

**Beyond Promises: Governments in Motion One Year
After the Beijing Women's Conference
September 1996**

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Foreword

Anniversaries are good occasions to take stock. One year after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, it is time for the governments which made commitments at Beijing and the thousands of women who helped shape the landmark Platform for Action to pause and reflect on what it has really meant to bring Beijing home.

For millions of activists in the global women's movement, Beijing has become a metaphor for transformation. While imperfect, the Platform adopted by governments last year is the strongest holistic statement on equality, development and peace to come out of any gathering of the world's nations. It is a roadmap towards a better future for all, not merely women. It calls for major transformations in human relationships as well as the ways we live, work and share the planet.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women was the largest mobilization of the global women's movement to date. Nearly every country of the world and tens of thousands of people participated in the multi-year process that culminated in Beijing in September 1995. Over 40,000 women made it to China to participate in the NGO Forum, to cover the conference for the media and to negotiate and agree upon the Platform for Action. There was significant press coverage of the conference -- the personalities, the conflicts and, to some degree, the issues.

Now, on the first anniversary, the world wants to know what has happened since Beijing. We assume that government representatives are also curious about what has transpired in other countries and how it compares to activities in their own. The Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) has prepared this one year anniversary report, building on our six-months preliminary post-Beijing monitoring report, *First Steps*, to respond to this need.

While we have taken a retrospective look one year after that unprecedented gathering in China, we have our sights set on making bold headlines in the year 2000. In that year, all governments will be called upon to present their achievements in delivering upon the goals outlined in the Beijing Platform. A year is a brief moment in the history of nations and the process of social change is long and difficult. What are realistic benchmarks by which to measure progress when trying to reverse centuries of discrimination and injustice? This survey attempts to point to the directions in which governments are going in the post-Beijing era.

Whether through the first-ever action plans for women in the Pacific Island states, legal measures to penalize family violence in Latin America, new laws to correct centuries-old gender bias in property rights in Nepal, or parliamentary measures to give women a third of seats in legislative bodies in India, policies to bridge the gender pay gap in some industrialized countries, legalizing abortion in South Africa -- or simply counselling centers for women in tiny Niue, governments around the globe are discovering that they have to find ways to respond to the groundswell of change.

Not surprisingly, there is very little new money on the table in any country. Most governments are looking to draw upon existing resources, but mere reallocation of a shrinking pie will not satisfy women's hunger for substantial change. Women everywhere will continue to mobilize and

organize, in partnership with men and as leaders of a myriad social movements, to push their governments to deliver more than piecemeal on their promises.

While current macroeconomic policies and the race for privatization and transnational capital are real forces for governments to reckon with, NGOs monitoring international agreements know that it is ultimately political will that is key to turning the words into action. We also know that the momentum generated during the promising Conference process is hard to sustain.

To build on the enthusiasm and creative energy unleashed during the Beijing process, governments and NGOs must continue to engage, encourage and thus empower each other. Perhaps the biggest challenge in the road to transformative change lies in the ability of both sides to build constructive partnerships, drawing upon each other's strengths and wisdom.

Governments must make it a practice to share information about progress and problems in implementing the Platform nationally and globally. The United Nations should regularly collect and update this information from governments as well as the U.N. system and NGOs so that we can learn from each other. Member state representatives to the Commission on the Status of Women should critically evaluate the state of progress and creatively develop ways to overcome obstacles, particularly by mobilizing the different parts of the UN system. And finally, women's groups and NGOs must have timely access to this information to use it in multiple and responsible ways, not only to critique government performance but their own, from the perspectives of women and civil society.

The mobilization around the Fourth World Conference on Women was the "locomotive" for other U.N. conferences and social processes to solve some of the world's most pressing and persistent problems. Women's groups have historically been the spark, the fuel and promise in the vanguard of change. We owe it to the world, and to ourselves, to close the gap between rhetoric and reality and to move forward, step by step, in our common goal to improve the lives of women and girls everywhere. As we progress towards this goal, we will create a better future for all.

Bella S. Abzug
President

Susan Davis
Executive Director

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This report could not have been compiled without the cooperation and contributions of some 22 governments, dozens of NGOs and dedicated staff of U.N. agencies in UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). We offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who made the effort to contribute to this collective effort, and take full responsibility for any errors.

This report was compiled, written and edited by WEDO's international staff in New York including Bharati Sadasivam, Anita Nayar, Inji Islam, Jill Crawford and Susan Davis. Everyone on the WEDO team worked extremely hard to meet impossible tight deadlines as reports came flooding in by fax in the last days of August.

Our special thanks to Lead Dog Design and John S. Swift Printing for working with us to produce this report and to ProMedia for helping to publicize it.

Finally, we express our abiding appreciation to the many readers of this report- people who are curious enough to pick it up and sufficiently committed to use it.

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Introduction

Beyond Promises: Governments in Motion One Year After the Beijing Women's Conference is a progress report on some 51 governments, and the Caribbean region and Pacific Island states. It also includes a brief report on initiatives to monitor the World Bank.

We have titled the report *Beyond Promises* to emphasize our expectation and the need for governments to go beyond the lipservice paid to women and the easy rhetoric on gender issues and truly deliver on the pledges made in Beijing. As Bella Abzug quipped when asked after the conference concluded what does it all mean, "This is a contract with the world's women; it may not be legally binding but it is politically binding."

Women around the world are determined to hold governments to their promises and see that they fulfill their bargains. Legislators and public officials are joining forces with grassroots activists to create political accountability for promises made at U.N. fora. For example, in the United States, hundreds of women's organizations joined in the Contract with Women in the USA campaign launched by WEDO and the Center for Women's Policy Studies. The Contract, summarizing the Beijing Platform in ways that relate to Americans, has also been endorsed by over 30 members of Congress and 300 state legislators.

The Contract campaign was adapted to women's needs in Costa Rica and launched by the Arias Foundation and other NGOs on March 8th. A special Contract with Nigerian Rural Women campaign was initiated by the CountryWomen's Association of Nigeria. In Brazil, officials in federal ministries and in six cities signed protocols committing themselves to implement specific items in the Women's Conference platform. All of these initiatives point towards greater accountability, to take us beyond promises.

We have benignly described governments "in motion" a year after Beijing to create a less judgmental atmosphere of neutrality. It is easy to be cynical. Too many choreographers can lead to processes that sound all too familiar to bureaucracy-watchers. While many of the motions may resemble carefully orchestrated "political ballet," we do not wish to make premature judgments that might undermine the first steps of hesitant dancers seeking to find their footing.

All too often we assess actions that appear to be one step forward, two back, given the economic climate of the day. In better cases, we can point to two steps forward, one back. But this is the rhythm of dancing and why governments in motion are better bets than those who are not.

Whether one seeks a steady drumbeat, a hot samba, steamy salsa or formal minuet, all governments are waltzing around the toughest provisions tacked on the Platform that asks them to really move.

We will let you be the judge of whether governments are merely going through the motions or doing a serious tango.

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Methodology

The methodology used for *Beyond Promises* was a survey of all governments, supplemented with NGO reports. It involved several steps, including publishing an interim report on March 8, six months after Beijing, titled, *First Steps: What Has Happened Since Beijing?* This was a preliminary progress report of a sample of 25 countries and the CARICOM region of the Caribbean. It was strategically produced to be in time for distribution at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting in New York, March 11-22, 1996.

The Commission is the official body at the U.N., comprised of some member states, charged with the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action implementation at the global level. By assessing the state of implementation efforts after just six months, we hoped to set the stage for a more robust set of concrete accomplishments by the first year anniversary in September 1996 which are described in this report.

For both reports, WEDO understood that all governments would be in the early stages of implementing the Beijing Platform, and designed a very simple questionnaire covering six areas (see appendix A). The questions were formulated to enable every government to report on

something positive. It was also patterned on the *One Year After Cairo* report prepared by the Natural Resources Defense Council, WEDO and NGOs that are part of the Earth Summit Watch, to assess national action to implement the International Conference on Population and Development.

On behalf of WEDO, co-chair Bella Abzug wrote to all Ambassadors at the U.N. missions in New York in January with a request for information on activities their governments have taken since Beijing to "turn the words into action." WEDO chose to work through U.N. missions to increase the political linkages between negotiating the U.N. conference agreements and implementation. The U.N. is often attacked as being a "talk fest" without concrete results to show for all its conferences. It is in the best interests of the U.N. for representatives of member states to be informed and conversant about conference outcomes and implementation efforts not only for their own country but globally. WEDO wanted U.N. mission representatives to officially transmit our request and contact the relevant persons in their national capitals to secure a response.

WEDO requested to receive their responses by the end of February to prepare a report in time for the opening day of the CSW. Because of the short amount of time to respond and the early stages of implementation activities, WEDO expected to receive only a small sample of country reports from governments.

To supplement official responses, WEDO contacted a small number of more active members of the global network for quick intelligence gathering and reports on government implementation. WEDO, Interaction and the International Women's Tribune Center also developed a "Country Commitment" monitoring chart which was widely disseminated by all three international networks. It was included as Appendix C in the *First Steps* report. Sources for all reports were identified.

WEDO distributed hundreds of copies of *First Steps* to members of the CSW and other NGOs during the meeting in an attempt to persuade governments to agree to making annual progress reports. Unfortunately, the WEDO-facilitated Women's Linkage Caucus was not successful. The CSW will prepare a comprehensive status report on implementation only in 1998 and the year 2000. In the interim, sectoral reports will be prepared on clusters of the Platform for Action related to the five-year review of other relevant U.N. conferences.

For example, in 1997, the U.N. will review the five years since the Earth Summit and the CSW will review, among other items, the status of implementing the Women and Environment section of the Platform and related sustainable development sections on access to economic structures. In 1998, the focus will be on human rights linkages and in 1999 the emphasis will be on health and links to the Cairo Population and Development conference agreement.

After the CSW meeting, WEDO distributed *First Steps* to every U.N. mission with a request to provide an update or a new submission by July 1996 to be included in the one-year anniversary report. In exchange, WEDO promised to distribute copies to all governments.

In addition to contacting governments by letter and, as time allowed, by fax and follow-up phone calls, WEDO reached out to NGOs and monitoring networks in individual countries for assistance in preparing country reports. These sources were supplemented with contributions from U.N. agencies including UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UNIFEM. Sources are identified for all reports and footnotes have been used for reports with multiple sources. All of the submissions have been edited by WEDO.

Because just under half of the reports include responses from governments, we do not attempt a systematic, statistical analysis of the information collected. Non-response to the survey and to particular questions should not be interpreted as inaction.

WEDO will distribute copies of *Beyond Promises* at the Association for Women in Development conference, "Beyond Beijing" in Washington D.C. September 5-8 at which some 1200 activists are expected from around the world. WEDO will hold a press conference at the United Nations on September 9 to publicize and issue the report to all member states, U.N. agencies and the press.

It also plans to use the report as a discussion tool at a three-day workshop on the subject, "Holding Governments and International Agencies Accountable to Their Promises: Monitoring and Advocacy Strategies for Advancing Women's Agendas," to be held September 10-12, 1996, in New York. The workshop will have 40-50 participants, over half from the South or countries in transition, whose organizations are actively engaged in monitoring their governments or international agencies operating in their countries, and who are advocating for institutional and policy changes. The workshop will provide an opportunity for NGOs which submitted reports to critique and evaluate the *Beyond Promises* and strategize together for future monitoring and advocacy efforts.

A report on the outcomes of this workshop, including national and international watch models and advocacy strategies, will be available from WEDO in November 1996.

Our intention in both *First Steps* and *Beyond Promises* was to have a geographically diverse sample of reports on what governments have done since Beijing to provide some useful insights on patterns and directions, obstacles and innovations. With this report, we hope to praise the progress to date and encourage all governments to take action to realize the Beijing consensus.

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Overview

Stock-taking exercises pose several dilemmas for the growing breed of national and international organizations engaged in the necessary and long-overdue business of monitoring U.N. conference agreements. The first is in determining the precise role these agreements have played in bringing about real or projected change in sovereign nations and among individual cultures

and communities. In the vast and borderless world of 'women's issues,' it is especially hard to pinpoint actions as outcomes of specific U.N. documents.

Whatever the debating points, there can scarcely be any doubt that the Beijing Platform is a unifying force propelling change in the lives of millions of women today as perhaps never before. After Beijing, there has been a virtual explosion of feminist mobilization.

However daunting the challenge of holding governments and international agencies to their promises of social commitments, it is one that must be met in today's climate of impoverishing globalization. In fact, never has there been a greater consensus on human development at a time when conditions are so uncondusive for it. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns, from economic globalization and growth that is, in the words of the UNDP's Human Development Report 1996 "rootless, ruthless, jobless, voiceless and futureless," can make the race for gender equality a race to be equally poor.

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Opening Numbers

Beyond Promises includes 53 reports from 51 countries and territories and two regional reports for the many countries of the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. While only a sample, this survey presents information on roughly half of the 189 member states that attended Beijing. Nearly 43 per cent (22 out of 53) of the reports are from government sources, although many more non-governmental sources interviewed government officials to prepare their submissions.

There is relatively good balance among the geographic regions: nine reports are from Africa, three from the Near and Middle East; ten are from Asia; five are from the Pacific including a regional report; ten are from Latin America and there is a CARICOM regional report from the Caribbean; nine reports are from Western Europe and four are from the transition countries, and there are two reports from North America.

Regional distribution:

Regions, # of Reports, % reports from region

Africa, 9, 17%

Near/Middle East, 3, 6%

Asia, 10, 19%

Pacific, 5, 9%

Latin America, 10, 19%

Caribbean, 1, 2%

Europe, 9, 17%

Eastern Europe/FSU, 4, 7.5%

North America, 2, 3.5%

Total 53

Thirty-six percent of the governments which submitted a formal response were from Western Europe. In all, governments willing to submit a response include: Austria, Botswana, Cambodia, Chile, Denmark, El Salvador, Iceland, India, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Niue, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Tanzania, Tonga, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Zambia.

Mechanisms: Going Through the Motions

Much of the initial responses to the Beijing Platform have been in creating new mechanisms, upgrading existing structures and energizing participatory processes. But since it is only year one, most women activists tend to give their governments the benefit of the doubt. Many recognize the goodwill gestures governments have made to disseminate the results of Beijing in local languages, to consult with NGOs and to include activists in the agenda-setting for national action plans and follow-up mechanisms.

Many Latin American countries report the formation of commissions, interministerial and/or with NGO representation, to follow up on agreements. Peru has elevated the status of its commission for women, the first such since independence, by setting it up in Congress, whereas in Bolivia the committee is headed by the first lady herself.

In Nicaragua, the government has not yet taken this first step, whereas Colombia's new government office for women is hobbled by the lack of a presidential decree and the commitment of funds. In Uruguay the president has delegated authority to the Institute of Women and Family to find out what other ministries are doing to implement the Beijing Platform. In Costa Rica, the government has set up a National Center for Women and Family which has launched an equality of opportunity plan for 1996-98.

In South Africa, the office on the status of women is being established within the presidency. Other African nations are less ambitious, settling for gender focal points in ministries, as in Zimbabwe. Interministerial commissions are also emerging up in some countries, such as Russia, Austria and Bangladesh.

A heartening feature of committees formed in some parts of Asia and Latin America is the government's willingness to involve NGOs as consulting partners for the first time, both during the Beijing process and after. This is seen as an especially important breakthrough in Pakistan, where the bureaucracy has no tradition of working with members or groups from civil society. In the Republic of Korea, the national committee on women's policies, headed by the prime minister, is involving women experts and women's NGOs in the formulation of policies. There is some evidence of such partnership in Indonesia, while it is yet to happen in Malaysia.

Surprisingly, some open democracies, such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia, have been strangely reluctant to involve NGOs in post-Beijing activities.

Many governments are fulfilling the PFA requirement to develop a national plan of action by the end of 1996 if they did not have a plan in place. Countries with plans or processes to develop one include Bangladesh, Botswana, Canada, CARICOM, Chile, Iceland, Finland, India, Mexico, the

Pacific Islands, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, and USA. A good number of countries surveyed have also translated the Platform for Action in the local language for wide dissemination, with some, like Pakistan, bringing out abridged "user-friendly" versions. Many also have drafted national plans of action in keeping with Platform requirements.

Several countries, notably the Nordic nations, are drafting serious gender agendas. Japan's council for gender equality is working towards a 21st-century vision for a gender equal society. The Netherlands even boasts a ministry for emancipation affairs, whose minister has taken a new emancipation policy back to the drawing board after it was sharply critiqued by more than 30 women's organizations. In Denmark, the prime minister has set up a committee to consider changes in the organization of work for equal status between men and women. The Danish labor ministry has also started gender-proofing legislation. As donor nations, Norway and Denmark have also made gender equality a central objective in their development cooperation plans. Norway has the distinction of being among the few surveyed that has matched word with deed: it has raised its budgetary allocation for women in developing countries by NOK10 million for this year.

In a small but significant number of countries, the year after Beijing has seen the emergence of long overdue legislative actions toward gender justice, greater participation by women in political decision-making and reproductive health. The enactment of legislative measures represents signal victories for women, not only because it fulfills a central strategic objective of the Beijing Platform, but demonstrates governments' commitment to real change.

Women's Health: One Step Forward

Reproductive health and reproductive rights remain areas where some hard battles are being fought, and sometimes won. In Poland, four parliamentary commissions adopted a draft liberalization of the anti-abortion law in July. The bill allows legal abortions to be performed until the 12th week of pregnancy for women in difficult personal or economic circumstances. There is, however, much opposition to the proposed measure which is expected to be put to vote in the fall. In South Africa, the ruling African National Congress overcame widespread opposition from a range of forces to approve a bill allowing abortion on demand for the first time in history in the country. Endorsing the measure, the ANC has said that it reaffirmed constitutional principles of the right to privacy and personal security.

In Spain, however, a similar bill to liberalize the abortion law has fallen through for lack of support from the ruling Popular Party. The opposition-sponsored bill, moved in June, sought to give women, rather than their doctors, the right to decide on abortion.

Argentina's law on reproductive health, rejected for four consecutive years, has succeeded in receiving partial sanction from parliament. Women's groups have still to secure full enactment of this modern legislation designed to protect the health of women and adolescent girls.

Some emerging democracies of the former Soviet Union are making encouraging beginnings in setting up institutional mechanisms for women's health. The Ukraine, for example, has launched two initiatives, under presidential decree, on family planning and child health.

Violence Against Women: Changing the Score

Women in some countries have wrested key victories in the equally contested terrain of domestic violence. In Colombia, a bill to eradicate violence in the family became law on July 16, but not without a protracted battle. Malaysia also recently became one of the few countries to enact such a law. Costa Rica has launched a national plan for the detection of family violence. Reform of the law relating to family violence is also on the cards in Peru. In Puerto Rico, the government has created a commission for women's affairs supported by \$1.8 million budget to eradicate gender violence and improve legal, psychological and housing services.

While laws alone cannot safeguard women, the enactment of penal and civil sanctions in domestic legislation forms an integral part of the the Platform's strategic objectives in dealing with violence against women.

Egypt has sustained its post-ICPD momentum and recently banned the practice of female genital mutilation despite strong cultural opposition. Denmark, among donor nations, has targeted for special attention the practice of female genital mutilation in its plans to mainstream a gender perspective in international cooperation.

Sexual Exploitation: Back Tracking

With concerted actions by NGOs and U.N. agencies, governments report some encouraging initiatives to tackle the difficult problem of sexual exploitation, particularly of girls. A World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children will be convened by Sweden, UNICEF and ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism) August 27-31, 1996 to agree upon a specific plan of action to halt trafficking, prostitution and pornography involving girls and boys 18 years old and under. Both the UK and the USA have taken new steps to prosecute their nationals when engaging in this activities while abroad and the Philippines has introduced measures to protect children and prevent trafficking.

Japan has continued its process of public apology to women and payment of reparations to women known as "comfort women" who were victimized during World War II, although activists insist that public funds should be used, not private monies, to convey the public weight of responsibility for these human rights violations.

Political Participation: On the Floor

The Beijing Platform is starting to have the effect of making some governments allow greater room for women in public life. The Indian government, following on an earlier measure that gave women 33 per cent of seats in local government bodies, is drafting a bill to give them similar representation in legislative assemblies at the state level and in parliament. The proposal holds immense promise and opportunity for women in the world's largest democracy. Mongolia increased the number of women in parliament to seven after the Beijing conference.

Perhaps the greatest surge toward women's greater political participation is happening in Africa, where women are mobilizing in their thousands to gain a political voice denied them for

generations. Proof, if needed, of just how difficult this quest can be comes from Zimbabwe, where a 23-year-old woman's accession as chief of the Matabeleland southern province has caused a storm of protest. Despite President Mugabe's endorsement of the succession of Nqobile Mabhena to her father's post as chief over 100,000 Sotho people, influential male politicians and traditionalists want her ousted. The government's handling of this case will be a real test of how it balances its commitment to equality with its appeasement of custom. Whatever the outcome, Zimbabwean women and NGOs are unlikely to be deterred from entering the political arena in their own way as, for example, by intervening in policy-making.

In Cameroon, the Mothers for Mayor campaign has succeeded in doubling the number of women mayors from 400 to 800 after Beijing. In Zambia, the national women's lobby group is working at full steam to ensure that more women participate in the local government, presidential and parliamentary elections later this year. The group has assembled at least 300 women who aspire to political office and plans to petition the Organization of African Unity for the inclusion of women in peace negotiations. It has made peace a central theme of the women's political platform.

Keeping the peace: One False Step

Governments report very little action to explicitly implement the peace sections of the Platform for Action, although many are in motion on major issues which were bracketed in Beijing and eventually addressed in the final agreement, such as landmines and nuclear testing. Women around the world have continued their campaign to ban landmines. While a U.N. review conference on landmines last May in Geneva did not reach agreement, 35 of the 185 U.N. member states support an immediate global ban on landmines, 16 said they would never use them, four have suspended use and five states are destroying their stockpiles.

Activists have succeeded in getting the U.S. on August 15, 1996 to repeat its call for an international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling and production of landmines. Although the U.S. also committed \$50 million in 1997 to clear mines from Bosnia and other former war zones, it retains the right to use mines defensively and still refuses to adopt a global ban. Germany broke ranks with Western nations and in April, its armed forces agreed to "totally and unconditionally" relinquish the use of antipersonnel landmines.

On the use and testing of nuclear weapons, women activists remain at the forefront of the peace movements urging adoption of an international comprehensive test ban treaty banning nuclear testing. On another peace and human rights issue at the forefront of women in Beijing, the international tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda have appointed some women as judges. Both tribunals have made painfully slow progress during the past year in responding to the Beijing agreement to condemn the use of "rape and other forms of inhuman and degrading treatment of women as a deliberate instrument of war and ethnic cleansing" and bringing to justice perpetrators. Activists demand more serious commitment by all governments to marshal the resources and will to implement this mandate.

Legislative Change: Fast Forward

Botswana, Brazil, Columbia, Denmark, and Philippines all report some effort to review legislative options to remove barriers for women, create ways to expedite certain bills and "gender-proof" legislation. There have been specific victories such as in Zimbabwe in challenging an amendment to the constitution that would not permit women who marry foreigners to pass on to them their citizenship. Women in Nepal are planning to change the property and inheritance laws and activists in Pakistan seek to reverse the discriminatory Hoodood ordinances.

The Pay Gap: Closing In

Women won a hard-fought victory at the International Labour Organization to secure a new convention to protect home workers, in spite of strong employer opposition. Led by SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) in India, home workers have struggled for more than a decade to gain recognition of their rights and protection for their increasingly precarious work. More advanced wealthy countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, New Zealand and the U.S. are seeking creative ways to bridge the gender gap in wages. Canada, the U.K. and New Zealand are making initial progress on counting unpaid work by adding questions to the census and setting up new processes to create satellite accounts to the gross national product called for in the Platform for Action.

Conclusions

All over the world, stock-taking meetings are being held to mark the anniversary of Beijing. In Bogota, there will be an Andean regional meeting for government officials and women's groups from September 22-25 to take a closer look at countries' first year track record post-Beijing. In Washington, D.C., an estimated 1,200 women will gather from around the world from September 5-8 at the Association for Women in Development conference.

In Jordan, there is a gathering of Arab women planned for October and in Dakar, Senegal, African women will meet in early September. It is beyond the scope of this survey to assess the extent to which fundamental change is taking place. This task requires the best efforts of our researchers, pollsters and trendwatchers. The number of actions that could be reported is probably endless. The large and interlinked world of "women's issues" makes it difficult to discern where to focus and what to exclude. If it is true that all issues are women's issues, then this report can only scratch at the surface and stimulate your curiosity to delve deeper into the investigation of what is really happening after Beijing.

But we hope you won't stop there. Because, in truth, we already know: not enough is happening. But together we can stir up the band to play some new tempos that gets everybody moving as fast as they can. As Emma Goldman said ages ago, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

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The World Bank's Progress One Year After Beijing

On the final day of the Beijing conference, during the Women's Linkage Caucus, World Bank President James Wolfensohn was presented with a petition calling on the Bank to fully implement the Platform for Action and carry out four fundamental reforms which would allow Bank programs to address the needs of poor women rather than increasing their hardship. The petition was signed by nearly a thousand individuals and organizations from every region of the world and served as the basis for the "Women's Eyes on the World Bank" campaign, which aims to monitor the Bank's performance and generate pressure for implementation of the recommended reforms.

Since Beijing, Mr. Wolfensohn has led efforts to heighten the Bank's public commitment to gender issues. One year later, it is perhaps premature to judge how well this stated commitment will translate into concrete programmatic change, but clearly the Bank is in motion.

In November 1995, the Bank organized a two-week program, "Beyond Beijing: Acting on Commitments to the World's Women," to highlight the outcomes of the Conference. The program included sessions at which Mr. Wolfensohn, the Bank's regional vice-presidents and members of its executive board outlined to their staff the implications of Beijing for the Bank's strategy to fulfill its commitment to address gender issues.

Each region within the Bank is now developing a regional gender strategy and the president has established an internal committee to track and report progress to him quarterly. The Bank has also created "External Gender Consultative Group" of twelve NGO representatives to help the institution improve its performance in addressing gender issues and women's concerns. The group had its first meeting in April 1996, where it made recommendations to the Bank which were subsequently presented in writing to Mr. Wolfensohn.

The most frequent criticism of the World Bank's failure to address women's concerns relates to the negative impact of structural adjustment programs (SAPS) which the Bank finances. The Beijing Platform for Action contains explicit recommendations to the Bank to review the gender-differentiated impacts of adjustment and ensure that SAPs benefit poor women and other disadvantaged groups by improving their access to and control over economic resources. The Bank claims that adjustment creates economic growth which in turn reduces poverty and leads to general improvements for women and their families. Despite over a decade's evidence from NGO and other sources on how SAPs have increased the burden of poverty and deprivation for women in country after country, the Bank has yet to acknowledge negative impact in more than a handful of cases, citing 'very little quantitative data 'available on differences between the impacts of economic reform on women and men.'

Nevertheless, there is some recognition that gender issues have not been adequately addressed in adjustment programs. The Structural Adjustment and Gender in Africa initiative was launched in November 1995 to systematically integrate gender concerns into the preparation, implementation and monitoring of three SAPs during 1996 (Burkina Faso, Mali and Mozambique). More recently, the Bank has agreed to embark on an unprecedented participatory review of structural adjustment in collaboration with NGOs. The 'joint Bank-NGO effort will review experience in

10- 12 countries with participation from a broad range of civil society organizations. Gender issues have featured as a prominent concern in initial discussions; gender specialists and women's groups are represented on both Bank and NGO steering committees. Both sides will need to see that a focus on gender is maintained as the in-country reviews begin in 1997.

A key recommendation of both the Beijing petition and the External Gender Consultative Group was that the Bank work in partnership with women's groups (and other sectors of civil society) in designing policy reforms and investment projects. In many countries, monthly meetings take place between in-country Bank staff and local NGOs, including women's groups, to discuss aspects of the Bank's program in that country. While such meetings are useful and informative, they hardly constitute participation and partnership.

The Bank also claims to promote participation by women's groups through its poverty assessments, documents which are intended to inform the Bank's poverty reduction strategy in a given country. In a March 1996 progress report, however, the Bank itself reported that fewer than two-thirds of poverty assessments conducted in the preceding fiscal year included any analysis of gender issues or used participatory methods to identify the concerns and priorities of women's groups. Given that women and children invariably comprise the majority of the poor, the value of any poverty assessment that fails to address gender is questionable.

Even where the Bank has prepared a strong poverty assessment based on effective consultation with women's organizations and other relevant groups, these reports do not necessarily translate into programs which improve the situation of poor women. The Bank's Country Assistance Strategies, which set the framework for its lending program in each country, rarely give priority to improving social and economic conditions for women. Just over half the strategies produced in the last fiscal year made any mention of gender issues, and those that did tended to give it short shrift.

Despite some encouraging motions toward greater sensitivity and responsiveness to gender issues, clear evidence of concrete changes in Bank programs has yet to be found. Anecdotal reports of both promising actions and lack of concern on gender issues in specific projects suggest that the degree to which any particular Bank effort reflects top management's stated commitment depends on the individual commitment of staff involved. In other words, the rhetorical priority now placed on gender has yet to be institutionalized into standard Bank practice. It appears to have focused greater attention on gender and women's concerns in certain activities, but much remains to be accomplished. The pace of change is still far too slow for the millions of women whose lives the World Bank has yet to improve.

Implementing the World Bank's Gender Policies - Progress Report No. I (World Bank: March 1996, p. 4).

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Australia

- Office of the status of women suffers 40 per cent cut in resources
- Little involvement of NGOs in government consultative processes

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Government and NGO delegates to Beijing reported on negotiations and commitments made at the conference at various report-back sessions, notably one entitled "Australia's Commitments to Action" held from December 8-9, 1995. The office of the status of women, a small section of the department of the prime minister and cabinet, prepared and distributed materials from the conference.

The new liberal government that came to power six months after the Beijing conference has made no official statements about the status of Australia's commitments or the implementation of the Platform for Action. There have been no statements confirming or denying the status of the previous government's commitments. However, since the change in government, the office of the status of women has experienced a cut in resources of over 40 per cent.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The office of the status of women is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Platform and is currently developing an implementation strategy to identify what has been achieved and what needs to be addressed. They are coordinating the interdepartmental committee task force on women comprised of federal departments of public service, defence, community services and the arts, statistics, industrial relations, employment, education, training and youth affairs, treasury, social security, foreign affairs and trade, immigration and multicultural affairs, health and family services, aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commission, science and technology, and primary industries and technology.

The task force is charged with maximizing the opportunities for women and influencing policy development in relevant government agencies. It last met in February prior to the new government being elected. Its current task is to update and disseminate the implementation plan.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The previous labor government made commitments in four areas arrived at through consultation with Australian women's NGOs. The four areas are balancing work and family responsibilities, violence, health, and public life and decision-making. Various efforts are underway on each of these commitments:

- **Women and Families:** Working women's centers are to be established in Victoria and Western Australia in 1996 to provide free and confidential advice on issues such as pay and working conditions, occupational health and safety, training, work force reentry and employment discrimination.
- **Violence Against Women:** The government is working with states and territories on developing an integrated approach to stopping violence against women. The aim is to

encourage national consistency in approaches to preventing violence against women, with particular focus on improving the response of the justice system and other services. A report on violence in schools investigated the nature and impact of violence in schools, including bullying, violence-based on gender and racism, and ethnic violence. A summit of experts to discuss domestic violence is being planned. However, the government has rejected efforts to have appropriate NGO representatives involved in the planning this summit, as it has NGO efforts to expand its emphasis to include all violence against women.

- **Women's Health:** A new program has been established to improve the health status and well being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and infants. The focus will be cervical screening and breast checks, maternal and infant health monitoring and health promotion programs targeted at remote and rural indigenous communities.
- **Women in Public Life and Decision-Making:** The government has provided some funds through the end of 1996 for the establishment of a national body of women in business seeking to promote opportunities for women in the business arena.

These concerns reflect NGO priorities only minimally, since there is little "real" allocation of resources to redress current imbalances.

4. Resources

Since this government has yet to deliver a budget, its financial priorities are unclear. While women's NGOs have previously received some government funding, the current government has devised a six-month funding process giving time for NGOs to find independent/ private sector funding. In effect, the government has no commitment to financially supporting women's organizations. The minister assisting the prime minister for the status of women has publicly failed to support NGOs.

As far as overseas aid is concerned, the previous government had said it would give high priority to assisting organizations and groups in Pacific countries to implement their national commitments. To this end, consultations will continue bilaterally and through regional and NGOs to develop activities which meet the needs of Pacific women and assist in strengthening their organizational capacity to work for the advancement of women.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

NGOs have been lobbying to highlight their valuable role in Australia's obligations under CEDAW as they have not been included in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation programs.

6. Linkages to other United Nations Conference Agreements and Conventions

At the commission on the status of women meetings in March 1996 in New York, the government delegation agreed to ensure a coordinated approach to implementing the world conference agreements. The Australian government made several linkages to the Women's

Conference during the final preparatory committee for the U.N. Conference on Human Settlements held in February 1996 in New York. Australia also introduced a proposal for governments and intergovernmental agencies to announce at Habitat II commitments to action by 2000, similar to the the initiative they made for the Women's Conference.

Source:

Jacklyn Draper, National Coordinator, Coalition of Australian Participating Organizations of Women (CAPOW!)

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Austria

- Inter-ministerial working group including NGOs formed to design and monitor PFA implementation
- Short version of the PFA published for wide distribution

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The minister for women's affairs gave a press conference immediately after returning from Beijing.

The ministry will publish a new book series dedicated to reporting on Beijing follow-up activities, including a shortened version of the PFA in the first volume for wide distribution and a second volume covering the December 1995 follow-up conference in Vienna.

The minister for women's affairs has referred on various occasions to the Beijing document. Austria considers the conference successful in confronting the backlash that progressive women's politics have been facing in a number of countries, moderately in Austria.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

An inter-ministerial working group met after the new Austrian government was designated to structure and monitor the implementation of the PFA.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The progress of implementation was held up with the end of Austria's coalition government and subsequent elections in December 1995. The PFA is being implemented following specific Austrian priorities, outlined in the address of the minister for women's affairs to the World Conference on Women, including women in development, trafficking of women, migration.

4. Resources

As Austria is still in the process of negotiating its new government, no provisions for budgetary resources have been finalized.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Austria emphasized the incorporation of NGOs in the preparatory process to Beijing and has included them in an inter-ministerial working group on structure and monitoring of implementing the PFA.

An NGO devoted to eliminating domestic violence against women was formed in February 1996.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The minister for women's affairs is charged with coordinating policies and programs with respect to women's affairs. The assistant of international affairs at the women's ministry heads the inter-ministerial working group and works to ensure a combined and inter-linked approach to all relevant UN activities. Austria places special emphasis on the implementation of the Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Rio conferences.

Austria supports the drafting of an optional protocol to CEDAW.

Source: Office of the Minister for Women's Affairs

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Botswana

- National plan of action identifying six priorities formulated by government and NGOs monitor PFA implementation
- Government expedites review of laws hindering the development of women

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Representatives of government and NGOs attended conferences, general assemblies and other large gatherings throughout the country to brief participants on the outcomes of Beijing.

Several briefings were held on International Women's Day and more intensive reports issued country-wide at consultative meetings with all communities around the country.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The government adopted a sub-regional strategy to review the Platform for Action. A workshop was organised for the SADC region in November/December 1995 with the following objectives:

- to share national strategies and plans on utilising the outcomes of the Beijing Conference
- to identify a sub-regional (SADC) strategy for the implementation of the PFA
- to develop a subregional coalition on women's issues at policy and programme levels.

Prior to the workshop, the government and NGOs held a planning meeting at which a national plan of action was drawn up. Six priority areas were identified:

- persistent poverty among women
- decision-making and political empowerment
- education and training
- women's health and population
- violence against women
- the girl child

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has expedited the process of reviewing laws that hinder the development of women. Other processes being given due attention are the ratification and signing of CEDAW and the adoption of a national policy on women in development.

The national plan of action has, among other things, placed emphasis on the girl child and has designed some strategies to ensure continuity with efforts to empower women and integrate them in the development process. School curricula are being changed and sex stereotyping is being removed from school textbooks to discourage discrimination against the girl child and encourage girls to take up any discipline and explore all career opportunities. Health programmes and other structures are being put in place to combat HIV/AIDS, rape and other forms of violence against women and teenage pregnancy.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government worked with NGOs in the planning meeting to draw up a national plan of action and identify priority issues.

6. Linkages to Other U.N. Conferences and Conventions

Discussion on the recommendations to government to ratify and accede to CEDAW are at an advanced stage. Botswana is also a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Sources: Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs, Department of Culture and Social Welfare

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Brazil

- Ministries of health, work, education and justice undertake new commitments to implement the PFA
- Five cities have developed and signed protocols with key ministries to implement the PFA

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government has given great importance to reporting back to the nation on the outcomes of Beijing. The National Council on Women, a special advisory commission at the governmental level, organized several post-Beijing activities. Five large cities developed protocols or contracts with key ministries including health, education, work and justice, which were signed on March 8.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

Specific actions will be taken through the development and signing of protocols with relevant government actors.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

Women parliamentarians who attended the Beijing Conference selected 15 bills among those circulating in the Congress that are priorities for women's concerns and started to give special attention to passing them.

As part of the innovative strategy to develop protocols to implement the PFA, the ministry of health has committed to reduce women's mortality from cancer by providing free breast and uterus exams through the public health system.

The ministry of work has committed to undertake a new professional training program to reach 10,000 girls by the end of 1996.

In the area of education, the ministry will include a new framework of equality between the sexes.

The ministry of justice will implement a new holistic program to prevent sexual and domestic violence against women.

4. Resources

The government plans to implement the PFA with existing resources in the ministries.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

NGOs have made several notable efforts to publicize the Beijing outcomes. CEMINA, for example, aired a series of radio programs showing the ways in which the PFA is linked with the everyday life of women. Other organizations, especially the Coalition of Brazilian Women for Beijing, have written journals and organized seminars to make public what has happened in Beijing.

On March 8, the National Council on Women launched a series of videos produced by NGOs to circulate among governmental and non-governmental institutions for educational purposes.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The National Council on Women tries to make linkages between all U.N. conference agreements and the PFA.

Source: REDEH

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Cambodia

- Secretariat of state upgraded to ministry of women's affairs
- Ministry preparing budget amendment to facilitate implementation of PFA
- Implementation steering committee includes government and NGO members

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

An evaluation meeting was held under the chairmanship of H.R.H. Samdech Preah Reach Botrei Preah Ream Bopha Devy with all Khmer participants at the Beijing conference. Fourth World Conference and their sponsors.

The deputy leader of the delegation, Keat Sukun, made a report to the two prime ministers with suggestions not only to the secretariat of state for women's affairs, but to other institutions, state and private, to implement the Platform for Action, especially with respect to education, health, legal protection and economic development.

Mr. Sukun also made a report through the national television and radio network.

Officials from the secretariat of state for women's affairs disseminated information to remote areas of the country. A key message is that Cambodian women have a very important role to play in social and economic development process.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The secretariat of state is being upgraded into a ministry of women's affairs. The two prime ministers declared that the ministry should have enough resources (financial and human) to implement the policies.

All institutions have been directed to include a gender component in their programs.

The government will build the capacity of focal points (women's interest representatives) at the central and provincial levels. It will also set up a children's rights protection committee.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The ministry of women's affairs has developed a position paper focusing on education, health, legal protection and economic development.

4. Resources

The ministry is amending the budget to cope with its new status and expansion of activities.

The balance of resources comes from foreign assistance, both grants and loans.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The ministry set up a steering committee comprised of representatives from other government institutions and NGOs to implement the PFA.

The ministry of women's affairs is working to include a gender component in the programs of other ministries.

Source: Secretariat of State for Women's Affairs

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Caricom Countries

- Draft regional plan of action published after consultations with NGOs
- National structures set up for strategies on Beijing follow-up
- No additional government funds for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Government representatives made use of the media to spread the messages of the Conference, by addressing the nation on recommendations made or re-broadcasting their speeches.

Government and NGO delegates were widely interviewed on radio and television. One radio station introduced a programme titled, "Bringing Beijing Home" aired on Thursday of each week.

Summarized versions of the Platform for Action were widely circulated among women's groups, NGOs and educational institutions, and in the media.

Caricom governments have reacted positively to the Conference agreement and are in the process of formulating a Regional Plan of Action to implement the PFA.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The Caricom Secretariat is formulating a Regional Plan of Action.

At the national level, the national committees of NGO and government representatives that were formed for the Beijing process will be retained to work on strategies to implement the PFA.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

In November 1995, governments in the region called a meeting of all agencies involved in the Beijing process to begin planning a Caricom regional post-Beijing plan of action to the year 2000. A regional advisory committee, comprising Caricom, the national machinery, UNICEF, UNIFEM, ECLA, WAND and CAFRA, is now in effect.

The draft plan has been published after a series of consultations with government, opposition parties, trade unions and women's organizations. One of the first steps will be to integrate what different agencies are doing in the region.

A major strategic objective is to begin the process of changing relations between women and men both within institutions and within the culture of the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean.

As part of fulfilling this objective, a series of programs is being planned. One of them will be to look at labor conditions of both unwaged and low-waged workers, including the measuring and valuing of unwaged work, and the wages and working conditions of domestic workers.

UNICEF called a meeting on June 10-13 of its focal points on gender and NGOs to discuss post-Beijing activity, to which representatives of the Caribbean sub-region were invited. The process will include ways in which to link the outcomes of Rio, Vienna, Cairo and Habitat conferences with the Beijing PFA.

The November meeting was preceded by a regional meeting in October that brought together one representative from each of the Caribbean delegations who attended the Beijing conference, most of whom had also attended the retreat on "Conference Diplomacy and Negotiations" which was the final stage of Caribbean preparations for Beijing. Recommendations for action after Beijing from the retreat include:

- Use the Beijing PFA as a negotiation tool nationally, regionally and internationally to hold governments accountable;
- Convene a regional meeting for missions, women's bureaux and their respective permanent secretaries to review outcome of the Beijing conference and to discuss how that outcome would inform their work;
- Use the PFA to develop work plans for the next two years; and
- Ensure that the Caricom secretariat secures the mechanisms and resources to implement decisions emanating from the conference.

The October Caricom meeting was the first attempt to respond to the spirit of the pre-Beijing meeting recommendations. Participants agreed on the following:

- the relevance of the Beijing experience for their program planning;
- a draft framework for a regional plan of action based on the Caribbean priority areas agreed upon at the pre-Beijing retreat and successfully negotiated at Beijing; and
- a regional strategy for mobilizing resources for the implementation of the proposed regional plan of action.

Caricom also intends to design proposals for programmable regional projects. The key areas for these projects have been identified as follows:

- Institutional mechanisms
- Power and decision-making
- Data collection/analysis

- Media/Communications
- Legislative reforms
- Information sharing
- Resources/Services

For each of these the key dimensions, goals and actions have also been identified.

An example of a national follow-up action is the formation of a women's political platform by NGOs in Trinidad and Tobago.

4. Resources

There are no known funds from governments in the region. The Women in Development Europe (WIDE) has informed countries and NGOs in particular of funds available for follow-up work on the PFA. UNICEF and UNIFEM have expressed continuing support. The British Development Division has also started its interest in Beijing follow-up work.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Many governments have called on the expertise of NGOs to assist with incorporating a gender perspective in their programs, although a specific action plan has not emerged as yet. Individual governments are expected to develop their own national plans on the basis of the Caricom regional plan, with the involvement of NGOs.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The area of linkages is weak and one in which NGOs need to play a greater role in educating governments.

7. Additional Comments and Information

The four most important challenges in the implementation of the PFA are:

- Access to adequate human, financial, technical and infrastructural resources, as income generation from inside territories is grossly inadequate, outside sources are drying up, and women have not yet learnt to empower themselves;
- Language and communication barriers, hindering the sharing of resources at all levels;
- The absence of women from the highest levels of decision-making; and
- Lack of training for more women on broader socio-economic, cultural and political issues, to enable them to negotiate and carve spaces for themselves.

There are, however, great opportunities in the fact that there is recognition of the strength and resources of the region's feminists and their organizations which can be vehicles for change, and recognition of the work of NGOs in general, and the strengthening of regional NGO networks. Regional governmental agencies actively seek and facilitate collaboration with agencies, as demonstrated through the regional advisory committee on post-Beijing activity, the preparation of the Caricom regional plan of action, and the recent UNICEF Gender Focal Points meeting.

Source: The Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women; International Women Count Network (IWCN), Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

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Chile

- Government ratifies equal opportunities plan
- Interministerial commission being constituted

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The minister for women's affairs and Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (SERNAM) spoke at a public meeting on the agreements after Beijing. Other public services represented in the official delegation also reported back. The parliament held a special session on the issues in the Platform for Action. The ministry of communications and culture edited a publication on the conference and the PFA for nationwide distribution.

To mark the first anniversary of the conference, SERNAM will organize an international seminar to provide a forum for dialogue between government representatives of Latin America, the European Union and women from academia and the feminist movement on the challenges and strategies in mainstreaming women's issues.

SERNAM's report on Beijing caused several months of internal turmoil, sparking a political discussion on issues such as the definition of the term, 'gender,' the role of the family and issues of reproductive health.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

SERNAM and the ministry of foreign affairs will be in charge of the follow-up. An inter-ministerial commission is being constituted with representatives of public services in different

government departments such as education and health which were part of the national report process leading to Beijing.

The government of President Frei also ratified on March 8 a plan for equal opportunities as a working instrument.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has identified as priority areas the improvement of the quality of education of women, with special attention to the needs of the girl child and eliminating hidden curriculum and classroom discrimination; tackling AIDS and adolescent pregnancies; giving women a greater presence in decision-making positions in public life and increasing women's participation in the labor force by providing child care and adequate training. A special focus is on poverty and families.

4. Resources

A reorientation of existing resources to implement agreements is being discussed.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government is encouraging the involvement of NGOs in monitoring PFA implementation. The priorities of both sides coincide and there has been growing contact between government and NGOs to develop complementary programs. The lack of resources is, however, a major constraint for NGOs in carrying out implementation programs.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government strongly advocates linkages between ICPD, the Social Summit and Beijing.

Sources: SERNAM, Fempress, UNICEF (Department of Gender and Development)

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Colombia

- Law on family violence passed after long battle
- No concrete plans or programs for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government organized six workshops in different regions to inform the nation. It also published *Equality, Development and Peace for all the Women of the World : Synthesis of the*

Platform for Action and International Commitments. The senate made a publication, *For Women of the New Millennium*, which includes the *Fourth World Conference, Parliamentarians and the 4th World Conference* and *Suggestions of Parliamentarians on the Platform for Action*.

In a creative effort, women senators of the Liberal and Conservative parties together organized a debate on November 28, 1995 inviting all ministers of state. The ministers had to describe, in writing, the initiatives and mechanisms designed for their area to implement and monitor the commitments to the PFA. The debate included a presentation of a video by the feminist group, Cine Mujer, on the situation of women in Colombia as well as interviews with the delegation to Beijing. Both were broadcast on TV by Channel 3 and the cultural channel.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

A year later, there are no concrete plans or programs, with the continuing government crisis paralyzing post-Beijing activities.

The political crisis has affected the new government office for women, Direcccion Nacional de Mujer. Despite the appointment of a well-known feminist leader as its head, the office is unable to function for lack of a presidential decree and commitment of funds.

NGOs have not yet agreed on monitoring strategy. The National Network is yet to finalize goals and indicators to negotiate with the government for follow-up and monitoring.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government made a commitment to implement the entire PFA without reservations but has not yet announced priorities or concrete programs.

However, in a significant victory, a bill to eradicate violence in the family became law on July 16, 1996 after a long battle. Its definition of violence included physical, sexual and psychological violence.

Colombia has taken progressive leadership positions on subjects like reproductive rights and reproductive health. This is primarily because its legal framework, established by its political constitution and laws, is one of the most advanced in Latin America with respect to equality, prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex and the protection of women's status as workers, family members or single parents.

In other efforts to lend a gender perspective to public policy, the government has drafted several legislative proposals that are being studied by Congress. They include:

- Ratification of the Inter-American Convention to prevent, eradicate and condemn violence against women;
- Immediate reinstatement of pregnant workers dismissed for that reason;
- Appropriation of the family home and conditional co-ownership;

- Establishment of administrative procedures to protect offspring; and
- Reproductive health standards.

4. Resources

There have been drastic cutbacks. Only development cooperation funds are available for PFA implementation.

5. Involvement with Women and NGOs

Six workshops have been organized to commit social sectors in the implementation and monitoring of commitments

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

Little has been done so far. A commission of the senate and parliament has been created to see that international commitments are kept.

UNICEF is providing technical and financial support to the government and NGOs in the preparation of teaching and sectoral documents on government's commitments to women in Beijing, Cairo, Vienna and Copenhagen.

Sources: Fempress (from sources including government and NGOs), National University of Colombia, UNICEF country reports.

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Denmark

- Beijing Declaration translated into Danish
- Government launches initiatives on equal pay and equal status for men and women
- Ministry of labor has started gender-proofing legislation
- No new resources identified for implementing PFA

1. Reporting to the Nation on the Fourth World Conference on Women

The ministry of foreign affairs published a report on the conference, reprinting the Platform for Action in full and providing a Danish translation of the Beijing Declaration. The Danish Equal Status Council plans to bring out a popular version of the PFA in simple language during 1996. The ministry of foreign affairs will also publish its own follow-up plans in a Danish-English publication.

On April 25, 1996, the government presented a memorandum to parliament detailing the initiatives planned by the relevant ministries. The parliament decided to encourage the government to mainstream a gender perspective in administrative, policy and planning activities, nationally as well as internationally and to work towards a continuation of U.N. women's conferences in the year 2000 and onwards.

The government is of the view that the outcome of the conference was positive and, most important, the conference maintained the forward-looking approach of previous United Nations conferences and summits. It endorses the clear messages contained in the PFA concerning the integration of gender aspects in policies and planning.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The Equal Status Council (the national machinery) holds a key position in monitoring the implementation of the PFA. The chairperson of the council led a small working group of civil servants which was responsible for the formulation of the government's statement to parliament.

One outcome of the parliamentary debate is that the government has been asked to strengthen cooperation between NGOs and to work towards a new conference on women in the year 2000.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has proposed the following initiatives at the national level:

- The prime minister has set up a committee to consider possible changes in the organization of work for equal status between men and women and to propose priorities for future activities on equality, nationally as well as internationally;
- The government will further strengthen its efforts to provide equal educational opportunities for girls and boys, especially at primary school level.
- It will continue to work towards eliminating occupational segregation in the labour market and improving the reconciliation of working life and family life;
- It will intensify efforts to reach the goal of equal pay for equal work and for work of equal value, to improve women's participation in decision-making and to eliminate "double discrimination" of women belonging to ethnic minorities;
- It will set up a working group to plan a campaign against female genital mutilation.
- The ministry of labor and the Equal Status Council have launched a statistical project on equal pay.
- The ministry of labor has started gender-proofing legislation.

At the international level:

- The government will redouble its efforts to integrate a gender perspective in Danish development cooperation policies and programmes (mainstreaming), especially with regard to poverty alleviation, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, women's human rights and elimination of violence, particularly female genital mutilation (FGM);
- It has issued a set of guidelines on the prevention of FGM;
- It will accord priority to the implementation of the PFA at annual negotiations with programme countries;
- It will emphasize the implementation of the PFA and integration of gender aspects vis-a-vis multilateral development organizations;
- Denmark will call for the integration of a consolidated European Union policy concerning women and development in the general objectives of EU development cooperation.

The Danish delegation did not make any specific commitments in Beijing.

DKN was part of the official Danish delegation to Beijing and is of the view that the government reflected NGOs' suggestions. It is now in dialogue with the government to strengthen its efforts in the following areas: fighting trafficking in women and prostitution, unequal payment at the labour market, the lack of women in research and faculty positions in universities, and the need for genderproofing labor market agreements.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Major women's NGOs, such as DKN, are represented in the Equal Status Council and in the Committee on International Equality, which has representatives from parliament, NGOs and civil servants. These two bodies have discussed the government's statement on the follow-up to Beijing.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

A paper was commissioned to review recommendations on women and gender from the previous theme conferences and compare them to those in the PFA. The review pointed out that each conference has seen a strengthened incorporation of the gender perspective. However, the PFA contains the most precise and extensive actions to be taken with regard to equality between the sexes, as well as subjects addressed by other U.N. conferences and summits. The report concludes that specific conferences on women are still indispensable because they function as locomotives for other U.N. conferences and summits.

In light of these conclusions, the ministry of foreign affairs proposes to incorporate the more detailed actions concerning equality recommended by the PFA into plans of activities prepared as a follow-up to other U.N. conferences. Denmark will also advocate the continuance of the series of world conferences on women.

Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The National Council of Women in Denmark

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El Salvador

- Government sets up Institute for the Development of Women headed by the First Lady and composed of both government and NGO representatives

2. Structure for Follow-up

In February 1996, the government created the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women and officially introduced it on March 8, International Women's Day. Its board of directors is headed by the First Lady and composed of six state ministers, the state attorneys (fiscal and general), the human rights defense attorney, and two representatives of NGOs. Its objectives are to:

- promote development of salvadoran women;
- promote equal opportunities between men and women;
- promote and coordinate the development of programs and projects for women;
- reform legislation and norms that discriminate against women;
- promote creation of new legislation; and
- manage national and international cooperation for the development of programs and projects.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

In May 1996, the institute held a workshop on gender with presentations and discussions of a report entitled, "Approaching the Focus on Gender in El Salvador: Problems and Recommendations." The report was prepared by national and international consultants with support from the World Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank. The workshop's objective was to support the government in defining a strategy to mainstream a gender perspective in the work of all public institutions and define mechanisms of coordination between the institute and other government entities.

A centre of documentation within the institute encourages research and facilitates the access of current information (national and international) on social, economic, political and cultural issues that concern women.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government works closely with NGOs on women's health care issues.

NGOs are also represented in the Institute for the Development of Women.

Source: Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations

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India

- Government announces draft national policy on the empowerment of women
- Draft bill to give women 33 per cent of seats in state legislative assemblies and in parliament
- No specific government structure for follow-up

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government has done little on its own to disseminate the outcomes of the conference to the public. However, officials of the department of women and child development have attended regional and national consultations organized by others and used these occasions to report on the key issues of the conference, the role played by India and the commitments made at Beijing. The government also sponsored four regional consultations on the draft national policy for the empowerment of women. The department dissected the Platform for Action and shared the relevant parts of the action plan with other government departments. The country paper on Beijing has been widely circulated.

Although it is difficult to assess the exact nature of the impact of the Beijing conference on the government's policies and programs, the government does appear to have become more sensitized to issues relating to women and more open to involving NGOs at planning and policy level meetings. The government has not, however, made any announcement about its strategies after the Beijing conference.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The government is yet to set up a mechanism to review and monitor the implementation of the PFA.

The new government that came to power in May has yet to decide on an earlier proposal to set up a National Council for Women headed by the Prime Minister. A number of women's groups have opposed the formation of such a council because they feel the government should strengthen the National Commission for Women, a statutory body constituted in 1992, rather than set up parallel bodies.

Both houses of Parliament adopted a resolution on March 8 which said that a standing committee of both houses be constituted to monitor the progress and implementation of policies and projects aimed at improving the status of women.

At the NGO level, the government will interact with the National Alliance of Women, which has been formed out of the Coordination Unit set up in Delhi for the Beijing process. It has received a memorandum from the alliance calling for a program of action based on the recommendations made in Beijing.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government's initiatives can be classified as:

- Policy response;
- Legislative response;
- Institutional response and
- Plan response.

At the policy level, the government has drafted a national policy for the empowerment of women. Action on the final draft has been delayed due to the formation of the new government at the centre.

The government has stated that the policy has been drawn up keeping in view national and international developments and after a series of consultations with state governments, NGOs, social activists, researchers and other experts. The policy seeks to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination, increase the active participation of women in all spheres of life, incorporate gender perspectives, translate *de jure* equality into *de facto* equality and take affirmative action wherever necessary.

An important legislative measure is the drafting of a bill to give women 33 per cent of the seats in state legislative assemblies and in parliament. The prime minister has given an assurance that the bill will be passed during the current session of Parliament. The bill is not likely to be opposed since almost all political parties had promised such a reservation in their manifestos in the recent elections.

The bill is a significant follow-up to an earlier measure, before Beijing, reserving 33 per cent of seats for women in grass-roots governing bodies at the village level.

The new government has yet to finalize a proposal to set up institutional mechanisms in the form of women's rights commissioners at the district level.

The government also plans to set up a national resource centre for women with funding from a bilateral donor.

The previous Planning Commission had instructed relevant government departments to build a women's component and identify specific physical and financial resources for women while formulating the ninth five-year development plan (1997-2007). The newly constituted Planning Commission is likely to continue with that approach.

The department for women and child development which is the lead department in this regard has prepared an expert group paper and is in touch with other departments for gender inputs.

The National Commission on Women has proposed amendments in laws relating to women and is awaiting a response from the government. It had also organized regional consultations on partnerships with NGOs for implementation of the PFA.

The government had made the following commitments in Beijing:

- Increase the education budget to six per cent of the gross national product;
- Appoint a human rights commissioner to look into atrocities on women;
- Formulate a national policy on women;
- Set up a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the PFA; and
- Improve health care schemes for women and children.

These commitments do not fully reflect NGO priorities. The conference of commitments organized by the National Committee for Women (before the Beijing conference) had highlighted these as some of its priorities:

- Increased spending on the social sector, with gender-disaggregated fund allocation and 70 per cent of all allocation for poor women; and
- The setting up of a regulatory body to monitor transnational corporations and export-processing zones in light of structural adjustment policies.

The new government is yet to respond to a memorandum submitted by the National Alliance of Women seeking 33 per cent reservation in public sector employment opportunities for women, protection of rights of the girl child, allocation of resources to end child labor and the publication of a report on CEDAW.

4. Resources

The government has made no new and additional resources available in the current budget for PFA implementation except in education.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Most government programs involve NGOs in monitoring committees.

The government invited several NGOs to participate in the formulation of the national policy on women which gave them an opportunity to reflect upon in light of the Beijing PFA.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The department of women and child development has prepared a report on CEDAW and a draft report on the Child Rights Convention.

Sources: Centre for Women's Studies and Development, Panjab University; Centre for Health, Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations.

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Indonesia

- No additional funds or formal government-NGO mechanisms for follow-up
- Ministry for the role of women designated to implement the PFA

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The ministry for the role of women held seminars to disseminate the Beijing Platform for Action. High-ranking officials from the various ministries as well as the provincial government also attended workshops and seminars organized by NGOs to publicize the PFA.

The government has not translated the Beijing documents into the Indonesian language. The Communication Forum of Women, an umbrella organization for NGOs, has taken the initiative to translate both the PFA and the Beijing Declaration.

Overall, there have not been any visible efforts by the government to report on the conference.

The ministry for the role of women, which has the mandate to coordinate the women's programmes of the other ministries, has taken the significance of the Beijing conference into serious consideration. It has held held various cross-sectoral meetings and is now engaged in determining how the existing programmes for women can be improved and strengthened taking into account the 12 critical areas of concern.

As a follow-up to Beijing, the ministry organized a national seminar on the subject, "Equal Partnership Between Men and Women," in March 1996. This was the first nationwide initiative sponsored by the ministry and drew wide attendance. Several vice-governors attended in their capacity as chairpersons of the management teams of women's programmes at the provincial level. Other participants came from the academia, women's studies' centers, representatives of the Indonesian Women's Congress (KOWANI) and other NGOs working on women's issues.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

There is no public announcement of any institution, mechanism or process by which the government plans to review and implement the PFA.

However, the government has officially designated the minister for the role of women to review and implement the PFA.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

None, so far.

The government made no specific commitments at Beijing.

4. Resources

The government has not made known any allocation of funds to implement the PFA.

International donor agencies such as UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNDP, the Ford Foundation and the World Bank as well as some bilateral donor countries are providing resources. For example, UNDP is funding the socialization of the PFA.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government has involved various NGOs through their parent organizations, KOWANI and the Communication Forum for Women, seminars and working groups in planning, programming and evaluating the progress achieved.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

Development in Indonesia has been guided by its 'development trilogy' (development, stability and equity) for more than two decades. This framework facilitated national efforts to carry out activities in line with the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. The Jakarta Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted at the Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development in June 1994 provided inputs for the Beijing Declaration and the PFA.

Indonesia has ratified CEDAW and the Child Rights Convention and supports the promotion and protection of the rights of the girl child. The ministry has launched a pilot project to pay special attention to the educational needs of the girl child.

7. Additional Comments and Information

The Indonesian Convention Watch working group at the Graduate Studies' Program in the University of Indonesia is monitoring the implementation of CEDAW. It has especially focused

on Article 11 of the Convention, relating to the rights of women workers. The working group, which is a multidisciplinary body of academics and NGOs, has now produced several research results to be used as a basis for discussion on the rights of women workers with policymakers at the national level. It is also disseminating the content of CEDAW with training for strategic groups (such as those with large outreach programs) and young women lawyers.

Sources: Graduate Women's Studies Program, University of Indonesia, and the Women's Association Against Violence (SPEAK)

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Japan

- Government asks Council for Gender Equality to review the PFA and draw up a national plan of action
- NGO involvement and feedback sought by government agencies in drafting "vision of equality" for 21st century
- No specific resources allocated for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government's Council for Gender Equality and local authorities throughout the country held many meetings to report on the conference and to inform people of the importance of implementing the Platform for Action.

More than 2,000 people from all over the nation attended a conference organized by the International Women's Year Liaison Group on November 22, 1995, to hear the IWYLG's report on the conference and its 135 goals and 15 resolutions to implement the Platform for Action.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The government has designated the Council for Gender Equality, attached to the headquarters for planning and promoting policies relating to women, to review the PFA and draw up a national plan of action.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The Council for Gender Equality is drawing up a report based on the "Points of Issues in the Committees of the Council for Gender Equality." This will form the basis of the national plan of action. The report follows an inquiry from the prime minister for the "Overall Vision of a Gender-Equal Society Towards the 21st Century." The council has sought feedback from NGOs on the points of issues.

* The Institute of Economics under the Agency of Economic Planning has set up a study team consisting of officials and NGOs on counting unpaid women's work into the national census, under the leadership of the agency's vice-minister.

* The Bureau of Banks in the Agency of Economic Planning has set up a team to review the existing financial mechanisms with a gender perspective, and redefine its legislation to make women eligible for credit from financial institutions.

The government's specific commitments are:

- Empowerment of women, especially in education and employment, by launching an initiative on women in development.
- Respect for the human rights of women, in particular, reproductive health and rights, by addressing issues of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and 'comfort women.' The creation of the Asian Women's Fund is a step in this direction.
- Partnership between women and men, NGOs and government and across international borders.
- Securing world peace and prosperity.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The Council for Gender Equality, together with the Gender Equality Office in the prime minister's office, holds meetings to inform NGOs and the public of its deliberations and to report on U.N. meetings relevant to women's issues.

Unfortunately, the Office is not organized to function effectively for several reasons. It is headed by the chief of cabinet, whose time is taken up by other issues; it is not adequately staffed nor financed, and its mandate is not clearly stated.

The Beijing Japan Accountability Caucus (Beijing JAC), which is the new name for the Japanese NGO representatives' caucus formed during the Beijing conference, will work to follow up on the agreements in the PFA. It comprises accredited NGOs, some women parliamentarians who were members of the government delegation (including Ms. Sumiko Shimizu, currently vice-minister of the Agency of Economic Planning) and members of the media.

The Beijing JAC provides a forum for individuals (activists, scholars and media representatives), women's organizations, networks and groups working on issues relating to women. It is a loose forum of existing networks and caucuses which work toward common goals, such as the Network on Women's Health (born after the Cairo Conference), the Caucus on the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women, the Japan Bretton Woods Coalition, International Movement against Racial Discrimination, the Network on Violence against Women, the Network of Women for Environmental Protection (GENKI, born at the Earth Summit), the Caucus on Unpaid Work and local coalitions such as the Kyushu JAC, Osaka JAC and Hokkaido JAC.

The objective of the Beijing JAC is to foster further networking, information exchange and lobbying national and local governments. It is currently focusing on two issues:

- reorganizing and strengthening the national machinery that works on women's issues; and
- enactment of legislation to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

In December, members of the Beijing JAC, together with women members of the Parliament representing four political Parties, submitted requests to the then prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama, and the then chief of cabinet, Koken Nosaka, urging the government to

- create a position for an independent minister for women's issues and appoint a woman to this position;
- establish a ministry for women's issues to coordinate the policies of different ministries and agencies and propose policies and legislation from a gender perspective;
- guarantee transparency within the Women's Issues Advisory Council (under the prime minister) by allowing NGO participation; and
- enact legislation to prevent and eliminate violence against women. Japan does not have any legal guarantees for women in this sphere. In particular, current Japanese law does not entitle a girl child to take a rapist to court, only the parents can sue the assailant. Domestic violence is often overlooked for lack of legal backing.

Mr. Murayama received the Beijing JAC proposal well but made no promises. (In the Japanese political system, the prime minister is not in a position to create a new ministry.) He however made the assurance that he would consider nominating a woman minister for women's issues without portfolio. The Beijing JAC sees this as the beginning of a long-term commitment and will focus on a detailed outline of the framework for the ministry and draft legislation on related issues such as that against sexual violence. For this purpose, the Beijing JAC has formed teams to conduct fact-finding studies and research on laws and functions of women's ministries in different countries.

The Women's Issues Advisory Council has assured the Beijing JAC that it will consider its feedback in the process of drafting a future vision for creating a society of joint participation among men and women for the 21st Century. Its first draft received comments, amendments and new proposals from women all over Japan during February 1996.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

A headquarters for planning and promoting policies relating to women, that the government agreed to set up at the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, has never met.

As a follow-up to its statement in Beijing and the Human Rights Conference in Vienna, the government presented a resolution at the 50th U.N. General Assembly, co-sponsored by 46 states,

on "The Role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in Eliminating Violence against Women."

Sources: Yoko Kitazawa for the Beijing Japan Accountability Caucus (JAC) and the International Women's Year Liaison Group (IWYLG).

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Malaysia

- Government to implement national action plan with modifications in keeping with PFA
- No new funds or formal mechanisms to involve NGOs in Platform implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government has not organized any public activity of its own to discuss the Beijing conference. It has however said that the draft national action plan on women will be reviewed and modified with Beijing inputs. It has thus indicated its recognition of the significance of the PFA. Its specific actions will need to be concretely assessed.

The Gender and Development Programme of the Asia-Pacific Development Centre, a regional intergovernmental organization, participated in the following follow-up activities to report on the outcomes of the conference:

- A debriefing for UNDP staff ;
- A post-Beijing national conference organized by the National Council of Women's Organizations in May 1996;
- A post-Beijing forum organized by the National University of Malaysia.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

There is no new government mechanism. The PFA will be integrated into existing consultative structures. There is no national mechanism which includes the range of women's NGOs and government organizations.

At the regional level, responses vary. APDC-GAD will produce a regional monitor to share information on responses from institutions, government and NGO mechanisms for

implementation, monitoring and review. This monitor will be produced annually and will act as a review mechanism for women and NGOs in the region.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

There have been none by the government so far. CEDAW was ratified (with reservations) the month before Beijing. The government proposes to implement the National Action Plan on Women, after modifications in keeping with the PFA. The post-Beijing meeting in May came up with a plan within the Beijing framework covering the 12 critical areas of concern. The report of this meeting has been sent to the government for incorporation into the action plan, with special inputs from NGOs on specific sections, such as women's health.

The government's main commitment at Beijing was to work towards lifting the many reservations it placed when ratifying CEDAW. This was a direct response to requests from women's NGOs.

4. Resources

There is no new government funding. In fact, the government does not fund any activities by women's NGOs, pre- or post-Beijing. The women's aid refuge gets a small amount of funds from the social welfare budget.

The Canadian International Development Agency has made funds available for the implementation of post-Beijing activities under the Southeast Asian Gender Equity Programme.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

This has not happened so far since the implementation of Malaysia's own women's action plan has not begun. There have been no formal efforts to involve NGOs except through the NCWO's connections with government. The national action plan does include women NGOs' inputs.

6. Linkages to Other UN Conference Agreements and Conventions

There has not been much effort in this direction so far. The government's women's affairs division did not send a representative Cairo and the ICPD Platform is seen as controversial and sensitive.

The women's affairs division has initiated and lobbied for the setting up of an inter-ministerial committee to take up gender concerns at all ministerial levels. This is in line with Malaysia's commitments at both Nairobi and Beijing.

Sources: Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) and the Gender and Development Programme of the Asia-Pacific Development Centre (APDC-GAD).

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Mexico

- President announces formal installation of national program for women for PFA implementation
- No new resources allocated

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Upon returning from Beijing, the national population council, through a project titled "From Cairo to Beijing," convened 32 public fora and workshops to disseminate information about the Platform for Action and invite proposals for the national program for women, based on the particular situation of women in each federal entity.

Presentations were made before the Congress and the Senate. The council also fostered NGO participation in post-Beijing meetings and conferences in 17 states and the federal district. NGOs conducted select meetings with intellectuals, religious groups and the media, published articles and held press conferences as well.

2. Structure for Follow-up

The government released a national program for women (1995-2000) in March.

On March 8, 1996, the President announced its formal installation in a special nationwide message.

The executive coordination for the national program was named and installed on July 1, 1996 to monitor implementation of PFA commitments in the government's social departments (health, education, work, social development and family).

The five proposed strategies involve planning, coordination, encouraging state and local governments to participate in the national program, jurisdictional and institutional development, and follow-up and evaluation.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The national program's challenges and objectives include:

- Equal access and zero discrimination in education;

- Promoting an effective system for women's health care;
- Confronting women's poverty;
- Increasing labor opportunities and protection for women workers and stimulating women's capacity to produce;
- Defending women's rights and increasing their access to all levels of political participation;
- Preventing and eliminating violence against women; and
- Promoting a culture of equality through the protection of plural, balanced, and non-discriminatory images of women.

These commitments reflect NGOs priorities, since NGOs were active in the national preparation for the regional and world conferences.

4. Resources

PFA initiatives have so far been carried out using existing resources from various sectors and ministries. No new resources have been assigned to the national program.⁶

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The process for the formulation of the national program for women involved broad participation of governmental institutions and NGOs, which will continue through the implementation and monitoring stages as well. This will also be the case for the PFA, although the specific mechanisms are still under discussion.⁷

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government acknowledges that women's issues are crucial in the construction of a new development strategy more focused on human aspects as a result of international conferences.

The follow-up strategy of international agreements is based on the coordination of institutional actions. For example, the United Nations Population Fund has financed some activities within the project 'From Cairo to Beijing.' This two-year project began in March 1995 as a joint effort to promote the implementation and follow-up of objectives set forth in both the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing conference.

It has three main objectives: to contribute to the consolidation of the national program for women; to design a set of operative indicators that might facilitate the evaluation of outcomes

from the program and the PFA; and to foster the inclusion of a gender perspective in the national population policy, with the participation of state governments and NGOs in state population councils.

Workshops have been scheduled throughout 1996 on the definition and use of indicators of social conditions of women.

Source: Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations and the National Coordination of NGOs

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Nepal

- Government to introduce bill on inheritance and property rights
- Task force of legal experts formed to amend laws that discriminate against women
- No specific funds for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government has done very little to describe the significance and impact of the Beijing conference. Some NGOs have done so on their own through seminars and workshops.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The ministry of women and social welfare has formed a task force of legal experts to amend discriminatory laws on women. The ministry organized a three-day national women's conference to discuss property rights, but unfortunately did not invite national women's organizations.

The ministry plans to work with NGOs to implement the PFA although no formal mechanism has been set up.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

In keeping with its commitment in Beijing to amend existing laws which discriminate against women within the next two years, the government plans to introduce a draft bill on inheritance and property rights in the coming session of parliament.

4. Resources

There is no specific budget for the implementation of the PFA. But the recent budget of the government allots some funds for the uplift of women.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government organized a national seminar to involve NGOs in the process of implementation of the PFA. However, it has not yet formulated plans to include women's organizations in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programs.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government has announced a bill on child rights. Work is in progress on a bill for a commission on human rights, and there is continued discussion on Nepal's CEDAW progress report.

Source: The Socio-Economic Welfare Action for Women in Nepal (SEWA)

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The Netherlands

- Government identifies extra funding for PFA implementation
- Government reviewing macroeconomic policies from a gender perspective
- Policy paper on emancipation due by the end of the year

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government was well represented at a working conference organized by the national NGO Beijing committee on November 25 as part of a series funded by the ministry of social affairs and development.

The Platform for Action is being translated and will be ready for distribution in September 1996.

In addition, active NGOs and women's groups have made many efforts to report to the nation on the Beijing conference.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

After parliamentary approval, the government will come out with a plan for PFA implementation in September detailing activities at the national and international level in each critical area of concern. This process will result in a final report in 1999. Concurrently, the ministry of social affairs will present a new policy paper on emancipation (1997-2000), the contents of which will be debated in Parliament.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The department for development cooperation in the foreign ministry has identified additional funds for PFA implementation. Other ministries are reordering funding priorities.

The special programme on women and development within the department has undertaken a study on strategies for increasing women's political participation at all levels in developing countries. The study focuses especially on the participation of women in local and village structures, in the belief that this is a necessary condition for effective participation in decision-making at the higher administrative levels. Results should be completed this year and will serve as a basis for the development of intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs in countries of concern.

The department has initiated a critical review of macroeconomic policies from a gender perspective, including gender-sensitive guidelines for programme aid. It has put on its agenda the legal status of women as well as inheritance rights and is committed to further exploration on issues regarding women and armed conflict and violence against women in general.

The department, in collaboration with the special programme on women and development has formulated its priorities for further follow-up to Beijing, including a new strategy paper for upcoming years, expected to be ready by the end of 1996.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

NOVIB has initiated a Social Watch initiative, in collaboration with NGOs, with the aim of monitoring the progress on basic social priorities set by the Social Summit and the Women's Conference, as well as to put pressure on national governments to implement their outcomes. An annual Social Watch report will highlight the most important achievements in or obstacles to social progress.

The government has officially recognized the critique submitted by more than 30 women's organizations of the new emancipation policy. It called upon the ministry of emancipation affairs to consult with the women's movement in formulating relevant policies. The minister

for emancipation affairs was then asked to draft another policy paper through a consultation process. Women's groups have stressed that the new policy, expected to be released by the end of 1996 should include a future course and detailed plan of action linked to the Beijing PFA.

A key concern among women's organizations is whether they will be fully involved as consulting partners. It is also not yet clear whether the review of the so-called emancipation support

structure, proposed by the minister, will allow space for new developments such as post-Beijing initiatives or an international perspective.

The department of development cooperation has reiterated its commitment to giving special attention to cooperation between NGOs and networks on gender and development, both South-South and North-South, to build upon the close contacts made at Beijing.

A 'start group' was initiated early this year to develop a proposal for a working group, titled the Platform for Action Plan 2000. After several open meetings, NGOs and representatives of the women's movement agreed on a proposal for a working structure and activities ranging from pressuring the government to translate the PFA into Dutch to organizing a commemorative national event one year after Beijing.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

Progress on the implementation of the Beijing Platform will be linked as far as possible to The Netherlands' next report for the CEDAW committee.

The Netherlands has as yet to fully implement the 20/20 initiative, stating that it expects aid-receiving countries to cooperate and agree to a shift in their national budgets before it makes its contribution of 20 per cent. In addition, the minister for development cooperation has stated that The Netherlands will allocate more funds for countries that participate and less for countries that do not participate.

Sources: Ministry of Social Affairs, NOVIB and Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking

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New Zealand

- Ministry of women's affairs launches gender analysis framework
- Ministry to work closely with NGOs in mainstreaming gender perspective in policies and addressing gender pay gap and unwaged work

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Immediately following the Beijing Conference, on 19 September 1995, New Zealand marked the 102nd anniversary of women gaining the vote. On that day the New Zealand parliament debated the Beijing conference and its outcomes.

On two occasions the cabinet has considered papers on follow-up to the conference.

The December issue of the newsletter published by the ministry for women's affairs highlighted the conference and its outcomes. To mark International Women's Day, the ministry also published the full report of the conference delegation in *Beijing and Beyond*. Both publications have been distributed widely.

Official delegation members and women who attended Forum '95 have spoken at numerous public meetings and been interviewed by media throughout the country.

Both the minister and the ministry of women's affairs have distributed the Platform widely to groups and to individuals. In addition, the New Zealand NGO Coordinating Committee has distributed summary versions.

Ministry staff have participated in a series of consultations on the PFA held from February to July in 21 centres throughout the country by the NGO coordinating committee, formed prior to the Beijing Conference. The report of these consultations will be presented at the centenary conference of the National Council of Women in September. The government will take into account NGO findings in developing its implementation strategy.

The NGO coordinating committee 1996 prepared a 24-page booklet on the Beijing Platform including workshop guides for 12 critical areas of concern. A travelling roadshow went throughout New Zealand conducting workshops.

The government describes it as an obligation to develop a strategy in the 12 areas of concern to improve the status of women in the country.

It sees the follow-up to the Beijing Conference as an opportunity to focus on those areas where further progress can be made to improve the status of women in New Zealand, where women have a level of legislative protection and economic opportunity that is amongst the best in the world.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The ministry of women's affairs will be responsible for working with other government agencies on implementation strategies and will report to the government by December 1996. The ministry will work closely with the NGO coordinating committee.

Particular issues to be addressed include:

- mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development of all policies and programmes;
- obtaining information on women's unpaid work and its application to policy development;
- bridging the gender pay gap;
- focusing on more and better data collection about all aspects of women's lives;

- making recommendations which apply specifically to Maori women and girls as indigenous people;
- enhancing women's role in decision-making, including through a commitment to gender balance on all government-appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The ministry launched its gender analysis framework, *The Full Picture*, to mark its tenth anniversary in May.

The government did not make specific commitments in Beijing. However, it did undertake to "to use the actions outlined in the Platform as the basis for developing a strategy for New Zealand women in terms of the areas of legislative, administrative, and additional charges that still need attention."

4. Resources

The ministry's work programme for the fiscal year 1996-97 will focus on a number of issues raised by the Platform.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government has undertaken to use the report of the NGO workshops in the further development of its implementation strategy for the PFA.

The government has not developed an action plan to involve women in formal monitoring mechanisms.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

In Beijing the government was committed to ensuring that the Beijing Platform, at the very least, reflected the agreements made at past U.N. conferences. It likewise expects such conferences to reaffirm the rights enshrined in existing conventions and covenants.

Sources: Ministry of Women's Affairs and an anonymous source

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Nicaragua

- No national plan of action, funds or follow-up structure

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government has made no national plan of action during this first year. It has not responded positively to suggestions from women in NGOs and the social movement that it be done jointly with them.

The government has also not given any publicity to the Beijing conference.

There have been no joint meetings, except for a Central American union meeting organized by the unions at which representatives of the government were present together with those from civil society. However, there was no agreement on conflictual issues such as causes of poverty and sexual rights and reproductive health.

Some departments are organizing meetings on priority themes such as violence, poverty, and for study and action.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The Nicaraguan Institute for Women, a government organization, has done nothing since the Beijing meeting. Its director is currently running as a vice-presidential candidate for PRONAL (the National Project) made up of members of government. In fact, women's issues as a whole have taken a back seat because of the government's pre-election concerns.

However, the three separate NGO committees set up for working on Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing have come together to work towards presenting coherent proposals to the new government that will assume office in 1997. Women's issues and rights are the unifying thread of the united committee, known as the Iniciativa Intercumbre. It has already been instrumental in the analysis of documents and the formulation of proposals. The committee aims at mobilizing more women, especially at the local level, and at decentralizing efforts from the centre to the departments and the municipal level.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The Nicaraguan government made no specific commitment in Beijing.

4. Resources

The government has not allocated any funds for implementation of the Platform.

The UNDP has funded some activities of the women's movement and NGOs. International agencies such as HIVOS and NOVIB and the Dutch Embassy have funded the follow-up sub-regional meeting in El Salvador, and the one to take place in Panama in August.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Nothing has been done by the government.

However, NGOs and women's social movements have taken the initiative on their own to network and exchange information and monitoring strategies. At the third national encounter for women's networks and organizations, the 130 participants formed working commissions to study and make proposals on the following priority issues: the economy and poverty, education, violence, reproductive health, sexual rights and mass communications. The meeting noted that human rights, the girl child and resource mobilization are cross-cutting themes linking these critical issues.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

There have been no efforts at the government level.

Source: Myra Paso Marciaq and Maria Hamlin-Zunega for the Nicaraguan Women's Iniciativa Intercumbre

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Niue

- Government sets up counselling centers for women

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government held a one-day workshop for representatives from the 14 villages in Niue. Representatives from the main churches and women's NGOs were also present. Participants were given summaries of the Beijing Platform for Action. Radio Sunshine and Television Niue disseminated information on the conference.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The division of women's affairs within the department of community affairs is responsible for Women in Development activities. Some of the issues in the PFA do not apply to Niue. The division is formulating a programme to meet the needs of women in Niue.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has made no specific commitments other than to meet the requirements of the PFA where applicable. A new project in place is the establishment of a counselling centre for women and the training of seven counsellors for a total population of 1,200 women in the entire island.

4. Resources

Niue receives an annual allocation of \$10,000 for WID activities from the New Zealand government. These funds have been used for workshops conducted by local and overseas resource people and the construction of a counselling office for women.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Government departments convene workshops with the objective to encourage participants to return to their villages and organizations to conduct workshops at the village level.

The government has always set aside a position for a woman representative in all its statutory bodies and government committees.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government has held two workshops on CEDAW to familiarize women with the Convention. A workshop to promote women's human and legal rights is scheduled for November 1996.

Niue's involvement with the South Pacific Regional Environment Program, particularly with the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Project, has exposed its women to principles of sustainable development and conservation.

Source: Department of Community Affairs

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Norway

- Special budgetary allocation for women in developing countries increased by NOK10 million in 1996
- White Paper on development cooperation identifies gender equality as central objective

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

A national conference for NGOs, governmental representatives and researchers was held in December 1995, to report on the conference. Follow-up meetings with NGOs through the ministry of women's affairs contact forum for joint exchange of information also took place.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The ministry of children and family affairs is the lead ministry for national follow-up. It has disseminated the Beijing Platform and national report on the conference to all ministries, important national institutions like universities, the Norwegian Research Council and to a wide

range of NGOs, with a request to report back to the ministry on plans and initiatives for follow-up.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

A new White Paper to parliament on Norway's cooperation with developing countries, which focuses strongly on follow-up to Beijing, identifies gender equality as a central objective. The ministry of foreign affairs is also working on a new strategy for gender equality and integration of a gender perspective in all development cooperation.

The government did not make any specific commitments in Beijing, based on the position that all areas covered by the Platform are equally important.

4. Resources

The government has increased the special budgetary allocation aimed at women in developing countries from NOK 45 million in 1995 to NOK 55 million in 1996. This allocation can be used for Beijing follow-up activities.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

See #1 and #2 above.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

Through new strategies on gender and development, environment and other areas, the goal is to reinforce integrated follow-up to the various agreements and conventions.

Norway hosted a high-level international meeting on the 20/20 initiative (launched at the Social Summit) in April 1996 and an international conference on child labor in 1997. These fora will offer valuable opportunities to emphasize coordinated follow-up to the different U.N. conferences. In addition, the government is strongly emphasizing the U.N. system's responsibility for coordinated follow-up.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Pakistan

- PFA being translated into Urdu
- Core groups and women's development departments set up in all four provinces
- No new resources mobilized or allocated for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government highlighted key aspects of the conference through television programmes. The secretary, ministry of women development and youth affairs, addressed a number of meetings organized by NGOs in Pakistan's major cities and the leading women's college in Lahore.

The government has had the Platform for Action translated into Urdu for public dissemination and is bringing out a user-friendly abridged version of the document in Urdu. The Pakistan national report to the conference is also being produced in Urdu alongwith an abridged user-friendly version.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

Preparations for Beijing that began in mid-1994 when the ministry entered into an agreement with bilateral and multilateral donors laid the foundation for the Beijing follow-up. The multi-donor facilitating unit set up by international donors coordinated the post-Beijing process, providing support to the ministry and facilitating government-NGO collaboration.

The underlying thrust of the entire Beijing follow-up process has been one of building consensus at different levels of government and between government and NGOs. Consultative meetings were held with individuals and the provincial government departments concerned to set up a mechanism to develop strategies for implementation.

The government has now formed provincial core groups comprising NGO representatives and government officials and is in the process of setting up Beijing follow-up units in women's development departments in the provinces and in the ministry for women's development at the Centre.

The follow-up units will act as secretariats for the core groups, one of whose primary tasks will be to monitor and review the follow-up activities. However, government funds for the implementation of the PFA are limited. With the mechanism now in place, the next task is the formulation of a National Plan of Action by the end of 1996 based on provincial priorities.

Some of the priority issues to be addressed are women's education, health and reproductive health and violence against women.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has fulfilled its commitment to set up a human rights ministry, although this was not one of the priorities on the NGO agenda. NGOs and women's groups feel that pressing issues such as discriminatory legislation and women's political participation did not require the

setting up of yet another bureaucratic structure, but could instead have been dealt with by the law ministry or the women's ministry.

The creation of women's development departments at the provincial level is a significant policy decision.

4. Resources

Donors (including international agencies) have made resources available to plan the implementation of the PFA. Donors have indicated their support to the Beijing follow-up units for a period of one year. No additional funding is available for the moment but will be sought after the plan of action is ready and specific targets identified.

The ministry proposes to work towards the inclusion of plan of action targets in the next five-year plan (1998-2003) which is currently under preparation.

The annual budget presented in June 1996 makes no provision of funds for the implementation of the PFA, a fact that raises doubts about the extent of the government's commitment.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government has actively involved NGOs as well as individual women in the Beijing follow-up process. It has held a series of consultations with NGOs in all four provinces and organized two national-level workshops with NGO representatives to review and finalise the implementation mechanism. Most important, it has recognized the role of NGOs in facilitating implementation, review and monitoring and has sought NGO collaboration in developing the national plan of action.

The involvement with NGOs is a most significant breakthrough in a country where the bureaucracy has no tradition of working with members/groups in civil society.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

Pakistan ratified CEDAW on 12 March 1996. This has not, however, resulted in visible and concrete steps to remove discrimination against women, notably the removal of discriminatory legislation from the statutes, or ensuring women's representation in the assemblies. The government is reported to have withdrawn its reservations to the Child Rights Convention.

7. Additional Comments and Information

NGOs are concerned with the removal of discriminatory legislation, particularly the Hadood ordinances pertaining to adultery, rape, theft and drugs. Women have been subject to excessive victimization under these laws; the majority of women in Pakistan's prisons have been convicted under them. Second, NGOs feel that government efforts to deal with the rising violence against women by setting up special women's police stations and providing financial and medical

support to victims are inadequate. NGOs have called for training and sensitization of the police force and more strong-willed initiatives to protect women.

Source: Shirkat Gah

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Palestine

- Women's departments created in ministries of youth, social affairs, culture, planning, health

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Representatives of both governments and NGOs held meetings, including one hosted by the minister of social affairs in Gaza with women's organisations, to discuss the main issues arising out of the Beijing conference.

2. Structure for Follow-up

Despite difficulties and delays created by political events after the conference, such as national elections and the persistent closure of the borders, some effective steps have been taken towards the institutionalization of women's advancement. The government has set up specialized women departments in the ministries of youth, social affairs, culture, planning and health. The ministry of planning, support by the UNDP, is taking the initiative to build a coordination mechanism between the women's affairs departments of the line ministries. A proposal to establish a multi-disciplinary high-level steering committee to bring together a wide range of ministries was drafted; however, election preparations and the uncertainties that followed have considerably affected the progress of the project at the governmental level.

4. Resources

No additional resources have been allocated.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

From the NGO side, the coordination project facilitated the linkage between the main formal and informal NGO networks which composed the preparatory committee: the Palestinian Women's Union, the Women Technical Affairs Committee, the Health Coalition and other informal groupings. They reached a general consensus on the need to establish a common working group led by the women's union to cooperate with the project. The persisting closure of borders has prevented them from meeting to define working relations and a work plan. In addition, the lack

of clear relations and line of authority between the general secretariat and the branches of the Women Union has also hampered the progress in this field. The project will establish an administrative agreement with the branch of the union in the West Bank to implement project activities.⁴

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The Palestine National Authority is taking these matters into consideration. However, due to the situation in Palestine, they are currently dealing with other priorities; they will be attended to in the near future.⁵

Sources: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Palestine Section (WILPF); UNIFEM Western Asia Regional Office

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Peru

- Commission on women created in Congress
- Permanent Commission on Women's Rights working to modify laws relating to women
- No additional funds for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The ministry of justice organized a seminar on women and development in which the national organization of NGOs in Peru and the regional coordination of NGOs of Latin America and the Caribbean participated.

The regional coordination of NGOs of Latin America and the Caribbean organized a regional seminar with speakers from all subregions to inform the public and government officials on their experience and the results of the forum and conference as well as perspectives for post-Beijing activities. A publication of the speeches was distributed in the region.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

A permanent commission on women's rights has been formed in the ministry of justice. This commission will be the principal official institution carrying out post-Beijing activities within the government. It is currently developing a national plan of action for women's development.

The national coordination unit for Beijing will initiate a project on the first anniversary of the conference on mobilizing women's organizations in Peru to ensure the monitoring of Platform agreements. The project will evaluate the progress in the first year and formulate a system to

monitor policies, programs and services. It will publish regional and national reports on every anniversary of the Beijing conference.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

For the first time since independence, a commission that deals exclusively with women's issues has been created in Congress, demonstrating a determination on the part of government to implement the Platform. Headed by Congresswoman Beatriz Merino, it plans to modify laws affecting women, such as that on family violence. The commission is interested in monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform, as well as agreements relating to women from previous U.N. conferences.

The government has declared family planning as a priority in its national plan. Although this initiative is not a direct result of Beijing, and may be seen as part of a politics of rationalizing resources in a neo-liberal economic scheme, the President is using the conference to give high profile to his proposal for family planning. However, the approach is rather broad and open to NGOs that have expertise in the area.

Reproductive health is an important NGO priority. It is important for NGOs to introduce their agendas for the empowerment of women in government family planning programs to broaden its scope.

4. Resources

The government has identified no new and additional resources yet.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The regional coordination unit is working to further the initiative of Social Watch International which, in its first phase, gives emphasis to the situation of girls. A national social watch group is being organized with the participation of government and NGO representatives to take up other areas of concern in the Platform in the coming months.

So far, the government has done nothing significant to involve women and NGOs in the implementation process.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

None have been made to date.

Sources: Centro de la Mujer Peruana "Flora Tristan," Fempress and UNICEF

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The Philippines

- President approves 30-year national plan for women
- Congress files legislative measures to reclassify rape as crime against a person and not crime against chastity

1. Reporting to the Nation on the Fourth World Conference on Women

The first official act after Beijing of the Philippine delegation was to present a report to the President on the Philippine participation in the conference. This was followed by a speech made by the head of the Philippine delegation, Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani, in the Philippine Senate. In the House of Representatives, the Congress committee on women took the lead in publicizing the results of the conference.

The committee also initiated a consultative dialogue with Philippine NGOs on the legislative follow-up to the conference. Under the aegis of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, government line agencies and departments with NGOs including women's groups convened consultative workshops, at national and regional levels, assessing the outcomes of Beijing and implementation strategies.

The National Steering Committee of NGOs for Beijing conducted an assessment and planning workshop on the Beijing Platform from 21-22 November 1995.

The delegations report to the President as well as to the bicameral legislature cited the Beijing conference as a "historic landmark," and noted that "the world community has come to agree that women's concerns cut across all aspects of life." It also declared that the conference has advanced Philippine priorities issues covering:

- the full enjoyment of all human rights and the protection against violence and exploitation of the Filipina migrants including migrant workers;
- the elimination of trafficking in women and girls, and measures to address the root factors that encourage trafficking; and
- a comprehensive strategy for enabling women to overcome poverty especially that of rural women.

The National Commission conducted a series of fora on the PFA in different provinces. It has also produced a simplified, popular version of the Platform.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

On 11 October 1995, the President issued a memorandum expanding the coverage of the Social Reform Agenda to cover the Beijing Platform. The same memorandum instructed the lead

convener of the Agenda to make arrangements with the National Commission for the implementation of the PFA. The Social Reform Council, a presidential body that implements the agenda, subsequently became the main vehicle for the implementation of the PFA with coordination from the National Commission.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

On September 11, 1995, the Philippine President approved a 30-year national plan for women. He also directed that the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development would be the framework to follow up the government's commitments in Beijing. Under the plan, all government offices and government-owned or controlled corporations are enjoined to take steps to ensure the full implementation of outlined policies, strategies and programs stressing the role of women in nation-building and ensuring the fundamental equality of men and women before the law. The same executive order designated the National Commission, in coordination with the National Economic Development Authority, as the main agency to monitor implementation of and update the plan every six years, or upon a change in national leadership.

The Lower House Committee on Women has begun studying all pending bills relating to women. It also has an oversight committee to review all policies and legislation relating to women.

Meanwhile, the Cairo-Copenhagen-Beijing Interface Steering Committee has consolidated a legislative and executive agenda. The Interface Steering Committee is a collaborative government-NGO project in which government officials and the National Commission, population and development NGOs, women's groups and population institutes come together to link the agendas of various U.N. conferences to build on major gains.

The Philippine government has specifically committed to:

- Increase its annual contribution to UNIFEM by 700 per cent;
- Mandate that all government offices allocate a portion of their annual budget to women-specific and gender-oriented programs;
- Intensify the training of rural women and give more access to credit; and
- Impose more stringent penalties for those who engage in trafficking of women.

At present, however, allocations for women-specific programs are still being made from ODA funds and not from the national budget.

The following are some of the programs outlined by the government in implementing the PFA based on the 12 critical areas of concern:

Poverty

The Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty will develop conceptual and practical methodologies to incorporate a gender perspective in all aspects of economic planning including structural adjustment planning and programs.

It will also improve the gender perspective of the national strategy to fight poverty.

Health

The department of health will establish/strengthen facilities for adolescent health centers to provide educational programs on sex education, sexuality and responsible sexual behavior in schools and communities.

Violence Against Women

Both Houses of Congress have filed legislative measures seeking to reclassify rape as a crime against a person, instead of a crime against chastity. A bill seeking to punish offenders of domestic violence was also filed. The relevant departments of police and justice will develop a module and conduct gender sensitivity training for police officers and judges handling cases of women and children in especially difficult circumstances.

Economic Structures and Policies

The department of trade and industry will implement its livelihood program for women to increase its loan releases and reach out to a greater number of women borrowers in all regions in the country. The Phillippine export processing zone will use gender-responsive recruitment and training policies and facilities for workers.

The department of labor and management will develop statistical methods and conduct research towards the assessment of the economic contribution of women including unremunerated work.

In addition, it will strictly enforce the implementing rules and regulations of the Sexual Harassment Act of 1995. Furthermore, to ensure the safety of Filipina migrant workers, the department plans to forge bilateral/multilateral negotiations with employer/host countries, implement full disclosure policies and operationalize quality deployment of Filipina migrant workers by deregulating the rules for service contractors and enforcing stricter pre-qualification of foreign employers.

Inequality of Men and Women in Decision-Making

To give Filipinas equal opportunity in the public service, the Civil Service Commission plans to increase the number of women in senior and managerial positions from the current 31 per cent to 40 per cent by 1998.

A pending bill filed in both Houses of Congress seeks to allocate 30 per cent of appointment slots in government to women. The bill also provides for 30 per cent of the slots in political parties being reserved for women.

4. Resources

The National Commission deemed the allocation of 20 per cent of the national budget to social programs and services as a means of releasing resources for women's concerns. However, it remains to be seen whether this commitment made by government will boil down to new and additional resources for women.

Meanwhile, the General Appropriations Act of 1995 instructs all government departments, bureaux, offices and agencies to set a minimum of five per cent of their 1996 allocations for use in projects designed to address gender issues in accordance with the Women in Development and Nation Building Act.

So far, the only known source of funds for implementing the PFA is the President's contingency fund.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

At present, there are no direct efforts by the government to involve the public and the NGOs in the implementation of the PFA except through the Social Reform Council. In addition, NGOs like the Center for Legislative Development and Gender Watch have made their services available to concerned government agencies and local government units. (Gender Watch is the Philippine monitoring group of the Asia Pacific Watch Group.)

Further, the Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board (PBSB), which has evolved out of the pre-Beijing Philippine National Steering Committee, acts as the NGO conduit for technical working groups in the senate and lower House. It brings in NGO perspectives in the review of government structures and initiatives in implementing the PFA.

6. Linkages to Other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

So far, there are no distinct efforts along this line. The efforts made by the Cairo-Copenhagen-Beijing Interface Committee represent an attempt in this direction which have to be sustained and expanded in the post-Beijing phase.

Sources: The Cairo-Copenhagen-Beijing Interface Steering Committee (in association with the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement and contributions from WomanHealth; National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and the National Council of Women of the Philippines); the Center for Legislative Development; and the Secretariat of the Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board

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Poland

- Draft liberalization of anti-abortion law adopted
- Government formulating national plan of action
- PFA being translated into Polish
- No funds or formal structures for follow-up

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government has almost accomplished the translation of the Platform of Action into Polish. Women's NGOs are working with the government to improve the Polish version of this document.

The Polish Committee of NGOs - Beijing'95, established by twelve organizations at the end of 1994 to prepare the shadow report on women in Poland has continued its work after the conference. Its main activities after Beijing:

- two national conferences for women's NGOs on Beijing;
- meetings with various local communities to publicize the Beijing outcomes; and
- publication of important excerpts from the PFA, now in process.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The government is currently formulating a national plan of action. The government plenipotentiary for family and women's affairs is coordinating this project, and has invited

NGOs to participate. Work is, however, progressing slowly.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

On 9 July 1996, four parliamentary commissions adopted a draft liberalization of the anti-abortion law. The draft stipulates that abortion would be legal until the 12th week of pregnancy for a woman in difficult economic or personal circumstances. The draft proposes obligatory consultations for a woman, sex education in schools and some state subsidies for the pill.

The Polish parliament has received many letters of support from abroad although there is a lot of opposition to the draft at home, which makes the final outcome uncertain. It will not be voted before the autumn. The government made the following commitments in Beijing:

- fight women's unemployment;

- observe the principle of equal pay for equal work;
- provide education, training and equal access to managerial positions; and
- support women's business activities.

These commitments reflect NGO priorities only to some extent. They do not include legal guarantees for real equality between women and men (NGOs demand the enactment of an Equal Status Act) and for women's health, particularly reproductive health and rights.

4. Resources

So far, the government has made available no additional resources to undertake PFA initiatives and commitments.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government has invited NGOs to provide their inputs for the national plan of action. It has also invited conservative Catholic NGOs that oppose the PFA. Their participation neutralizes to some extent the impact of NGOs active in the Polish committee of NGOs.

The government has taken some formal steps to involve women's NGOs. However, the NGOs challenge will be to use the opportunity for a more significant impact.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

So far, there are no distinct efforts in this regard. Some integrated initiatives are likely mainly on the ICPD and the Beijing conference. Other international conferences and documents are not fully recognized or implemented.

Source: Federation for Women and Family Planning

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Spain

- Move to liberalize abortion law falls through for lack of ruling party support
- PFA translated into Spanish
- Wide dissemination of Platform highlights
- No specific structure for follow-up

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The former Socialist government had taken several steps to disseminate information on the conference between September 1995 and March 1996, when it lost the parliamentary elections.

The minister for social affairs and the director of the national Institute for Women (Instituto de la Mujer) made presentations on the Beijing conference to the European Union Council of Ministers in Labor and Social Affairs in Brussels, the Plenary of the European Union Parliament in Luxembourg, the Commission of Women's Rights in the Spanish Parliament, and to Spanish NGOs.

In November 1995, the government participated in a seminar entitled, "Women Propose," attended by 15 countries of the European Union, to study the most relevant aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action.

An exposition, titled "The World Marches on With Women," was organized in Madrid from March 6 -14. The objective was to show the changes in U.N. women's conferences from Mexico to Beijing. This was a travelling exhibition and was sought by local governments and corporations.

Under the new government headed by the Popular Party, there has not been much discussion of the Beijing PFA and little support for the department of social affairs, which has jurisdiction over the Institute for Women.

The Institute for Women, the governmental organization now attached to the ministry of labor and social affairs, printed and disseminated 5,000 copies of the Platform for Action and 8,000 copies of a leaflet titled, 'What Does the Fourth World Conference on Women Mean?.' The leaflet identified the following areas as being important for Spain:

- empowerment of women
- mainstreaming
- human rights for women and girls
- feminization of poverty
- importance of NGOs and feminist groups
- sharing family responsibilities
- youth

The government's national machinery is currently disseminating information and reprinting the leaflet.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The government has not appointed a specific organization to review and implement the PFA. The national machinery for women, the Institute for Women, is supposed to be the mechanism for implementing, monitoring and reporting on the PFA. Regional government structures for women are also mechanisms for implementing the Platform.

The Commission on Women's Rights in parliament asked the previous government to designate the Conference of Regional Machineries for Women as the body for the follow-up of the implementation of the PFA. However, there is no decision taken or meeting convened to review the implementation so far.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The Fourth European Union Equal Opportunities Programme (1996-2000) has identified the Beijing PFA as a framework and reference to implement policies and programmes for the next four years. The EU council of ministers of labor and social affairs have decided to hold a yearly review of the implementation of the Platform.

The director of the Institute for Women has announced that a new Spanish Equal Opportunity Plan will be drafted soon. Some autonomous and regional authorities for equal opportunities will also draft new equality plans.

Work is in progress on the Third Plan on Equality, to be introduced in September. However, NGOs and other women's organizations have not been involved in discussions to analyze needs and strategies. The specific commitments made by the previous government for the plan relate to investing in education of women and girls, integration of gender perspectives in policies and programs of cooperation for development, and more institutional and financial measures.

The government is working on programs, some of them in collaboration with the chamber of commerce, to help women integrate better in the work force, especially to ensure opportunity and security of employment in the business and corporate sectors.

4. Resources

Under the third national plan on scientific investigation and technology development, the government has allocated approximately (US)\$800,000 for the year 1996 for sectoral studies on women and gender issues. The amounts earmarked for this area for the next three years are \$960,000, \$1.12 million, and \$1.6 million respectively.

There are no new or additional resources available for fresh initiatives. It remains to be seen how the cuts announced by the new government in the public sector will affect women's programs. Nevertheless, the budget for the implementation of the EU equal opportunities programme is also supposed to be the budget for the PFA.

Overall, budgeted funds for women's programmes have decreased.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

There is no new specific committee or initiative to involve NGOs in the implementation of the PFA at the national level. However, some regional governments (such as the Basque country and Cataluna) have taken some steps in this direction.

The government has financed two projects developed by the National Council of Women in Spain and the Spanish Association for Professional Media Women on the dissemination of information and follow-up of the Platform. I

6. Linkages to Other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government is supporting a working group charged with developing an optional protocol to CEDAW.

7. Additional Comments and Information

The autonomous parliament of Extremadura, which has a woman president from a political party of the left, has signed an agreement with the 8 March Foundation to hold the first congress of women in the autonomous region.

A recent move to liberalize the abortion law fell through for lack of parliamentary support. Several women's groups and NGOs have criticized the ruling party and its allies for their failure to back the opposition-sponsored bill presented in June, seeking to modify the present legislation to give women, instead of doctors, the right to decide on abortion.

Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Fundacion Asistencial Mujeres and 8 March Foundation

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Tonga

- National WID policy being formulated

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Government and NGO delegates to Beijing participated in intensive public awareness programmes to inform the public about the conference through the media, seminars and workshops. Government and the private sector strongly supported these dissemination efforts.

4. Resources

- Australian Aid is funding activities to strengthen post-Beijing NGO initiatives.

- The New Zealand government has launched a special mission to identify a Women in Development project for NGOs.
- UNIFEM is funding the development of a national WID policy through strengthening national machinery

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Through the Women and Development Centre, the government supports the national umbrella organization of women NGOs in its activities. It helps disseminate information to major and grass-roots level NGOs, seeks funding for their projects and assist when requested.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government of Tonga ratified the Child Rights Convention in September 1995.

Source: Women and Development Centre, Prime Minister's Office

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Turkey

- Interministerial council formed to follow up PFA implementation
- Government committed to removing reservations to CEDAW
- PFA translated into Turkish

1. Reporting to the Nation on the Fourth World Conference on Women

The general directorate on the status and problems of women, affiliated to the ministry of state, responsible for women's affairs and social services, initiated several campaigns to disseminate information on the conference. NGOs and universities also organized seminars, workshops, panels, forums and other innovative gatherings.

The Platform for Action has been translated into Turkish and will be disseminated throughout the country. A summarized version of the PFA will also be published.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

A key outcome of the consultative post-Beijing meetings was a proposal to establish an interministerial council. The council, comprised of high-level ministerial representatives, relevant government agencies and NGOs, will be empowered to introduce new mechanisms for implementation and follow-up activities. Unfortunately, the process toward activating this council has not progressed due to concerns with the general elections, held in December 1995.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has taken the following actions to implement the commitments announced in Beijing:

- Remove reservations to CEDAW.
- Extend compulsory primary education from five to eight years and increase the literacy level of women to 100 per cent by the year 2000; and
- Reduce infant and maternal mortality rates at least by half by the year 2000.

If a draft bill on the amendment of the civil code is enacted, a considerable portion of the reservations to CEDAW will be removed. The bill was submitted to Parliament by women parliamentarians who occupy only 13 seats of a total of 550 seats. Women parliamentarians have also formulated new strategies towards the goal of equality between women and men. They declared their intention to work collaboratively on women's issues in a non-partisan manner.

4. Resources

While some efforts have been made to mobilize available financial sources to realize PFA commitments, there are no new and additional resources so far due to a budget austerity program.

6. Linkages to other U.N. Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government fully supports the optional protocol to CEDAW. It is committed to integrating the follow-up to the women's conference with those to other U.N. conferences such as Copenhagen, Cairo, Vienna, Rio because each has important implications for women's empowerment.

Source: Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations

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Uganda

- Ministry of gender and community development sets up gender task force
- New constitution enshrines many rights required to realize gender equality

1. Reporting to the Nation on the Fourth World Conference on Women

The NGO monitoring committee, which evolved from the preparatory committee, was established immediately after the Beijing conference. Several national meetings have been organized since then.

Notable activities include:

- A post-Beijing NGO Forum held in November 1995
- An NGO monitoring committee meeting with the media in February 1996
- A workshop on working with women leaders in the post-Beijing period held in March 1996

A post-Beijing strategies workshop convened by the Regional-Focal Field Institution, the ministry of gender, and the umbrella organization for women's NGOs in Uganda.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The post-Beijing strategies workshop recommended the establishment of a national implementation, monitoring and evaluation machinery. The ministry of gender was given the task of steering this machinery but no progress has been made.

The regional focal institution has initiated a process of documenting progress so far made on implementation and monitoring of the Beijing and African Platforms in Uganda. An East African sub-regional post-Beijing conference was held in Kampala from July 29 to August 1, bringing government and NGO delegates from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi. The conference will shape the mechanism required to monitor implementation of the Beijing and African PFA.

3. Specific New Initiatives

The ministry of gender and community development has set up a gender task force to focus on gender equality and women's rights.

As a direct outcome of the Beijing process, the Council for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa, a regional body covering the whole of Africa, was formed in Dakar in 1994. The council was formed to address feminization of poverty and women's economic empowerment. It is unique in that for the first time in Uganda, it brings together professional women from banks, NGOs working in economics, the private sector, and ministries like finance and planning, trade etc. Women working with quasi-government bodies are also members. The council is targeting economic structures to enforce gender equality and equitable policies, programs and projects.

Women in Development Europe is working with the council to undertake a consultation process before the World Bank's annual conference in November 1996 where critical decisions will be made on the special program of assistance for Africa.

A review conducted by the National Council for Children identified information and research gaps on the situation of girl children in Uganda.

The government is organizing an African conference on the empowerment of women through functional literacy and the education of the girl-child in cooperation with the Organization for African Unity.

The new Constitution promulgated in 1995 enshrines many rights required to realize gender equality. However, many laws need to be updated such as those concerning inheritance rights, land ownership, marriage, divorce and domestic violence.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The NGO monitoring committee aims to raise public awareness about the women's conference and the government's commitments; promote and monitor implementation of the Africa and global PFAs; improve the capacity of women's organizations to implement programs and evaluate their impact; and provide a forum through which NGOs can put pressure on government and monitor their progress on implementing their commitments.

Sources: Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA) Uganda Chapter; UNICEF; National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda

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Ukraine

- Government launches two initiatives on family planning and child health
- Mechanism set up for NGO involvement in government programs
- No long-term national action plan
- No new funds for PFA implementation

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government supported NGO-sponsored conferences on the Beijing Platform that were held in Odessa (November 1995) and Kiev (December 1995; June 1996). It has helped disseminate conference documents to regional and non-governmental women's organizations. A number of articles have been published in newspapers, and two programmes based on documentary footage of the conference have been shown on Ukrainian television.

By signing the Platform for Action, the government has realized its great significance for women of the country. It is now becoming aware of the lack of women's participation and activity in the political sphere, and is planning revamp some of its key departments to increase women's influence in public life.

Currently, women account for only four per cent of members of legislative bodies.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

The government has created a committee for women's affairs, motherhood and childhood, headed by the President. It has also set up a section for health protection, motherhood and childhood in the cabinet. It now plans to merge these organizations to form the ministry of women's affairs, family and demographic policy.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has launched two initiatives as part of its effort to implement the Beijing PFA.

The cabinet approved a program titled "Family Planning" in September 1995. Its main goals are to:

- create state structures to implement family planning programmes;
- educate medical and social workers in family issues;
- popularise contraceptive methods;
- prevent unwanted pregnancies and decrease dangerous pregnancies;
- educate the public on safe methods of family planning, equitable relations in the household and healthy upbringing of children.

In January 1996, the President approved another initiative titled "Children of Ukraine." The government allotted a sum of \$4.6 million for its implementation, a sum that is woefully short of what is required. The programme seeks to

- ensure a child's legal and social protection;
- reduce infant mortality and morbidity through modern medical care;
- reduce child malnutrition;
- fight child crime, drug addiction, alcoholism and smoking;
- create medical institutions and consulting services for pregnant women and children;
- increase financial subsidies for families with children, especially invalid children.

The cabinet has instructed key institutions and non-governmental organizations to elaborate upon the conception of its program titled "Woman" by January 11, 1997.

The Ukrainian government made no specific commitments in Beijing.

4. Resources

The government has made no new or additional resources and funding available to undertake PFA initiatives.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The government has created a mechanism called the Constantly Acting Conference, with representatives of NGOs, which meets four times a year. NGOs thus have the opportunity to evaluate government programs, network with one another and exchange information and strategies.

The government has not yet formulated a long-term national action plan.

6. Linkages to other United Nations Conference Agreements and Conventions

The government is supporting NGO initiatives to draft laws on violence in the family and on child rights. It has not drafted these laws at the government level and has so far expressed its inability to provide financial assistance to the specialists engaged by NGOs for the purpose.

There has so far been no effort on the part of the government to link the PFA with other U.N. conference agreements or agendas, such as Habitat II, CEDAW or the Child Rights Convention.

Source: MAMA '86

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The United Kingdom

- Government to construct satellite accounts to measure unwaged work
- Resources made available centrally for PFA follow-up

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The Parliamentary under-secretary of state for the department of education and employment reported to parliamentary committees about the conference and supplied copies of the Platform for Action; she also wrote to ministerial colleagues about implementation plans and asked them

to review policy in light of the Platform. The government has held regular meetings with women's and development NGOs.

In November 1995, the department produced a delegation report on the conference preparatory process, negotiations in Beijing, the NGO forum, and implementation which included a summary of the PFA. Both the report and the PFA have been distributed to individuals upon request and free of charge. Copies were placed in the library of the House of Commons and distributed to county libraries. The delegation report is available on the Internet and its details were advertised in departmental promotional literature issued to schools in England. Schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland have also received information about the world conference and the PFA.

More informally, both ministers and officials cover the PFA and its impact on the lives of all women in appropriate speeches.

2. Structure for Follow-up

A public consultation exercise was conducted to establish priorities for implementing the PFA. The department of education's sex and race equality division, which is responsible for coordinating government policy on matters of concern to women, issued a newsletter to NGOs and others giving full details of the consultation exercise and other elements of the implementation plan. Apart from the division's specific responsibility on the U.K.'s implementation of the PFA, the foreign and commonwealth office has overall responsibility for all U.N. matters including institutional and structural issues.

Around 120 consultation exercise replies were received by the deadline of February 1, many of them from umbrella organizations summarizing the views of several NGOs. The government announced the results of the exercise at a meeting with NGOs in mid-April and subsequently published a report outlining a review mechanism including annual progress reports and meetings with NGOs. Underpinning this process, division officials host regular bilateral, interdepartmental meetings to review policy in the context of the PFA.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The report of the U.K. delegation commits to implementing the PFA in the U.K. along with the U.N. European Commission for Europe and to reviewing the Overseas Development Administration's gender equality strategy.

The consultation exercise reviewed government commitments in Beijing and set out several further commitments for immediate government action. These include:

- the setting up of a gender statistics user group with the support of the office for national statistics upon demand for such a group.
- the publication by the department for education and employment of a short summary of key facts and statistics on women and girls in education and employment.

- the establishment of an interdepartmental group by the office for national statistics to take forward the government's commitment to the construction of satellite accounts to measure unwaged work. The group will foster their development, stimulate policy interest and ensure policy awareness by compilers.
- a commitment by government to explore options to promote women's and men's independence starting with an extensive package of work incentives aimed at helping people back into work
- government support for a sexual offences (conspiracy and incitement) bill, the purpose of which is to extend the jurisdiction of U.K. courts over conspiracies and incitement to commit sexual offences against a child abroad.

4. Resources

A full assessment of resources would require extensive research across all government departments. For example, apart from the national commitment to increase the out-of-school child-care grant targets announced in Beijing, there has been an additional (pounds)12.5 million extension to the scheme to further develop provision over the next three years. Resources have also been made available centrally to coordinate and monitor follow-up to the conference.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

The sex and race equality division held a debriefing meeting for NGOs in London; a parallel meeting was organized by the Scottish office in Edinburgh for Scottish NGOs. Another meeting for NGOs on April 17, 1996 in London and a similar session on April 29 in Scotland reported back the consultation exercise outcome.

The consultation exercise was designed to elicit NGOs' views on implementation. In addition, the minister asked for proposals on how NGOs could be involved in implementation and the result is the review mechanism described above. Both government and NGOs were pleased about the co-operation and good working relations built in Beijing, and both are keen to develop this further. At both ministerial and official levels, the department for education and employment has asked other government departments to foster closer and more focused links with relevant NGOs. To support this, the sex and race equality division has compiled a contact list for NGOs and others showing one named official dealing with sex equality in each government department. The contact will be aware of what their department has done and is doing to implement the PFA.

6. Linkages with other U.N. Conferences and Conventions

The U.K. government takes an holistic approach in the follow-up of international conferences. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has lead responsibility but works very closely with experts from home departments in the relevant field.

The sex and race equality division is responsible for coordinating the follow-up to the Beijing conference and for CEDAW in the U.K. It holds bilateral meetings with government departments responsible for coordinating follow-up to the Rio, Cairo and Copenhagen summits.

The Overseas Development Administration's social development division was active in ensuring that the U.K. delegation to Habitat II took full account of the PFA in negotiations about the text adopted in Istanbul. The division will do the same in preparing for the World Food Summit.

Sources: International Wages for Housework Campaign (IWHC); International Women Count Network (IWCN) and the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

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United States of America

- \$1.6 billion Violence Against Women Act approved
- System-wide mainstreaming in all federal agencies
- National action agenda and satellite conference September 28, 1996
- Support for working women, minimum wage increased, health insurance coverage expanded
- New unit on international child labor exploitation and trafficking of children for prostitution
- Welfare for poorest families with children, especially non-citizens, rolled back

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Members of the U.S. delegation to the Fourth World Conference and of the President's Interagency Council on Women traveled throughout the country delivering speeches, participating in panels, attending conferences -- all designed by local groups or coalitions to "report back" on Beijing and develop strategies for implementation and follow-up activity. These events are on-going. The council holds open public meetings monthly in Washington to provide an update on implementation and follow-up activities at the federal level and to ensure an ongoing dialogue with NGOs about their concerns and recommendations.

Publications disseminated include: "Report to the President from the United States delegation to the Fourth World Conference on women," "update reports" on the U.S. commitments made at Beijing and the May 1996 Status report on implementation. These documents and materials relating to the Platform for Action are available on the Internet both on the council's page and on the White House server.

2. Structure for World Conference on Women

The President established the Interagency Council on Women as a follow-up to the Beijing conference. The Council, chaired by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and

Honorary Chair First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, consists of high-level representatives from each federal agency working to identify initiatives in their agencies to implement the Beijing document.

On September 28, 1996, the council will sponsor a national conference via satellite when Americans will join together to report on progress made since the women's conference and look ahead to develop a national action agenda.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

Specific commitments were made at Beijing and others have been added since. The commitments include:

- establishing the President's Interagency Council on Women;
- implementing the Working Women Count Honor Roll, a grassroots campaign to improve conditions for women in the workplace;
- increasing women's economic security through new steps to recognize leaders in the micro-lending field and ensure funding by Federal agencies to the micro-lending area and by securing economic self-sufficiency for women through entrepreneurship;
- launching a six-year, \$1.6 billion initiative to fight violence against women, including domestic violence and sexual assault, in accordance with the Crime Bill passed in 1994;
- improving women's health by taking action on a range of health problems of concern to women throughout their life cycle, recognizing the additional problems faced by women of low-income and from ethnic and racial minorities;
- taking a number of actions to remove educational barriers facing girls and women, including girls and women with disabilities, those who are low-income, and those from ethnic and racial minorities;
- pressing for US ratification of CEDAW and
- launching new initiatives on international development including one to increase women's political participation and another to promote knowledge about women's legal rights.

All of these commitments respond to high priority areas of the NGO community. The President's Council published a report in May 1996 that updated existing commitments and announced new initiatives for implementation being taken by government. The following is a synopsis, and where possible, an update of the report:

Working Women: In response to the Department of Labor Women's Bureau's 1994 "Working Women Count" survey, the Women's Bureau created the Working Women Count Honor Roll which has generated over 1300 pledges. The Honor Roll encourages employers and other

organizations to improve the areas of major concern for women, such as pay and benefits, helping employees balance work and family, and improving opportunity through advancement, training and anti-discrimination programs.

Discrimination on the Job: The Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs will develop a new reporting method to identify pay differentials between men and women who are within the same salary category. The basis of any pay discrepancies will be examined, and appropriate corrective remedies will be sought.

Violence on the Job: To address the alarming percentage of homicides as the leading cause of death on the job for U.S. women, with the highest number in the health care and social services sector, the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration developed guidelines for preventing workplace violence for health care and social service workers. The guidelines offer both policy recommendations and practical ideas employers can use to deter violence in the workplace without jeopardizing compassionate care for clients and patients.

Unwaged Work: The Departments of Labor and Commerce have begun consultations about constructing reliable estimates of the amount and value of unwaged work. The Departments are determining the degree to which information used by statistical agencies in other countries can be applied to the U.S. estimates and how to best use U.S. expertise on time use studies.

Women and Economic Security: The Department of Treasury recently established the Presidential Awards program to honor outstanding practitioners in the microenterprise field. Awards will be made to different types of program, reflecting the broad diversity of the field of microenterprise development, and best practices learned from the winning programs will be disseminated in the field.

Violence Against Women: The Violence Against Women Office at the Department of Justice is leading a comprehensive effort to fight domestic and other forms of violence by combining tough federal laws with state and localities assistance in law enforcement, victim assistance, prosecutions and crime prevention. Recent initiatives include:

- the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a nationwide, 24 hour hotline to provide immediate crisis intervention assistance to those in need. 1-800-799-SAFE; and
- S.T.O.P. Grants (Services, Training, Officers and Prosecution) to states that meet the criteria.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: The ratification of this women's human rights treaty is the Administration's top priority among human rights treaties presently awaiting advice and consent by the U.S. Senate.

Health: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has made improving women's health a top priority by establishing women's health coordinators in each of their agencies and regional offices, creating the first deputy assistant secretary for women's health position and combining its commitments with financial strength. Several initiatives include:

- Implementation of a National Action Plan on Breast Cancer;
- Continued commitment to increasing research on women's health issues and the requirement that women be included in clinical research trials;
- Public policy agenda on HIV/AIDS specific to women, adolescents, and children; and
- Initiation of the largest prevention study ever undertaken in the U.S. on the causes of death and disability in postmenopausal women.

Education: The Department of Education is moving to remove barriers facing girls and women of different backgrounds - including girls and women with disabilities, those of low income and those from ethnic and racial minorities. Initiatives include increasing leadership development and family involvement in education.

Housing and Urban Development: The National Partners in Homeownership initiative will increase the number of women homeowners in America. HUD is also planning a series of community meetings at public or assisted housing sites for dialogue about housing as a women's issue.

Transportation: The Department of Transportation activities include examining the design of air bags and how they place elderly women at risk, a highway engineer training program, and in June of 1996, a Second National Moving Kids Safely Conference.

Environment: The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) commitments include addressing women's susceptibilities and exposure to environmental pollution, such as the Long Island Breast Cancer Study; the Toxins Release Inventory which tracks estimated chemical releases into the environment including chemicals with reproductive and developmental effects; and working with the Girl Scouts of America to promote environmental stewardship.

White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach: The Women's Office hosts "At the Table" which is a series of roundtable discussions across the country between women and Administration officials.

Communications: The United States Information Agency has created an international electronic bulletin board on worldwide follow-up activities to the women's conference. USIA is also conducting an agency-wide survey assessing the integration of women and their status in all programs. This internet address is <http://women.usia.gov/usia/>.

Foreign Policy and Foreign Affairs: The U.S. Department of State efforts include development by the African Bureau of a model to intensify programs and mission efforts to enhance the roles and status of women in Africa; and human rights reporting now examines the extent to which women are active participants in government and economic growth, and integrates women throughout the human rights reports.

U.S. Mission to the U.N. efforts include: Ambassador Madeleine Albright and U.S. Mission representatives continue to consult with American NGOs in matters affecting women, ranging

from implementation of the Bosnia peace agreement to resolutions regarding human rights in countries around the world. The U.S. strongly supports the Secretary-General's goal of gender equity by the year 2000 for the U.N. secretariat.

Trafficking of Children for Prostitution: The Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) established a special unit on international child labor exploitation and has continued its efforts to broaden the international dialogue on forced child prostitution problem. The department supports programs initiated by the International Labour Organization. The Department of Justice, State, Defense, Labor, as well as the President's Interagency Council on Women will be represented on the U.S. delegation to the August, 1996 World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

International Development: The Agency for International Development has several major initiatives and is adopting a Gender Plan of Action to improve the lives of women and girls around the world. New initiatives and projects represent the Agency's efforts to strengthen its commitment to mainstream women into activities. Some activities include:

- modifying the agency's technical framework under each strategic objective to reflect the key role of women in development;
- the Women's Legal Rights Initiative to help women develop an understanding of the legal system and empower women to understand the methods in which law inhibits or promotes their participation in social and economic life;
- increasing girls' primary school completion in twelve countries; and
- focusing on providing credit, technical assistance and other financial services to women's microenterprise development.

Defense: The Department of Defense has completed a report, titled "Women in Defense - DOD Leading the Way," which outlines its programs and initiatives consistent with the objectives of the Women's Conference . Two recent initiatives include Model Communities which is a preventive installation base effort to address the reported increase of youth violence, and the New Parent Support Program which offers basic support services to all new parents who request it. The department also completed a Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Report, as well as a Spousal Abuse study.

4. Resources

The United States is undertaking its implementation and follow-up activities within existing resources.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

See answer to #1 above. In addition, the Interagency Council maintains contact with many individuals and NGOs who developed a working relationship with the government in preparation for Beijing. These groups, plus new individuals and organizations, frequently are in contact with

the Interagency Council and have begun, through the council, to establish contacts with relevant agencies and staff regarding specific areas of implementation of particular concern to them. Also, on a more informal basis, the council, because of its wide contact with NGOs across the country is able to sometimes connect groups with similar interests or strategies who would otherwise not know of each other's efforts.

The council is working with volunteer coordinators in all 50 States who are planning community conferences on September 28 and to participate in the national conference via satellite. On this day Americans will join together in community conferences across the country to report on progress since the Women's Conference, share what's working in communities and look ahead to develop a national action agenda to improve the lives of American women and their families. NGOs which fully support the Beijing Platform for Action have begun to organize a national coordinating mechanism on their own initiative to interface with the Interagency Council.

6. Linkages to other United Nations Conference Agreements and Conventions

Relevant government personnel and agencies, especially within the State Department, make an ongoing effort to coordinate follow-up activities, to share information, and to, where appropriate, develop mutually reinforcing strategies and initiatives. This is done on an informal basis, but also through *ad hoc* intragovernmental task forces. For example, a government wide task force is currently focusing on the environment with particular attention to women and both Rio and the Fourth World Conferences.

An ongoing relationship is maintained with the U.S. Representative to the U.N. Human Rights Commission and any activity involving issues, policies and initiatives is closely coordinated. See question 3 for the linkage to the Social Summit commitment on girls' education. Beijing Conference language was reaffirmed at the U.N. Habitat II conference in Istanbul in June 1996.

Source: The President's Interagency Council on Women

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Venezuela

- Women's commission launches initiatives in priority areas of PFA
- No national plan of action

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

The government national council for women held a press conference and made presentations on two television programs on returning from Beijing.

Reports were distributed to ministers and governors.

The bicameral commission for women's rights televised programs in October to inform the public of the Beijing Platform. The commission also organized regional forums and workshops attended by approximately 700 women in six states. The forums precipitated a series of initiatives in four priority areas of the PFA: education, poverty, women and power, and violence against women and family. Both government organizations and NGOs were involved in these initiatives.

2. Structure for Follow-up

The national council has very little political power or resources.

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has not yet formulated a national plan to follow up on its commitments in Beijing in the areas of education, poverty, health, violence, and access to power. The commitments leave out some key NGO priorities such as sexual and reproductive rights and attacking the root causes of poverty.

4. Resources

There is no provision for additional resources.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

A commission for assessment was formed in the national bicameral commission for women in the Congress composed of the Centre for Social Investigation, Formation and Women's Studies, the Centre for Women Studies of the Central University of Venezuela, and the coordinator for women's NGOs. The aim of this group is to plan more effective strategies of intervention.

Since 1985, women's NGOs have participated in committees to assess national mechanisms and there is a representative of women's NGOs on the board of directors of the national council. Several women's NGOs and research organizations are now reviewing proposals for laws regarding violence against women and the family in conjunction with the assessment of the bureau of investigation and the juridical bureau of assessment of the Congress.

Source: Centre for Social Investigation, Formation and Women's Studies (CISFEM)

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Zambia

- National women's lobby group to campaign for greater women's participation in elections this year

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

Report-back sessions were held on the national television. These sessions were very well received and have generated a lot of interest.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

A national women's lobby group is working to ensure that more women participate in the local government, parliamentary and presidential elections this year in an effort to implement the Beijing conference agreements around increasing women in local and national decision-making positions. The non-partisan group has issued a declaration of peace in Africa which condemns the perpetration of violence and any threats to peace, that also calls for the inclusion of women in peace negotiations led by the Organization for African Unity.

Source: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations; AfricaNews

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Zimbabwe

1. Reporting to the Nation on the World Conference on Women

In early December, the women's machinery called a series of meetings of the National Preparatory Committee, which includes several NGOs, to share the Beijing experience. It highlighted political participation, the girl child and economic empowerment as its priorities from the PFA.

The theme of International Women's Day in March 1996 was women and political participation. The President in his keynote address made an undertaking to include more women in decision-making. He also deplored violence against women as a violation of women's human rights.

2. Structure for Follow-Up

In its December meetings, the national machinery proposed that each line ministry should appoint a gender focal point as a means to overcome the constraints faced by the women's department to impact on other ministries. Some ministries have since set up these focal points.¹

3. Specific New Initiatives and Commitments

The government has enunciated a Zimbabwe Vision 2020, as part of which it is holding country-wide consultations in formulating a national development vision to the year 2020. It has scheduled women's consultations to shape the vision although it remains to be seen how effectivel the process will take on board the Beijing, Vienna and other U.N. conference commitments.

A poverty forum has been set up under the auspices of the Institute of Development Studies. The objective is to carry out poverty assessment studies (including sex-disaggregated data) in order to influence government policy.

4. Resources

The national budget presented in July has increased the health and education allocation although there is no policy pronouncement that this is designed to cater to women's health concerns or the education of the girl child.

The ministry with jurisdiction over the national machinery is still poorly funded.

AusAid and to a lesser extent UNDP have indicated some assistance may be forthcoming for post-Beijing activities.

5. Involvement of Women and NGOs

Many women's NGOs are part of the poverty forum.

Women's rights organizations successfully challenged a government proposal in December to amend the constitution, the net effect of which was to curtail the right of citizen women to bring their foreign spouses into the country (whereas men can bring in foreign wives). The proposal has since been shelved and discussions are ongoing regarding other sections of the Constitution that are under review.

The WILDAF network has submitted proposals to the government to pass a specific law on domestic violence. It expects to have a second draft ready by the end of the year for discussion with the ministry of justice, legal and parliamentary affairs.

A new network of NGOs has been engaged in dialogue with the government and parliament on ways in which to address the serious implications for women of the virtual collapse of the public health system following the introduction of structural adjustment programs.

There has been a hiatus within the NGO community after Beijing due to the near collapse of the National Association of NGOs, the umbrella body under which NGOs organized for the conference. NANGO is experiencing several problems of lack of resources and donor support. It has therefore been left to individual NGOs and networks to do the best they can.

SOURCE: Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)

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