



**INVOLVEMENT
OF WOMEN
CO-OPERATORS
IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THEIR
COUNTRIES**

**Sofia
1985**

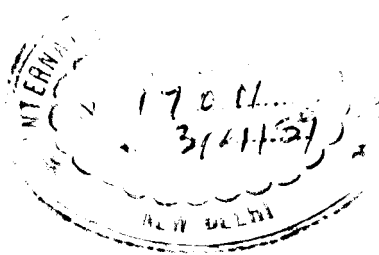
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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE - WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE UNION - PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

JOINT SEMINAR

INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN CO-OPERATORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THEIR COUNTRIES



Sofia, June 1985

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The increasing role played by women in the co-operative movement contributes directly to determining their place and importance in social and economic life, to mapping out the ways for joint and equal activity with men in the efforts for facilitating the working and living conditions of millions of women co-operative workers in the world and especially in the developing countries, to setting forth the programmes for improving the education of young women and girls.

These problems were the central theme in the international seminar, held jointly with the ICA Women's Committee in Sofia, at the end of June, 1985 on the initiative of the Central Co-operative Union with the participation of representatives of co-operative organizations from 34 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The International Labour Organization /ILO/ at the UN and the Non-governmental Committee for the promotion of aid to co-operatives /COPAC/ showed interest in the seminar and sent their representatives.

Four reports were submitted for the attention of the participants that served as the points for discussions and exchange of co-operative experience.

In over two days 55 delegates from 34 countries discussed clearly, frankly and openly the current problems facing the world co-operative women's movement, looking for ways to overcome the backwardness, misery and famine in many Third World countries. All the participants were unanimous in their statements that the struggle for full equality of women is an inseparable part in the struggle for preservation of peace on the planet. The envoys of co-operative organizations from

the four continents parted with the firm resolution to fight for solving the problems standing before mankind.

A declaration in this spirit was adopted at the seminar.

This booklet contents the welcoming speeches, reports, the declaration and list of participants in the seminar.

WELCOMING MESSAGE

BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL COOPERATIVE UNION OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA, IVAN PRUMOV, TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN'S
COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE UNION AND THE PARTICI-
PANTS IN THE SEMINAR ENTITLED, "THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE WOMEN-
COOPERATORS IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE
COUNTRIES"

June, 1985

Esteemed Mrs. Yonsdotter

Dear Guests.

Dear Cooperators.

I am glad to have the honour, on behalf of the Executive
Committee of the Central Cooperative Union of the People's
Republic of Bulgaria, to greet you, the members of the Women's
Committee of the International Cooperative Union and participants
in the International Cooperative Seminar, who have come from all
parts of the world to socialist Bulgaria to familiarize yourselves
with our experience in the field of cooperative work, with the
contribution of the women-cooperators to the social-economic
development of Bulgaria, to feel the generosity of Bulgarian
hospitality. I welcome you on Bulgarian soil and wish you fruit-
ful work with all my heart.

At the session of the Committee, you will discuss questions which are important to all of you, connected with the present activity and the future programme of the Women's Committee. you will review and report on your contribution to the implementation of the Programme of the United Nations Decade of Women, you will discuss your participation in the forthcoming Third World Conference of the United Nations about Women, which is to be held in July in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, and you will elect a new Executive Committee.

At the seminar, you will exchange information on the place and role of women-cooperators in the development of your respective countries, and will get acquainted with the contribution of Bulgarian women to the social-economic development of Bulgaria.

Women are not only one half of humanity - they are an ever more active force in the creation of material wealth and spiritual values. There is no sphere in life, where their labour, their efforts are not put in.

The care about people is the basic preoccupation of the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, it forms the purpose and content of its overall policy. True to this policy, our State regards the problems pertaining to the state of women as problems of our entire society. The care for women is an obligation and deed also of the individual social-economic organizations, like the Central Cooperative Union.

Today the Central Cooperative Union unites all co-

operative organizations in the country with a total membership of 2,3 million cooperators. Through the 28 district cooperative unions, it governs the activity of 4II consumers' cooperative societies, which are the basic commercial organizations in the villages and small towns. Through their broad network of shops and catering establishments, they realize 3I per cent of the nation's turnover and, through their activity of buying up agricultural produce from the public and private farms, they ensure valuable raw materials for the industry and goods for the home market and export. Our industrial activities, too, acquire an ever growing importance. The cooperative industries meet the needs of more than one half of the population in this country of bread, and produce about 60 per cent of the confectionery and 94 per cent of the soft drinks in this country. The Central Cooperative Union buys up, processes and packs for the home market and for export wild and cultivated medicine plants, mushrooms, honey and bee products. Through its foreign trade organization of "Bulgarcoop", the Central Cooperative Union maintains business contacts with about 250 foreign firms of 50 countries, the contacts deepening more and more on the basis of effectiveness and mutual benefit. The Central Cooperative Union makes incessant efforts for the social development of the working collectives in the cooperative organizations, for the improvement of the labour protection, health protection and rest activities, for the development of amateur art activities, sports and tourism in the cooperative system. We have our own organization of home and international tourism, "Cooptourist", through which foreign tourists can get services in all Black Sea, mountain and balneological

resorts in the country. The cooperative organizations manage two national centres for the enhancement of the personnel's qualification, 13 district professional-training centres, 9 culture centres with 15 000 amateur performers, 419 commissions and councils of mass physical culture and sports, 5 sports and hikers' clubs with a membership of 55 000 cooperators who actively participate in sports. In 10 rest homes more than 10 500 cooperators repose annually. In its higher educational establishment, the Central Cooperative Union trains agricultural and cooperative cadres from the newly-liberated countries; there, up to this moment, about 1 200 leading cadres have been prepared from the cooperative movements of 34 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Since 1903, The Central Cooperative Union is a member of the International Cooperative Union and it constantly expands and activates its international work for the consolidation of the international cooperative solidarity.

These are in short the data about the basic activities of the Central Cooperative Union, the responsible economic and social task of which is to enhance the living standard of the cooperators.

This is the place to note that the Central Cooperative Union, as a socio-economic organization, has a considerable part in pointing out the role and importance of the woman-cooperator for the social-economic development of this country, in expanding her participation and authority in all spheres of economy and social management, and it has an essential contribution to the alleviation of her labour and to her harmonious and

all-round development.

Through her labour, knowledge and skill, through her devotion, care, warmth and dedication to the family, the Bulgarian cooperator has won a broad recognition, and enjoys great esteem and respect.

I would be very happy if this country's experience in the field of participation of women-cooperators in the development of Bulgaria would be useful to you, to your countries.

Allow me to assure you that the Executive Committee of the Central Cooperative Union will make all efforts needed to create good conditions for fruitful work. I am convinced that on the basis of our common experience and your active participation in the discussions, you will achieve the purpose of this seminar - to emphasize the contribution of women-cooperators in the development of their own countries, your constant effort to develop links of friendship among the women-cooperators of the whole world, your genuine desire to strengthen the international solidarity and deepen the cooperation among yourselves in the conditions of durable peace and social justice.

I wish you success, active and fruitful participation.

Thank you for your attention.

June, 1985.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR OF WOMEN-COOPERATORS

JUNE 1985, SOFIA

MESSAGE OF MRS. ULLA JONSDOTTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE WOMEN'S
COMMITTEE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE

Dear Mr. Prumov,

Dear guests,

Dear women - members of the Women's Committee,

Dear friends, sisters and collaborators!

This is a historical meeting. The Women's Committee began its work 20 years ago. Today this is the biggest meeting we have ever organized. This is of course due to the generosity of the Central Co-operative Union of Bulgaria, giving us the opportunity to invite about 30 women from Africa, South East Asia and Latin America. And they all came here to this meeting. Many of you who have come here for the first time are ~~also here~~ for the first time as members of the Women's Committee. I said it is a historical meeting because it is such a big meeting. But there are also other historical events. It is the first meeting under the new Rules of the Women's Committee. It is also the re-constituted Women's Committee that would meet today. We are in the new Women's Committee 77 members. That creates the biggest committee within the International Co-operative Alliance. That means that we have become very strong. That is one of the things that we will discuss today how we will become even more stronger. And we are, of course, very happy to have our special guests here for the Seminar. And most of the time you will be able to sit with us today. We have some private matters like elections that will take place this

afternoon, so of course then we will leave it only for those who are members of the Women's Committee. Otherwise you should all feel like you are most welcome to our meeting. We have many important things to discuss today. We will also have in front of us the election of the new Executive Committee which is very important for our future work. When I entered this Committee fifteen years ago it was quite a small Committee with mostly representatives from Europe. Today we have 34 countries represented, out of which 13 come from newly-developed countries.

We are, I can assure you Mr. Prumov, most happy to be here in Bulgaria today. Of course we all know that Bulgaria, the Bulgarian co-operators are playing a very big role in the ICA. We know also, through our dear friends - Liudmila Alipieva and Hertzzy Pinkas and before them Valka Georgieva, how very active the women in Bulgaria are. So we feel very honoured and proud to be here in Bulgaria with you too.

I have got a little gift here - that is a little bell instead of a gavel. Usually when I am sitting as a chairman, I have a gavel, which is maybe a rude way to conduct a meeting. So now I got the little bell. I hope it will give us a nice atmosphere during the three days that we will work together. I will use the bell and when you hear the sound you will know that this is a sign that we want to work together, not only for us sitting here, but we have to remember that we are working for the many women at home in our organisations.

It is a very impressing fact to see when you look into the new Committee, at the background of the members, that many of you do represent women's organisations at home, either as presidents or secretaries, or as members of Executive Committees. And I think that is what we need for the

future. If we want to be strong in the co-operative movement, if we want to have a better representation then we need the backing up of our women's organisations at home. We also need to go home and tell the women about the activities in other countries, to give them the taste of how we can be more successful. So I must say that I am very proud of the new Committee. And I hope that you will now feel most welcome - all of you.

Before going into more practical work, I would like now to declare the meeting open and I do it with this nice little bell.

I would like to give the floor to Mr. Prumov who is the President of the Central Co-operative Union of Bulgaria. As I had the opportunity to tell him yesterday night, we really feel that he is one of us. He was always supporting the Women's Committee.

THANK YOU!

Welcome address by Mrs. ELENA LAGADINOVA
President of the Committee of the
Bulgarian Women's Movement

DEAR GUESTS,

DEAR FRIENDS,

I have come to your seminar with genuine pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Committee of the Movement of Bulgarian Women.

We highly appreciate the activities of the Committee of Women of the International Cooperative Union as well as the initiative of the International Cooperative Union and the Central Cooperative Union in Bulgaria to discuss the problems of the involvement of women cooperators in their countries' development. This is eloquent of the understanding of the important role which women cooperators from the whole world play to secure the feeding of their populations and for setting up better conditions of life. This also is eloquent of the importance which such a mass and authoritative organization with a nearly 100 years-old history as is the International Cooperative Union attaches to the need for studying the specific problems of women, finding ways and means for the betterment of their hard conditions of life and work under which women in many countries, especially those engaged in farming life.

It is an honour for us that the People's Republic of Bulgaria was selected to host this Seminar. We take this as a recognition of the contribution of the cooperative movement in our country which also has a nearly century-long history, being a member of the International Cooperative Union since 1903.

The cooperative idea has deep roots and great popularity in Bulgaria. Only 40 years ago, before socialist reorganization

commenced in this country, Bulgaria was a country of scattered farming, a country of small owners living in constant fear of the day to come. In the cooperative movement the poor peasant masses saw their sole support against misery and ruination, against their dependence of the large owners and banks, against natural disaster. The first cooperative farms, as well as a wide network of consumer cooperatives were formed as early as before World War II following the model of the Soviet Kolkhozes. In the struggle for the materialization of the cooperative idea, women paced shoulder to shoulder with men and were one of its most fervent supporters.

As a result of victory over fascism in the World War II with the price of millions of victims and the decisive contribution of the Soviet Army and the Soviet peoples, a people's democratic rule was established in Bulgaria and a reconstruction of the entire political and socio-economic system began in our country. In agriculture this reorganization was expressed by the formation of Labour Cooperative Farms. The broad peasant masses, including women, embraced the ideas of mass cooperation in farming as their sole road to salvation. This was also the first of the three main stages of the revolutionary reconstruction of farming in the country. Later, the present-day agro-industrial giants of incomparably greater opportunities for the introduction of mechanization and automation grew up as a result of the merger of the thousands of small farms, having principally new organization of labour, new and better conditions of life and work in the Bulgarian village. The cooperative movement made a vast contribution to the materialization of our objective of farming a socially homogenous society, for closing the span of incomes, of the living and

working conditions of the different social groups and of the people in towns and the countryside.

What did the Bulgarian woman, including the woman-cooperator received from socialism?

She received the guaranteed right to work, to equal opportunities for professional realization and promotion, to equal pay.

She received the right of equal access in education which enabled her to take higher places in professional and specialities which until recently were considered to be the vested interest for men. According to the latest statistics, 42.5 per cent of the agronomists, 4.6 per cent of the veterinary technicians and 52,2 per cent of economists are women.

Bulgarian cooperative farmer is entitled to the same social benefits as the women working in industry: maternity leave, single allowance for child birth and monthly allowances for children, free medical services, free education for her and her children, facilities for sending them to nurseries and kindergartens, to be supplied with food for the whole family from the public canteens and kitchens, paid annual leave, old-age pension and many others.

But the quantitative and qualitative changes in the country's development, the structural changes in the economy as a result of the accelerated introduction of technological progress, raise new and greater requirements to education and the qualification of the staff, to the establishment of more flexible and more efficient forms and training and re-training of the working people, including women. We are facing the problem of introduction light-type mechanization and automation of some processes and operations in production, for re-

ducing wherever possible the heavy and manual labour and achieve further levelling off of the conditions of labour in industry and agriculture. This, of course, is also related with many problems of professional orientation and the further improvement of the women's education and qualifications.

The development of new and the improvement of the new available technologies in farming and livestock breeding is the basic strategic line in the development of agriculture by 1990. It is done on the basis of the solution of a whole complex of problems in the field of genetics, selection, soil fertility regulation, irrigation, plant protection, complex mechanization, automation and electrification. In each of these fields we need people who are capable and knowledgeable. women-cooperative farmers are a vast reserve for our society to achieve the strategic objectives of its development.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I could not talk about equality of women and their part in development without drawing your attention to the problem of problems of today: the preservation of peace in the world. As neither development nor equality could be possible without peace.

In our difficult, conflict-forming 20th century, humanity is facing the alternative of peace or nuclear destruction. The lessons of World War II have been neglected by some political and public circles in the USA and West Europe making appeals for the revision of the post-war agreements, for new reshaping of the map of Europe. The US government declared practically the whole world for a sphere of their "vital interests".

We, women, and all the progressive forces are facing

the problem of saving humanity from the threat of nuclear holocaust with all of its severity. We think that it is vitally important to **discontinue** the arms race and start up steps to disarmament, observing the principle of equality and equal security. We expect that the US Government should offer a constructive attitude to the numerous peaceloving proposals and unilateral steps of the Soviet Union in order to achieve progress in the Geneva Talks, that it should respect in deeds and not only in words the already reached agreements on the SALT-2 strategic arms limitation. But so far President Reagan's Administration does not seem to show such readiness and is trying to gain military superiority over the Soviet Union, preparing for "star wars" and militarization of outer space.

The struggle of the democratic and progressive forces, and their unity of action acquire newer and still more significant dimensions under the conditions of intensified tension in international relations, of the imperialist forces' plans to make the fullest use of the latest achievements of the scientific and technological revelations for the ends of war. To this we are also called upon by the lofty objective pronounced 40 years ago on the foundation of the United Nations, and to this we are called upon by the oath which the progressive women gave in December 1945 when they laid the foundations of the International Federation of Democratic Women.

I hope that many of those present here we shall meet in July in the capital city of Kenya at the UN World Conference of Women devoted to the main topic of "Equality, Development, Peace". The theme of our Seminar is fully consonant to the problems to be discussed in Nairobi. I believe that we all, regardless of our national belonging, ideology and poli-

tical convictions shall raise jointly our voice to defend the most superior human good: to live in peace. This is our duty before the memory of all who died. This is our responsibility to the future.

I would like to wish you, once again, fruitful work of the Seminar and pleasant stay in our hospitable country.

Thank you for your attention!

C E N T R A L C O O P E R A T I V E U N I O N

S E M I N A R

"Involvement of Women Cooperators in the Development of Their Countries"

LYUDMILA ALIPIEVA

The Status of Women Cooperative Members in the
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA and Their Part
in the Country's Socio-Economic Development

Esteemed Guests,

Dear Ladies from the Cooperative Movement,

Ten years have gone by since the 30th session of the United Nations General Assembly, held at the end of 1975, the International Year of Women, proclaimed the period between 1976 and 1985 the Decade of Women and resolved that its motto of "Equality, Development, Peace" should pool together the efforts of governmental and non-governmental, of national and international organizations in promoting women's social progress all over the world.

In a month's time, women from various strata, representing different parts of the planet, will gather in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi to reaffirm the dedication, the belief and the will of millions of women to achieve human progress in a just and peaceful world.

The Third United Nations Conference on Women, which will take place in June at Nairobi, will review what has been achieved so far in the implementation of the Plan for Worldwide Action and the Programme for the Second Half of the Decade of Women. The Conference will also draw the balance line of women's contribution to society and of society's concern with their status.

Prior to September 9, 1944, Bulgaria was a country torn by acute social issues, one of which was the unequal, calamitous, literally

tragic plight of the women in the cooperatives. Those women were real martyrs, victims of injustice, discrimination and arbitrariness. From very early dawn they arose to knead the bread, to cook, to weave the cloth that would go into dressing their numerous offspring. Those women existed in the most primitive of conditions - in low and unhygienic mud-thatched cottages that had neither water nor electricity nor sewage. They raised their children in unbelievable difficulty, especially at times when their husbands would go far from home in search of a job. And while doing all this, women were sharing equally the men's burden in field work and in raising the live stock. They knew no rest and no holiday. Yet, even while overburdened with household chores, divested of opportunities to obtain education or even plain literacy, while being victims of religious and other prejudices, women received much lower pay than men for their backbreaking workday lasting between 16 and 18 hours. Many public areas and positions of service were off limits as far as women were concerned. Women played no role in public affairs.

The terrible conditions of existence, the illiteracy, the toil at home and in the fields, the undernourishment and the lack of sufficient medical assistance could not but result in a shorter lifespan and in a higher infant mortality rate. The average lifespan varied between 45 and 50 years, and 150 of every 1,000 newborn died in the first twelve months of their life.

The change in the status of the Bulgarian women in the cooperatives brought about by the socialist revolution of September 9, 1944, their participation at the various levels and phases of the country's socio-economic development, and the role they play at the current stage - the developed socialist society, provide a most eloquent illustration of how the women in the Bulgarian cooperative movement have progressed in social terms.

One of the first acts of legislation by the people's government, the Bill of Equal Rights of the Sexes, was adopted a mere 37 days

after the socialist revolution, on October 16, 1944. This equality was further embodied in the 1947 Constitution, and was reaffirmed with Article 35 of the 1971 Constitution. Along with the right to work and education, women obtained also equal political rights.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the legislation pertaining to cooperatives (the Cooperatives Act) and the statutes of all cooperatives guarantee to the women cooperative members total equality, including equal pay for equal work, the right to free education, to paid annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, and numerous other social acquisitions which help the women in the cooperatives combine their social and family functions.

Socialism elevated the women in the cooperatives to the ranks of the full-fledged architects of society in the most encompassing meaning of that word. For the first time ever in the Bulgarian state's thirteen-century long history, the social system had created an objective basis for the harmonious and all-round development of the women cooperative members.

In a letter to the delegates to the First Congress of the Bulgarian Women's Union, the leader of the socialist revolution in this country, Georgi Dimitrov, addressed in 1945 the following words to the women of Bulgaria: "Women are a tremendous force so long as they are organized, politically aware and active. Our entire experience teaches us that no major nationally useful deed would be possible without the participation of women. The Fatherland Front's victory over fascism brought equality to our women. An equality that has been fully deserved."

The key social issue of true male and female equality in all areas of social life was put forward for a comprehensive and rapid solution with a new emphasis in the years after 1956. The subsequent period was marked by a breakthrough in the overall approach to the status of women. Their active position as participants in the country's socio-economic progress was ultimately affirmed.

Addressing in 1968 the First National Conference of the Committee of Bulgarian Women, the leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party and head of state Todor Zhivkov pointed out: "The life of every woman in the household, the life of woman in society is the only true characteristic of the very household and the very society."

Four decades have passed since the victory of the socialist revolution. From a backward agrarian country, the People's Republic of Bulgaria transformed herself into a developed industrial-agrarian state. In the meantime, the Bulgarian women cooperative members became involved en masse in production and management and grew into an active and publicly recognized force in the development of our society. They have come to deserve enormous credit in the building of the developed socialist society, since progress and the contribution of women in socialist Bulgaria have become indivisible categories.

In the search for differentiated and comprehensive solution to the problems of the women cooperative members, a key part was played by a series of documents of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and especially by the March 6, 1973 Decision of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria "On Raising the Role of Women in the Building of the Developed Socialist Society". It amounted to an all-embracing and scientifically determined programme for enhancing the part played by women in social and political affairs and in management, for constantly improving the conditions in which they could combine more harmoniously their family-rearing functions with professional careers. In its objectives, that Decision outgrew the tasks set down before the world public's attention by the UN Decade of Women. In this way, too, Bulgaria has been pioneering the way for others. The Decision itself was published as a United Nations document in 1975, the International Year of Women, to illustrate how a small country is consistently solving the problems of its women through successful socialist construction.

The consistent policy on women as workers and mothers has been reflected in a number of Bulgarian Communist Party documents. Special emphasis is placed in them on the need of PRIORITY to the solution of the problems of women.

In this country, the participation of women cooperative members in socio-economic development is an objective and irreversible process, because society needs their effort, because professional self-realization is a key prerequisite of women's social equality, and because women can no longer imagine an existence without involvement in society's advance.

This participation of women cooperative members in Bulgaria's socio-economic development in the post-revolutionary years has been manifested most strikingly along several lines.

Our society boasts as one of its uppermost acquisitions the guaranteed right to work, the opportunities for women cooperative members to pursue a career of their own, to acquire training in a new profession or occupation. The building up of agriculture's material and technical facilities and its collectivization brought about conditions which made feasible women's en masse advent into socially-useful labour. In Bulgaria today, 43 per cent of all women of active age are either studying or working. Women account for 49 per cent of the labour force employed in the national economy.

The structural changes in that economy and the broad-scale application of the achievements of techno-scientific progress in all areas of production have had a positive effect on the structure of the female labour force. Many women cooperative members have moved from agriculture into other branches of the economy. While in 1960 agriculture employed half of all working women, its share has now dropped to a quarter. But at the same time, women have come to account for a greater share in agricultural work: currently they make up 70 per cent of the labour force

in horticulture and over 36 per cent in livestock breeding. In the past, it was only very rarely that one would come across female agronomists, zootechnicians, economists or veterinarians on the cooperative farms. Today, half of agriculture's agronomists, zootechnicians and economists are women. On the whole, women cooperative members account for 48.8 per cent of the total number of employees in agriculture, 53 per cent in consumer cooperatives, and 69 per cent in the producers' cooperatives. In cooperatives offering services like tailoring, hairdressing and toy manufacturers, the respective figure is 78 per cent; in retail trade and public catering, between 70 and 75 per cent; in bread production, 60 per cent, and in confectionery, 70 per cent. In other words, the building of a developed socialist society has resulted in qualitative changes in the nature of female labour, with a shift from agriculture to the services.

Parallel to the en masse advent of women cooperative members into the public sector, the years of people's rule brought also a solution to one of the crucial problems of social progress - the liquidation of illiteracy. The development of the productive forces and the rate of the techno-scientific progress have been setting forth more and higher requirements to the education, occupational training and skills of the women cooperative members. Nowadays, the Bulgarian women cooperative members have unrestricted access to free education at all levels - universities, colleges, secondary schools, and a wide choice of training and retraining courses. Girls and women make up half the body of students at all levels of education. They are also 48.7 per cent of economists, 41.3 per cent of agronomists, and 40.2 per cent of zootechnicians.

In view of the significant contribution made by women cooperative members to the implementation of the country's socio-economic policy aimed at meeting more fully the population's needs, the Central Cooperative Union is creating conditions for constant improvement of the training and the working conditions of women, through various forms of general and special training at courses,

by updating, mechanizing and automating the material and technical base, all with a view to freeing women from unproductive manual labour.

Women are also making a gradual and confident entry in government, an area that was unknown and out of reach to them in pre-revolutionary times. As early as 1945, 16 women were elected people's deputies to the First National Assembly, the country's parliament. Today, there are 87 women in the National Assembly, or 21.75 per cent of all people's deputies. Of these 87 female MPs, 37 per cent are cooperative members. The practice of electing women to the cooperatives' leading bodies is increasingly gaining ground: they now account for 28.8 per cent of those in management. There are a quite a large number of cooperatives with women presidents. Women occupy over 20 per cent of the seats in the ruling councils of the district cooperative unions and consumer cooperatives; over 30 per cent in the ruling councils of producer cooperatives on the average, and as high as 50 per cent in cooperatives employing mostly women, and 41.43 per cent in the management of the agro-industrial complexes. This is a convincing indicator of the headway which women cooperative members have been making with respect to acquisitions and their real contribution to the building up of socialist Bulgaria.

The pursuit of the strategic objectives laid down by our state policy - the intensification of production and all other activities, the improvement of efficiency and quality, is also a means towards the attainment of this country's uppermost socio-economic goal - to meet steadily the constantly growing material, cultural and social needs of the people. Within that framework, a special place is occupied by the social needs of mothers, children and the family. With respect to them, Bulgaria is implementing a policy the like of which even much wealthier countries have not dared to apply. We are justly proud today of the results which we have achieved in the past years not only in boosting women's role as creators and citizens, but also on the grown public care for them, their children and their families.

The social policy in the People's Republic of Bulgaria with respect to women and the recognition of motherhood as a social function has found expression in Article 37 of the Constitution, which proclaims that the exclusive protection of mothers and the cares for them are a constitutional duty of all state, economic and public organizations, and spells out some specific forms of these cares: pre- and post-natal leave at full pay; free obstetric and medical aid, and other social acquisitions. Compensation payments during pregnancy and childbirth amount to 100 per cent of the woman's pay packet. Besides the regular pre- and post-natal leave, women cooperative members are entitled to additional paid leave. Under a decree of the Bulgarian government, as of July 1, 1985, the paid leave can be extended until the newborn reaches the age of two; compensation payment for the period of extension will amount to the minimal monthly salary established for the country. Afterwards, a cooperative member may remain on unpaid leave until her child turns three. About 99.5 per cent of deliveries in this country take place at maternity wards under specialized medical control, and totally free of charge. Until July 1, 1984, mothers received full pay while staying at home with an ill child so long as that child was below the age of seven; this age limit has now been raised to nine. Also from that date, the age until which children are entitled to free pharmaceuticals for home and outpatient treatment was raised from three to six.

Other broad-ranging measures cover labour safety, social security and all-embracing social support for young mothers.

All cooperatives enforce strictly the Labour Code provisions with respect to transferring women from more hazardous jobs as soon as pregnancy is registered. On the average, 13 per cent of the women below the age of forty employed in agricultural cooperatives are pregnant in a single year. They are transferred to lighter jobs within a week from the registration of pregnancy.

The labour safety legislation contains scientifically determined norms and regimens of work and rest for 400 different jobs in

agriculture, with special differentiation for women.

Major improvements in working conditions will be made by the end of 1985, in accordance with the programme for labour safety and hygiene, which envisages all women to be employed in conditions which correspond to the respective sanitary and hygienic norms. Specialized research institutes update and append annually the list of occupations and workplaces where women may not be employed because of the weights, strain or intensity involved. Particularly hazardous jobs which might have an adverse effect on pregnancy or breast-feeding are listed under a separate heading. All women employed in the cooperatives receive working and protective clothing free of charge. The nurseries and kindergartens have sufficient capacity to meet the demand. The state budget allocates millions of levs annually for the building of child-care establishments. There are currently 208 nursery beds per 1,000 three-year-olds, twice as many as there were in 1979; 611 of every 1,000 three-to-six-year-olds attend full-day kindergartens. The bulk of nursery expenses and a large portion of kindergarten expenses are subsidized by the state.

Women employed in the cooperatives have also come to enjoy better conditions for rest and balneo-treatment, including subsidized stay at any of the 32 rest homes and prophylactoriums belonging to the cooperatives which have been built in the country's top resorts and which operate the year round.

Canteen food is available to all women cooperative members at half cost. During harvest time, all women in the agricultural cooperatives receive free food. Eighty per cent of the pregnant women receive free snacks. Take-away food is also provided as a way of easing their household chores. This leaves the women with more free time to devote to their children and to their own cultural needs.

The Cooperatives Retirement Act of January 1, 1967, introduced

mandatory social security for all cooperative members after 20 years of work, on completion of 55 years of age for women, and 60 for men. Retirement payments have been steadily boosted.

Budget subsidies aimed at encouraging a growth in the national birth rate, at ensuring a broad-ranging and efficient health service for mothers and children, at better labour safety and social security increase with each passing year.

The effort to consolidate family life and to improve relationships within the family is viewed in this country as being linked directly to a reduction in the volume of household work. Special attention is paid, therefore, to the improvement of retail trade and the services, to increasing the volume and improving the quality of consumer goods and services.

The women in the cooperatives have their own stake in the further development of all branches of their respective cooperative, since this reflects positively on their own prosperity.

The state's social policy aimed at easing women's work is highly instrumental to the solution of such a key problem as that of the women cooperative members' leisure time, and the creation of conditions conducive to their all-round and harmonious development.

The facts and figures cited so far point inarguably to the proper orientation of the state's overall policy on women cooperative members within our society. They serve to highlight the fact that the care for the individual is a basic concern to our state, its meaning and content; that the care for women, those in the cooperatives included, is a central problem to the state. Yet the care lavished on women is also an obligation and the work of the different public and economic organizations, and it should be noted at this point that as a public economic organization the Central Cooperative Union has done a great lot to promote

the role and the importance of women cooperative members in the country's socio-economic development, to boost their involvement and authority in all areas of the economy and government; it has also contributed significantly to the easing of women's work and to their harmonious and all round development.

The message of greetings from Bulgaria's State Council President Todor Zhivkov to the participants in the UN Conference within the framework of the Decade of Women, dated July 14, 1980, read in part:

"...True equality of men and women has already been achieved in the People's Republic of Bulgaria. The problems pertaining to women's growing role are solved comprehensively, through the efforts of the state and the entire society; useful initiatives are constantly undertaken and enriched with a view to providing all necessary conditions for the achievement of a harmonious combination of woman's social functions as a mother, a worker and a citizen, for her full-fledged realization as a personality of many-sided development..."

The United Nations proclaimed 1985 an International Year of Youth. Young people are our future and our hope. It is on their shoulders that the main responsibility will come to rest for the preservation of peace, for bringing our country's economy up to the level of the latest achievements in science and technology. We, as mothers, bear the responsibility for the nation's future, for our children. And we must spare no effort to bring up a worthy generation.

Nothing brings women more closely together than the common concern for the fate of their precious offspring, for the life of the future generations. That is why the preservation of peace is so precious to them. The motto of the UN Decade of Women is "Equality, Development, Peace". Each of these objectives, no matter how great by itself, attains its true dimension only as part of the triunity. Because women's equality is impossible without

social development which would guarantee women's own evolution, and both require peace and international security. There is not a single woman in socialist Bulgaria who has not raised her voice in support of the struggle for peace and disarmament, for fraternal cooperation and for social progress by all peoples of the world, against all forms of discrimination and oppression, of exploitation and human rights violation. As always in the past, today, when we are marking the 40th anniversary of the victory over Hitler's fascism and Japanese militarism, the Bulgarian women cooperative members add their angry protest to the indignation of the millions of women across the planet at the adventuristic course of US imperialism and its attempts to push the world into a destructive nuclear catastrophe. The Bulgarian women cooperative members have come up with numerous initiatives in defence of peace, and some of them have gained broad international repercussion.

It is through their involvement in the nation's effort, with their participation in the country's socio-economic progress, with their promotion of deeper and broader ties with the women's cooperative movements and organizations in the fraternal socialist countries, with their solidarity with the women's struggle for equality the world over, with their contribution to the development of the progressive international women's movement fighting for peace and social progress, with their initiatives aimed at consolidating the international cooperative movement and at enhancing the authority of the women within that movement, it is with all this that the women cooperative members in the People's Republic of Bulgaria trust to have contributed to the UN Decade of Women.

All said above leads to the inevitable conclusion that women cooperative members in the People's Republic of Bulgaria have attained positions which are excellent stepping stones towards future progress. Further serious effort is needed to tap fully the creative potential of the women in the cooperatives, to establish the material and social conditions which would allow women to combine still better the two main aspects of their mission - self-realizat-

ion in work and in public affairs with the responsibilities of raising and educating the coming generation. There is still a lot to be done with respect to women's careers, to their involvement in socially useful production, the distribution of household chores, and the further increase of women's leisure time.

Dynamic socio-economic development and the active influence of techno-scientific progress require from us, the women in the cooperative movement, selfless and inspired work, dedication and model discipline. To that development we, women, must respond with a fresh influx of energy, willpower and inspiration, so that we may build into that upward development our labour, our talent, our eternal striving for happier life.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF COOPERATIVES IN ITALY
AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY

Report by Costanza Fanelli
Women(s) Section of Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative
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SOFIA SEMINAR
19th-21th June 1985

Introduction

In Italy, as in many other countries, far-reaching processes of change are in progress which had determined a crisis of the pre-existing balance. New technology is bringing about changes in the traditional production methods and in the field of labour as well as in the pattern of consumption and of living. The unemployment problem is worsening daily, especially for youth, women and in the regions in the south of Italy: traditional sectors have entered a crisis at a time when new sectors and new skills have appeared which require new policies in the fields of training and labour. The welfare-state model as set up in a state of crisis and new ways are being sought in order to continue to meet a growing demand on services. Although it will be very difficult, Italy must emerge from this economic malaise with a new balance able to combine a greater degree of efficiency within and competitiveness on the world market, as well as economic development and social equality. All this must be seen against a background of growing disequilibrium between developed and under-developed countries which urgently requires all countries to develop new economic strategies which link the processes of economic restructuring in the industrialized countries with the necessity for a juster distribution of resources on a world scale.

The development of cooperatives

The Italian cooperative movement has always operated with the conviction that vitality, resources and innovative capacity exist in all countries and that these must be given forms of expression and allowed to participate in the economic process. The cooperative movement of the Lega in particular has deve-

developed in all sectors because it has presented itself as an instrument of organization and utilization both of human resources and of the economic resources aiming at changing the market and has inserted into the production process new or marginalized labour forces. The cooperatives which are members of the Lega combine greatly varying social and productive spheres: men and women workers, entrepreneurs in the cultural field, small and medium-sized agricultural and commercial businesses and consumers both of goods and services and householders. The cooperative movement is involved in the modernization of agriculture through producer participation and the setting up of an industrialized agricultural system. It seeks to protect the consumer by creating for him an effective presence in the marketing sector and it is working to alleviate the problems in the housing sector, especially in the large cities. As well, it has increased the degree of participation of workers, the middle classes, youth, women and skilled workers in the development of the industrial and service sectors. It is effectively taking part in the cultural growth of the country.

Women have, particularly in the last few years, been increasingly involved in the growth of the cooperative movement. In contrast to earlier years when women were present only in a few sectors (agriculture, handicrafts, consumption) their presence is growing today in all sectors. This presence in cooperatives does, of course, reflect in large part the tendency towards a greater involvement of women in the economic process in Italy, but it is also an expression of the growing pressures of the women's movement to enter the work force, to find new forms of work, to participate in the production

process and to generally raise their standing in society.

Women in the labour market

Since the middle of the 1970s, when the previously existant trend was reversed, there has been an increase in the female work force in Italy. Forecasts estimate that within a few years Italy will be nearing the levels of productive participation of women which are usual in the more advanced industrial economies. More women are demanding work and the number of women is increasing for whom there is now the choice of working and continuing to run a household as well.

Changes of this type in the attitudes of women have, in part, been aided by the various social and institutional changes which have gradually led to a greater degree of equality between men and women on the labour front. However, these changes in attitude have also been brought about by a number of structural changes in the productive process. The most significant change has been the growing importance of the tertiary sector within the productive process. In fact, the growth in female employment in the last ten years has mainly taken place in the services sector. As with the general trends in other industrialized countries, there has been a sharp drop in the proportion of women employed in agriculture (today 13.6 % of total female employment), a slight drop in the proportion of women in industry (26 %) and a strong increase in the services sector which today employs a good 60 % of the total female work force.

If, however, we examine these figures more closely we notice that the share of women in agriculture as expressed in terms of total employment is growing and not decreasing, in particular in seasonal and poorly qualified work, and the propor-

tion of women in services is mainly increasing in the public sector. A great female presence in the work force has thus done little to improve the quality of women's work which continues to remain concentrated in seasonal, temporary and poorly qualified employment. The proportion of professional women is low, even though there is a slight upward trend, with the proportion of women in management positions being extremely low. There are very few business women, however there are a great number of women employed as independent workers.

Women in cooperatives

This situation is also reflected in cooperatives. However, it is necessary to add immediately that there are also significant women's initiatives within the cooperative movement to correct a number of negative aspects by attempting to become involved in the organization of a number of areas of production of goods and services as well as by attempting to enter into new fields. In agriculture, even though female seasonal workers still predominate, there has been an increase in recent years in women members of cooperatives, in permanent jobs for women and in the number of specialized female workers. The manufacturing sector of cooperatives has represented for many women an alternative to unemployment due to retrenchment or due to the bankruptcy of their previous employer, or it has represented an alternative to work in their own homes.

Cooperatives have been developed in two sectors, in the cleaning and in the restoration sectors, where illegal and precarious types of work are widely spread in the private sector. This has thus ensured for many women greater security and a

new qualification and has contributed to an improvement in the social status and to a modernization of the sector. Within consumers' cooperatives women make up 20 % of the clerical employees and 80 % of the sales staff.

In recent years there has been a growing female presence in new sectors of cooperation linked to the expansion of the tertiary sector and characterized by higher qualifications and by a greater degree of entrepreneurschip: tourism, planning, research, public relations and interpreter services, the welfare and cultural sectors and a series of activities once handled as individual services (consulting services, publicity, the health sector, etc.). There are also cooperatives which have arisen as a direct result of the new political and cultural initiatives of the women's movement; women's newspapers and magazines, libraries, cultural centres of research and documentation and theatre groups. The degree of involvement of women in the cultural sector in general is high.

A distinctive experience of the cooperative movement in Italy has been the growth of numerous cooperatives with a high degree of female participation in the field of social services: this is not only a response to the problem of female unemployment but also a means of combatting the decreasing ability of public institutions to supply socially useful services, and of experimenting new and valid types of services in this field.

As well as a strong presence in the productive sphere, a significant female presence in consumer cooperatives must also be mentioned. Consumption and housing represent a large field of users' cooperation and women make up a great part of the membership. However, there is no corresponding percentage of women

at decision-making levels in cooperatives to match this presence. Women are often the driving force behind the social initiatives of consumer cooperatives, but they count either little or not at all in decision-making concerning the economic policy of the cooperatives. In view of this outline we can thus say that women represent a great resource for the development of the country, but they are still not being employed to full advantage as they should.

In taking up the new ideas expressed by women in recent years and by keeping in mind the limits which still hinder a greater and more decisive role for them in the development of cooperatives, we need to ask ourselves a number of questions:

In what way can the cooperative movement in future become an instrument for attaining a greater role for women in economic and social matters?

How can we increase the role of women in the functioning and in the decision-making process of the cooperative movement?

In what areas can women contribute towards the establishment of a more balanced development which makes full use of all resources both economic, social and cultural?

The development of the cooperative; the skills and entrepreneurship of women

The development of the cooperative appears today to be linked to its capacity to be innovative at the organizational and marketing levels, to increasingly acquire entrepreneurial skills, and to react to economic and technological challenges, maintaining at the same time its nature as a business which follows aims of a special social value. This requires a greater degree of involvement of members and workers in the deve-

lopment of the business, a higher level of skills and a continuing willingness to update, At the same time, it is necessary today for the cooperative movement - in contrast to the past - to branch out into new areas and to contribute in doing so to new experiences in business management in which workers should play a leading role.

All this appears today as a challenge for women who continue to be more restricted in their career choices by still widespread cultural stereotypes and by lasting family chores. But at the same time this experience (as well as numerous surveys carried out within the cooperative movement) tells us that the desire of the cooperative movement for renewal and for a response to the new problems coincides with the most widespread aspirations and needs of women which, however, have to be taken up and encouraged, such as by new and bold decisions concerning the instrument and means of participation. Women are greatly interested in finding in the cooperative a field where their own skills and capacities can be made better use of. There is a call to exert more influence within the management levels of the cooperatives. And finally, there is a greater tendency amongst women to promote and create cooperatives even in non-traditional areas.

The role of training

In view of this new situation, the cooperative movement should be more willing than other sectors to experiment and to further new forms of activity which, in turn, promote the skills of women and their participation in the management of cooperatives (plans and positive action). The new developments, which in terms of organizational structure and skills have been

brought about by technological innovations and by the large-scale introduction, even in the cooperative movement, of data processing, are a chance which should be exploited for providing women with new opportunities.

In effect, this involves the setting up of real plans of action by women with respect to the development of individual enterprises or groups of enterprises. The role of training, whether in skills or in the cooperative, is obviously of great importance, both for supplying specific skills or for increasing the motivation which women feel for advancement, for new career choices or for greater responsibility at the management level. The experience which the cooperative movement has accumulated in the field of training (which was a factor of fundamental importance in the development of the human resources in the cooperative movement) should be dealt with in a chapter all its own: "training for equality" means giving women cognitive instruments, as well as skills and management experience but it also means creating a new orientation for everyone, which is a necessary condition for changing the existant status quo of the economic structure.

This task cannot be carried out in isolation from the cooperative concept: it is the system of training as a whole, from school to training for and on the job which should create the basic conditions for a more widespread philosophy of equality. But it is also true that a greater interest expressed by the cooperative movement in producing innovations in jobs for women and in the professional training of young people could encourage new initiatives for collaboration between schools and the cooperative movement. The offer made by some cooperatives to provide training schemes and work designed

to provide women with new productive skills, together with orientation schemes for girls in schools, would represent a form of positive action to help qualify women for the labour market and it would help to develop new links between cooperatives and society.

Women and participation

Very often, the main measure used to ascertain whether women are playing a significant role is to count the number of women seated on the boards of management of cooperatives. If this measure alone is used, one notices that the numbers of women are still low within the cooperative organizations, even though there are some signs of improvement. In reality, besides taking up such positions in order that there are more women in administrative councils and as heads of cooperatives and see whether participation in the decision-making process is being encouraged amongst men and women. If the democratic and participatory forms in the cooperative organization are merely formal, and are not supported by a willingness to involve members actively, then it is clear that women will be the first to be excluded, even by other mechanisms in the decision-making process.

What can be done to encourage participation, particularly on the part of women? How is it possible for instance, to spread information of what is to be discussed and decided? How can we create amongst women a tradition of management skills which, in the case of women members working in cooperatives, could enrich their productive and job role and which in the case of women members of consumer cooperatives could contribute towards broadening their sphere of influence in decision-making

concerning social and economic matters (those problems linked to the home, to social services, to cultural matters, to consumers and to the protection of consumers)?

Women often succeed, or have the impression that they succeed, in gaining increasing influence in the smaller cooperatives. Certainly small cooperatives, in particular those founded and developed under the predominant influence of women, often display more immediate and spontaneous forms of participation and an involvement in the daily decision-making process which goes beyond roles and duties.

But once the threshold to a larger firm has been crossed difficulties arise in reconciling participation and the allocation of authority, and participation and business needs dictated by the market which require an ever faster decision-making process. This problem poses itself in varying ways according to the type of activity in which the cooperatives are involved; many cultural and research cooperatives as well as those involved in the social field have good levels of participation. It is more difficult for those cooperatives which have arisen out of private firms gone bankrupt and where the concept of a self-managing enterprise must be built up from nothing.

Research is going on into more complex forms of participation necessary in the development and modernization phase of cooperatives. This research must, if it is intended to provide women with greater spheres of influence, take account of a number of aspects of the lives and culture of women: there is a need for ways of organization which takes account of the daily activities of a woman's life, for the better use of the concrete experience of those individuals within a cooperative.

for the removal of bureaucratic processes and easy access to information and knowledge. In order to gain more influence within the cooperative movement it is not, however, enough to achieve a greater degree of participation of women in the lives of individual cooperatives: it is necessary to become more numerous within the representative structures of the movement, within the associations at sector level and within the system of assistance and training.

Experience tells us that only when there is an increased presence of women at this level will the political role of women within the cooperative movement also grow. It must be added that the greater presence of women today in public institutions in Italy, in particular in the regional and local administrative bodies, i.e. at a level where plans and provisions for cooperatives are decided, offers women in the cooperative movement greater opportunities than was previously the case to exert influence on the development of cooperatives.

Women and the setting up of new cooperative enterprises

In all western countries including Italy one of the steps taken for confronting the problem of unemployment amongst young people and women has been the encouragement and promotion of new enterprises at the local level. Italy is currently discussing a special plan concerning youth unemployment, and the cooperative movement has let the government know it is willing to contribute to the creation of new jobs on condition that state intervention be aimed at creating valid jobs from the economic point of view and that these become part of economic and social development plans. Government proposals foresee, amongst other things: the setting up of Labour agen-

cies in order to encourage labour **demand and supply** and promote initiatives including cooperation, aimed at increasing employment; different kinds of incentives for the development of new kinds of enterprises; new types of cooperatives in the agricultural, crafts-, industrial, tourism, and service sectors. Within this framework specific initiatives should be added designed to create new activities for women within the cooperative sector. **As the experience** of recent years has shown, many women have found and can find **within** cooperatives a means of making full use of their skills, capacity and ideas concerning social and economic matters. However, there is a need for policies, laws and instruments which favour and provide an incentive for women to set up a cooperative. Here it is necessary to mention in particular:

1. The promotion and development of women's cooperatives must be accompanied by parallel initiatives in order to create a **greater** cultural awareness in the relative environment and amongst the women **themselves**. The various public institutions (advice agencies or commissions) or the cooperative associations must see that this is carried out.
2. Certain economic incentives should be made available to "award" the entry of women into cooperative societies (such as financial incentives or tax benefits).
3. Specific training courses are needed to improve the skills and qualifications and work experience.
4. Specific services must be made available to facilitate women's participation in training courses and in the social life of the cooperative.
5. At the start-up phase experts are often needed for problems

concerning production, work organization and marketing. These experts must also help to form certain figures within the cooperative, including women, who will later be capable of carrying out the role of administrator and manager. In this context managerial courses for women should be promoted and special incentives should exist to encourage women to take part in other courses organized by the cooperative associations.

Other countries are also carrying out experiments with positive results, concerning moves designed to create new economic activities for women. It must be added here that the European Community is also increasingly involved in supporting such activities, which represent an innovative contribution with respect both to unemployment amongst women and to changing traditional productive spheres of women.

Cooperatives and social services

Women in the cooperative movement have played a special role in recent years in the promotion of cooperatives which are a response to daily problems affecting the lives of families: assistance cooperatives for infants, the elderly, handicapped people, kindergartens and recreation centres for children, cultural and sporting activities and social tourism.

This is a sector of development within the cooperative movement which we believe represents an original response both to those who would like to dismantle and limit the development of social services throughout the country as well as to the inability of the state to increase its share of the direct management of social services. With the development of cooperatives in this sector it is not intended to replace the state,

which should play the essential role of guarantor for the just distribution of social opportunity, but it is intended to widen and improve the social services available to individuals and families by means of more efficient forms of management which are less bureaucratic and more sensitive to the needs of the people.

With regard to this latter point it would seem very important and useful to add to the development of cooperatives offering social services also cooperative forms for users in this sector. This could be done by affiliating families in the area as members of the cooperative or by assuming as a base the members already associated within a cooperative (housing or consumers' cooperative). An organized group of users of a particular service could, in fact, become a driving force, even in economic terms, for the development of new services for families and in so doing improve the services offered and the presence of the cooperative in the area.

The development of a network of qualified social services in the form of a cooperative is also part of a grander design which turns the cooperative movement into one of the leaders in the tertiary field: it is this objective in particular which affects women in two ways: the development of qualified tertiary services will in fact provide women with new work opportunities and also with solutions for the better organization of daily life, a thing which lies close to the heart of many women because the chores of daily life still weigh down heavily to a large part on their shoulders.

Women, culture and cooperatives

It is no coincidence that many of the new cultural activities

of women in Italy have assumed a cooperative structure: in publishing, in the theatre and in the production and distribution of information. The cooperatives have guaranteed many women opportunities for the production of cultural activities and it has favoured the spread of culture amongst women and between women and society. Through the cooperative a part of the cultural production of women has acquired a more business-like and market-oriented dimension. In a world in which the value of production and the circulation of culture and information is growing constantly, but where at the same time the danger of the concentration of the production in just a few hands is also growing, this development provides for women in particular a field in which they can emphasize their own role. By means of an increased presence in cooperative development in this field it is possible to contribute towards creating an increasingly close relationship between economic and social development and the development of culture as a common good.

Women in the development of collaboration between North and South

It is no longer possible today to talk of the development of one's own country and the position of women in it without mentioning the role which women must play in terms of the development of the whole world. There has been a growing contribution by the cooperative movement, including the movement in Italy, in initiatives aimed at development, in terms of the realization of concrete projects and of the transfer of knowledge, the furthering and development of training and in terms of technical assistance.

The increased role of women in the cooperative movement of so many countries makes it today more possible for them to directly contribute and exchange experiences and to identify with in-

creating accuracy the contribution which the cooperative movement can make in order to assist women in assuming a leading role in the development of their own countries. Just as women in many countries have already found in the cooperative movement an original and valid means of participation in the economic and social development of their countries, the cooperative movement can, especially in the developing countries, provide an efficient way of involving women in the development process. This is the basic message which the women in the Italian cooperative movement will be taking with them to Nairobi to the World Conference on the occasion on the close of the Decade of Women.

The role of the Women's Committee of the ICA was important in the creation of a new awareness within the ICA concerning the specific problems faced by women in the development programmes and initiatives carried out in Third World Countries. It is important to stress this duty, i.e. to increase the role and representation of women from the Third World within the ICA, to augment relations between women in cooperatives and those in women's organizations in Third World countries. This would also serve as a stimulus in the face of intergovernmental decisions and programmes to achieve more influence as women. The women of the Lega are striving to promote an international culture of cooperatives within the women of the Italian Cooperative movement in order to create concrete possibilities for the exchange of experience and knowledge between the women in Italian cooperatives and women in Third World countries. We are also striving to increase the availability of technical teams and women experts who take part in training programmes for cooperatives, to provide technical assistance and to promote coope-

ratives which incorporate the view points of the women and the experience of the women in the cooperative.

We hope that during the Conference in Nairobi - thanks to the presence and contribution of the ICA women cooperators - the important role of cooperatives will be stressed, as was the case during the Lomé III Convention. It is a role which is important for the self-development of women, which in itself is a pre-condition for true economic and social development for women in all countries.

International Cooperative Alliance

SOFIA SEMINAR

June 19-21 1985

"INVOLVING WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THEIR COUNTRIES"

by

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L C O O P E R A T I V E
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N E W D E L H I I N D I A

INVOLVING WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRIES

Introduction:

Efforts to involve women in development are already under way, but viewed against the fact that women account for half the world's population, the majority of women still remain outside the development network. Governments, planners and agencies involved in development work realise the vast potential that exists among women who, if their talents are properly harnessed, can contribute greatly to the welfare of their countries - but there are, at the same time, many constraints which hinder women from greater participation in the development efforts of their countries. Today, a vast amount of research is being undertaken by national and international agencies, and by women themselves, to see why efforts to improve women's social and economic status by affording them a place in the development process, have not had the desired result.

Before women in the third World countries can take their rightful place in society, and venture forth in numbers into areas of development which would spell faster progress for their countries, they would need local and other forms of protection, encouragement and motivation in many areas.

As cooperators, we would naturally strive to bring about a greater involvement on the part of women in the development of their countries through cooperatives, which are recognized as being one of the most suitable instruments for bringing about change leading to progress through self-help and mutual help.

This paper deals briefly with the situation of women in general, their role in agriculture and as workers in industries and other fields, and some of the constraints which hin-

der them from fuller involvement in the development process. It also deals with the situation of women in cooperatives, and attempts to put forth some suggestions as to what can be done to enhance their contribution to cooperative development; I have not gone into greater detail as I am circulating separately the Report of the Regional Workshop for Women Cooperators held in Indonesia in March 1985, where this subject was dealt with.

At the outset I would like to state that I have drawn on information put out by FAO on Women in Agriculture, and the ILO on Women Workers as these provide authentic and up-to-date information re: women in these areas.

Women's Needs:

What are some of the major needs of women to enable them to become partners in development? Definitely education is one such pre-requisite. Although serious efforts are being made in many countries of the Region as well as elsewhere to increase educational opportunities for boys and girls, from the primary to the university level, and despite the fact that preferential treatment is being afforded to institutions of learning which cater to the needs of girls and women, women still lag far behind men in the field of education. There are statistics to prove that school drop-outs are higher among girls than boys, and even at the enrollment stage, boys outnumber girls. In countries where families tend to be large, and the majority of peoples live near or below subsistence level, girls are usually kept at home to look after the younger children, and to help with the household chores. Naturally then, when it comes to higher institutions of learning, we again

find that boys outnumber girls.

Again, following a chain-reaction, when it comes to training opportunities, boys and young men, who have had the advantage of basic and university education will stand greater chances of availing of professional training.

In view of the fact that fewer women as compared to men have had access to elementary, secondary and higher education and professional training, it is not surprising that fewer women are to be found at the "top" in medicine, commerce, industry, trade, politics, etc. There are some professions in which large numbers of women are to be found, for example, in the nursing, teaching and secretarial professions, but on the whole, the average middle-class and low-income group women is open to exploitation in the labour market, and usually works longer hours for less pay.

The Cooperative Movement

Even in the Cooperative Movements in the Region of South-East Asia, men outnumber women as cooperative members, office-bearers and employees, and it is rare indeed to find women at the policy-making level, whatever be the type of cooperative. One exception is in the Japanese Consumers Cooperative movement; although no separate statistics for male/female membership are available, it is a recognised fact that housewives form the bulk of the membership in the Consumers Cooperatives. Women are also to be found on Boards of Management - though not in the majority - in the large, successful consumer societies, and as Managers in the more recently started consumer shops.

In other countries of the Region, there are some examples of women's cooperative and other organizations which are

doing outstanding work. In India, for instance, there are Women's Urban Banks, which are fully managed and serviced by women. These banks help women belonging to low-income families to come out of debt and to start small businesses which can make them economically independent. Then, to cite another successful women's organization in India, there is SEWA - the Self Employed Women's Association, which endeavours to organize poor, working women and assists them to improve their socio-economic conditions through joint action.

As part of its contribution to UN International Women's Year, the ICA ROEC organized a Regional Seminar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in July 1975, on "The Role of Women in Cooperative Development". Three more Regional Seminars for Women Cooperators were held; the first two in Sri Lanka in September 1980 and July 1982 respectively, and the third in Jakarta, Indonesia, in March 1985, to discuss the theme and to formulate action programmes for enhancing Women's participation in Cooperatives.

The ICA ROEC has also undertaken surveys and studies in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia on women's cooperative activities in selected areas. Further, studies have been published on the Role of Japanese Women in the Consumers', Agricultural and Fisheries' Movements, and on four successful Women's Industrial Cooperative Societies in Bangalore in Karnataka State of South India. Such surveys and studies have facilitated exchange of information among women cooperators, motivated those looking for avenues of action, and helped in formulating and implementing action programmes.

The ICA ROEC has also conducted National seminars for women in Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka,

and has upon request supported and assisted in such seminars in the Region organized by the Member Movements.

Over the years, in addition to surveys and studies, seminar reports and other material of special relevance to women, publications on "Balanced Diet" and "Key to Household Economy - Household Budgeting" were also prepared for use in women's cooperative programmes.

The ICA ROEC has been associated with the Women's Projects in Sri Lanka and Thailand, and a Women's Project is being launched in India.

The Swedish movement has given significant assistance, both financial and technical, from 1960 onwards to the ICA ROEC and National Movements in the Region towards enhancing women's participation in cooperative development.

One of the recommendations of the ICA ROEC Regional Seminar (1975) was that ~~the~~ national cooperative organizations should establish women's cooperative committees to formulate policies and programmes for enhancing women's participation in cooperative societies. Similar committees should be established in all cooperative organizations, at the secondary and primary levels, and following this recommendation Women's Committees have been set up in most of the countries of the Region. These committees have been established over the years and some of them are fairly young.

We find that since the women's committees came into being, programmes for women cooperators were started on a more systematic basis, and they include meetings, national seminars, and other promotional and developmental activities. There is also a realization that programmes should filter down to the grass-root level, and efforts are being made to esta-

blish linkages from the grass-roots to the national level.

Women's cooperative bodies at national level should consider what steps can be taken to see that legislation which hampers women from greater involvement in cooperative development is removed. They should try to see how programmes of assistance - including international assistance - for women cooperators can be increased, with direct benefits to the grass-root level. Another important issue that needs careful thought is how to increase women's access to cooperative educational institutions at all levels.

Rural Women:

Studies made by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), reveal some very interesting facts concerning the position of women in agriculture. I, therefore, give below extracts from these studies.

"WOMEN : THE MISSING LINK IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES"+

"In the Third World a woman's place is in the field, the cranary and the dairy, as well as in the home. Recent studies on the role of women in agriculture all point to the same conclusion - they contribute far more to food and agricultural production than has been generally recognized."

"The studies show that women produce much of the Third World's food, and that they process and cook almost all of it. Furthermore, they play a leading role in marketing cash crops."

"In fact, far from limiting themselves to household chores, rural women in developing countries spend most of their working time producing and processing food or earning cash -

+ FAO FEATURE WFD/1/84

less than half is spent feeding, clothing and caring for their families....."

What Women Do:

"In 82 developing countries outside Latin America surveyed by FAO, 42 percent of the agricultural labour force was female. The proportion ranged from 46 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa and 45 per cent in Asia to 40 per cent in the Caribbean and 31 per cent in North Africa and the Middle East."

"In Asia, women do much of the work involved in producing rice, the staple crop"

"Women are particularly important later in the food chain, during and after the harvest Women undertake more than half the storage and processing workload in most of the countries surveyed. They clean, thresh and dry grain, dry fish and make cheese and yoghurt."

"Women are more involved than men in buying and selling food in most developing countries ... In much of Asia, marketing vegetables at the local level is done by women."

"Women also shoulder much of the work involved in feeding and care for small animals, such as poultry, goats, pigs and rabbits. They do the milking and they process and market milk and other animal products locally."

"Many development failures resulting from a disregard of women have been documented. In one area of northwest Bangladesh a scheme to introduce a new variety of high-yielding wheat produced disappointing results, because women, who usually selected the seeds for planting, were not involved in the extension programme as a result were choosing the wrong seeds. In this instance, as in others, cultural attitudes discouraged

contact between male extension workers and women."

"The emphasis on reaching man through extension may even change the mix of crops grown in a particular area. In Bangladesh, women grow vegetables, fruit and spices, while the men grow rice and wheat. Training and credit directed to the men have reduced the share of fruit and vegetables grown, possibly lowering nutrition standards."

Sometimes the impact of development projects is limited because planners do not take account of the entire food chain and the various roles in it. In one area in the Near East, attempts to introduce a new wheat variety failed, because bread produced with the new wheat flour had an unusual colour, unacceptable to women who were responsible for baking."

"Almost every development expert working on the problems of women has stories like these. They have noted other effects of an over-emphasis on men, such as a tendency for mechanization to be directed to jobs, such as ploughing, normally the responsibility of men. If ways of carrying out related tasks in the food chain, such as milling, are not also improved, the workload of the women may increase dramatically."

Why Are Women Forgotten?

"Failure to appreciate the contribution of women to agricultural production can be partly explained by the tendency in official statistics to concentrate on wage labour or cashcrop production, which are dominated by men. The International Labour Organization estimates that, on a global basis, almost half the hours worked by women are not counted

in official labour force statistics."

"Women may be left out of the development picture because they are under-represented in the policy-making areas of government and in agricultural extension and training services. Less than ten per cent of extension workers are women"

"In the extension services of most developing countries women are largely restricted to advising on home economics. Even then, they are usually administrated by men. There are exceptions - more than a third of the extension agents employed by the government extension services in peninsular Malaysia are women. A similar situation exists in the Philippines."

"The share of women in agricultural management and extension is likely to increase in the future "

"The proportion of women participants in FAO - supported group training activities in 1982 was only five per cent in Asia and the Pacific."

Reaching Out to Women and Men:

"What can be done to help women in their work and to give them a bigger say in the development affecting their lives? Clearly they can be taken into account when development programmes and projects are being planned."

"To encourage this, FAO has drawn up a set of guidelines for use in agricultural planning. They cover issues such as education and extension, and access to credit and marketing. For example, the guidelines recommend that credit schemes be designed to make credit available without requiring land title as collateral - particularly important for women whose husbands have migrated to urban areas. The guidelines also suggest ways of bringing women into field projects in

areas such as irrigation, land and water management, soil conservation and fertilizer use."

"The impact of agricultural programmes on women could be improved if more information were available on the role of women. Statisticians should be encouraged to develop socio-economic indicators that allow the impact of development programmes on the well-being and prosperity of women to be more accurately measured. Statistics can be improved for these purposes by breaking down data by sex wherever possible."

"In the long term, education - both for women and men - offers the best chance of improving the position of rural women in the Third World. Women must be encouraged to participate in educational programmes at all levels - from farmers' field days to post-graduate university study. Male farmers need to be shown how changes in their working methods can affect their womenfolk, for better and for worse. Policy-makers, both male and female, need more information about the role of women."

Agricultural education for women is gradually swinging away from a sole focus on home economics and nutrition, as people come to understand how rural women actually use their time. Nutrition remains an important tonic, but instead of focussing just on food selection and preparation, programmes now take into account broader aspects, such as different affects on nutrition of male and female cash earning. Men also need to learn about nutrition - if only so they will accept new and more nutritious ingredients and styles of food."

"Women could play a much greater role in agricultural extension and training. In many countries male extension workers are excluded from the home because social customs limit

contact between the sexes outside marriage. Women extension agents, on the other hand, can often approach women and men equally."

"The Third World's need for increased food production and rural development has never been greater, while the climate for external assistance from the industrialized world has rarely been worse. In extension, as in agriculture generally, the challenge is to make use of all available human and material resources. There is no excuse for ignoring both the existing and potential contribution of half the population."

Studies made by International Labour Organization (ILO) also reveal some very interesting facts concerning the position of working women. I therefore, give below extracts from these studies.

"PLIGHT OF WOMEN WORKERS"+

"They work on farms and in factories, homes and hospitals. Their hours of labour are long and often arduous."

" They have made tremendous progress in education and more and more of them are shedding their cloistered lives within the confines of their homes to become wage earners."

"Nevertheless, for the hundreds of millions of women workers of the world victory in the battle against occupational segregation and unequal wages still seems a long way off."

+ "PLIGHT OF WOMEN WORKERS" (An article based on ILO's World Labour Report) published in "The Statesman", New Delhi, dated 11.3.1985.

"In a comprehensive analysis of the problems and prospects of the women workers of the world, the ILO paints a distressing picture of the plight of women, particularly in the developing countries."

"The majority of the 600 million women workers (1980) live in the developing countries. About two-thirds of them work in agriculture."

"While there has been a significant increase in the number of women working in industries between 1970 and 1980, women in the rural areas throughout the Third World work on farms."

"In India, between 30 % and 40 % of farm labour is composed of women. In Bangladesh, despite their secluded status, women are forced by poverty to come forth for other hard work, such as road construction."

"In many societies, especially in Asia and Latin America, the process of agricultural growth and modernization is leading to pauperization and increasing landlessness, drawing more and more women into agricultural wage labour."

"Even rapid industrialization, which has increased job opportunities in the developing countries, has not fully helped working women since they often lose traditional sources of income without getting new jobs. This has happened, for example, in the industrializing economies such as Brazil, India, Mexico and Nigeria."

"Studies show that women are increasingly confined to home work, as in the textiles, clothing and tobacco industries and in marginal service jobs in the urban informal sector where employment is casual and irregular and where incomes are very low."

"However, there are some hopeful signs on the horizon. Although secretaries and teachers in the developing countries are occupational categories filled by both men and women, the trend is for these to be feminized."

"In Asia, the number of women employed as first grade teachers increased between 1975 and 1980."

"Paradoxically, there has also been an increase in the women's share of unemployment in the Third World. In 1981, according to the World Labour Report, seven of 12 developing countries covered by a survey indicated that women's share of unemployment was higher than their share in employment. In 1976, this situation prevailed in only six of the countries surveyed."

"Moreover, the percentage of women in total unemployment increased in 10 of the 12 countries, mainly because of an increasing number of women looking for jobs."

"The report notes that literacy among women has increased significantly. There was an increase of 55.2 % in female literates during the decade 1970-80, representing an annual growth rate of 4.5 % ..."

"This progress has, however, still not matched the higher literacy among the male population. Among Third World women over 15 years of age, one in two can now read and write but among men in the same age group, two in three are literate."

"Women's wages are also lower than those of men. They further suffer from what the report describes as "occupational segregation" which, to some extent, can be attributed to inadequate education and training as well as education and training not adapted to the needs of women."

"Although many developing countries have adopted legislation which provide for equal pay and other benefits for women workers, the vast majority of women workers in the Third World remain outside the scope of such legislation since they work mostly on farms, or are engaged in domestic service or family enterprises."

Conclusion:

Much still remains to be done before women can make sizeable and meaningful contributions in the field of cooperative development.

At present they are too few in number as members, office-bearers, employees and policy-makers in the cooperatives, and one of the first pre-requisites, therefore, is to swell their numbers within the cooperative fold. Women also need legislation to safeguard their rights. They need to be organized for group action, given member education to enable them to participate actively, and be provided training to equip them to take up responsible positions in the cooperatives. In addition to support from the local cooperatives, there is a great need for more of international assistance for women's programmes.

There are some questions which regard to women's participation in cooperatives which are still being debated. One of them is: should women form their own separate cooperatives, or join those having mixed membership? This should be a matter for the concerned women themselves to decide, but they should bear in mind certain facts:

"Cooperatives are a business, and require financial, technical and other inputs skilled management, and enlightened membership, good management/member

relations, and links with other cooperative organizations with whom they must work, e.g., cooperative banks and other credit institutions, marketing institutions, federations and unions, training institutions, cooperative wholesales, the government machinery concerned with cooperatives, agencies providing education in home economics, etc."

Too many women's societies function in isolation and thus remain outside the mainstream of cooperative activity.

In mixed cooperatives women do not generally play decisive roles which allow them to influence the policies, programmes and running of their cooperatives. This situation could be improved if women were organized for group action in such cooperatives.

Another major draw-back is that there are too few cooperative women personnel to work with women's questions in the cooperative sector. This is the case even at ICA level, and all-round efforts should be made to remedy this.

Women cooperators who are expected to work in the field, and who are in need of constant information, education and training receive these to a very limited extent. Even when conferences, seminars and other events are organized by the cooperatives, unless they are organized under the banner of "women's seminars", there are usually no woman, or only very few women participating.

If the cooperatives want to achieve the goal of seeing men and women as equal partners in development, they must in-

crease the extent of inter-action between the activities being undertaken by both in the cooperative sector. If some of these urgent major constraints are tackled, a beginning will have been made.

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

Regional Office for East, Central & Southern Africa

P.O. Box 946

MOSHI, Tanzania

INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA by Zakia Meghji

The subject Involvement of Women in Development is very wide, for development encompasses all walks of life - social, political, economical, etc. Development in human society has many sides. Walter Rodney writing on "How Europe under-developed Africa" looks at development at different levels. "At the level of individuals, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being".¹ At the level of social groups it means an ability to control and deal with nature. Since human beings operate in groups, development would mean ability for people to work together and be able to lead better lives. It is only by working in groups that human beings are able to deal with their environment better. A "Society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment".² This is possible when human beings understand and make use of their skills and understanding of technology to change mode of life and organization of work.

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1. Walter Rodney: How Europe underdeveloped Africa TPH Tanzania Pg. 9
2. Ibid, Pg. 10

Development however does not take place in a vacuum. It takes place within particular socio-economic structure. Since the superstructure is very much determined by the economic base, it means that development must be seen in this perspective. Productive forces and production relations determine the level of development.

When we talk on involvement of women in development, we are talking on the place and role of women in different sectors and at different levels of a particular society. We are talking about technology they use for farming, their skills at industrial level, their attitude towards life, their education and training in different spheres of life, their social role and many other aspects.

women comprise half or more than half of the world population. The majority of women in Africa live in the rural areas where they play a significant role in agriculture. Women also take care of animals such as goats, cattle, sheep, chicken, etc. Apart from this, they have a traditional role that of child and home care. This involves cooking, fetching firewood, water, etc. Due to low technology they spend a lot of time attending to these chores. However it is a recognized fact that even though "women make up more than half of the world's population (52 %)" do two thirds of the world's working hours, they only receive one hundredth of the world's property.

If one is talking on the role of women in development, one can see that women give so much, yet get so little. Can we then say that women are involved in development? If the answer is yes, it is important to question the level that women are involved in development. In order to answer such questions one has to look at both sides of the coin. That is their contri-

tribution towards development and their benefits from such a contribution.

Women in Rural Areas

In Africa about 90 % of people live in rural areas. This also means that only a very small percentage of women live in urban areas.

Mechanisation in agriculture has lagged behind in most parts of Africa, Whereas industrial development could have gone hand in hand with agricultural development this has not been the case in most African countries. Small scale industries have been emphasised which has not done much to liberate peasants from traditional form of technology. Apart from few areas where agriculture equipments such as tractors, combine harvesters are used, the majority of peasants still use the back cracking hoe, Weeding is done manually and so is harvesting. Since it is women who work hardest on the land, it is women who suffer most. When development programmes are introduced or encouraged in rural areas, women's full potential cannot be reached. This is because they have very little time to attend to such programmes. If women are to be involved then technological development must be emphasised with women in mind. Thus in agriculture women must be exposed to modern and scientific methods of farming. More women should be trained in agriculture so that they can play their full role in this sector. Presently, many agriculture extension workers are men who tend to reach male farmers. There is need to train more women agriculture extension workers if women agriculture producers are to be reached. Experience has shown that they can. Experience has shown that they can be good agents for change. As women spend a lot of unnecessary time attending to chores,

there is need to develop infrastructure that would reduce and shorten the working day of the women.

Equal chances in education for both boys and girls is very important if women are to be professionals, technicians, etc. This traditional attitude on educating girls in home economics subjects which include needlework, cooking, taking care of children and home is quickly disappearing as women have proved just as capable as men in other technical subjects.

However, inequality in chances still persists in many countries in Africa. There are more schools for boys than girls. It is interesting to note in countries like Lesotho more girls go to schools especially at primary levels, since boys either herd cattle or go to work in the mines in South Africa. This has reflected on the high level of women in development in Lesetho.

An example from one of the Regions in Tanzania shows that there is a gradual drop as girls go to higher grades compared to boys, (see Appendix 1)! This situation means that there are fewer girls at managerial and policy making decision level compared to boys. Apart from there being less schools for girls there are other reasons for this. Pregnancy while in school is one such reason where girls prematurely leave schools. The other reason is early marriages where families with a low income may be tempted to marry off their daughter in return for dowry.

Women in urban areas

Just as youth leave rural areas for towns to look for employment so do women. With little education they find it difficult to find a job. Some get employed as house-servants unskilled

workers, are self-employed or just roam the streets. There are women in urban areas who after failing to get employment organize themselves in groups. There are either informal or formal groups. Some women have registered themselves as cooperatives and with the help of cooperative officers have done well. These women are engaged in tailoring, restaurant, lodging business, charcoal making, savings and credit, etc. This is perhaps one of the best ways for women to be self-employed. Once organized and having access to credit these women can go a long way towards bettering their lives. They will develop at the individual level which will have an effect on their families and community at large.

Women who are exposed to ideas and innovations are ready to take up these ideas and implement them from the benefit of communities at large. An old saying still stands "when you educate a man you educate an individual when you educate a woman you educate a family".

Noreen Clark writing on education for development and the rural women summarizes the task of rural development. She says that rural development must include efforts to create and expand economic alternatives for adults:

- enable adults to enhance their roles as spouse and parents
- enhance and re-establish complementary pattern of interaction between men and women.

Noreen Clark - education for development and the rural woman, Volume I - A Review of Theory and Principles with emphasis on Kenya and the Phillipines printed in U.S.A.
1979, Pg. 26

COUNTRY - KENYA

Author - A. W. Kuita

Name of Society - Mwiria Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd

Date Registered - 1954

Membership - 3603

Women members - 942

Board members - 9

Women Board members -

Activities - (I) Marketing coffee
(II) Distributing seedling to farmers
(III) A shop to sell merchandise and agriculture inputs
(IV) Transport facility

Why started the Society : (I) Farmers depend on coffee as their source of income
(II) To be able to market their coffee smoothly and without being cheated
(III) There is a problem of transport in the area. Therefore the society has helped to solve this problem.

Success ; Farmers are more close to their society and feel that they can influence changes
Reduce burden of farmers when it comes to look for markets for their coffee
Farmers have a source of income

Problems : High cost of farm inputs
Unreliable rain - Irrigation is expensive
Fluctuation in prices

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APPENDIX II

SHORT SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

The case studies have been prepared by women in the countries of the Region. It is hoped that since some of these women will attend the Conference. They will be able to contribute to the Conference on their experiences. The Regional Office in Moshhi hopes to publish some of these case studies at a later date.

On behalf of the international Cooperative Alliance, Regional Office Moshhi, I would like to thank all those who wrote these case studies.

Kenya

Lesotho

Mauritius

Tanzania

APPENDIX I

From Women Project Workshop : 30th May - 2nd June 1984

Danish Volunteer Training Centre by Maria Kamm

Table 1 : Std VII leavers - Kilimanjaro Region 1983

Girls	-	16348
Boys	-	<u>16482</u>
Total	-	32830

N.B. : Opportunities for boys and girls in Primary Education are the same - A big achievement for the National Equal Educational opportunities.

Table II : Form I selection 1983

Girls	..	246	..	1.5 %
Boys	..	422	..	2.6 %
Total	..	668	out of	32830

N.B. : Main reason for disparity is that there are less places in secondary schools for girls compared to boys.

Table III : Form V selection 1983

Girls	..	822	25.1 %
Boys	..	2414	74.6 %
Total	..	3236		

N.B. : Reason - not enough places for girls in secondary schools.

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Strategies for Change October 10 - 14, 1983
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30 May - 2 June 1984 D.V.T.C. Arusha
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pend their business. Being new in the business world, many financial institutions are reluctant to offer credit facilities to women.

Presently, there has been a lot of pressure from different international non-governmental organizations like FAO, DANIDA to set up a special fund in financial institutions to give women credit facilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion one can say that involvement of women in development depends very much on the socio-economic base prevailing in a particular country. This is because social relations, attitude, infrastructure prevailing all reflect on the economic base. Since development does not take place in vacuum, the role and position of women which determines their place in development is reflected by these two factors - mode of production, social relations which prevail. If true development is to take place then women must take their rightful position in development programmes and projects. Women as well as men should be able to utilize and contribute fully towards their countries development in different schere. They must also be able to benefit fully from their contribution. One thing is very clear and that is woman have great potential which has not been fully tapped.

ZM/GM/10.5/85

it must employ well trained managers and accountants. Committee members should also know their roles and responsibilities. If women are to manage these societies then they must be well trained in relevant fields. The ultimate aim of involving women in cooperatives is to have them work side by side with men as equals.

Women to be liberated from heavy workload

As pointed out earlier women spend a lot of time doing chores which could have otherwise taken shorter period if appropriate technology was developed with a woman in mind. When planners and policy makers determine the G.N.P. of the country such work is not recognized as contribution to development.

In more advanced economies women usually have more time to attend to development programmes, for example, to take part in social, economic and political activities, besides taking care of their homes.

In Africa the situation is different. Women have to walk long distance to water source, firewood and health centres. One can see that in Africa if women in rural areas are to be involved in economic activities apart from their daily routines the benefit to them must be big. Without labour saving devices, easy accessibility to social amenities a woman will be exhausted and will have a double day if she were to participate in development activities and programmes. Moreover the creation of day care centres for small children would also help to reduce the burden of routine chores on the women.

Lack of Accessibility to Credit

Even where women organize themselves into economic groups and cooperatives many times they lack the necessary capital to ex-

they stand better chance to influence policy, legal questions, political decisions and the like. It is however important that these women who come from different class background are conscious of the type of changes needed. It is a fact that education changes the class position or status of an individual. One can be from a peasant family but through education one can move and become an upper strata petty bourgeoisie. The commitment of these women towards bettering the mass is very important. They should realize that they are in a better position to influence changes as they understand the situation much better.

Right of Ownership

Traditional set up in most African countries is such that men have more rights than women. Even in those societies which were predominantly matrilineal the situation is changing towards patrilineal. This is the reason why marketing co-operatives in Africa have predominantly male members. Since they are the ones who owned land they also controlled crops. Women alongside men participated in production of cash crops. However, the proceeds from sale of crops go to men.

This is why in most parts of Africa, after independence period women were motivated to form economic organizations. Some of these organizations became registered as cooperative societies. Today women are involved in different economic activities. These include handicraft cooperative, poultry groups and cooperatives, consumer shops, savings and credit.

The importance of education and training cannot again be over-emphasised here. A cooperative society whether it is for women, men or for both must be well run and managed. This means

- intergrate women more fully into the community beyond the family circle
- acknowledge women's overlooked economic contributions to family and community
- recognize the strength of informal networks of women within the family and community
- create programmes where there are sufficient benefits to women for participating that will outweigh the disadvantages
- assist women to acquire specific knowledge and skills related to agriculture, family planning; animal husbandry, nutrition, literacy and health practices.

Fuller participation of women in development cannot be realised without removing constraints affecting women. There are many constraints affecting fuller participation of women in development. I will just outline a few of these.

Lack of Equal Education Opportunities

In most parts of Africa women have not had equal chances as men to education. Ever though legally women have been given equal opportunities, it has already been shown that there are fewer high schools where women could study as compared to where men could study. Girls who get pregnant while in school are in most cases discontinued while the boys who make them pregnant continue their schooling.

Higher education is a key to participation in different development programmes. Women who have been trained at higher institutions of learning e.g in cooperative colleges, universities are in a better position to change and influence changes. By being incorporated in the high government machinery

Woman of Chad
Sweeping
Plastering the floor and walls
With cow's dung and black earth
Cook, nursemaid, carrying
On her back the baby,
Washing dishes,
Planting, weeding, reaping
Doing shopping,
Buggy, lorry, donkey.
Woman of Chad
What are you not ?

(Popular song from Chad)

PARTICIPATION OF THE WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE
SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION ORGANIZATION OF THE INQUIRY AND AIM OF THE STUDY

- A - Organization of the inquiry
- B - The obtained results
- C - Limits of the study
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- E - Plan

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 - 1. The Conference in Mexico (1975)
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- B - The reports of the Secretary - General of the United Nations
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PART TWO - INCORPORATION OF WOMEN TO THE COOPERATIVES

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2. Seminar on promotion the participation of women in the cooperatives (Sri Lanca, 1980)
3. Meeting of representatives of the Women's Committees (Sri Lanca, 1982)
4. Seminar on the agricultural multipurpose cooperatives (Japan, 1982)

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1. Analysis of the numerical data
2. National programmes
3. Difficulties present
4. Future trends

Burma

South Korea

Hong Kong

India

1. Analysis of the numerical data
2. National programmes
3. Difficulties present
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Indonesia

Malaysia

Nepal

Philippines

Singapore

Sri Lanca

Thailand

CHAPTER IV - COUNTRIES OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN

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2. Recommendation for Peace, 6th African regional conference of ILO (Tunis, October 1983)
3. Regional undertaking of the CA
4. Regional seminar of the ACECA on the participation of women in the credit cooperatives (Dakar, 1981)

B. Reports by countries

Benin
Burundi
Botswana
Cameroun
Cape Verde
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Gambia
Malawi
Mali

Mauritius
Niger
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Rwanda
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Swaziland
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1. Seminar on the role of women in the cooperative movement in Latin America (Lima, January 23-27, 1978)
 2. Seminary on the role of women and the youth in the cooperative movement (Colombia, October 6-14, 1980)
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B. Actions of priority for the ILB

1. Revision of Recommendation 127
2. Adapting of the national cooperative legislations
3. Consolidation of educational structures
4. Establishing of salaried occupations and remunerated activities
5. Intensification of social and economic services
6. Promotion of productional and trade activities

C. Feminization of the cooperative movement

Author - A. W. Maita
Name of Society - Kirinyaga Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society
Date Registered - 1963
Membership - 5840 but only 900 presently deliver their
milk to the Society
Women Members - 2152 but only 400 presently deliver their
milk to the Society
Board members - 9
Women Board Members - 1
Activities - sale of members milk
- sell animal feeds to farmers
Why started the society : To make it easy for farmers to sell
their milk
Success : Source of regular income
Problems : Bad roads especially during rainy
seasons. This made it difficult for
farmers to send their milk to col-
lect points
High cost of animal feeds.

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LESOTHO

Author : Maknena B. Majora
Name of Society : Lesotho Poultry Cooperative Society Ltd
Date Registered : 20th October 1971
membership : 4051
Women members : 3951
Activities : Market members produce collectively
Purchase poultry feeds
Purchase poultry equipment
Educate members on best methods of poultry
keeping

Why started the Society : To combat nutritional deficiency
in diet
To improve the socio-economic
standards of its members.

Success : Society has created employment to
women
Members are now self-employed and
have regular source of income

+++++

Author : Mabatebang L. Mokhesi

Name of Society: Maseru Township Credit Union

Date Registered : July 1964

Membership : 854

Women members : 639

Board members : 9

Women Board members : 6

Activities : Saving and give loans to members

Why started the Society : Easy access to loans - no security
by husband needed as in other
financial institutions

Women can invest their money much
better this way.

Success : Have trained manpower
Can insure members against death and disa-
bility.

Problems : members do not attend study groups regularly
Committee members miss some meetings
Very few educated women have joined the
society.

+++++

MAURITIUS

Author : Kamia Guinness

Name of Society : Vocoas Popular Cooperative Credit Union Ltd

Date Registered : 1976

membership : 777

Women members : 233

board members : 9

Women Board members: 2

Activities : Saving and giving loans to members
Consumer shop

Why started the Society: To get rid of loan sharks who give loans at exhorbitant rate of interest demanding tangible security such as jewels, furniture, etc.

To get consumer needs at reasonable prices and avoid being cheated by private shopkeepers

members produce could be sold in the shop

Success : Loans given have helped members tremendously

The society has grown and is doing very well

members mainly utilize their loans to build houses and for agriculture work,

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TANZANIA

Author : Thecia Bwire

Name of Society : Jitegemee Taylors Cooperative Society

Date Registered : 1971

membership : 30

Female : 26

Board members : 9

Women Board members: 9

Activities : Production of shirts
Production of childrens clothes
Restaurant
Consumer shop
Farming unit

Why started the society: Women who had been trained at the
YWCA needed employment

Success ; Women get regular income
Every member gets not less than 110/ (\$ 47) a
month

Problems : Difficulty in securing raw materials
Difficulty in getting chicken feed

+++++++

Author : Zainub Mgonja

Name of Society: Marawe Kyura Women Cooperative Society

Date registered: 1974

Membership : 100 (all female)

Board members : 10 (all female)

Activities : Consumer shop
Transport
Tailoring
Kindergarten

Why started the Society: To add income to women

Problems ; Difficulty in getting essential
commodities and spare parts.

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ZAMBIA

Author : W. Simonde

Name of Project: National Cooperative Study Group

Date implemented: 1982

Membership : 40 000 approximately

Women : 10 000 approximately
Activities : Mass education project
Training to group members on cooperatives,
women and cooperatives, youth and coopera-
tives.
Success : Mass very enthusiastic on the project
Problems : unsuitable radio air time
Some men are jealous and do not allow their
wives to participate in study groups

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Author : Temwekira Modesta Mvula
Name of Society : Chibwe Multi-purpose Cooperative Society Ltd
Date registered : 22nd May 1975
Membership : 613 unto 1983
Women members : 185
Board members : 7
Women Board members:2
Activities ; To supply agricultural services to members
Consumer shop
Hammer mills
Cooperative credit scheme
Poultry) introduced in 1980
Needlework)

Why started the Society: Credit scheme to help small farmers
obtain money to take care of their
farms
Poultry/Needlework - better nutrition
habits
Improve their standard of living by
running these extra projects which
are income generating activities

Success : Women getting regular income
Support from the Department for
Cooperatives

Hammer mills has reduce burden on women of walking long distance to ground their maize into maize meal
easy access to consumer shop.

Problems

Shortage of poultry feeds
Lack of transport - to transport feeds to the centre
No proper planning for markets for the chickens
No competent accountant
Transport
Problem of obtaining essential commodities.

+++++

MAURITIUS

Author : Kolila Deepchand
Name of Society : Jagriti Handicraft Cooperative Society
Date registered : 1974 revived in 1978
Membership : 250 (all women)
Activities : Courses in dressmaking, embroidery, basket making and nutrition are given
Buys spices from members and processess at the Society
Why started the Society : To share knowledge especially in handicraft
To promote women's welfare by finding markets for their products and inculcate in them a comparative spirit.
Success : Has a permanent sales cum show room
Workshop and training room
Has created employment - 10 full time members
25 part time
Source of income for members

Problems : Lack of funds
Lack of trained teachers in handicraft
Problem of marketing.

+++++

KENYA

Author : Bernadette Wanyonyi
Name of Society : Mukuru Consumer Cooperative Society
(Nairobi)
Date Registered : not shown
Membership : 100
Women members : not shown
Board members : 15
Women Board members : -
Activities : Sell of fresh green groceries and other
farm produce
Why started the Society: To give employment for members of
society both full and part time.
Some husbands have joined the society
Business doing well
Good relationship between members
and the Community
Problems : Still need help in terms of technical
assistance.

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*PARTICIPATION OF THE WOMEN IN THE
COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES AND GROUPS*

Dr. Dionysos Mavrogiannis

PART FIVE APPENDICES

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(questionary)*

APPENDIX II *List of the conventions and recommendations of the ILO
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APPENDIX IV *India -"-*

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(Caribbean Islands)*

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referred to in the present study.*

PART FIVE : APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

ROLE AND PARTICIPATION OF THE WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVES

(Questionary)

A. Statistical information

1. Adult population of the country and sex distribution
2. Total number of the cooperative members: break-down by sex for every type of cooperatives ¹⁾. Evolution of that participation for the last five years
3. Total number of the members of the managing boards and of Boards of Directors. Total number and break-down by sex of the management and of the members of these boards for every type of the cooperatives and at all levels ²⁾. Evolution of the distribution for the last five years.
4. Total number and distribution by sex of the employees in cooperative , by type of cooperative, and at the different levels of the cooperative movement.

B. Precise role and participation of women

1. General conclusion about the specific role of the women in all activities of the cooperatives at all levels. Give examples and accounts indicating that this role has in a general outline been assumed, as well as some findings of a general character.

1) The types of cooperatives is to be determined by the different fields of activity : trade, consumers , credit etc.

2) Primary (local), secondary, and tertiary, if any.

2. Are there any cooperative activities, specifically only for women? When an affirmative reply, give a description and make a possibly more detailed analysis.
3. Are there any specific programmes or other undertakings aiming at an increased participation of women in the cooperatives? When affirmative, describe them. When negative, - has there been given any serious thought to setting up such programmes?
4. Are there in existence any covered-up or manifest barriers of social and economic, cultural or political nature, which prevent or do not admit the participation of women in the cooperatives, due maybe to the policy in general, or the legislation, to the administrative methods, accepted practises, or the customs or traditions? If an affirmative reply, describe them, and indicate the measures taken for their overcoming if any. For instance, do women have access to credit?
5. If in all aspects of the cooperative life, the correlation between the women and men is smaller than that of the sex structure of the population, what are the most probable reasons to explain that situation?

C. Regarding the Future

1. Suggestions and recommendations about a national policy that would remove the present hindrances and would encourage the full participation of the women in the cooperative activities, as well as suggestions for programmes and measures, which would aim to increase that participation (information, education, and training, the setting-up of cooperatives of interest especially to the women, as kindergartens, handicraft cooperatives etc.)
2. Suggestions for programmes, which would have an aim to change the attitude regarding the role of woman in the cooperatives.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF THE CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE ILO REGARDING THE WOMEN WORKERS

<u>A. Conventions</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Rartifications</u> <u>of 01.31.1984</u>
N° 3	Protection of maternity, 1919	28
N° 4	Night labour (women) 1919	59
N° 41	Night labour (women) (revised) 1934	37
N° 45	Underground works (women), 1935	87
N° 81	labour inspection, 1947 (art.8)	105
N° 89	Night labour (women),(revised) 1948	62
N° 100	Equality of payment 1951	105
N° 102	Social security (minimum norms) 1952	30
N° 103	Protection of maternity (revised) 1952	22
N° 110	Plantations, 1958 (Part VII,protection of maternity)	11
N° 111	Discrimination (employment and professions) 1958	106
N° 118	Equality in medical treatment (social security) 1962 (art.2 and 4 - maternity)	35
N° 122	Employment policy, 1964	69
N° 127	Maximum workload, 1967 (art.7)	20
N° 129	Labour inspection (agriculture) 1969	23
N° 136	Benzene, 1971 (art.11,§ 1)	26
N° 140	Paid leave for education, 1974	21
N° 149	Employment and conditions of work and life of nursing personnel, 1977	18
N° 156	Workers with family responsibility, 1981	3
N° 157	Safeguard of rights in matters of social security, 1982 (art.2)	0

<u>B. Recommendations</u>	<u>Subject</u>
N° 4	Saturnism (women and children), 1919
N° 12	Obstetrics (agriculture),1921
N° 13	Night work of women (agriculture) 1921
N° 26	Migration (protection of women and young girls on board of ships),1926
N° 67	Guaranteeing the means of existence, 1944 (maternity and retirement age of women)
N° 90	Equality of payment ,1951
N° 95	Protection of maternity,1952
N° 110	Plantations, 1958 (IV.Equality of payment X. Social security)
N° 111	Discrimination regarding employment and professions 1958
N° 112	Medical treatment of labour in the enterprises, 1959 (art. 8d)
N° 113	Consultation and collaboration between public authorities and the organizations of employers and workers on an industrial and national level,1960 (§§ 1 and 2)
N° 114	Protection of the workers against ionising radiation (art.16) 1960 (see: the resolution regarding the protection of working women against the ionizing radiations, 1960 and the Model Code of the ILO (Ionizing radiations) part II,1959, art. 5 b)
N° 116	Reduction of the duration of the work-day,1962 (I § 9; and D § 18)
N° 119	Termination of labour employment,1963 (§3d)

Recommendations

- Nº 122 *Employment policy, 1964*
- Nº 123 *Employment of women with family responsibilities, 1965*
- Nº 127 *The role of cooperatives in the economic and social development of the developing countries, 1966*
- Nº 128 *The maximum workload of one worker, 1967*
- Nº 144 *Safety measures against the hazards of intoxication due to benzene derivatives, 1971 (Chapt. IV. medical measures, § 19)*
- Nº 148 *Paid leave for education, 1974*
- Nº 150 *Assessment of human resources, 1975*
- Nº 157 *Employment and conditions of work and life of nursing personnel, 1977*
- Nº 165 *Workers with family responsibilities, 1981*
- Nº 167 *Safeguard of rights in matters of social security, 1983 (§§ 7 and 8, art. 28)*

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVES

(An inquiry performed by the International Labour Bureau)

A. General Notes

Next month, in July 1985, the United Nations' Conference in Nairobi will account on the results of the first decade for women 1975-1985. That will be the moment when the international institutions will face the problem of what is the status and the legal, economic, social and cultural fate of the other half of the world's population- the women. This account will, beyond all doubt, assess the issue at three levels. In the first place, the position and conditions of women in the whole world will be assessed, including as well the present-day difficulties. Next, the measures taken to benefit of women during the reported decade are to be indicated. And in the third place, the results -whatever they are- that are to lay down the future policy in that respect, which will have to be carried out, and the importance of which require intensified and long-range undertakings.

The main problem, centrally manifested in the National plan of action at the Conference in Mexico in 1975, consists of how the women will be able to participate in the process of development, profiting, of course, from all advantages which are standing out.

Among the most effective and significant forms of that participation of the women in the development process are the cooperative societies and other groups of association. We mention the participation of women in the cooperatives as effective and significant, for several reasons: first of all, because the cooperatives are economic institutions, of the non-profit-making type in conducting their activity, securing for their members a sound, correct and fair economy, managed in a democratic way. Next, the cooperatives are social and cultural institutions, since they exercise the functions of a school of democracy, experience and education of the members and their families, And finally, for many countries of the Third World, the cooperatives represent the preferred means for the development of the economy, especially in the field of rural economy. With all these considerations in mind, the use of the numerous forms of cooperation by women in their struggle for equality with man, is the best choice. And it is for this reason that, the world's plan for action of the Conference in Mexico included

the cooperatives amongst the institutions which can be of help to women, to overcome their position and their status of inferiority with regards to men.

B. Activity of ILO

What is the attitude of the International Labour Organization /ILO/ the Organization I am representing, regarding the problems of women in general, and more specifically in the field of the cooperatives?

ILO was created in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles in Paris. Its main object is to assist the workers of the member countries to improve their conditions of life and labour. The Administrative Council of the organization consists of representatives of the Ministries of Labour and the Professional Organizations, that is to say, of the employers and of the workers of the member countries. At present their number is more than 150.

An Office for women, under the guidance of Mrs. Smirnova of the USSR was recently organized within the framework of the permanent Secretariat- the International Labour Bureau (ILB). This Committee is entrusted with the task to coordinate and develop the activities of the organization to the advantage of the women, having in mind, that now almost all Technical services have activities linked with the women workers - scientific and research work, education, publications, seminars, practical activity for technical assistance.

The Department of Legal Regulations is the most important unit of our organization. It draws up and puts forward for adoption by the General Assembly of ILO conventions and recommendations, legislative texts, which in accordance with some procedures become internal laws of the member countries. The so ratified conventions acquire a binding force, while the recommendations serve as a guidance or are a source of inspiration to the national legislators.

Among the some 300 conventions and recommendations, a great number refer to the defence of working women, as well as to securing equality of job opportunities and equal payment of the labour of women, e.g.:

- Conventions Nr3. of 1919 and Nr.103 of 1952, which are regarding protection of maternity;
- Convention Nr.100 of 1951,requiring equality of payment;
- Convention Nr.122 of 1964,referring to the policy of labour employment;
- Convention Nr.156 of 1981,which is in support of women workers with family obligations,etc.

The same refers as well to some other recommendations. Consequently, ILO has not been waiting for the Decade for Women,proclaimed by the United Nations, to adopt legislative measures in defence of working women.

A Service for co-operatives under the direction of Mr.Hel-Bongo, former Minister of Chad, has been functioning since 1970, within the framework of ILB.

The annual budget of the Service amounts to more than 9 million and a professional staff of some 100 persons is working in Geneva, mostly as experts.

In the last ten years, more than 10 projects for technical assistance to the benefit of the women-members of cooperatives have been realized already, or their realization is under way, sponsored by this Service. The greater part are in Africa, but there are some also in Asia and Latin America. Referred to here, are independent projects, intended entirely for the women, as those in Papua-New Guinea, in the United Arab Emirates, in Senegal and in Bolivia, or sub-projects, which represent a part of broader projects in the sphere of cooperative development, as in Thailand,Turkey,Sudan and Mauritania.

With these projects ILB has been the pioneer in that, to a great extent , virgin and unknown field of activity.

C. Inquiry of the IBL

In order to adapt, to develop and define more precisely its program of technical assistance, which would be of use to women in the cooperative sphere, the ILB drew up a questionnaire which was put forward to 1980 to the member countries, to the national cooperative organizations and to the cooperative scientific and research centres. It was intend-

ed to gather in, the necessary information manifesting the condition and the needs of the women-cooperative members. We received around 300 replies, of which some hundred were of value. Of these we retained the replies of 70 countries of all continents, including some European countries too.

The questionnaire was composed of diverse questions. In the first place it aimed at obtaining statistical data about the adult population, sex structure, as well as the number of men and of women for the last five years participating in the different categories of cooperatives, in the managing boards and wage labour of the cooperatives. Another group of questions was regarding the role of women in the cooperatives- of a mixed type, or composed entirely of women; the national programmes favouring women; the barriers and obstacles of socio-economic, cultural and political nature. The last question involved the gathering of suggestions and recommendations with regard to future improvements of conditions.

D. Results of the Inquiry

Although the statistical data obtained on the basis of the mentioned questionnaire were neither complete nor unified, did not all refer to the same periods, or to the same categories of cooperatives, but contrary to that, the competent national authorities and the national cooperative movements were able, openly to state the problems they were facing in that field.

The frequency of the problems that were mentioned, enables a juxtaposition of the information received or of the existing difficulties for every given country, which facilitates the presenting of the problems with regard to geographical location or cultural level.

In order to facilitate the establishment of mutual relations and the collation of similar situations, the classification of the collected information on the national experience is performed on the basis of criteria of geographic and cultural nature for the respective countries.

The countries of inner Africa present a geographic and in a cultural respect same entity, characterized by the position of women, similar to that of the national and sub-regional societies of that continent.

In Africa in general, the perception of the problem of women in the cooperatives and in the process of development becomes of a wide range and more significant from year to year. That is thanks to the efforts of the women themselves, the national programmes and the assistance offered by the international organizations as : the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the International Labour Bureau, FAO and the Cooperative Savings and Credit Association (ACECA)

The Round Table, as an example, which comprised women of the French-speaking countries of West Africa, was organized by the ILB and held in Senegal in 1980. Among other things, was made the conclusion, that women are inadequately informed about the advantages which cooperatives offer, In spite of the fact, that women assume a considerable place in the production of material wealth and carrying out of services, without receiving an income proportional to the applied efforts.

The same Round Table proposed the following measures for an improvement of the situation:

- the education, information and training of women before their joining a cooperative society
- the creation of cooperatives and cooperative groups separate for women
- the promotion of the managerial qualities of women
- a harmonization of the strategies of action in that respect with goals and methods of approach, which are neither identical nor coordinated

It is of importance as well, that here be mentioned the seminars organized by the ICA in Kampala, 1974, in Moscow, 1980, and in Lome, (Togo), 1982 about the women cooperative members, and about the part played by women in the cooperatives. These events gave an opportunity and brought into being the will to remedy the situation.

The gathering of numerical data on the African countries proves to be insatisfactory, because the cooperative movements are immature still, lacking somewhat, with respect to their structure, and they are not well enough comprehended even by the responsible national authorities. We could give some examples for some representative countries.

In Benin the present woman works 14.5 hours a day, according to data of 1981. Women and young girls participate in 144 mixed cooperative groupings, in rural groupings and in 82 groupings of women. The familiar activities comprise the growing of food crops, small animal husbandry, processing of raw stuffs and handicraft. Existing obstacles are: lack of technologies and capital, the low level of education and illiteracy, as well as the predominance of the rural economy - a sector in which the labour of women is neither accounted for, nor sufficiently remunerated.

In Botswana several women are taking part in important functions of the Cooperative banks and in the managing boards of 123 miscellaneous cooperatives. But these effectives are barely sufficient and little known. On the contrary, the presence of women is considerable among the salaried employees of the cooperatives. Such is the case in the consumers' cooperatives, where half of the 300 employed are women. In the other types of cooperatives there is one woman-employee to every five employed men. In the sphere of the handicraft production 80% are women. In Botswana there are no political, legal or social barriers to hinder the participation of women in the cooperatives. Restrictions here are of moral nature and are based on the traditional role of the woman as wife, mother and housekeeper. An existing project of the ILB for technical assistance is aimed at consolidating the position of women, mostly in the sphere of education and cooperative training.

In Cameroun the situation is different. Eleven of the 372 cooperative societies in 1982 were managed by women and were dealing with production and sale of foodstuffs. In the years 1976-1980 of the 200 loan and savings offices, 3/5 were represented by women.

In rural economy the presence of women in the cooperatives is negligible. The obstacles are obviously due to the lack of programme for encouragement and support.

In Cape Verde women during 1980, participated in 24 production and miscellaneous cooperatives of the 106 existing. The number of members of these 24 cooperatives was 171 women and 315 men.

In the managing board of 66 cooperative and pre-cooperatives there were 30 women and 231 men, or approximately 1 woman to every 8 men. The main obstacle indicated by the national agencies was in the refusal of women to assume economic responsibility, i.e. that women were not inclined to it and informed enough regarding the issue.

In the Ivory Coast in 1980, there were 1600 pre-cooperative groups for the production of coffee and cocoa with 88.000 members and 77 groups for growing of foodstuffs, with 30.000 members. Only 5% of the women were participating in the groups, even though that the adult female population in the rural areas is greatly more numerous than the male population. The lower status of women is due to the fact that it is the man who is the head of the family farm. In 1982 the situation improved, with women beginning to play a more considerable part than in the past, specially in the rural activities, in the handicraft production and in the small-scale fish- and foodstuff industries.

Here too, no improvement of matters could be achieved without some predisposition and cooperative education. The responsibility in that respect is to be born by the Ministry, which is in charge of the position of women.

In Gambia women play an important role in the cooperatives, owing to undertakings carried out by the government.

In the savings and credit cooperatives, by way of example, women are three times more than men. But in the managing boards the number of women is two and a half times smaller than the number of men.

There are no separate cooperatives for women, neither are there any special programmes for women.

When the women leave the villages and live in the towns, they can take a more active part in economics.

The economic sector of villages should become subject to programs of eradicating illiteracy, for economic consciousness and cooperative education.

In Malawi, the infirmity of the cooperative movement has a greater repercussion on the position of women. According to statistical data, in 1981, the participation of men in the primary cooperatives was 5 times more numerous than that of women. In the managing boards there was one woman compared to 15 men. Employees in the cooperatives were men only.

National programmes, nonexistent at present, could improve the situation.

In the Island of Mauritius, there are many fishing, saving and credit cooperatives, as well as consumer and handicraft cooperatives. Women are present in all, but the figures for women are 10 to 50 times smaller than those for men. There, a number of women are in managing positions in the savings and credit cooperatives.

There are few cooperatives for women.

The authorities of the Island are giving great priority to the cooperatives, and at present a project financed by the UNDP ¹⁾ and implemented by the ILB is rendering technical assistance needed for the development of the cooperative movement. Consequently, there may be an encouraging future regarding the status of women in this country.

Rwanda is a small country, with an actually great number of pre-cooperative groups and popular banks, the participation of women being still weak. In 1980 the subdivision of the country was of 143 municipalities with 258 authorized cooperatives and 1.223 pre-cooperative groups. The figure of membership amounts to 154.000 men, or 97,65 % of the total and 3.719 women or 2,35%. The figures of members of the managing boards showed 2.852 men, or 93,75% and 190 women - 6,25 %.

Legally and politically women have the same rights as men, but actually, in the sphere of economic activity the place of women is far more behind that of men, due to the existing division of labour and the limited role of women.

The authorities and the population are becoming continually more conscious of the need of including the women in the development process, and are assisting them in the acquisition of managerial qualities.

1) UNDP = United Nation's Development Program

In Senegal the situation is somewhat more peculiar. Women participate in mixed cooperatives for the production of peanuts, with the number of members amounting to 397.000 men and women. However, the number of women is not known and does not seem to be very great.

Contrary to that, in the urban regions are in existence about twenty cooperatives of women in the sphere of handicraft production and processing of fish. There are as well about 600 women's groups in the rural regions, a part of which are being assisted by a project of the UNDP and by the IBL with the aim of facilitating the labour of women.

Special programmes for the women are being authorized every year by the Department for the Status of Women at the Ministry for Social Development. The women adhering to the trade unions (1/4 of the total number of the workers belonging to the trade unions) are setting up in Dakar women's cooperatives for production and services.

Senegal is one of the rare countries, where consciousness on the part of the state and the women for a need to improve their status is very high and is making headway.

In Sierra Leone the women have taken their fate in their own hands; 150 of the 1200 local cooperative organizations are women's cooperatives in the spheres of savings and credit, of handicraft production and the sale of farming products.

Illiteracy and the burden of traditional roles are a hindrance for an increase in the participation of women. However the creation and functioning of separate cooperatives for women, are a proof of their will to go forward, relying on their own forces only.

In Swaziland the position of women is more fair than elsewhere. Of the total number of cooperative members, amounting to 7.600, 33% are women. In the consumer's cooperatives their number is three times greater than that of men, and in the savings and credit cooperatives their number is six times greater. In the managing boards of the local cooperatives the number of women amounts to nearly 200, compared to 530 men, while the women as employees at the cooperatives are by far more numerous than men.

There are no separate women's cooperatives.

That more favourable position of women is due, in our opinion, on the one hand to the diversity of the cooperative forms, and on the other hand, to professional appropriation of the new economic roles between men and women.

Conclusion about Africa: That is the situation in Africa in the sub-Saharan regions; hard labour and inadequately paid for, traditional practices, illiteracy and a limited participation in cooperative development with some small promising exceptions, meaning by this the savings and credit cooperatives, the handcrafts, those for the processing and sale of food products, and the consumer cooperatives. The conspicuous and positive example demonstrated by Swaziland, being a confirmation of the order of things. In another geographical and cultural region, that of the Arabic and Islamic countries of North Africa, among them: Mauritania, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey and some other countries of the Near and Middle East, the position of women has always been in dependence upon the social and cultural factors, limiting their economic role. However, here and there, the authorities and the women themselves respond to that, by training young women for a participation in economic life. That are examples given by Algiers, Mauritania, Sudan, Turkey and Iraq. One thing which we have to stress here, is the general conclusion, that the national society, which is exclusively under the lordship of man, permits women to leave their isolation, only when the economic activities, most often of the handicraft kind, are being performed in the familiar or village structure themselves, and do not menace the domination of man. How far will that liberalization, of the roles rooted in this regions, come, will show the future and changes in consciousness, not only of the women, but of the men too.

It would be suitable to say some words now, about some Asian countries too, where the problem is the same, but it is brought forward in different manifestations.

In the regional scale, to begin with, the national authorities and the women are well aware of the gravity of the problem. In the last years, several regional seminars which were organized mainly with the help of the ICA, contributed much to the beginning of a change in mentality, the creation of the women-members' cooperatives and in the realization of national programmes for technical assistance in favour of the population concerned. Such is the case with the seminar on the Cooperative Activities, organized in Tokyo, August-September 1979; the seminar for an Extension of the Participation of Women in the Cooperatives, organized in Sri Lanka in November, 1980; the session of the representatives of the Women's Committees, in Sri Lanka again, in July 1982 ; and the seminar of the Agricultural Cooperatives of Multipurpose Activities; at which special attention was drawn to the activity of women in agricultural organizations of women, held in Japan in August -September 1982. The general tendency which was outlined in all these events is the need for an education of women, and next to that, assistance should be given to the creation of cooperatives for services related to the family/health ,credit,nutrition, education for children/ and finally, the creation of additional income generating cooperatives.

We shall consider some examples of the Asian countries :

In Bangladesh women participate in the mixed cooperatives and participate as well in the separate women's cooperatives.

For the mixed cooperatives we have available official statistical data for the years 1979 and 1983.

In 1979 the membership of 58.000 agricultural cooperatives was 1,5 million men, and 20.000 women only. For 1983 the figures were 2.630.000 men and 65.000. That is an increase of the membership of women of more than 300%.

In the field of weaving men are more numerous than women. However for the period 1979-1983 there was an increase of 20% of the women, while the number of men remained the same.

In the dairy and fishing industries the members of the 4.500 cooperatives are only men.

In the 4.000 multipurpose cooperatives there were 1,5 million men and only 2.300 women. A situation, which remained unchanged for the period 1979-1983. Hence, one should not be astonished, that the women have set up their own cooperatives. In 1983 there are in existence one national cooperative, 41 central regional cooperatives and approximately 3.000 women's primary cooperatives of women.

The membership of women reached 85.000 persons. From 1979 to 1983 there was an increase of 47% in the membership of women in the central cooperatives and of 90% in the primary cooperatives, which is an indication of a great progress to the advantage of the cause of women.

The situation in the managing boards is not spectacular.

In 1983, in the 18 national cooperatives there were 15 women compared to 255 men, in the central cooperatives -369 women compared to 7.500 men and in the primary cooperatives 21.000 women and 672.000 men. The growth rate in the collectivization of women for the period 1979-1983 is almost equal to that of the men(with an exception of the primary cooperatives), hence there is no perceptible change in favour of women.

And finally, regarding the cooperative employees, the situation is still worse, since the few available positions are taken up by the men. In 1983 in the national cooperatives were working 45 women compared to 1.581 men, in the central cooperatives nearly 250 women while the men employed- were 2.600, and in the primary cooperatives 454 women and 82.000 men. These figures speak for themselves well enough.

With regards to the existing obstacles, the following are to be mentioned: the illiteracy, hindrances of cultural order and the low level of the economic development of the country.

However, the authorities and the women, while aware of the difficulties, are manifesting their determination and will in the struggle to do away with the unfavourable position of women, which is in existence today.

India in 1981 had a population of 654 millions, of which 316 millions were women. In 1983 there were 3 millions mixed cooperatives affilliating 100 million members. The number of the women's coopera-

tives being industrial. The position of women in detail is little known. The illiteracy and the dominating role of men in the sphere of economy are the main hindrances in the existing situation. In 1978 women are holding only 1/8 of the paid positions of work. The situation remains almost without any change in the next five years to, until 1982. In this way, the woman's population, constituting nearly half of the total population and securing 2/3 of the total labour, is contributing only 1/10 to the total country's production and owns only one hundredth part of the real estate in its totality.

And coming back again to the cooperative movement, it should be noted that a part of the managing boards of the women's cooperatives are composed of men, who manage these cooperatives. Some states have decided to retain a number of managing positions for women cooperative-members. There obviously is a willingness for performing a change in the situation. This struggle is waged by the women, conscious of their capabilities and of their requirements, especially in the fields of savings and crediting, where they have achievements in creating and managing their own banks. The forum of the working women in Madras is a conspicuous and very encouraging example. The Congresses of 1978 and 1982 emphasized the necessity for an improvement of conditions for the access of women to the cooperatives.

For Indonesia we have available exact numerical data regarding the mixed coepratives for 1981. The greatest participation of women is in the cooperatives dealing with public services / 115.615 women and 930.719 men/, in the village cooperatives /121,749 women and 930.719 men/, in the workers' cooperatives / 22.132 women and 105.133 men/, in the cooperatives of retired persons / 17.065 women and 41.675 men/. There are as well 151 women's cooperatives with 21.567 members, and in defiance of which 500 of them are men. No data are available about the participation of the women in the managing boards or as salaried personnel in the cooperatives.

The better part of the cooperative activities of the women are confined to the spheres of savings and credit.

The difficulties on hand are of a cultural and economic character. The problems are still man's business, and of less concern to the interested women. There are no special programmes to provide for the realization of the problem in the coming years.

For Asia, and not merely from the quoted examples it can be seen that the need of the presence of women is enormous. Women are taking part even in the agricultural cooperatives, contrary to what is happening in Africa, and they are involved easier in economic activities to create salaried jobs. With regards to legal matters, there still exist some obstacles for the access of women to ownership and credit, and what concerns the illiteracy, it makes the participation of woman in management difficult, or entirely impossible. There are countries, like Singapore, where the situation is very encouraging. But in the countries with a numerous population, immense work is to be done in all spheres. The hope for a satisfactory change could come only from the women themselves by means of the savings and credit, handicrafts and industrial cooperatives, by trying to get themselves organized financially and economically in order to evade from the traditional and stereotype roles. These roles should be redistributed so as to favour the other half of the Asian population, which actually represents a very high percentage of the world's women's population. If the struggle was to be lost in Asia, but won in another place, that would in the final account, be a dead loss for the cause of women.

We shall leave aside talking much about the Pacific Ocean Islands, where many countries took part in the survey of the ILB. It would be enough mentioning that the cooperative movement is making a fresh start, and that the plans for development of these new states lay an emphasis on the cooperatives. Women begin to participate in the first cooperatives, whose activity is dealing with the handicrafts, savings and credits, and trade. The backwardness in economic development and the absence of patterns are giving a reflection of the cooperative movement, which has not yet become mighty and significant.

In the Carribean Islands, on the contrary, the cooperatives are generally well developed and the women fully participate in them. The situation regarding the women is best compared to all other developing countries,, when we consider all other cooperatives, except the agricultural and fishing ones, namely: savings and credit, consumers and industrial. The whole of the membership of women in these mixed cooperatives is varying from 25% to 60% in some countries, like Porto Rico and Dominica. This mass participation of women can be explained by the fact that women are free of the burden and obstacles of cultural

nature. That accounts for, as well, of the absence of separate cooperatives of women.

We should turn some more attention to Latin America, where general conditions of social and economic development have not yet reached a satisfactory level.

Many meetings and regional and national seminars, like the one at Lima in January 1978 and that in Colombia in October 1980, have stressed the determination of the states and the concerned cooperative movements to undertake measures for encouraging the participation of women in the cooperatives.

In Argentina, by 1981, there were more than 5.000 mixed primary cooperatives, 43 unions and two at national level with a total of more than 1.000.000 members.

Informations regarding the role of women are not very eloquent. By a national survey of 1977, it is to be seen, that in the savings and credit cooperatives of women constitute 36% of the membership body 1/5 of the members of the managing boards, 44% of the salaried personnel and 27% of the employees.

Unfortunately, there is no government program for an improvement of the situation. National seminars, organized by the cooperative movement are trying to evoke women to make all those who are interested, conscious of the problems.

If we consider the case of the greatest country in Latin America - Brazil, it will be noticed, that the situation is still worse. According to statistical data of 1980, more than half of the population, which amounts to 119 millions - are women. However, of the 32 million women actively participating in the economy, only 6% have any income. The rest of them work in the family economic unit managed by the man. 33% of the working women are occupied in the service sector/nutrition, repairs, homework/, 16% - in social activities, 15% in the sphere of agriculture and livestock breeding, 14% in the processing industries, 9% in trade and 13% in different other activities.

There are in existence several thousand cooperatives, mainly in the fields of production, consumption, credit and services. But little is known about the situation of women, since the survey could not get at statistical data on that matter. What we know for sure, is

that the traditional role of women remains persistently in the countries which are faced by difficulties at the outset of their economic development. There do not exist any programmes for improving or alteration fo the existing situation.

Certain individual efforts are aimed at the organizing of women's savings and credit, and industrial cooperatives. Few women are being elected to the managing boards of the cooperatives, but not a single one to the cooperative movement at national level.

In Bulgaria ,according to data of 1981, the situation is brighter and the trends are more encouraging.

The participation of women in the production cooperatives is 8%, and in the cooperatives for servies it amounts to 15%. In the managing boards the participation of women is 17%, and something not to be neglected - 33% in the committees. Besides 60% of the paid cooperative workers are women.

According to a study of 1983, the situation seems to be more favourable in the urban-than in the village regions. Actually, in the different categories of cooperatives (for services, for social utilities,handicrafts) the participation of women is at all levels. In the savings and credit cooperatives the women take part even in the managing boards.

A big project of the ILB has rendered in the last years a great help to the Mothers' clubs. The women concerned were able to organize several networks of kindergartens, as well as to secure credit and set up cooperative production groups.

Since 1976 the National Cooperative Institute has set up six centres for the promotion of women, and is aiming at the creating of service and handicrafts cooperatives for the women.

The Government too is conscious of the problem and is striving to encourage efforts directed to organizing the women in setting up cooperatives.

In Colombia, in 1980 the average participation of women in the cooperatives had reached approximately 28%. Some other data show, that in the same year in the consumer cooperatives there were 4.163 women as to 22.057 men, and in the credit cooperatives there were 90 women and 276 men. The memberships of the managing boards were composed of 1 woman compared to 9 men. The situation was better in the different committees - on audits, education, credit etc.

There are in existence as well several cooperatives of women primarily in the production of shoes.

In the spheres of handicraft production, communal services and savings a number of women's pre-cooperative groups are functioning.

The first National Assembly of women members of the cooperatives was held in 1977. Then, a clear conclusion was reached, that the role of women has remained of secondary importance, compared to that of men, and that programmes for the education and encouragement of women are lacking.

And finally in Nicaragua, in 1980, according to information by the Centre for Cooperative Training, there were 2.673 cooperatives with a total of approximately 97.000 members. Of these 42% are women and 58% men. The greatest share of the working women is in credit cooperatives, the consumer's, in the cooperatives for services and in the labourers collectives.

As far as governing functions are concerned, women are not so numerous in the agricultural economic sector /334 women of a total of 5.833 persons/. In the subsidiary sector /of production/ there were 200 women compared to 115 men. In the tertiary sector, that of the cooperatives for services, there were 10.000 women approximately of a total of 28.000 persons.

The salaried cooperative workers are primarily men. Several handicraft cooperatives, which are purely women's began activity. The government endeavours take legislative and educational measures for furthering the integration of women in the cooperatives. This brief trip, however, to the biggest countries of Latin America could not satisfy us. Scarcity of numerical data, a falling behind of cooperative development, an absence of the women from almost all spheres of activity, rudimentary consciousness and a shortage of national programmes. The woman, especially the Indian, has not yet

emerged from the primary socio-economic standing. There is a huge work yet to be done in this sub-continent.

E. The industrialized European countries

Before we try to draw any conclusions and state general tendencies it would be suitable to cast a glance at the cooperative members-women in Europe, so as the state of affairs is seen by the inquiry made by the ILB, in spite of the fact that this survey regards only the developing countries.

Two surveys concerning the cooperatives of Europe should be mentioned. The first was carried out by European Economic Community in 1981 and was regarding the employment of women by way of the cooperatives or the institutions of collective economic activity. The survey showed that the questioned women in France, Italy and England were in favour of a collective form of work, which helps them to create independent and remunerated employments. The recommendations of the study concern the necessity of assisting the cooperatives of women in the spheres of finance, (consultation regarding investment, on taxation matters, on credits) of education (training) and of administration. Model cooperatives should be set up for the encouragement of women, and to be used by them as pattern.

The second survey was made in 1980 by the Plunkett Foundation on account of FAO. It regards the participation of women in the agricultural cooperative organizations. In general, the study admits that women play an immense role in agricultural works, as well as in accountant and secretarial activities, but always at an inferior or medial level of the scale. At the level of decision taking that participation is so faint, that it renders ineffective all factors, which could bring about a change or an improvement of their fate.

To be more specific, the participation of women in the agricultural cooperatives is very low, lower than in all other cooperative activities. The reason for this is , because agriculture in Europe is traditionally an occupation for men. When the women are being admitted to the cooperatives with their husbands, and being entitled to one vote only, it is the man who exercises this right.

The study underscores, actually, the active participation of the women in the cooperatives of the countries with a planned economy. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Roumania, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and in the Soviet Union, women participate in the agricultural cooperatives with a percentage varying from 20% to 40% of the total number of the members, and their part in the managing boards is between 11% and 34%.

The inquiry of the ILB confirms the data of the mentioned study concerning the agricultural cooperatives. In all European countries with a free market economy, the participation of the women in the agricultural cooperatives is very limited, including in the countries most developed economically, politically and socially. Exceptions are Ireland, where the membership of women amounts to 25%, and Finland with a percentage of 20.

But women have a broad participation in the consumers cooperatives, especially in the English speaking countries, the Scandinavian countries, and the Central European countries with the existence of the old traditions of the guilds and of the feminist movements. In the Mediterranean European countries- the situation in Italy is improving fast in favour of the women (women-cooperative members - 10 to 15%) in other countries, like Greece however, legislative measures are being taken for the restoration fo an equality of rights and payment, between men and women, which without doubt, will have a positive repercussion on the problems of the women, organized up to now in separate cooperatives.

The countries, in which the cooperative status of women is very high, sometimes also equal, equal, or more than equal, compared to the cooperative status of the men, that are the European countries of a planned economy. Almost all of these countries took part in the inquiry of the ILB and their responses are the most detailed and most complete of all those received from the other countries (Exceptions being Singapore and Bangladesh). I will present to you the example of two socialist countries only:

In the German Democratic Republic, the participation of women in consumer cooperatives in 1981 amounted to 84% with regard to the total membership. The percentage of women in the managing and accountants staff was 41% ; for the women elected to the managing boards it

was approximately 40%; and as members of the auditing commissions 60%. The consumer cooperatives satisfy 83% of the country's demands for admission of children in the nursery establishments, -98% in the kindergartens, and 54% in the summer-vacation resorts for children.

In the Soviet Union, the Constitution in its articles, 7, 10, 22, 24, 34 and 35 provides for the equality between men and women and the protection of the cooperatives.

The main cooperative sections of consumption and production comprised in 1983 some 60 million members, 67% of them women. The attendance of women to the managing boards exceeds 43%, and of these 41% are acting as presidents of the managing boards, which is an exceptional fact in the international cooperative movement. This percentage applies to the cooperative organizations at all levels, (local, of districts, regional, republican). More than 60 % of those employed at the "Centrosoyus" are women. The women's committees of this supreme organization have broad programmes for the promotion of women, for broadening of the social undertakings, for the advancement of the family well-being and alleviation of hard labour of women. And besides all that, the cooperative movement of the Soviet Union is playing a prominent part in an upswing of the consciousness of the women-cooperative members in the whole world.

In conclusion, with regards to the situation of the cooperatives in Europe, we could say, that two approaches and two realities are prevailing. In the countries of free trade economy, the place held by the woman-cooperative member is a product of a long historic evolution, linked with the movement for the liberation of women under the guidance of prominent feminists, already at the end of the last century. We should not forget, that the Commune of Paris of 1871, and before it, still, the socialists and utopians were preaching for the liberation of woman.

But in these countries it is a shortcoming, that the problem of women does not sufficiently attract the attention of the national cooperative movements, probably because of the erroneous idea that the woman has attained the status equal to that of men, which is in fact not true, and that the woman can take up her own defence.

In the European countries of planned economy, the favourable and even dominating position of women in the cooperative movement, is as it seems, a result of the conditions created by the 1917 revolution and by the Second world war. The planning of human resources, the appreciation of the status of woman, the remuneration of her labour, the information and education she is acquiring, are as well factors which integrate her in the process of development on an equal footing with men.

F. Final Conclusions

What general conclusions could this report and this review of the activities of women lead us to within the framework of the cooperatives?

Leaving aside the European countries, we think that the picture appears gloomy:

1. Regarding the setting up and functioning of women's institutions and particularly of committees of the women cooperative members within the framework of the national cooperative movements, we consider that in the Asian countries there are positive results. In Africa and especially in Latin America the lack of women's institutions, which are to deal with the promotion of women, cripples the cooperative development of women.

2. As a general rule, it is the men, who manage the activities of women and who consider and adopt the measures in favour of women. This creates a state of dependence, and is disparaging to women, depriving them of the possibility to acquire knowledge, even at the price, and by the way of trial and error.

3. With the exception of some countries, mainly, smaller countries and countries with a democratic and socialist orientation, numerical data about the economic activities of women are missing, and because of that, in connection with the Decade for Women, we do not know anything about the role of women in the economic development and in what way they join to the social and economic development of the societies to which they belong.

4. It is evident, that the situation is improving for women in the countries developing from the viewpoint of economics and the cooperatives. But in most cases, the women are overburdened by hard labour and do not receive the remuneration that would give them the possibility get some education, for instance, and be able to go out. Hence, they continue to play their roles, assigned by tradition and stereotype, imposed by the surrounding male environment which is doing the thinking, acting and taking decisions on behalf of them and on their account.

5. With the urbanization of life, and the emerging of the woman from the village surroundings, where social, economic and cultural conditions are still primitive, women begin to take a greater part in economic life and communication. That explains why they are of such small number in the cooperatives of the village regions (agricultural, fishing and stock-breeding cooperatives).

The tendencies which favour them require their participation in the industrial and handicrafts' cooperatives as well as those for services. The culmination are the savings and credit cooperatives, where even men admit the preponderant position of women in the management and credibility. That is a common phenomenon, which can be noticed in all countries all over the world.

6. And there where the society of man has fossilized, women take the initiative to set up and manage separate cooperatives of women, in order to face urgent needs, and challenge an open or even a disguised refusal of some cooperative movements to facilitate their membership. Judicial or administrative obstacles, for which the state governments could be held responsible, do not exist, or are minimum. But, since some of the national associations in the new countries are by tradition set up by word of mouth, and not by a written document and the majority of women being illiterate and kept aside from information and education, the equality of sexes remains only a triumph of judicial, administrative and bureaucratic texts, but not an evident and living everyday reality. Consequently, even when the equality between the sexes is proclaimed, the desired equilibrium remains to be conveyed in practice.

7. The greatest obstacles due to the social and cultural conditions humiliate women as soon as they step over the threshold of their homes. The millennial practice of the superiority of man, has established the

collective department in the institutions, which in their turn, put into shape our old and new world. The worst of all is, that the situation does not astound anybody, that all, the women sometimes as much as the men, consider that the social division of labour is done well, the way it is done. It follows, that free are only those who know that they are slaves and want to alter their status.

8. There are some things altogether and constantly lacking, and hindering even the best intentions, as is the illiteracy, the lack of information and the weakness of women in the sphere of managing functions.

9. Even when the woman is participating, in one way or another, by no matter what percentage, in the local cooperative organizations, that participation is not proportional and is not reflected in the governing bodies. The cooperative members-women, hence are necessarily headed, even under best conditions, by the men- who manage and make decisions. Even in the cooperatives of women.

11. Finally, the problem of the participation of women in the cooperatives is an inseparable part of their participation in the process of development, and that is not only a matter of equality or justice, which is owed to them. That which is needed above all, is the creation of conditions- objective and permanent, which would make them capable to think, decide and act in the direction towards which they will be lead by their needs and their justified aspiraitons.

R E S O L U T I O N

of the participants in the International Seminar on Involving
Women Cooperators in the Development of their Countries

Sofia, June 1985

Representing women cooperators from 34 countries of the world, integrated by the ICA Women's Committee, the participants in the International Seminar organised by the Central Cooperative Union of Bulgaria in Sofia from 19th to 22nd June 1985, having acquainted themselves with various aspects of the place and role of women in their cooperative organisations as well as in their countries:

- NOTE** that women are vitally interested in increasing their participation and influence on the development of cooperatives in their countries;
- CONSIDER** that all women cooperators should act as catalysts to use better the existing possibilities and participate in the creation of better conditions for positive development of socio-economic relations and progress;
- DECLARE** that they shall take every effort to consolidate the ties and the collaboration between cooperative movements in various countries;
- SUPPORT** all peace initiatives of the international governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- EXPRESS** their readiness to unflinchingly fight for lasting peace and social justice.

Simultaneously the participants in the Sofia seminar of women cooperators, highly assessing the preparations of the debates, stress the need to organise periodical meetings to evaluate progress in the strengthening of the role and place of women in the cooperative movement.

L I S T O F P A R T I C I P A N T S

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3. NIDIA BALBI DE GONZALO	ARGENTINA
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Published by CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE UNION
UNITED CO-OPERATIVE PRESS

Circulation 200 FREE OF CHARGE

BULGARIAN ESPERANTIST CO-OPERATIVE
OFFSET PRINTING HOUSE Order No 500