanent Missions of 67 Member States, there were no women at all.⁹

- The percentage of women diplomats by region: Latin America and the Caribbean (37.5%); Western Europe and Other (29%); Africa (19.4%); Asia and the Pacific (9.3%); and Eastern Europe (8.6%).⁹



Military and police

- In only 13 out of 45 researched countries do women comprise more than 10% of the military service members.¹
- The combat role is open to women in a few countries, including Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Venezuela and Zambia.¹
- Many countries have reported a participation of women in the police force, and in most of these countries women's participation is increasing; the highest reporting of female police chiefs is 13%. Most women police officers were assigned to areas dealing with rape and women prisoners.¹
- Data from Brazil's special police stations show that women-only units have greatly facilitated the reporting of abuse. In Sao Paulo, reported rape cases went from 67 in 1985 (before the women's stations were open), to 841 in 1990.¹⁰

UN peace-keeping

- For selected years from 1957 to 1989, there were 20 women out of a total of nearly 10,000 military personnel.⁹ From 1989 to 1992, this figure rose to 255, little more than 1% of the total.³
- Out of the 17 peace-keeping operations in 1993, 2% of the military contingents were women.³
- Women have played a larger role in peace-keeping's non-military sector. From 1957 to 1991, women comprised 5-23% of the international civilian staff serving in UN peace-keeping operations.³
- In the only all-civilian peace and security mission — the UN Observer Mission to South Africa in 1993 — about half of the international staff were women, and over 50% of them were team leaders for the major part of the mission.³

When women make a difference

- In 1980 in Denmark, three housewives organized half a million women to successfully petition for the ban of cruise missiles on Danish territory.⁹
- In Argentina, the women of the Plaza de Mayo are widely regarded as responsible for bringing international attention to the "disappeared" through defiant, silent demonstrations during the military dictatorship (1976-1983).⁹
- The peace-keeping operation during Namibia's transition to freedom, 1989-1990, is widely considered one of the most successful. In a breakthrough for challenging peace-keeping roles for women, over 40% of the professional staff were women. Staff selection was based on background, experience and regional balance rather than a deliberate policy of selecting women.³

The Draft Platform for Action proposes to:

- Increase and strengthen the participation of women in conflict resolution and decision-making and leadership in peace and security activities and protect women in armed and other conflicts.
- Increase the percentage of women at all decision-making levels, which may make or influence peace-keeping policy.
- Ensure that international judicial bodies are able to address cases involving rape, indecent assault, and other forms of violence against women; and strengthen women's participation in national reconciliation and reconstruction.



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Summary of the second review and appraisal of the **Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women**

The *Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000* (NFLS), adopted in Nairobi at the 1985 third UN conference on women, provided a framework for action at the national, regional and international levels to promote greater equality and opportunity for women. The first review and appraisal of the *Strategies* was issued in 1990.

The *Second Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies*, issued as a main document of the Fourth World

Conference on Women, has been prepared on the basis of information contained in national reports received by the Conference Secretariat from 130 UN Member States by 1 December 1994, the results of regional conferences held in connection with the Fourth World Conference on Women and information

provided by specialized agencies of the UN system. It also draws on gender statistics assembled by the UN Statistical Division. Structured around the draft *Platform for Action*, the key document submitted for adoption in Beijing, the *Review and Appraisal* should be seen as the factual support for the conclusions and recommendations in the *Platform*.

Re-assessing progress

Change in the work and lives of women all over the world is related to change in the global economic, social, and political environment. Given the dramatic turns of the last decade, in tandem with women's historically unequal status in society, women's position has been shifting across the international spectrum. Though gains have

occurred, to a degree, in all countries, poverty, violence, and the lack of access to education, among other issues, remain pressing concerns for women. In this context the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (NFLS) are being re-assessed.

The NFLS pointed out that the growing "feminization" of poverty — poverty growing faster for women than for men — poses a threat to both development and democracy. In the hopes of eradicating inequality between men and women and discrimination against women, some recent recommendations have been made, such as directing resources to poor women; ensuring access to education and health services; changing laws to ensure equal access to land, assets, and employment; providing adequate safety nets; and enabling the rural and urban poor to analyse their own situation and express their priorities.

Fighting illiteracy

Literacy and functional literacy have risen in the last decade. Girls' school enrolment is now comparable with that of boys, with the exception of Africa and Asia. There, cost, culture, and economics favour the education of male over female children, if education is a priority at all. Programmes have increased in non-formal education, alternative education, and education for special groups of girls and women, such as migrants, aboriginals, the impoverished, and the disabled.

Governments have agreed to encourage all schools to examine educational tools; eliminate discriminatory stereotyping; redesign textbooks to reflect a positive and dynamic image of women; and include women's studies in their curricula.

A small percentage of female students who do seek higher education go on to enter the formerly male-dominated fields of science and technology, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the majority continue to



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Summary of the 1994 world survey on

The Role of Women in Development

The *1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, one of the main documents for the Fourth World Conference on Women, examines the impact of three key issues affecting women: poverty, employment, and economic decision-making. Economic development is linked to women's advancement. Where women have made strides, economic growth has been steady; where women have been locked out of development, economies have stagnated. The *World Survey* explores how social and economic development can be used to build a more secure future for humankind.

Moving to a gender analysis



The women in development (WID) movement that emerged in the early 1970s successfully put women's advancement on the international agenda. Unlike past development models that stressed women's reproductive role, the WID approach focused on incorporating women into social and economic development strategies.

In recent years, however, the WID philosophy has been overtaken by a more complex and comprehensive analysis of development by gender. Gender analysis views women and men in terms of the roles they play in society, roles which change as societies change. Gender relations are the social, economic and political relations that determine gender identity. Since gender relations shape women's access to resources, their work opportunities and their roles in family and public life, they also determine women's status. Gender relations also frame male behaviour, responsibilities and entitlements.

By comparing women and men rather than looking at women as an isolated group, gender analysis illuminates key aspects of society's struc-

ture, making it easier to identify the obstacles to improving society and to finding solutions to women's issues.

Evaluating progress. Aftershocks from the political and economic upheavals of the last decade are still being evaluated. A global recession that lasted well over five years is just beginning a cautious recovery. Women's economic activity must be examined in terms of these ongoing changes, which include globalization of markets and production, structural adjustments, rapid technological innovations and growing economic interdependence.

Two significant changes have occurred over the past 10 years. One is the change in women's legal status in the direction of equality. This is reflected in the increase in the number of countries that are party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (139, as of May 1995). The other is women's achievement of equal access to education and training. By 1990, in most countries girls had the same access to primary education as boys. Even more progress has been made in second and third levels of education. However, there are regional differences, with Africa and South Asia being less rapid in closing the gap between boys and girls.

These developments have provided equal opportunities for an increasing number of women and allowed them to utilize the skills and priorities that derive from their gender roles. However, progress in developing and developed countries has been uneven and obstacles to women's advancement remain everywhere. Girls are still channelled into fields of study regarded as suitable for women, which prevents them from taking on the challenges of a technology-driven society. Adult illiteracy continues to be a primary problem for women, relegating them to a lesser standing in society.

Structural adjustment programmes. The WID approach to development, dominant during the 1980s, is now known by many as the decade of



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An overview of

The World's Women in 1995

Issues of gender equality are moving to the top of the global agenda but better understanding of women's and men's contributions to society is essential to speed the shift from agenda to policy to practice. Too often, women and men live in different worlds — worlds that differ in access to education and work opportunities, and in health, personal security and leisure time. *The World's Women 1995*, one of the main documents of the Fourth World Conference on Women, provides information and analyses to highlight the economic, political and social differences that still separate women's and men's lives and how these differences are changing.

How different are these worlds? Anecdote and misperception abound, in large part because good information has been lacking. As a result, policy has been ill-informed, strategy unfounded and practice unquestioned. Fortunately, this is beginning to change. It is changing because advocates of women's interests have done much in the past 20 years to sharpen people's awareness of the importance of gender concerns. It is changing because this growing awareness has, by raising new questions and rephrasing old, greatly increased the demand for better statistics to inform and focus the debate. And it is changing because women's contributions—and women's rights—have moved to the centre of social and economic change, as it became apparent in the series of international conferences held by the UN in recent years, including the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development

(Cairo, 1994) and the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen 1995).

To promote action on the new consensus to empower women, this second edition of *The World's Women* builds on the first one which was issued in 1991, presenting statistical summaries of health, schooling, family life, work and public life. It presents few global figures, focusing instead on country data and regional averages. There are myriad differences among countries in every field and *The World's Women* tries to find a meaningful balance between detailed country statements and broad generalization.



Education for empowerment

In the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, education is considered one of the most important means to empower women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in development processes. Educated women marry later, want fewer children, are more likely to use effective methods of contraception and have greater means to improve their economic livelihood.

Through widespread promotion of universal primary education, literacy rates for women have increased over the past few decades—to at least 75 per cent in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and eastern and south-eastern Asia. But high rates of illiteracy among women still prevail in much of Africa and in parts of Asia. And when illiteracy is high it almost always is accompanied by large differences in rates between women and men.

At intermediate levels of education, girls have made progress in their enrolment in school through the second level. The primary-secondary enrolment ratio is now about equal for girls and boys in the developed regions and Latin America and the Caribbean and is approaching near



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