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DRAFT INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

Working paper submitted by Iran with a view to facilitating
discussion of the draft Plan of Action*

*. No priority has been set as to the order of the discussion of the individual categories listed.

75-04559

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Statement of Problems and Suggested Steps in the following areas :

- Food
- Health
- Education and Training
- Workforce
- Legal and Constitutional
- Participation in Policy-Making
- Determining Future Goals

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Food - Statement of Problems

Seventy-five per cent of the population of the world live in developing areas, and more than fifty per cent of this number are women and the majority of them live in rural areas. Besides their household chores and biological task of bearing children women are often responsible for 60-80% of agricultural work, and the processing of food. Given the global shortage of food and the prediction of grave food shortages, women must play a vital part in efforts to increase food production.¹ Yet women who are working as agriculturalists are not trained in new methods of farming, nor are they given agricultural extensions services. Neither do they have adequate access to credit facilities and marketing assistance.

The role of women also has bearing on the food crisis in another significant regard. Throughout the world it is the women, who can effect patterns of food consumption since the economics of food consumption is generally their domain. Thus women involved in the production of food need both agricultural training and nutritional education, whilst women in high consumption societies need not only education about nutrition, but also education regarding the consequences of unnecessarily high consumption, especially of proteins, on the world's total food supply.

1. Rome Conference, November 1974, 5% increase in food production by 1980.

Food - Suggested Steps

1. Special target dates should be established for increased food production. (Food Conference, Rome 1974 - by 1980 a 5% increase).
High priority should be given to the training of women within agriculture.
2. Research should be initiated immediately, based upon intensive time and budget studies as to how, when and where women's activities in producing food takes place.
3. Intermediate technological advances should be made equally and readily available to women in order to facilitate increases in food production.
4. Opportunity for agricultural extension services, credit facilities and marketing assistances should be made available to women as soon as possible on a basis equal to men.
5. Programmes should be carried out to inform both rural and urban women throughout the world of the nutritional value of different foods, and aspects of planning a healthful diet.
6. Women in developed areas should be informed of the effects of processed foods and of the consequences of their eating habits to the world's food supply.
7. Programmes to provide adequate food supply and nutrition for the impoverished in developed nations should be pursued.
8. Alternative sources of food should be developed and explored for example the potential of the sea bed and the sea.

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Health - Statement of Problems

Because of their biological function of giving birth, women have special health needs. Since maternity is a social function society is obliged to meet these needs. Among the special needs of women, nutrition and access to medical facilities should be emphasized.

The combination of childbearing, breastfeeding, housework and heavy manual labour (women in rural areas of some developing nations for example on the average carry water six to seven hours a day), causes physical exhaustion and poor health among far too many women. In the case of pregnant women, this is not only harmful to the mother but also to her unborn child and therefore to the next generation and society in general. Maternal malnutrition, especially during the critical period of fetal brain development contributes directly to brain damage among newborns. In an age when human creativity and inventiveness are so urgently needed society cannot afford such waste of human resources.

Medical facilities are generally not readily available to the women who need them most, namely, rural women and urban poor. Too often private and public programmes intended for them reach only a limited number of women. Few among the impoverished, most especially those in rural areas, have access to information and transportation to benefit from such programmes.

It should be noted that the condition of health, particularly of women in rural areas is exceedingly low owing to the lack of adequately trained medical personnel.

Health - Suggested Steps

1. High priority should be given to programmes that deal with nutrition, nutrition education, health education, family planning, maternal and child care, within the integrated context of complete health services.
2. Local authorities should be encouraged to introduce labour saving devices such as wells and the installation of milling machines in order to reduce the number of women-hours devoted to such essential chores.
3. Programmes should be initiated that take into account both women's individual needs as human beings and their maternity needs, making full use of existing services, paramedical personnel and traditional midwives.
4. Special efforts should be made to inform the urban poor and rural women about existing medical facilities. Distribution of medical services should be planned so as to make them more easily accessible.
5. Within the context of a massive program of health education and health services, courses in health education, maternal and child care should be organized in every village and every urban neighborhood. These classes should be advertised by the media and by all existing social networks. They should include information about what medical facilities are available, and how to get to the facilities. Physicians should periodically conduct physical examination of the participants in as many of these classes as possible.
6. Travelling clinics and medical teams should make periodic visits to all communities.
7. Recruitment and training should be undertaken at the village level to prepare people from villages as health workers to provide basic health Services for their community.

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EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Statement of Problems

Education In the field of education and training women have 1, also been neglected. They constitute the greatest number of illiterates. Fewer girls go to school. There is a high drop-out rate for girls. Even when there is a satisfactory percentage of enrollment of girls, there is often discrimination against them in the nature and content of the education provided and the options offered. This results in a vicious circle consisting often of early marriage, part time work, jobs which carry the least status and the lowest pay. Efforts are being made in most countries to eradicate illiteracy. Special literacy classes are being held, but here too the ratio of women's enrollment is much less than that of men.

The lack of opportunity for girls and women to be educated and trained equally with men leads to the marginal participation of women in development efforts and in modern economic activities. The results are by and large development processes and economic changes which work to the disadvantage of women by excluding them more and more from economic activity and public life.

Whilst illiteracy for women exists, the programmes for "the motivation towards change" so badly needed to improve the quality of life will fail. This failure not only affects women as individuals but also society as a whole. For in most societies it is the mother who is now responsible for the training of her children during the formative years of their lives.

1. See Annex. Statistical data.

WORKFORCE - Statement of Problems

Although the statistics on "economically active females" may reflect inaccuracies analysis will reveal some distinct patterns. Where they are recognized as part of the workforce, Women suffer discrimination in pay,¹ promotions, working conditions and hiring practices. Even more lamentable is the circumstance, particularly prevalent in developing countries where long, arduous hours of physical labor has not earned for women recognition as part of the economically active population. Thus, we see, for instance, from the statistics of one African country that only 7% of the women in that country were "economically active". In actual fact most of the agricultural work of that country was carried out by women. This may seem a minor statistical error, but in reality it is a reflection of how women's labour, productivity and involvement in development is not accounted for, as it falls outside of the tabulations comprising the GNP.

Another emerging pattern applicable to both women in developed and developing countries is that on the whole women continue to be concentrated in a limited number of occupations at relatively low levels of skills and responsibilities, and there remains a clear division of labor by sex rather than ability

Thus a job stratification takes place with jobs labelled as "men's work" and "women's work".

In short, women's work is given little or no recognition in economic accounting, is considered of less social value than men's work, and women's opportunity to work and choice of vocation is severely limited.

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1. ILO studies of the position in industrialized countries suggests women's wages are about 50-80% of men's for the same work.

8. The establishment of transnational teams of youth volunteers of equal members of men and women should be considered as part of the training of these young people for international services and as a means of contributing to the development process in the same atmosphere. Thus the spirit of world community and sexual equality could be nurtured in one project.

Legal and Constitutional; Statement of Problems

Although in the past thirty years there has been a marked improvement in the legal position of women and many conventions, declarations and other legal instruments have been ratified to grant women equality with men ^{1/}, there still exists a tremendous gap between de jure and de facto recognition of women's rights. All but five countries have laws granting women the right to vote and to be elected to the legislative, executive and judicial bodies of their respective governments. Yet in spite of this few women exercise these rights and the number of women holding high posts within the various branches of their governments is extremely low. The reasons for this situation are varied but basically custom, tradition and the existing social structure present the major obstacles to the exercise of women's constitutional rights.

In the field of civil law, especially family law, in most countries, progress has been very slow. Often only men are recognized as heads of families with sole responsibility over the persons and over the property of their wives and children. In some countries women are still required by law to obey their husbands, and in others they need the explicit authorization of their husbands to contract sue and be sued, and in others still they need the permission of their husbands to work outside the home. Thus we see that the legal capacity of the married women is still far inferior to that of the man in many parts of the world. In fact even in countries where the equality of men and women is not only guaranteed by law but where real progress has in fact been achieved, the rights and obligations of the spouses during marriage is not equitably shared.

It is recognized that law cannot be totally divorced from custom and tradition and that often it is in fact custom and tradition which are the barriers to women's real equality and progress. Therefore education of public opinion is as important as removing legal obstacles.

^{1/} Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952, 71 states parties;
Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, 1957, 46 states parties;
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and
Registration of Marriages, 1962, 26 states parties;
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the
Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1950, 40 states parties;
Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade,
and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956, 82 states parties;
ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work
of Equal Value, 1951, 74 states parties;
UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960, 59
states parties;
Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1967,
among others.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL: Suggested Steps

1. The speedy ratification of conventions relating to the Status of Women by Governments who have not yet done so; the enactment of legislations, conforming national laws to international standards. Immediate legislation by Governments to eliminate laws which discriminate against women should be encouraged.
2. The mass media should be utilized to educate public opinion and to inform women of their legal rights.
3. The provision of counselling and free legal service to women should be undertaken.
4. Measures should be taken to encourage women to run for public office and exercise their political and legal rights (availability of campaign funds to women, access to media and other promotional instruments should be extended).
5. Women should be encouraged to study for careers in law and constitutional process.
6. Studies should be initiated at the International level as to the possibility of the elaboration of new conventions in the field of woman's rights.
7. Measures should be taken to encourage the participation of women in the law-making process.

PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING: Statement of Problems

Although half the population of the world are women, only a small percentage of them both in the developing and developed world are in positions of leadership in the different branches of their governments, and an even smaller percentage are in the advisory groups which serve policy makers.

The reasons for this are multi-faceted but among the foremost are the following:

2. The number of women who have attained the same degree of education required for decision making positions in the government are comparatively low, especially in the developing countries.

Women have not been encouraged to a higher level of leadership because of traditional attitudes, bias, and discrimination.

3. Many qualified women are prevented from participation in public decision making, and managerial positions in the economy because they must bear the sole responsibility for the care of the young and the household.

The consequence of the above analysis is (1) that women are not involved in the decision making process and their needs therefore are seldom reflected in planning. (2) Since women do not contribute to planning they are less amenable to change and the implementation of programs for development. Thus plans and programs designed to increase women's participation in development will not achieve desired results unless women participate in their formulation as well as their execution.

PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING: Suggested Steps

1. Equal educational and training opportunities should be provided for women in order that they may acquire positions of leadership.
2. The mass media should be used as an educational instrument to help create the necessary attitude so that women may take positions of leadership, and to bring about changes of discriminatory practices within the family and within society.
3. Governments should establish a special "institution" at an appropriately high level, to undertake the planning of programmes for the total elimination of discrimination against women.
4. Massive educational efforts to prepare women for public life, to attract women into necessary educational programmes should be launched.

DETERMINING FUTURE GOALS: Statement of Problems

The prospects of the human future on this planet become increasing problematic, With the very survival of the human race being threatened by weapons of mass destruction, deterioration of the biosphere, the exhaustion of non-renewable resources and the potential for more widespread starvation than ever known in human history, the capacity to respond to/problems must be augmented by every possible human resource.

It should be noted that the policies which produced these threats to human survival were derived without the participation of women. It is hope that by redressing the imbalance of representation of men and women in decision making, significant progress can be made toward reversing the lethal trends which stand as obstacles to the the realization of a future characterized by true human community,

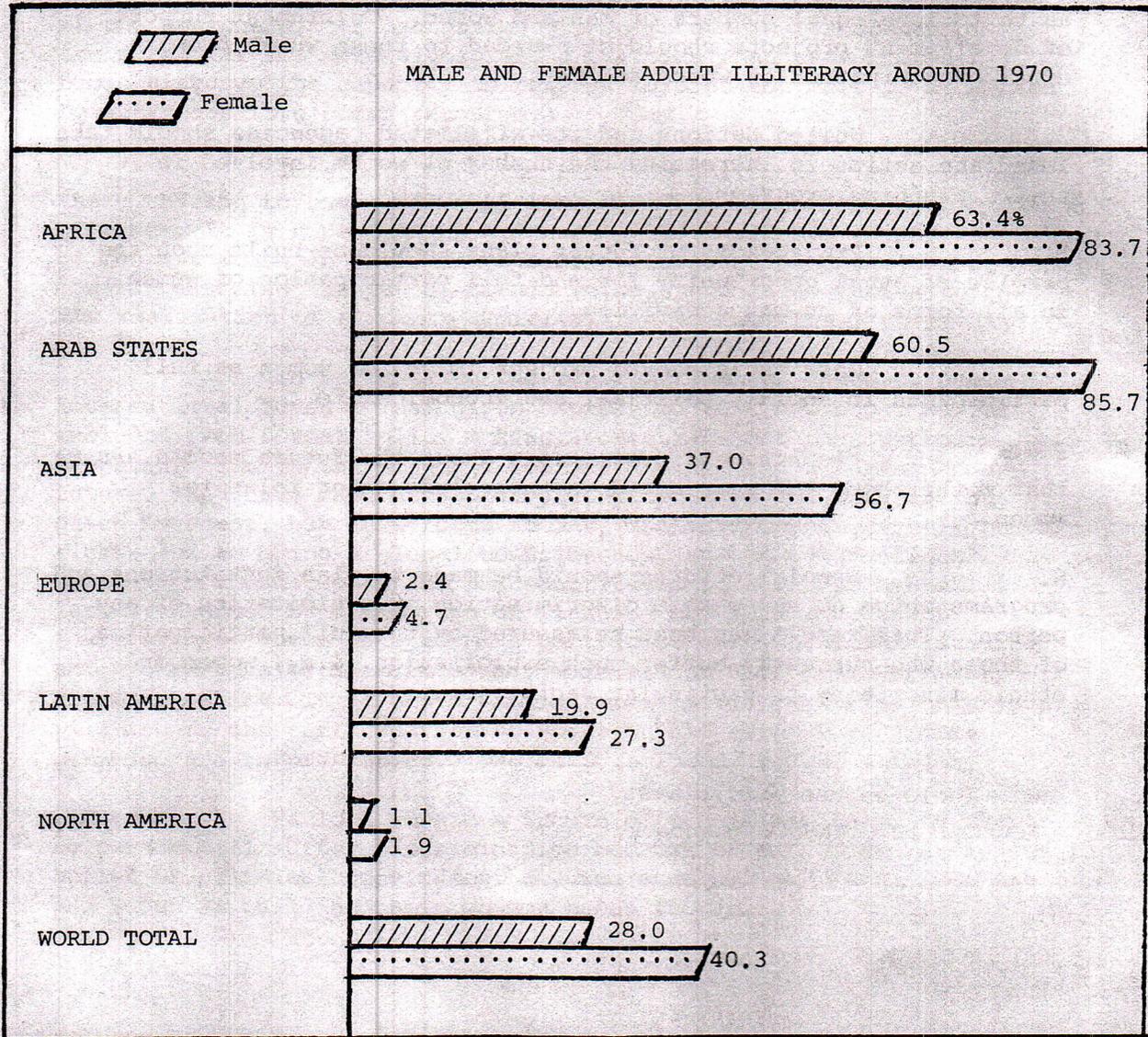
In recognizing the contribution of women to peace International Women's Year gives expression to a new hope. Whilst excluded from formal policy making, women have not been without representation in the struggle for world peace and a better human future. They have made outstanding contributions not only in the peace movement, but in efforts to save the environment, ensure human rights and to bring a global consciousness to the international community. These capacities and contributions, however, are still largely ignored by ministries of planning and future research institutions. Women have no more part in current futuristic studies and program projections than they have had to date in government decision making. It is hoped that efforts initiated during this year will assure the participation of women in all aspects of future planning and future making.

We look toward a future of true human equality where no person will suffer discrimination because of sex, race, religious belief or political conviction. We urge an equal partnership of men and women in building their common human future.

DETERMINING FUTURE GOALS: Suggested Steps

1. National planning groups should be reorganized so as to include equal numbers of men and women. Government support of development projects should be awarded to those which promote equal participation of women and men.
2. United Nations and its affiliated agencies should take immediate action in increasing the number of women involved in their planning programs.
3. Projections of future plans should be built upon the premise of equal opportunity for and full participation of women in all forms of human activities.
4. Mass media should project images of women as full participants in social, political and economic life.
5. Planning and projections about the future should assume that motherhood and marriage do not preclude other roles for women.
6. Special efforts should be made to plan institutions and programs which do not permit discrimination or exploitation of any person. This result may best be assured by the full participation of those who currently suffer such exploitation, i.e., women and ethnic minorities or particular racial groups.

TABLE I.



July 1974 issue of Common Concern published by the World YWCA. The figures were taken from "Learning to be" by UNESCO.

Statistics supplied by : Boulding Data Bank, University of Colorado.

TABLE II.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATIO* - Female for 1st level only - Approx. 1968.

	<u>Mean</u>	<u># Countries</u>
World	81.7079	168
Africa	53.137	51
America, N. ^{1.}	108.678	28
America, S.	107.416	12
Asia	71.047	21
Asia, W. ^{2.}	62.428	14
Europe	103.032	31
Oceania	102.272	11

*Percentage enrolled of corresponding population of school age as defined by each country.

1. Includes Central America, Cuba and the Caribbean.

2. Includes the Middle East.

Source: 1970 UNESCO Yearbook,

Statistics supplied by: Boulding Data Bank, University of Colorado.

TABLE III.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATIO* - Females for Second level only -Approx. 1968.

	<u>Mean</u>	<u># Countries</u>
World	26.061	160
Africa	8.583	49
America, N. ^{1.}	36.750	28
America, S.	31.54545	11
Asia	29.826	19
Asia, W. ^{2.}	23.85857	14
Europe	53.896	29
Oceania	33.00	10

*Percentage enrolled of corresponding population of school age as defined for each country.

1. Includes Central America, Cuba and the Caribbean.

2. Includes the Middle East.

Source: 1970 UNESCO Yearbook.

Statistics supplied by: Boulding Data Bank, University of Colorado.

TABLE IV

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE FEMALES in non-agricultural work as percent
of female population.

	<u>Mean</u>	<u># Countries</u>
World	13.67239	126
Africa	6.75082	21
America, N. ^{1.}	13.98345	36
America, S.	11.37808	14
Asia	6.29646	30
Asia, W. ^{2.}	3.27165	16
Europe	16.59741	37
Oceania	2.33030	27

1. Includes Central America, Cuba and the Caribbean.

2. Includes the Middle East.

Source: ILO Yearbook.
