Women's Issues After Beijing

Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Positions - Networks - Results

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A Basic Introduction

Hi Susan,

my outrageously expensive high-heeled Italian sandals that you were so envious of have fallen to pieces - they fell apart in the rain and mud of Huairou. It is really a joke. I should have brought my wellingtons! The weather is a disaster in this corner of China. I am coughing not only because of too many cigarettes, I am dead tired, in fact more dead than alive and at the same time completely crazy. When I see my bed for a couple of hours once in a while, even in my dreams I am still on my way from caucus to causus in the Beijing Recreation Centre (you remember: the themerelated meetings to coordinate lobbying activities), undiluted chaos! Lobbying on the spot is a tough business. And by the way, excuse my bad writing, I am scribbling this in the bus on the way back to the Beijing Conference Centre, my fingers are numb and the journey will probably again take about two hours today, even here they know what a rush-hour is, though it looks slightly different from back home. As I said, the whole situation is a complete mess and still I am happy, in fact guite euphoric. Just imagine, Susan, I was able to add a whole half-sentence to the Platform for Action! After tedious and painstaking work, umpteen consultations and by treading delicately in cooperating. It is absolutely great to add something really vital to the Platform at the very last minute! Of course, this was not an heroic act of mine, single-handed. Cooperation between the NGO-delegates, at least those from development activities, works pretty well; here at least everyone still listens to what the others have to say and gets down to it: if you support my cause, I back up yours. In spite of stress, too little sleep, too much work. It should always be like this, a damned good experience. This at least I will take home.

We had to work pretty hard as it is to keep the twenty/twenty regulation from Copenhagen. No one from the governmental delegations was awfully keen on it and certainly not willing to get into a fight over it. You must apply pressure, otherwise it is always going to be a minimal consensus. I really can't bear it anymore: "not covered by the minimal consensus... not consensually agreed...".

It pays to be at the top of the three-tier community of NGOs. You are sitting pretty if accredited to the governmental delegation: direct access to all the latest information and advice stands. You are always up-to-date about events and always find a woman to talk to. That Europe is speaking here with one voice is quite helpful for lobbying. For those who are simply accredited it is not too bad either. Even if there are certain access restrictions one can get around them. Before Beijing, I had been a bit sceptical about being part of the governmental delegation, but here on the spot you realize how valuable it is when cooperation between the NGOs works all right.

But the non-accredited NGO-women in Huairou are really out of it all, they depend on us to tell them what is going on. After Beijing we must seriously consider new forms of cooperation, bundling of capacities will be an important subject. This is a point where we waste a lot because of friction and at times even wear ourselves down. It can only get better.

Dear Susan, I am freezing to death, but just a few words about the Platform. I am quite drunk, in fact intoxicated with it. This thing is going to be an authentic feminine document with a claim to world-wide recognition. Never before in the history of the United Nations has there been a manifesto which brings together all our concerns, sufferings, hopes, aspirations and demands in such a comprehensive manner. This is only a first step. If we really put our hearts into it, then it is the beginning of the end of male claims of exclusive rights in shaping the political conditions in this world. If we really start down this road. In my present state of intoxication about so much feminine poetry, which - the Goddess knows - has come from so much sweat and back-breaking work, I regard the risks involved as minimal. This has got to change after Beijing. I know that. Because one thing is clear, the thing will turn into a terrible overfilled monster. Incomprehensible to normal humans, simply unreadable, piled together in a package through negotiations, confused and without discernible style and diction. A semantic adventure playground, a linguistic jumble. I see the danger: it is only one step from the jumble to the dump. We will have to completely distil the thing to make it politically productive! We must always have at hand what its real message is. If we succeed in this, we can turn the world back home completely round! Three conferences on women of only therapeutic value are enough of a warning!

So get ready for action, my dear! Lots of love

Yours

PS: Perhaps you will hear from me again from Beijing!

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Preface

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995 was a highlight in the post-Rio sequence of UN-conferences. More than 50,000 participants turned the event into the largest conference ever in the history of the UN: 27,000 women participants took part in the Forum of Non-governmental Organizations (NGO Forum), the Conference itself saw 5,000 delegates from 189 countries as well as 4,000 women representatives from NGOs and 3,200 journalists.

It was the objective of the Conference and the NGO Forum to review the Forward-looking Strategies, which had been drawn up at the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, in respect of their world-wide implementation and to work out a Plan of Action for expediting their realization.

The Platform for Action is the central document, a comprehensive catalogue of actions to be taken in order to eliminate world-wide discrimination against women. With the aim of enabling concerns and interests of women to be included in the Draft Platform, five preparatory regional conferences were held which brought together representatives of Governments and a large number of NGOs. During the whole preparatory period, women and women sorganizations met in countless workshops to work out common strategies and negotiating positions and thus to exert an influence on the process of preparation and on the Conference itself.

Since the mid-80s, advancement of women has become more important in international development cooperation. The primary object is to improve general social and political conditions to enable women to enjoy equal participation in the political, economic and social development of their countries. The "Guide-lines for the Advancement of Women in International Development Cooperation of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung", adopted in 1994, give an idea of how the Foundation wishes to contribute to improving the status of women in the Third World in all areas of its activities, ie in social and political and trade-union cooperation, in economic and social development and in media cooperation.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung assisted the process of preparation for the 4th World Conference on Women with a number of activities:

- in many project countries, the Foundation supported the national preparations for the Conference;
- during the preparatory regional conference for Africa in Dakar, Senegal, the office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung organized supportive measures for women representatives of NGOs from among their partner organizations;
- international conferences and workshops in Germany and the project countries provided a basis for the exchange of experience and for setting up a network of women in Germany and in the developing countries;
- the office in New York produced a video about the lobbying activities of NGOs within the United Nations system during the preparation of world conferences.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung regards a large number of the strategies which were incorporated in the Platform for Action as confirmation of its work and consequently wishes to contribute to the follow-up process of the 4th World Conference on Women as well: within the framework of its development cooperation, networks of women's organizations and women from among the partner organizations of the Foundation were supported in organizing regional conferences in Latin America, West Africa and Asia with the aim of critically evaluating the results of Beijing and the progress made in their implementation and in drawing up plans of action for the years to come. Moreover, it is proposed to take into

account and to incorporate the results of the 4th World Conference on Women in the project activities of FES in connection with the advancement of women.

The Platform for Action has taken up all relevant analytical conclusions, essential proposals for action and instruments of previous conferences and has given a more concrete meaning to the corresponding commitments and strategies. In her concluding speech in Beijing the Secretary General of the 4th World Conference on Women, Gertrude Mongella, stated that the tasks emerging from the 4th World Conference on Women may trigger a social revolution and become a turning-point in the history of humanity.

One essential condition for the follow-up process is the wide dissemination of information about the objectives and contents of the Beijing Platform for Action. As has been emphasized in the document at several points, it is above all the task of the NGOs at the national level to review, control and promote implementation of conclusions agreed upon.

This basic introduction puts into context the close links between the Platform for Action and the resolutions of the other major preparatory conferences in order to make them easier to understand. (The various German translations of conference documents from Rio to Beijing so far rather concealed these cross-references. For example, one of the central terms in all conference documents, ie "sustainable development", does not occur in the German version of the Platform for Action).

Moreover, this basic introduction intends to condense the comprehensive catalogue of analyses and objectives of the Platform for Action and thus make them accessible for political practice.

Chapter I

The Road to Beijing:

From the Foundation of the United Nations to the Fourth World Conference on Women

In their foundation charter the United Nations (UN) are committed to "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion..." (Charter, Art.I). Three women participated in the foundation conference in San Francisco in April/June 1945.

1945

United Nations are committed to promote gender equality

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations sets up the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) with headquarters in Vienna. The Commission is the oldest UN-institution responsible for the implementation of gender equality. The Commission prepares reports and recommendations on the status of women, it commissions studies to expose discrimination. It defines policy objectives on women's issues and proposes actions to realize these.

1946

Commission on the Status of Women

The CSW acted as organizer of the preparatory and follow-up process (monitoring) of the world conferences on women.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights reaffirms equality of men and women. Article 16 provides for "equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution" for both men and women.

1949

Declaration of Human Rights

The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights form the basis for legal standards and agreements which are intended to describe in more concrete terms how to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, nationality and religious orientation, as laid down in the two documents.

The General Assembly of the UN adopts the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

1949

Convention against Traffic in Persons

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva adopts the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Equal Value.

1951

Equal Pay for Equal Work

The General Assembly of the UN adopts the Convention on the Political Rights of Women. This convention gives women the general right to vote and to be eligible for and to hold public office.

1952

Political Rights for Women

Cartoon S. 8: Legal advice for women

1957

UN Convention on the Nationality of Married Women

1958

ILO Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation

1962

UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Human Rights Covenant) reaffirms the ban on discrimination and extends it. Everyone whose recognized rights and freedoms are infringed has recourse to appeal procedures. Article 3 commits the States Parties to the Covenant "to ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant".

1966

Human Rights Covenant of the UN

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights commits the States Parties to the Covenant "to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant" (Art.3). In Article 10 of the Social Covenant the contracting parties recognize that marriage can be concluded only with the free consent of both parties to the marriage. Before and after childbirth, mothers should be accorded special protection. During this period, working mothers have a claim to paid leave.

Social Covenant of the UN

The signatories recognize "that special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in work harmful to their morals or health or dangerous to life or likely to hamper their normal development should be punishable by law. States should also set age limits below which paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law".

First general declaration of the UN to put world-wide discrimination against women on the international agenda, though not binding under international law. First step towards a "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" which will be binding in international law (see also:1979).

1967

UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The United Nations concentrate world attention on the situation of women, on their concerns, needs and the daily violation of women's rights, as laid down in the various covenants, declarations and conventions of the United Nations.

1975

International Women's Year

The Conference of the International Women's Year from June 19th to July 2nd, 1975, is the highlight of the International Women's Year and the prelude to four world conferences on women so far.

First World Conference on Women in Mexico

In Mexico, a World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year is adopted, though not unanimously.

Following the Mexico Conference, the General Assembly of the UN proclaims this decade to be the UN-Decade for Women under the motto "Equality - Development - Peace".

1976-1985

UN-Decade for Women

The Voluntary Fund for the UN-Decade for Women (VFDW) is set up for funding UN-projects during the Decade for Women. In 1985 it is renamed into UNIFEM and established as an open-ended UN-development programme which is part of the overall United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

1976

First Development Fund for Women

The Fund, which is located in New York, raises funds from voluntary donations and supports pilot projects in development cooperation.

On the recommendation of the First World Conference on Women, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is founded in 1976.

UN-research on women initiated

At the suggestion of the World Conference on Women of Mexico-City, the UN declares May 8th to be the International Women's Day.

1977

May 8th is declared Women's Day

The "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" states that, in spite of all declarations, "extensive discrimination against women continues to exist", but that women's maximum participation is "required in all fields for the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and for the cause of peace". In the Preamble, the signatory States reaffirm their determination "to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations". The Convention defines discrimination against women as any gender-based exclusion or restriction which aims at preventing "the recognition, use or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women". The Convention lists a differentiated catalogue of discriminatory acts in all areas of life. The signatory States confirm their commitment to eliminating these forms of discrimination.

1979

Anti-Discrimination Convention

Based on Article 17, the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is set up to monitor the progress made in implementing the Convention. The Committee, composed of 23 women experts, examines the reports submitted by the signatory States every four years in respect of their anti-discrimination activities. The Committee itself has the right to request reports from the signatory States at any time.

Anti-Discrimination Committee

Five years after the conference in Mexico, the delegates from 145 states convene to take stock of the first half of the Decade for Women.

The Copenhagen Conference from July 14th to 30th, 1980, adopts a Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade for Women which concentrates in particular on employment, health, education and training. The Programme of Action, which was not adopted unanimously, takes up the objectives and demands not yet realized of the Mexico Conference and puts them back on the agenda.

1980

Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen

At the conclusion of the Decade for Women, the Nairobi Conference (July 15th to 26th, 1985) adopts the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women during the Period 1986 to the Year 2000.

1985

Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi

For the first time the central document, which formulates voluntary commitments of the national Governments, is consensually adopted. "This distinguishes this conference from the previous world conferences on women in Mexico in 1975 and in Copenhagen in 1980. The adoption of this central document without any dissenting vote is the most important result of the World Conference on Women in Nairobi", the German Government said in its official statement from 25-9-85 (Parliamentary Bulletin 10/3888).

This procedure is accepted for all the subsequent UN-conferences. Dissenting views are enclosed in the annex. The agreed documents of UN-conferences are not binding under international law, in contrast to its international conventions and covenants. They are voluntary commitments of national Governments.

At the Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro from June 3rd to 14th, 1992, 178 Governments met to adopt Agenda 21 unanimously, though not binding under international law, a comprehensive programme of action, valid into the 21st century, with instructions on how to act in environmental and development policies. Agenda 21 has the objective of changing human activities world-wide in such a way that a sustainable development is achieved. It is the most comprehensive international programme on the integration of development and the environment. Agenda 21 includes in Chapter 24 "a Global Plan of Action for women to bring about sustainable and equitable development". The Plan calls upon all governments to implement full equality in all areas of life in society. The Rio Declaration lists 27 agreed principles for future environmental and development policies and states under principle 20: "women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development".

1992

UN Conference on the Environment and Development

The industrialized countries have committed themselves to make available 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product for public development assistance with which to fund a package of measures. They promise "to reach this goal as soon as possible and to ensure an immediate and effective implementation of Agenda 21".

Representatives of 171 States adopt the Vienna Declaration in consensus voting. It sets forth and explains the principles on human rights, including a Programme of Action with concrete plans of actions, recommendations and demands. The Declaration emphasizes the necessity to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms "as a priority objective of the United Nations" and calls their observance "a legitimate concern of the international community". The human rights of women and the girl child are "an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights". The Vienna Conference from June 14th to 25th, 1993, urges Governments "to intensify their efforts for the protection and promotion of human rights of women and the girl child". The Conference requests the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur for violence against women.

1993

UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna

The Declaration assumes that "violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to the domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women 's full advancement, and that the use of force against women is one of the decisive mechanisms through which women are forced to subordinate themselves to men..." According to Article 1 violence means "any act of gender-based violence against women which results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". The catalogue of forms of violence includes rape in marriage, female genital mutilation and dowry-related violence. The Declaration emphasizes the right of women to enjoyment of all human rights and calls upon the States to accede to the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, to ratify it and to withdraw any existing reservations.

UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

Delegations from 179 countries adopt a Plan of Action on population and development designed for the next twenty years. A new strategy aimed at empowering women, especially at giving them control over pregnancies and the number of children, is intended to put a brake on demographic growth and improve conditions for sustainable development. Many of the agreements entered into in Cairo (from September 5th to 13th, 1994), in particular the time-frames set for the fields of health and education, anticipate commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action. Together with the Al-Azhar University (an important conservative Islamic authority), the Vatican takes a position which fundamentally deviates from the Plan of Action in three essential areas: both define family exclusively in terms of legal marriage of husband and wife. Sex education must therefore be aimed at legally married spouses only. Abortion is permitted only in cases of medical indications. In contrast, the Plan of Action protects "other forms" of family life as well.

1994

UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo

At the World Summit for Social Development from March 6th to 12th, 1995, more than 170 Governments adopt in consensus voting the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development. The Programme of Action calls for measures against poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. The Governments make commitments to give priority to the needs and rights of women and children in their efforts towards the eradication of poverty. "Basic health care, including reproductive health care, is to be guaranteed" (commitment 2). In commitment 5 the Governments promise in anticipation to pay "particular attention" to the results of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

1995 World Social Summit

The commitment of the industrialized countries under Agenda 21 of Rio to spend 0.7 percent of the Gross National Product for public development assistance should be implemented "as soon as possible". Industrialized and development countries alike should enter a mutual commitment of investing 20 percent of development assistance or 20 percent of the government budget, respectively, for programmes providing basic services.

From September 4th to 15th, 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women takes place in Beijing. 189 Government delegations adopt the consensus Platform for Action on September 15th.

Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing

The Platform defines itself as "an agenda for women's empowerment. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making".

The Platform seeks to "improve the situation of all women without exception…". It states that the majority of forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women of Nairobi have not yet achieved the agreed goals.

1995-2005

UN Decade for Human Rights Education

1996

International Year for the Eradication of Poverty

With the Conference on Global Challenges in Urban and Settlement Development (Habitat II) in Istanbul from June 4th to 14th, 1996 the cycle of major UN-conferences comes to a close. These conferences set the future agendas which can only be implemented if all peoples, national Governments and international institutions work together.

UN Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul

The HABITAT-AGENDA und its corresponding Plan of Action, like all other agendas of UN-conferences, is not binding under international law. But if non-observance of the commitments entered into at these UN-conferences is criticized in future, it can no longer be rejected as intervention in concerns of national sovereignty. Such criticism in future means intervention in issues of global governance.

Bildunterschrift: Opening of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing on 4-9-1995

Chapter II

The Platform for Action: Agenda for the World-wide Elimination of Gender Apartheid

The Fourth World Conference on Women (4th WCW) in Beijing set a new record in the history of UN-conferences on the 50th anniversary of the organization: more than 7,000 delegates from 189 countries convened in the capital of the People's Republic of China. A new record was also achieved in respect of participation at the NGO Forum in Houairou: more than 2,000 organizations were represented by more than 31,000 women participants, of which some 4,000 were involved in the consultations of the 4th WCW.

Largest world conference on the 50th anniversary of the UN

The Forum of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) from August 30th to September 8th, 1995, ended with the slogan "take Beijing home with you". Organizational responsibility for this international clearing centre of women's concerns was in the hands of the "Conference of Non-governmental Organizations with Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO). This Forum was an international meeting place for the exchange of opinions and experiences with some 5,000 events. The meeting was largely meant to influence the final wording of the Platform for Action. This form of lobbying by NGOs has accompanied all international conferences since Nairobi. The Platform for Action reflects the analyses and demands by NGOs (above all, women's organizations) from all parts of the world.

NGO-lobbying until the very last minute

The Platform defines itself as "an agenda for women's empowerment" which aims at "accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. This means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between men and women at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities".

Empowerment programme for social justice

Women's empowerment is an essential condition for social justice and a fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace and also for "a people-centred sustainable development". Empowerment means a commitment to a qualitatively and quantitatively transformed partnership between women and men "so that women and men can work together for themselves, for their children and for society, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century".

The Platform takes stock of the situation world-wide in twelve critical areas of concern, which establish the basis for a global agenda for social justice by drawing up 54 strategic objectives and 535 actions to be taken. The figures do not say much about the large diversity of activities that Governments have agreed upon. Generally, actions to be taken are related to a group of agents, international institutions, national governments and specific NGOs, which in turn are called upon to become involved in a whole host of activities (e.g. "review, adopt and maintain"). Each action incompasses a whole set of

activities. Altogether, several thousands of empowerment missions have been agreed in Beijing.

Twelve global problems in the focus of the Platform

Roughly one fifth of the draft was on the negotiating table in brackets - because still controversial - before the Conference started. It was called "holy brackets" because some parts of the text, for example in respect of "gender" and "reproductive health", met opposition by the Vatican, some Islamic countries or other governments. In a tough negotiating marathon during the Conference the draft was turned into a consensus document.

The hotchpotch nature of the Platform reflects the complicated process of negotiations between the UN, the Governments and the NGOs. The Final Document is an expression of a global communication and participation culture in its strong and weak points. For the first time, so many women with their hopes, aspirations, demands and claims were given a voice in one document which they had worked out together: a feminine stock-taking and agenda of unique authenticity. The slogan of the NGO Forum in Houairou "Look at the world through women's eyes" has become reality in the Platform for Action, women's views are the main feature of the document.

A document of feminine authenticity

The Beijing Agenda keeps pace with the standards set by the previous four UN-world conferences: the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Vienna Human Rights Conference, the World Population Conference in Cairo and the World Social Summit in Copenhagen. The results of these conferences provide the frame of reference for the Final Document of Beijing. All five conferences together describe the global challenges and formulate missions that will determine the survival of all humanity.

Beijing confirms the catalogue of missions for the international community

The Habitat-II Conference in Istanbul in June '96 added the component of social and environmentally-sustainable settlement and town development to the international agreements. The empowerment concept of Cairo and Beijing was incorporated in the Istanbul Plan of Action.

Whether the Platform for Action is implemented depends not only on Governments and on whether they keep their solemn pledge to take equality seriously: what really counts is that women themselves are willing to speak up for their rights.

Rights have to be fought for

"Since Beijing we have known the price of continued gender apartheid", said the Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland in her final speech. She reminded the audience of the fact that rights are not granted, but must be fought for. She does not see a single country in this world where essential demands of the Platform have been realized.

The Norwegian head of Government puts her money on the persuasive power of affirmative action and tells an encouraging story to illustrate this: when she was elected head of

Government fifteen years ago, it had been a cultural shock to many Norwegians. Today, four- year olds ask their mother: "Can a man also become head of Government?"

Sex, Gender and Empowerment

In the preparatory phase of the 4th WCW, a controversial debate took place about the meaning of the term "gender". This argument prompted the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW), as the UN body responsible for the world conferences on women, to set up an informal working group with the task of looking into the use of the term and of clearing up existing linguistic problems.

The working group reached the conclusion that the term "gender", which is frequently quoted in the Platform for Action, is used in UN-terminology in much the same way as is accepted and applied in general usage. The term was used in this sense in many UN-documents before the Platform for Action. The working group therefore concludes that a reinterpretation or supplementation of the meaning of "gender" for the Beijing Platform is not necessary. This clarification has been attached to the official Congress Report in the annex.

The Graeco-latin linguistic root of "gender" (Genos/Genus) comprises a large semantic diversity of identity-generating features related to family law (family, lineage, clan), to international law (tribe, people, nation) and to natural law (species, class, kind). The Latin word "sexus" defines gender as the corresponding biological orientation (male or female). The English word "gender" has kept alive the semantic identity-related features of the original word; in Anglo-American usage the word "sex" has also retained the biological component of "male" or "female".

The gender perspective of the Platform for Action illustrates the need for women's empowerment. Empowerment is a linguistic innovation of the verb "to empower". The majority of dictionaries published in 1996 do not yet include "empowerment". The previous world conferences on women talked of "advancement of women" only. In the Declaration and Platform of Beijing the terms "advancement" and "empowerment" are frequently used interchangeably, seven times in the Declaration alone.

Women's empowerment is the crucial term which supports and holds together the concept of the Platform. Women's empowerment, as used in the Platform, expresses the expectation that equal participation of women through empowerment will make the world more peaceful, equitable and able to develop sustainably. These hopes are the inspiration of the Platform.

The term, which created such a stir when first used at the World Population Conference in Cairo and which was initially also very controversial in the International Women's Movement, means, in its Cairo definition, that women have the right to full and responsible control over their fertility and that they need alternatives to child-bearing by improving their economic, social and cultural opportunities. Originally, empowerment implied opposition to any form of direct or indirect fertility control against women's will.

In the Platform for Action empowerment becomes a comprehensive concept with the aim of enabling women to claim all their rights in all spheres of life. Empowerment is directed against any form of gender-based use of force. The opposition to any form of violence, like the claim to sustainable development, runs like a red thread through the whole Platform.

On the one hand, empowerment is an end in itself which emanates from the dignity of the human person. On the other hand, women's empowerment is the critical instrument with which to realize peace, material justice and a sustainable development world-wide.

Chapter III

The Twelve Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action: A Women's Agenda for the Twenty-first Century

1. Women and poverty: the feminization of poverty

Analysis

More than 1 billion people, the majority of them women, live in "unspeakable poverty", mainly in developing countries. In the last ten years, since the World Conference on Women in Nairobi, the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately. In the Eastern European countries with economies in transition, poverty among women has also become a significant problem in the political, economic and social processes of transformation. Apart from economic factors, the rigidity of socially ascribed gender roles are to blame for "this feminization of poverty". Globally speaking, the limited access of women to education, vocational training, power and productive resources - including credit, land ownership and inheritance - is the most formidable barrier against change.

Poverty among women increased since Nairobi

Poverty among women is not limited to individual groups of countries, it is increasing in all countries in various ways and to various degrees: as mass poverty in many developing countries and as individual pockets of poverty amidst wealth in developed countries.

Poverty among women is increasing world-wide

The Platform lists lack of income, hunger and malnutrition, ill health and illness, lack of education, homelessness and inadquate housing, an unsafe environment, social and cultural discrimination and exclusion as manifestations of poverty. Poverty also manifests itself by lack of participation in political decision-making processes. All types of conflict, displacement of people and environmental degradation undermine the capacity of Governments to meet the basic needs of their populations. The uncertain global economic climate, economic restructuring, unmanageable levels of external debt and structural adjustment programmes create risks and insecurities for the future world-wide.

Poverty has many faces

The Platform attributes poverty among women to the structures existing at the state and international levels. "The failure... to address the structural causes of poverty" is quoted as a contributing factor. The risk of falling into poverty is greater for women than for men, particularly in old age.

Poverty has structural causes

In the developed countries, women have become much more threatened and affected by unemployment than men as a result of the economic development of the last decade, even if the level of general and vocational education is similar for women and they are formally protected against discrimination. Women are exposed much more to poverty as a result of unemployment than men are. Women in the Eastern European reform countries have been particularly hit by this development. Poverty also increases the risk for women of becoming the victims of sexual exploitation.

Women lose their jobs faster

Sustainable development and economic growth are possible only through "improving the economic, social, political, legal and cultural status of women". The release of women's productive potential, in particular in the developing countries, is pivotal to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Sustainable development requires women's productive potential

Gender-specific differences in the distribution of economic power are a barrier on this road and deepen the poverty gap between the sexes.

The eradication of poverty cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone. It is democratic participation and changes in economic structures that are more important in order to ensure access for all women to resources, opportunities and public services: "The empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty".

Empowerment helps to relieve poverty

Strategies and actions to be taken

Under four strategic objectives the Platform lists 45 actions to be taken by various agents - Governments, multilateral financial and development institutions, bilateral development cooperation, national and international organizations and women's groups - to address the problem of poverty. In order to realize the objectives of the Platform, all agents involved must support the needs and efforts of women in poverty. Further strategic objectives mentioned by the Platform are:

- to revise laws and administrative practices so as to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources;
- to provide women with easier access to savings and credit institutions;
- to allocate more resources to research about the feminization of poverty.

Eradication of feminine poverty requires a change in political orientation and new development strategies

The Governments are called upon to analyse the impact of their policies on women's poverty, with the full and equal participation of women. Research is to be conducted, from a gender perspective, into the effects of external debt problems, taxation, investments, employment and the impact of structural adjustment programmes among other things.

Policy analysis with, and in the interest of, women

In the framework of a people-centred policy, the Platform for Action calls upon Governments to eliminate the structural causes of poverty. In order to promote women's economic opportunities and their equal access to productive resources, the allocation of public expenditures should be targeted and restructured if already assigned. Economic policies should be designed in a way that encourages women's employment and income in both the formal and informal sector.

Eliminate structural poverty

Specific measures should be adopted to address women's unemployment, in particular long-term unemployment; female-headed households should be given special support. Women require Government assistance in obtaining affordable housing. Obstacles to access to land must be removed.

More efforts to eliminate unemployment and housing problems

In the interest of women agricultural and fisheries producers, the Platform for Action calls upon Governments to give women better technical and financial access to extension and marketing services and to encourage "the development of producer-owned, market-based cooperatives".

Special attention is paid to indigenous women in the Platform: it commits Governments to create opportunities for them in order to eradicate the poverty that affects them.

Encourage cooperatives

Addressed to the World Bank, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and regional development institutions, the Platform for Action demands gender-sensitive social impact assessment methods. Structural adjustment programmes must be designed to "minimize their negative effects". Development-policy institutions and the NGOs in development assistance are called upon to consider particularly the gender-specific impact of structural adjustment and rehabilitation programmes.

Social impact assessment for structural adjustment programmes

The Platform calls upon Governments to implement consistently the commitments made at the Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March '95 and to allocate more resources for eliminating poverty among women.

Implement commitments made in Copenhagen

The Governments reaffirmed their commitment in Beijing to search for "effective development-oriented and durable solutions to external debt problems" in order to reallocate resources in programmes targeted at development and at the advancement of women. The Platform documents the realization that there are no adequate techniques of debt conversion applied to social development programmes and projects in conformity with the priorities of the Platform for Action.

The NGOs and above all the national and international women's organizations are called upon to do everything in their power to ensure implementation of the recommendations, demands and agreements on poverty eradication. They should engage in lobbying in order to create publicity and control and to demand accountability from the State for its activities. This applies in particular to two central demands for poverty eradication: women's equal right to inheritance and their free access to resources and services. The Platform entrusts the realization of these demands to the NGOs.

Women's organizations are a recognized lobby for poverty eradication

2

Education and Training of Women: Discrimination must be eliminated everywhere

Analysis

"Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace". In real life, this human right invoked in the Platform applies less to women than to men. The Platform proves in its analysis of access to primary and advanced education and training for girls and women that discriminatory mechanisms exist in all countries, either generally or selectively.

Primary education for millions of women and girls not yet attained

More than two-thirds of the 960 million illiterate adults are women. Roughly 100 million children are as yet without access to primary schooling, including "at least 60 million girls". Discrimination is also the result of gender-biased curricula, reinforcing one-sided role models.

More than 660 million female illiterates

Even at a very early age, there is a double burden for girls of both educational and domestic responsibilities. This often results in poor scholastic performance. Girls drop out from school prematurely with early marriages and pregnancies. In education and training the same mechanisms apply that also bring about the lack of good health among women and girls and restrict their development opportunities.

Illiteracy and generally less adequate access to education is above all a problem persisting in development countries. Women are often excluded from studies in science and technology. This is due to the educational system itself: discrimination is the result of curricula, teaching methodology and stereotyped roles. They undermine girls´ self-esteem because they are largly denied the chance of acquiring knowledge and skills, in particular in mathematics and science. Science curricula are particularly gender-biased. "Science textbooks do not relate to women´s and girls´ daily experience and fail to give recognition to women scientists". This reinforces gender-specific barriers for studies in science and technology. The number of women in research and in the development of new technologies is therefore negligeable. It is essential to provide for equal access in the corresponding disciplines in order to actively integrate girls and women into technological and industrial developments. This "necessitates a diverse approach to vocational and technical training".

Discrimination is systemic

Strategies and actions to be taken

In line with the general demand of addressing the gender-specific impacts of all levels of the educational system, the six strategic objectives and fifty-seven actions to be taken commit Governments to:

- ensure equal access to education
- eradicate illiteracy
- eliminate barriers within the educational system
- improve girls' and women's universal access to education
- be accountable for what has been achieved.

Eliminate all external and internal barriers

By the year 2000, universal access to basic education should be provided for all children and completion of primary education ensured for at least 80 percent. Universal primary education should be provided in all countries by the year 2015.

Structural adjustment and rehabilitation programmes should not be implemented at the expense of educational investment. On the contrary, funds should be increased whenever possible.

Phased plan for primary education by 2015

Full and equal participation of women in educational policy- and decision-making must be ensured. This also applies to the design of curricula and the organization of career education programmes to encourage girls to widen their future career opportunities. It is necessary "to ensure that women of all ages can acquire the knowledge, capacities, aptitudes and ethical values needed to develop and to participate fully under equal conditions in the process of social, economic and political development".

Curricula should contribute to shared responsibilities between boys and girls of caring for their family and promote mutual respect between them. Boys must also have responsibility for and cooperate in the household.

Bildunterschrift S. 22:

Iranian women doing the entrance test at the University Amir Kabir

3 Women and health: a threat to an increasing number of women

Analysis

"Women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is vital to their life and well-being and their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life. ... However, health and well-being elude the majority of women". This gap has widened in the last ten years.

The gap in health services widens world-wide

Structural adjustment programmes, which are implemented in a number of developing countries on request of the World Bank, force these countries to decrease public spending, frequently at the expense of public health systems. This decline has an adverse effect on women. Privatization of health-care systems further reduces the availability of affordable health-care.

Structural adjustments threaten health systems

The Platform mentions complications related to pregnancy and child-birth as the leading causes of mortality and morbidity of women of reproductive age. Similar problems exist in countries with economies in transition. Abortions are also a high risk for a large number of women, in particular the poorest and youngest of them. "Most of these deaths, health

problems and injuries are preventable through improved access to adequate health-care services".

Special risks: pregnancy and child-birth

The Platform for Action considers women's health to be under increasing pressure in many parts of the world: increasing poverty, economic dependence, use of force, discriminatory practices, restricted freedom of decision of many women on matters of sexuality and reproduction and also lack of influence over decision-making are the essential gender-based factors that have an adverse impact on the health of women. Lack of food and inequitable distribution of food in the household, unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation facilities, lack of fuel supplies, deficient housing conditions all have a negative effect on their health. It starts in very early childhood: "Discrimination against girls, often resulting from son preference, in access to nutrition and health-care services endangers their current and future health and well-being. Conditions that force girls into early marriage, pregnancy and child-bearing, and subject them to harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, pose grave health risks".

Increasing pressure on women and girls

Adolescent girls are both biologically and psychologically more vulnerable than boys to violence, sexual abuse and prostitution. Girls are also more exposed to the possibly fatal consequences of unprotected and early sexual experience. Combined with lack of sex information and of basic health services and inadequate nutrition, this significantly increases their risks. Early pregnancies, unsafe abortions which put their lives at risk, HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases, the transmission of which is sometimes a consequence of sexual violence, all have a devastating effect on the health of women and girls. "They often do not have the power to insist on safe and responsible sex practices and have little access to information and services for prevention and treatment".

Higher health risks through violence

Psychological stress resulting from poverty, overwork, stress and domestic violence are growing health risks for women. Occupational health issues also grow in importance as a large number of women work in low-paid jobs in either the formal or the informal sector under monotonous and unhealthy conditions. "Cancers of the breast and the cervix and other cancers of the reproductive system, as well as infertility, affect growing numbers of women and may be preventable, or curable, if detected early". Illness, ill health or early motherhood in turn limit social opportunities, including opportunities in education and at work.

The gap between social and economic life realities of women and their human right to physical integrity widens, in particular when regarded from a gender perspective. The right of women "to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility", as reaffirmed at the Vienna Human Rights Conference, is of less consequence in their daily lives. However, the Platform emphasizes that this right is "basic to their empowerment".

Poverty makes women ill, ill health excludes them socially

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being", while the Platform applies this definition specifically to reproductive health. Reproductive health includes "all matters related to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes". As in the case of general health, it means more than the absence of disease or infirmity: "Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able

to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law".

Sexuality and reproduction are autonomous rights

The right to reproductive and sexual health, "the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations", is recognized as an autonomous feature of human rights. The Platform for Action is the first international document to make this clear distinction.

The human rights of women include the right "to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence". Catholic moral teaching on sexuality still insists on relating sexuality to reproduction only.

Breaking the taboo regarding women's sexual self-determination

In various contexts, the Platform explicitly mentions abortion as one possible choice for controlling fertility in the responsibility of women, if it is not against the law. Current Catholic teaching regards abortions as unacceptable even if they do not violate the law. Because of this, the Holy See subjected the complex "Women and Health" to a general reservation, which is included in the annex to the Platform.

Strategies and actions to be taken

The Platform defines women's sexual and reproductive health both as a human right and an essential condition for social development and peace. On this basis, the Governments commit themselves to create primary health care world-wide with concrete targets: By the year 2000 maternal mortality is to be reduced in all countries by at least 50 percent of the 1990 levels and a further half by the year 2015. In line with the Programme of Action of the World Population Conference of Cairo, the Governments declare in Beijing that high-risk pregnancies are "a major public health concern" and commit themselves to consider reviewing laws containing punitive measures against women.

Lifelong access to affordable health care

In cooperation with national and international organizations, priority should be given to education and information programmes that encourage women to take responsibility for their own reproductive and sexual health and that achieve mutual respect between men and women in matters of sexuality and fertility. Governments must further pursue policies to eliminate poverty among women; they must reduce environmental health hazards, which constitute a growing health risk for women, and take concrete preventive measures to protect women, young people and children from any abuse.

Concrete action towards prevention

To address the problems of sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health, the Governments and international organizations are called upon to develop multisectoral strategies with which to end the social subordination of women and girls and to ensure their social and economic empowerment. This involves efforts to protect women from sexually transmitted diseases and to give them information about how to prevent them. Governments regard full attention to the promotion of mutually respectful and equitable

gender relations as a fundamental aim of health policy and commit themselves to this principle in providing education on the matter to adolescents.

Health requires education

Governments and research institutions should promote gender-sensitive and womencentred health research that establishes disaggregated data for policy-making. The number of women in leadership positions in the health professions should be increased.

Health requires research and investment

To ensure primary health care, Governments must make the necessary budgetary allocations. In cooperation with other agencies, including non-governmental organizations, they should develop innovative approaches to funding health services that address women's specific health needs. Apart from Governments, the UN-organizations are called upon in particular to give priority to women's health and to implement the health objectives of the Platform for Action and other international agreements.

4 Violence against women: innate physical superiority does not imply rights

Analysis

"Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms... In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. The low social and economic status of women can be both a cause and a consequence of violence against women. The term 'violence against women' means any action of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."

The ever-present daily threat of violence

The Beijing Platform leaves no doubt that women are threatened by acts of violence everywhere in the world at all times and every day and that every woman is exposed to the risk - at least in the form of atmospheric threats.

Never before has violence against women been depicted and outlawed so clearly and uncompromisingly in all its devastating consequences in a UN-document.

Not enough protection in any country

The Platform states that everywhere in the world too little is being done against these violations of fundamental human rights. No country adequately protects women against threats of violence. The only progress made since Nairobi is that violence against women, its causes and consequences and measures to combat it, has been more widely studied and documented.

The Platform regards violence against women as "one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men". Acts and threats of violence, whether occurring in the home or in the community or perpetrated or condoned by the State, instil fear and insecurity into women's lives. The Platform quotes this as being "major obstacles" to the achievement of equality, development and peace, because the fear of violence is a permanent constraint on the mobility and activities of women and limits their access to a risk-free use of resources.

Violence against women instils fear and insecurity into women's lives

In many cases, violence against women and girls occurs in the family or within the home and is often tolerated there. Neglect, physical and sexual abuse and rape of girls and women by family members often go unreported. The same applies to spousal abuse. Even when such acts of violence are reported, the victims are often left unprotected and the perpetrators unpunished.

"You may give your wife as good a beating as you like ..." Violence against women at home in all languages of the world:

In all languages of the world there exists a wealth of proverbs bearing eloquent witness to how much for granted people take violence against women. "Beat your wife regularly, even if you do not know why, she will", is regarded as a confirmed male view almost everywhere.

Violence in so many variations, even in the name of love. Sometimes praised as an indispensable means in men's hands to chastise their wives, sometimes used out of pure power lust. As in the Spanish repertoire: "When you feel like beating your wife, just ask her to fetch the sun down from the skies for you".

The more, the merrier is the general view in Romania: "Women are like wild game: the more beatings they get, the better they become". In Hungary, people know what is needed: "A bone for my dog, a stick for my wife".

Popular Chinese saying expects male self-restraint: "You may beat your wife as much as you like, but never with a stick bigger than your thumb". In Belgium, too, people are in favour of order: "Everything in good measure, said the tailor, and gave his wife a good beating with the tape-measure".

In Russia, people expect some culinary return for a good beating: "The more you beat your wife, the better she will cook for you". Or even some monetary return: "Beat your wife with a hammer, and she will be like gold". Even in France, people anticipate some improvement in quality: "A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you beat them, the better they be".

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, the great German philosopher of the Enlightenment of European standing, makes someone say: "Thrash your wife and your corn well, says Sancho, and all will be well". Quite appropriate for a country where popular saying goes as follows: "A woman never beaten is like a cabbage without salt".

Even the Greek poet Lukian thought he knew: "You can get kisses, promises and dancing attendance from any man, a box on the ears only from a man who loves you". An Albanian proverb believes: "Better be beaten by your husband than be kissed by a stranger".

Frequently, women even approve emotionally of the violence directed against them in the proverbs. A French saying is: "Whether bad or good horse, it expects the spurs, whether good or bad wife, she expects the stick". Even in the famous quotation by Friedrich Nietzsche, it is not Zarathustra, but the little old woman who speaks the words: "Do you go to see a woman? Do not forget the whip".

The Platform proceeds from the assumption that violence against women is a manifestation of historically-unequal power relations between men and women. Violence against women through their lives derives essentially from cultural patterns, from traditional or customary practices; based on race, gender, language or religion they perpetuate the lower status of women and legitimize male domination. Such situations prevent a genuine improvement of the status of women. Women are subjected to a wide range of physical, sexual and psychological violence in all areas of life: in the family and in the community, through systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy. Other acts of violence against women include forced sterilization, forced abortion and forced use of contraceptives, prenatal sex selection and female infanticide.

Violence against women derives from cultural patterns

The risk of women of becoming victims is exacerbated by the fact that many forms of violence violate women's feelings of shame. Fear of exposure silences the victims because they, not the perpetrators, are subjected to public ostracization. The victims of violence suffer from lack of access to legal information, in effective protection by laws and in efficient aid on the part of public authorities. Laws that protect the perpetrators must be reformed. Violence against women is also ever-present in the media: women are raped and sexually enslaved, they are exploited as sex objects in pornography. Such images actually provoke acts of violence against women.

Feelings of shame silence victims and leave perpetrators unpunished

Strategies and actions to be taken:

The Platform lists forty-four actions to be taken under three strategic objectives with which to make gender relations less prone to violence. The objectives:

- to reinforce punitive measures for protection,
- to study the causes and consequences of violence,
- to assist victims of violence.

Education for mutual respect and cooperation

Even if knowledge about the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls has expanded since the Nairobi Conference, it is not sufficient to develop promising prevention strategies which include education. The Platform therefore regards it as essential to promote a gender-based study of violence in the home and in the community to be used for the prevention and elimination of such violence.

All Governments unanimously admit that the two central demands of preventing and eliminating violence have not been taken seriously enough and converted into practical policies. In order to give higher political priority to the problem of violence which, from a woman's perspective, is a problem of existence, the Platform regards groups of men who are opposing gender-based violence as valuable and indispensable allies. In some countries at least, men could be mobilized for this cause. The Platform explicitly welcomes this as a sign of hope and calls upon all Governments to condemn categorically any act of violence against women. All Governments commit themselves to refrain "from invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration", which puts violence into a relative context.

Mobilize men as allies against violence

Whether acts of violence against women are perpetrated by the State or by private individuals, they must be investigated, brought to the courts and punished. In some countries, legislation generally has no penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions with which to punish the offenders and redress the wrong done. In other countries they are not strong enough.

The Platform demands an active and gender-based policy of protection against violence. For example, measures must be taken which are aimed at "increasing the knowledge and understanding of the causes, consequences and mechanisms of violence against women" on the part of public authorities, law enforcement officers and the personnel in the judicial, medical and social services. The Platform regards it as necessary in many countries to reinforce existing laws against government officers who engage in acts of violence against women in the course of their duties. In all countries, women require an institutional framework in which they can report acts of violence and file charges, free from fear of retaliation. Victims of violence must be granted medical, psychological, legal and financial assistance because they also need shelters in which they are safe from the offenders.

Consistent policy of eliminating violence

In the Platform the Secretary General of the UN is called upon to provide the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women with all necessary assistance, in particular the staff and resources required to perform all mandated functions.

Female genital mutilation, female infanticide, pre-natal sex selection and dowry-related violence must be registered and subject to sanction as a violation of women's human rights. Women's organizations and other NGOs fighting such practices and creating public awareness for violations of women's human rights must be actively assisted by all Governments. Information campaigns must increase public awareness of the fact that violence against women constitutes a violation of their human rights. Education within the framework of primary health care is promised support.

Outlawing violence is not enough

The Platform calls upon all Governments to eliminate gender-related prejudices, especially in the field of education. They should fight social and cultural patterns of conduct based on the idea "of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes". State institutions should cooperate with educational institutions, enterprises and women's organizations "to raise awareness about violence against women as a violation of women's enjoyment of their human rights". The Platform recommends campaigns in order to sensitize girls and boys and women and men to the detrimental effects of violence in the family and society. Learning programmes should teach methods of communicating without violence and how to apply these methods outside the programmes.

Education helps against violence

Those responsible in the media are encouraged to promote information and education about the causes and consequences of violence against women. The media should raise awareness about the fact that media presentation of gender roles and the way in which they depict the relationship between men and women provides an important orientation for the way in which men and women deal with each other in their real lives. They cannot be neutral in respect of acts of violence. It would also be the task of the media to look self-critically at the impact of gender role stereotypes and how they are perpetuated by commercial advertisements.

Use the orientation provided by the media

Governments who have not yet done so are called upon to ratify international conventions on trafficking in persons and on slavery and carry them out consistently in their policies. More international cooperation is required in the fight against traffic in women in order to defeat the trafficking networks which are operating world-wide. Legislation to protect the women and girls concerned is not only non-existent; the penal and civil code must also be developed further in order to be able to punish perpetrators more effectively. Sex tourism is another issue where too little is being done.

Be determined in the fight against traffic in women

Programmes to heal and rehabilitate in society victims of trafficking are also in short supply everywhere. There is a lack of social, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the victims. The Platform calls for further efforts and more financial resources in this area.

5

Women and armed conflict: war and civil war are a waste of peace resources

Analysis

The first and foremost mission of the United Nations, according to its Charter from June 26th, 1945, is "to maintain world peace and international security". Yet the world community is far from protecting itself and "future generations from the scourge of war", as demanded in the Preamble. Comments about noble intentions are contrasted in the Platform with the daily horrors of war and civil war for women. Armed conflicts are obstacles to the social development which is indispensable for women's equality. They turn women into defenseless gender-specific victims.

War affects women twice

Armament to prepare armed confrontation ties resources which are essential for a peaceful and humane development. It thus undermines the productive interaction between equality, development and peace - terms which set the *leitmotif* for the Fourth World Conference on Women and are "inextricably linked". The Platform defines war and civil war as an area of systematic violations of human rights in the form of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, summary and arbitrary arrests and executions, disappearances of persons, in the form of racism, intolerance, poverty, starvation and neglect of the rule of law.

Triangle of survival: equality - development - peace

Bildunterschrift S. 31: Refugées in Srebrenica

In all parts of the world people are affected by armed conflicts, terror, hostage-taking or foreign occupation. Women and girls suffer particularly because of their sex. The dignity of women has become a welcome target for tactics of war and terrorism in contemporary ethnic conflicts. Women and girls are degraded, tortured and killed by systematic rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancies and other forms of gender-based violence. In almost all cases the perpetrators remain unpunished.

War is an attack on women's dignity

Practices of war which use sexual violence systematically violate international humanitarian law. The Geneva Convention of 1949 for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the Additional Protocols provide that women shall be especially protected from attacks on their honour, in particular against humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault. The Beijing Platform recalls its validity and reaffirmation at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna which stated that "violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law". Murder, rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy have become common practice in the process of ethnic cleansing. For the first time the stock-taking of the Platform focuses attention on the lack of appropriate counter-measures.

Sexual violence mocks at international humanitarian law

The Platform regards the devastating effect of over 100 million land-mines, scattered in 64 countries globally, as a particularly serious and persistent obstacle to peaceful development. They cause major injuries and lasting mutilation, inevitably affecting the civilian population, especially women and children. The land-mines remain in place when the warring parties leave the combat area and thus seal off large areas which are urgently needed for the cultivation of crops.

Land-mines: a murderous danger for women and children

Strategies and actions to be taken

The Platform mentions equal participation of women in conflict resolution at all levels as the first of six strategic objectives. "The equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflict are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security".

Equal participation of women in all peace activities

Governments should recognize "the leading role" of women in the peace movement and promote their commitment to a culture of peace. Equal participation of women must be achieved particularly at decision-making levels. The Beijing text lists the United Nations´ Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunals for Rwanda and for former Yugoslavia. All bodies involved in peaceful conflict resolution should be enabled to properly address all gender-based forms of violence against women in situations of war, in particular by providing equal participation of women in the institutions concerned.

The Platform calls upon all Governments to work actively "towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control". A comprehensive and speedy conversion of military resources as promised and planned reduction of arms expenditure are, however, linked to reservations on the basis of national security concerns. The same reservation applies to their declared willingness to "reduce excessive military expenditure", to limit arms production and to stop the acquisition of arms.

Promote disarmament - reduce arms expenditure

Savings made through reduced arms expenditure should be allocated for social and economic development, in particular for the advancement of women. A more intensive discussion should take place as regards the consequences of excessive military armament, trade in arms and the destructive power of arms.

Anti-personnel land-mines: far from a global moratorium

20,000 people are killed annually by anti-personnel mines (APM), according to estimates. 85 to 100 million land-mines not yet cleared are scattered in 65 countries. There is still a long way to go towards a global and controlled moratorium which is binding under international law. The use of APMs will be gradually phased out in small steps and lengthy stages.

(The German Government responded in June 1994 to the UN appeal made in a resolution of the General Assembly (48/75 K) to stop the use and export of APMs. This moratorium was initially limited to three years and was extended indefinitely on January 11th, 1996, by Cabinet decision. In April 1996, the German Government announced the immediate and complete ban on the use of APMs so that the use and export of anti-personnel land-mines are banned without exceptions in Germany today. Existing stocks will be destroyed).

At the International Review Conference of the UN Convention on Armament of 1980, which convened in stages between October 95 and May 3rd, 96 in Vienna and Geneva, the German Government spoke up in favour of extending the areas of application of the Protocol on the Use of Mines. A comprehensive export ban which is binding under international law was rejected in Geneva because of opposition in particular by Pakistan, India and the People's Republic of China. However, the Conference - including these countries - agreed on substantial improvements to the Protocol on the Use of Mines:

The Protocol on Mines will also apply to internal armed conflicts (civil war) in future. Non-detectable anti-personnel mines are banned.

The most commonly used form of mines, the APMs laid by hand, must in future be equipped with a self-destructive and self-deactivating device. The same applies to APMs laid from a distance, including by gun or aircraft. Areas with manually laid mines without self-destructive and self-deactivating devices must be fenced in and guarded. De-mining must take place before the area is cleared.

With the conclusion of the Conference, the signatory States are committed to stop, immediately and indefinitely, the transfer of non-detectable APMs or APMs laid by gun or aircraft. Once the Protocol has been ratified, the self-imposed commitment will become legally binding in respect of transfer of mines. Those violating the terms of the Protocol and thus killing or seriously injuring civilians are personally liable to prosecution.

Monitoring the new agreements will not include on-site inspections. The signatory States agreed to consultations and annual reports and mutual assistance in mine clearance. The effectiveness of the more comprehensive Protocol should be reviewed at an international conference by the year 2001 at the latest.

Canada will issue invitations to a conference sometime this year (1996); this is planned as a first step towards a universal ban on anti-personnel mines. The German Government lends support to the Canadian initiative. The German Foreign Office presented a "Programme of Action with 7 items" on APMs on July 18th, 1996, in which it announces a greater commitment for a universal ban and more financial resources for mine clearance.

The UN Convention of 1980 on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects is to be universally ratified by the year 2000. This applies particularly to the Second Protocol on the Use of Mines of this Convention which restricts the use of anti-personnel mines. It is planned to widen the areas of application of the Convention with the aim of affording better protection of civilian populations. The Governments commit themselves to programmes of assistance in mine clearance. They propose to exchange technical information about mines and intensify research on mine clearance. States which have not yet agreed to a ban on the export of anti-personnel mines are called upon to do so. All Governments should encourage further international efforts to stop the production and use of such mines world-wide.

Put a world-wide stop to anti-personnel mines

Systematic rape and all other inhuman and degrading acts of violence against women in situations of armed conflict should be identified and condemned as instruments of war and ethnic cleansing.

War crimes against women to be condemned and punished

The Governments recognize that there is a deficit in the implementation of international humanitarian law and declare their determination to increase all measures required for better implementation. Acts of violence against women must be properly registered. Rape in the conduct of armed conflicts constitutes a war crime. Steps must be taken to bring perpetrators to justice and to punish them.

More efforts to enforce international law

The effects of economic sanctions on women and children should be alleviated and food and medical care no longer be used as a tool for political pressure. The international community is called upon "to condemn and act against all forms and manifestations of terrorism".

The Platform wishes to encourage the women's contribution towards fostering a culture of peace. Peace research by and on behalf of women should be promoted and developed. All institutional participants of the Conference are called upon to promote peaceful conflict resolution, reconciliation and tolerance through education, training and exchange programmes, in particular for young women. Joint educational programmes should be established for girls and boys to promote a culture of peace. The Platform considers the level of research on the psychological, economic and social impact of armed conflicts to be inadequate for alleviating or healing its consequences.

Support women's initiatives for a culture of peace

In order to prevent the displacement of people, the root causes of their displacement must be investigated more thoroughly. Refugee and displaced women, including those displaced within their own country, are in need of more protection and assistance during their displacement, while in their host countries and on their return. The host countries must take more active measures to improve the situation of refugees. Women must be fully involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of all programmes providing assistance to refugees in order to protect women and girl refugees from discrimination. The right of displaced women "to return voluntarily to their place of origin in safety and with dignity, and their right to protection after their return" must be properly implemented. National immigration procedures must be brought into conformity with relevant international

instruments to ensure that the principle of *non-refoulement* be strictly observed. Governments have committed themselves in the Platform to investigate if and how sexual violence could be recognized as a reason for being granted refugee status.

6

Women and the economy: practically excluded from decision-making

Analysis

It is true that women's position in the economic field has improved since the Nairobi Conference in some respects. In general, however, the Platform states that women are everywhere virtually absent from or poorly represented in economic decision-making. This has an increasingly negative impact on women's equal participation in the economy.

Increasing impediment and discrimination

Women are only marginally involved in economic decision-making. Equality does not exist in particular in the two central areas, ie policy-making and business-related institutions. This applies to the formulation of financial, monetary and commercial policies and also to fiscal and bargaining policies. Women are also practically non-existent in international economic policy-making. Everywhere the rules are made by men.

Rules are made by men

Women's participation in remunerated work has increased substantially because a growing number of households depend on an additional income. However, the majority of women have been forced to accept poor legal and working conditions.

Women in demand as cheap labour

In many countries it is mainly women who work in part-time, home-based or casual employment. Their pay is lower, they lack job security and their occupational health and safety in the workplace is neglected. The combined impact of economic pressure and discrimination have further aggravated gender-specific exclusion. As a result, women are more willing to accept work even with less pay and poorer working conditions. Their low skill levels force them to take on monotonous and physically harmful work.

Inequality continues as a result of their being downgraded as low-pay workers. Globalization and increased competition cement inequality world-wide.

Social degradation is female

The Platform points out that more analysis needs to be done of the impact of globalization on women's economic position. However, it is a foregone conclusion that women are the first victims of structural adjustments because of their sex.

Discrimination against women manifests itself in education and training, remuneration and status of employment, promotion and horizontal mobility practices. Lack of adequate child care continues to restrict mobility and opportunities. The terribly unequal burden of responsibility for the family results in permanent overstress for working women.

Discrimination results in overstress

Traditional prejudices continue to be an obstacle for women's advancement, including the deeply-ingrained attitudinal distrust of men against women in management. Men do not regard women as their equals and women therefore have no access to positions of leadership. Frequently, sexual harassment also prevents women from making a contribution commensurate with their abilities. The lack of a family-friendly work environment creates further barriers: in many countries there is no affordable child care and inflexible work schedules deny women the mobility required for coping with their complex responsibilities.

Prejudice and distrust create barriers

Women contribute to development not only through their remunerated work. However, their work in the home and for the family is not valued in national accounts. The extensive invisibility of women's work results in their contribution being greatly undervalued. This ignorance greatly limits the social recognition of the status of women.

Unremunerated work by women is invisible

"The full visibility of the type, extent and distribution of this unremunerated work" will improve the status of women in society and will also contribute to "a better sharing of responsibilities" between the sexes.

Strategies and actions to be taken

The six strategic objectives of the Platform are directed towards a reduction of discrimination in various settings. In all sections of the economy, steps must be taken to make visible discriminatory effects on women and to eliminate them through gender-sensitive policies. The Platform defines the areas to be covered:

- women's equal access to decision-making,
- economic rights and employment opportunities,
- status of equal value in the work process,
- equal access to resources (business services, training opportunities, markets, information and technology),
- no gender-specific separation in the choice and practice of occupations,
- better coordination of remunerated and unremunerated work for women and men, respectively.

Remove structures hostile to women

Women must participate to the same extent in the design of business-related policies and institutions and accept responsibility in key positions. The gender-specific effects of institutions, trade relations, the flows of goods, services and money must become visible and be corrected in the spirit of the Platform. All structural adjustment concepts must incorporate a gender perspective.

Graphik S. 37:

Report on Human Development 1995 recognition of women's contribution von links nach rechts:

total economically active time among women total time spent by men and women in all economic activities total economically active time among men

remunerated one third unremunerated two thirds

total share of men total share of women more than half

three quarters remunerated one quarter unremunerated

von oben nach unten:

The graph on the front page of the Report on Human Development 1995 dramatically illustrates to what extent women's contribution to the economy is under-valued:

- Women carry more than one half of the work load.
- Men spend three quarters of their working time on remunerated work, whilst only one third of work done by women is remunerated.
- Consequently, men receive the lion's share of income and recognition for their contribution to the economy, while the largest part of women's work continues to be unremunerated, unrecognized and under-valued.

The majority of women work more hours than men

(working time of men = 100

von oben nach unten:

working time of women developing countries

urban areas

Kenya

Nepal

Venezuela

Indonesia

Colombia

rural areas

Bangla Desh

Guatemala

Nepal

Philippines

Kenya

industrial countries

Finland

U.S.A.

Norway

The Netherlands

France

Austria

Italy

From: Report on Human Development 1995, UNDP

Equal pay for women and men, a classical demand of social justice which has not yet been met, must at last be implemented. All States must enact legislation to guarantee the rights of equal pay, as formulated in 1951 in the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 100 as early as forty-five years ago.

Equal pay for equal work

Material justice between the sexes is an indispensable condition "for achieving a genuinely sustainable economic growth and sustainable development". It is therefore not only a question of legal entitlements; Governments promised to step up efforts to close the gap between women's and men's pay.

Job evaluation schemes with gender-neutral criteria should be developed and promoted by Governments. Pay and wage structures in typically female occupations, such as the nursing and teaching professions, should be examined: better pay gives better status.

Improve the status of female occupations

Another fundamental condition for a humane economic order quoted by the Platform is the elimination of forced and child labour. All forms of child labour must be eliminated within a clearly defined time-frame. The Convention on the Rights of the Child should become part of the national body of law. Special attention must be paid to excessive demands made on girls for work in their household.

Eliminate forced labour

In all parts of the world, women need a guaranteed right to organize in trade unions. The Platform regards this as a suitable mechanism for improving poor working conditions and for eliminating wage inequality for women. The election of women as trade union officials should be promoted by Governments, trade unions and women's organizations.

Women need trade union rights

Women must be protected from discrimination with respect to hiring, promotion and redundancy. Legal protection, including means of redress and access to justice, is also required for cases of sexual and racial harassment. Part-time, casual, temporary and home-based work requires appropriate protection of labour laws and must be covered by social security.

Enforceable rights for all women

Men and women should share family responsibilities. Traditional attitudes to the division of labour based on gender must be changed. The impact of social security legislation and taxation systems must be examined in respect of sharing of domestic responsibilities and reformed, when appropriate. Education programmes should raise awareness about a more equitable sharing of responsibilities.

Sharing family responsibilities

The encouragement and promotion of women, both in material and ideal terms, must be actively pursued in the interest of equality and equal participation in the economy.

Strengthening what encourages women - encouraging what strengthens women

The incentive role of the State as the employer must be used for the development of a policy of equal opportunities for women and men. In order to eliminate gender apartheid in the workplace, women should be encouraged to break away from traditional patterns of occupational choice and to seek employment in the scientific and technical professions as well. This requires vocational training, advice, retraining and counselling that are not limited to traditional employment areas. In turn, men must be encouraged to seek employment in the social field as well.

7 Women in power and decision-making: without empowerment hopes turn into illusions

Analysis

"Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives", as stated in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Platform refers back to this and declares that women's perspective is only marginally included in public decision-making. Women are under-represented at most levels of decision-making in the majority of countries. Globally, only some 10 percent of the members of legislative bodies are now women, and the percentage is even lower for ministerial positions and other executive bodies. The one-sided gender-specific concentration of power operates at many levels of society, "from the most personal to the highly public".

Almost everywhere women are powerless

As long as power relations prevent women from "leading fulfilling lives", sustainable development will not be feasible at any level of society. In changing power relations, "women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role. ... Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account".

Without women's participation in power no equality, no development and no peace

Bildunterschrift S. 39: women participants in the NGO Forum in Huairou

Although women make up half of the electorate and have attained the right to vote and to hold office in almost all members states of the United Nations, they are seriously under-represented as candidates for public office. This situation has not changed in recent years, in fact it has become worse.

Political representation of women is decreasing

There are hardly any women in leadership positions in institutions of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and law. Discriminatory attitudes, the burden of family

responsibilities and frequently the high costs of seeking public office deter women from participating in politics, or public life generally. Limited access, deeply-ingrained prejudices and male-dominated communications and decision-making structures reinforce "the tendency for political decision-making to remain the domain of men".

The Platform acknowledges that women have an innovative impact on Parliaments and Governments; they contribute to redefining traditional policy priorities and to placing new items on the political agenda which "address women's gender-specific concerns, values and experiences". Women have demonstrated at all levels, in all forms of organizations and public offices that they are not short of ideas or leadership qualities. And still it holds true that "Governments, transnational and national corporations, the mass media, banks, academic and scientific institutions, and regional and international organizations, including those in the United Nations system, do not make full use of women's talents as top-level managers, policy makers, diplomats and negotiators".

No lack of women's leadership qualities

"Equality in decision-making is essential to the empowerment of women", the Platform declares, while today women have neither equal rights nor equal power. Women are discriminated against because they are powerless, and they are powerless because they are discriminated against.

Without equality no power, without power no equality

Discriminatory attitudes create unfair structures, unfair structures in turn reinforce discriminatory attitudes. Women have thus no opportunities to influence political priorities and the allocation of public funds in a way "so that their interests may be recognized and addressed".

The Platform sees these "structural and attitudinal barriers" as the crucial gender-related dilemma which can only be addressed "in mainstreaming a gender perspective in policy development and the implementation of programmes". In Beijing, the Governments have committed themselves to make visible the real distribution of power and decision-making by "undertaking statistical gender analysis" and then to draw political conclusions because "without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved".

Attitudes and structures hostile to women are fundamental barriers

In this context, the Platform underlines the positive experience made in some countries, meaning the Scandinavian countries, with the system of affirmative actions. This selective quota-based preference of women has led to 33.3 per cent or more representation in local and national Governments. The formal right to participate in institutional power and political decision-making does not suffice to implement the necessary changes. In Beijing, the Governments therefore committed themselves to "achieving this goal...".

Affirmative action has been successful

Strategies and actions to be taken

The Platform wants to address the de facto exclusion of women from power structures and decision-making with two strategic objectives and thirty-three actions to be taken. These commitments imply a concrete obligation to implement the goals:

- "Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making".
- Qualification initiative for management and leadership positions.

Governments accept obligation to implement goals

Progress made on the path towards empowerment in the public and private sectors must be monitored, evaluated and annually reported on by Governments.

Obligation to present annual report has been agreed upon

The Platform deems it necessary to study more intensively the conditions for and opportunities of women to participate in political life. Governments wish to promote research in this field.

Electoral systems should be reviewed in respect of gender-specific disadvantages and be reformed when appropriate.

In Beijing, the 189 delegations have also accepted an obligation on the part of their Governments "to establish the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary". They are called upon to set specific targets and implementing measures.

Obligation of affirmative action for judiciary and public administration

Measures should also be taken to ensure that women are adequately represented at all levels of political parties. Political parties are called upon to examine party structures and procedures to determine whether they are directly or indirectly discriminatory. Generally, all social forces are called upon to encourage and strengthen the feeling of self-esteem, solidarity and leadership qualities of women; this should also form a part of education and training. Disabled women and indigenous women are explicitly included by the Platform.

Equality for women in political parties as well

The UN should set a good example; the Platform requires it to "achieve overall gender equality, particularly at the Professional level and above, by the year 2000". The UN is also called upon to develop mechanisms to nominate women candidates for appointment in senior posts in the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other organizations and bodies. In order to fulfil these obligations, the member states should "aim at gender balance" in the lists of national candidates for UN appointments.

Concrete obligations for the UN as well

8 Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women: no lasting impact in any country

Analysis

The Platform looks into specific institutional advancement of women in a separate chapter. As in the chapter on women in power and decision-making, it arrives at rather sobering conclusions: institutions for the advancement of women have had no lasting success either at a national or international level and are often marginalized by insufficient resources.

Marginalized existence

These institutions are not supported by serious political commitment to genuine change: "National machineries for the advancement of women have been established in almost every Member State to, *inter alia*, design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate, advocate and mobilize support for policies that promote the advancement of women. ... Often marginalized in national government structures, these mechanisms are frequently hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources, and insufficient support from national political leadership".

Lack of political will

There is no lack of methodologies for conducting gender-based analysis in policies and programmes. What is lacking is the political will to put into practice such results in favour of women.

At the international level, programmes for the advancement of women encounter similar problems emanating from a lack of commitment and political will. Moreover, the resources of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women are too limited to fully implement their mandates.

UN-programmes for the advancement of women also without power

Objectives and actions to be taken

The implementation of the three strategic objectives requires strong political commitment. The objectives:

- to create or to strengthen institutions for the advancement of women,
- to integrate a gender perspective in all policies for the benefit of women,
- to generate data to this end.

Institutional advancement of women can be improved

The Platform regards institutional advancement of women as an instrument to be encouraged and promoted for the implementation of gender equality. Policies for the advancement of women should be coordinated by a central unit "at the highest possible level of government" which should be given a mandate "to review policies and

programmes from a gender perspective. Before policy decisions are taken, an analysis must be made of their impacts on women and men. The evaluation of data and information for planning is part of the programmes for the advancement of women.

In order to function effectively, a national institution for the advancement of women must be located at government level, falling under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister. Clearly defined procedural rules are required for cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Sufficient resources must be available to the coordinating unit in order to influence government policy as early as the planning stages. All interested institutions and organizations in the public and private sector should be encouraged to participate in efforts to establish equality between women and men.

Activities to be located at Cabinet level

The Governments are called upon to give all ministries the mandate to review all policies "in the light of the Platform for Action" and to include a gender perspective. The national coordinating unit should monitor if and how the mandate is carried out and should establish direct links with institutions dealing with the advancement of women.

Policies at all levels to be examined "in the light of the Platform for Action"

More data should be collected on the full contribution of women and men to the economy, including the informal sector. In particular data and information on unremunerated work in the subsistence economy and on other forms of non-market production activities is inadequate. More precise data must also be collected to record women's unemployment and underemployment which is at present underestimated.

Gender-specific data on unemployment

In order to document unremunerated work and to make visible how inequitably remunerated and unremunerated work are distributed, the Platform reaffirms the demand of the Nairobi Conference to assess this type of work under the so-called satellite accounts which are consistent with core national accounts. Time-use studies should be conducted to measure this work in quantitative terms.

Unremunerated work to be included in national accounts

The Platform expects the United Nations to provide a more precise analysis of violence against women and improved statistical data that relate to women in economic, social, cultural and political development. The collection of data entitled THE WORLD'S WOMEN should be issued at five-year intervals and distributed more widely. The Secretariat of the United Nations and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women should ensure that better information in respect of progress made at the national and international levels is regularly passed on to the Commission on the Status of Women.

UN should intensify research on women's advancement

Human rights of women: codified in binding form and disregarded every day

Analysis

"Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings; their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of Governments". The Platform incorporates the exact wording of the Vienna Declaration, adopted on July 12th, 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights, in its own text. In line with the Vienna text, it continues "that the human rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights".

Human rights of women are the concern of the international community

Both documents declare the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms to be a priority concern of Governments and the UN.

All core statements of the Vienna Conference, without reservations, have been taken up in the Beijing Platform for Action. Reservations on the grounds of culture or traditions are expressly rejected. The Vienna Declaration strongly emphasized the close link between all international human rights instruments and their binding nature under international law; the Beijing Platform for Action reaffirms this.

Vienna and Cairo: human rights of women apply without any reservations

Both documents equally condemn any form of violence against women in armed conflicts and demand punishment for war crimes against women. Governments and the UN are both called upon to take urgent action to protect the human rights of women.

The Platform talks of "lack of commitment by Governments" as the cause of the gap between the existence of rights and their effective enjoyment in public and private life. It places much more emphasis on the private sphere as a source of violence against women and demands protection from it. Prevention of discrimination in the case of public rights of participation is not enough.

Lack of commitment causes gap between norms and reality

Unless the human rights of women, as defined by international conventions, "are fully recognized and effectively protected, applied, implemented and enforced in national law as well as in national practice,..., they will exist in name only".

Protection of the human rights of women inadequate

Discrimination and social exclusion will persist as long as a lack of awareness within the judicial system and under-representation of women in the justice and legislative systems continue, as long as violations of the human rights of women are not taken seriously, education about existing rights is insufficient and traditional attitudes remain unchanged. This will in turn perpetuate lack of enforcement of full legal rights because of their normative nature.

Strategies and actions to be taken

The Platform demands in its strategic objectives "the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women". It demands not only equality under the law, but equality in practice and education with the aim of achieving legal literacy. All forms of gender-specific violence constitute a violation of human rights. The Governments are urged to take actions to eliminate all forms of violence against women in private and public life, "whether perpetrated or tolerated by the State or private persons". The commitments entered into in the catalogue of fifty-two actions to be taken are directed against the widening gap between documented rights and increasing violence against women, "resulting from harmful traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and extremism".

Violence against women is the crucial problem

The United Nations must intensify their efforts to implement *de facto* human rights of women and the girl-child, in particular because of the "systematic and systemic nature" of the violations. "The human rights of all women and the girl-child must form an integral part of United Nations human rights activities". In order for the human rights of women to be genuinely implemented at the international level, the United Nations must be reformed.

Reform of the United Nations

The Platform wishes to close the still-existing gaps in the human rights instruments by the turn of the century. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be universally signed and ratified by the year 2000. States which have ratified the Convention should review procedures to ensure that they fulfil all the obligations set out in it (by the end of '95 149 States had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), five more States had signed it. The Federal Republic of Germany ratified the Convention in '85).

Anti-discrimination Convention to apply universally by the turn of the century

International cooperation must be extended, including prosecution and punishment of those profiting from organized exploitation of women and children, with the aim of eradicating trafficking in women and children, prostitution and sex tourism. All States are strongly urged to accede to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of November 1989 in order to provide for equal rights for girls and boys world-wide (by the end of '95 187 States ratified the Convention, two more States have signed it. The Federal Republic of Germany put it in force in 1992).

Combat trafficking in women and children

The Governments have declared their willingness to strengthen the United Nations with the aim of preventing female infanticide, of abolishing child labour and of stopping trade in children and human organs and child prostitution.

Comprehensive human rights education programmes should raise awareness of their human rights among women and make men more aware of them. The Platform states that women are, in fact, making increasing use of the legal system to exercise their rights, whilst it also assumes that in many countries lack of awareness of the existence of

these rights is an obstacle that prevents women from exercising them. Such education should increase women's awareness of their rights, encourage them to exercise them and be willing to fight for them. Knowledge of recourse mechanisms to redress violations must also be disseminated. The international human rights documents should be translated into alternative formats to ensure that knowledge of their rights is also accessible to persons with disabilities or at lower levels of literacy.

Education on human rights to counteract ignorance and helplessness

Women engaged in the defence of human rights in women's organizations and feminist groups must be particularly protected and supported. They are playing "a catalytic role" with their grass-roots activities, networking and advocacy of women's human rights. The Governments are called upon to support them and enable them to continue their work. Human rights education must start at school. The Platform demands that appropriate programmes and school curricula should be designed to this end. Human rights education is also applicable to members of the armed forces.

Bildunterschrift S. 46:

Exiled Tibetan women: silent protest at the NGO Forum in Huairou

10

Women and the media: use the media for the advancement of women

Analysis

During the past ten years, advances in information technology have brought about a global communications network "that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviour, especially of children and young adults". The Platform sees this as a major opportunity which has not yet been exhausted: "...potential for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women everywhere".

Technological change offers new opportunities

New opportunities have emerged, but old structures have remained in place. It is true that in the meantime more women have been represented in the media, but only very few have attained senior positions or serve on boards that influence media policy. Since Nairobi, very little has changed in the way women are projected in the media. Gender-based stereotyping and out-dated behavioral patterns are still dominant. With this in mind, the Platform argues for change: "The continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications ... must be changed. Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contribution to society in a changing world".

Structures hostile to women remain in place

Women need not only more influence on content, programming and media policy, they need better access to information technologies which have significantly expanded since Nairobi. Both technical competence and influence on programming will strengthen women's ability "to combat negative portrayals of women internationally and to challenge

instances of abuse of power of an increasingly important industry". Apart from self-regulatory mechanisms for the media, concepts for the elimination of gender-biased programming should be developed.

More technical competence and programming influence for women

Strategies and actions to be taken

Governments are urged to promote full and equal participation of women in the media. The same applies to access to management, programming, training and research. In appointing their representatives to management and regulatory bodies of the media, the Governments are required to aim at gender balance.

Promote full and equal participation of women

The producers of programmes should be encouraged to increase the number of programmes by and for women. The media should become more involved in social and development issues and pay attention in particular to the interests and concerns of women. In this context, the Platform also mentions programmes for the dissemination of information on various cultural forms of indigenous groups.

Women should participate in self-regulatory mechanisms which ensure non-stereotyped portrayals of women by the media. Gender-sensitive programming must start with the training of journalists. Women should not be presented as inferior beings whose exploitation as sex objects and commodities appears legitimate. Rather, it should be made clear that sexist stereotypes constitute a form of degrading discrimination. In the Platform, appropriate legislation is seen as indispensable to combat pornography and the projection of violence against women and children in the media.

Correct stereotyped projections

However, media and advertising organizations should do more than refrain from presenting violence or discrimination, they are also called upon to pay more attention to women's real concerns in a positive sense. Media campaigns should promote the equal and fair sharing of family responsibilities. Women must not be reduced purely to the role of passive consumers in the media, as is still largely the case at present, but should be presented in positive, active roles as "creative human beings, key actors and contributors and beneficiaries of the process of development".

More attention to women's concerns

More information about violence against women and the girl-child in public life and in the family should contribute to limiting the tendency to use force. In order to increase public awareness of the human rights of women, appropriate media campaigns must be designed and implemented.

Media campaigns against violence and for human rights

The media should establish internal commissions to ensure higher priority for women's concerns in programmes.

Women's organizations, other NGOs and media professional associations should create networks which facilitate the increased participation of women in international communication. The South-South and North-South dialogue among these organizations should be supported in order better to protect the human rights of women and to promote equality between women and men. Traditional indigenous forms of media should also be used in these networks to disseminate information on development and social issues.

Create networks for dialogue among women world-wide

The media networks of women for the exchange of views and the dissemination of information require international promotion. New communication systems which enable more women to participate in democratic processes are also worthy of support.

11

Women and the environment: the right to a healthy and productive life threatened world-wide

Analysis

"Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature", states Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration, adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June ´92.

Far away as yet from the ideal of Rio

This quotation comes at the beginning of the chapter on women and the environment in the Platform which concludes that humanity as a whole has not yet come any closer to this ideal state. In fact, general global survival data, collected for the purpose of taking stock, illustrate that humanity is moving constantly further away from this goal.

Worsening conditions in the environment displace whole communities from productive activities, in particular women. Rising sea levels as a result of global warming of the atmosphere threaten people living in coastal areas and in island countries. Uncontrolled ozone depletion severely affects the protective layer of the atmosphere so that increasing amounts of ultra-violet rays reach the Earth, with serious consequences for humanity and the environment. This causes higher rates of skin cancer, eye damage and a generally weakened immune system. Plants and animals are harmed in water and on land, thus reducing the harvest yields. Natural disasters, deterioration of resources, war and civil war with violence, displacement and terror are interrelated in their destructive effects on ecosystems. They have a particularly harmful impact on women and girls.

Ever faster destruction of ecosystems

In complete agreement with Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 in the Rio Declaration, the Platform explicitly refers to this chapter, leaving no doubt about the relevant causes for continued degradation of the global environment, where behavioral changes will be a matter of survival: "While poverty results in certain kinds of stress, the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries". The destruction of ecosystems caused by the industrialized countries further aggravates the situation of poverty and increases imbalances. Poverty and environmental degradation are closely

interrelated: "All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in the standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of people of the world".

Production and consumption in industrialized countries is a major cause of destruction

The Platform bases its hope for vital change on the fact that in the last ten years people have become increasingly aware of the limited nature of world resources and of the level of their destruction and depletion which has already been reached. The new development paradigm of quality and sustainability of patterns of consumption and production, which was promoted at the Earth Summit, will not succeed in the long run if women and men are not involved alike: "Sustainable development will be an elusive goal unless women's contribution to environmental management is recognized and supported". In the light of this conclusion, which is based on the role of women in development as described in Chapter 24 of Agenda 21, the Platform formulates its first strategic objective: "Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels".

Increasing awareness of limits to growth

The Platform also states that "women remain largely absent" at all levels of environmental policy formulation and decision-making. Their experience and skills "in advocacy for and monitoring of proper natural resource management too often remain marginalized in policy-making and decision-making bodies, as well as in educational institutions and environment-related agencies at the managerial level". Women are rarely trained as professional natural resource managers. Even in cases where women are trained to become experts in resource management, "they are often under-represented in formal institutions with policy-making capacities at the national, regional and international levels. Often women are not equal participants in the management of financial and corporate institutions whose decision-making most significantly affects environmental quality. Furthermore, there are institutional weaknesses in coordination between women's non-governmental organizations and national institutions dealing with environmental issues, despite the recent rapid growth and visibility of women's non-governmental organizations working on these issues at all levels".

Women de facto excluded from responsibility in environmental policy

The Platform assumes that by de facto excluding women from decisions on environmental policy valuable knowledge remains untapped. Women have already demonstrated their leadership roles in promoting an environmental ethic by using resources carefully and by recycling used material. Women, in particular indigenous women, have specialized knowledge of ecological linkages and fragile ecosystem management. In many regions, women provide the main labour force for subsistence production; "hence, their role is crucial to the provision of food and nutrition, the enhancement of the subsistence and informal sectors and the preservation of the environment. In certain regions, women are generally the most stable members of the community, as men often pursue work in distant locations, leaving women to safeguard the natural environment and ensure adequate and sustainable resource allocation within the household and the community".

Ecological knowledge of women disregarded

Strategies and actions to be taken

For the benefit of sustainable development, more attention must be paid to the skills, interests and concerns of women at all levels; conversely, the gender-specific impacts of development and environmental policies must be studied more intensively world-wide, assessed and tailored to the needs of women.

Gender perspective for environmental policy

Studies should also be carried out on the extent to which women in particular are exposed to environmental degradation and hazards because of their sex. Some key words from the list of items in the Platform: unsustainable production and consumption patterns, drought, poor quality of drinking water, global warming, desertification, sea-level rise, hazardous waste, natural disasters, toxic chemicals and pesticide residues, radioactive waste... Special attention is directed towards studying the situation of women with low incomes and indigenous women. The commitment for incorporating a "gender perspective" at all levels runs like a red thread through the whole fabric of 37 environment-related actions to be taken.

The Commission on Sustainable Development established in Rio must take gender impact into consideration in its work, as must all the other UN bodies which are active in the field of development and international financial institutions. More involvement of women is demanded for projects funded under the system of Global Environment Facility, with more women in planning and project management and more of them as beneficiaries. Social, economic, political and scientific institutions, which address environmental degradation and the resulting impact on women, should receive support.

Responsibility for environmental policy planning to be shared with women

In Beijing, the national Governments committed themselves to develop "a strategy for change to eliminate all obstacles to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development" and to provide equal access to resources. Equal participation and control is required for decision-making on environmental policy at all levels. With this in mind, access to environment-related education should be facilitated and improved. Women should be encouraged to become involved in decision-making, planning, management, science and technical consulting, especially at a local level. The precautionary approach in environmental policy as agreed in Rio should be enforced by applying clean technologies in all areas of life with the aim of reducing environmental hazards.

Committed to "a strategy of change"

In the developing countries in particular, women need technical assistance for small businesses, industry and commerce, in agriculture and fishery to acquire environmentally safe technologies and to support women entrepreneurs.

The 189 Governments have agreed in Beijing to ensure "that clean water is available and accessible to all by the year 2000 and that environmental protection and conservation plans are designed and implemented to restore polluted water systems and rebuild damaged watersheds".

Clean water for all by the turn of the century

12

The girl-child: existentially disadvantaged

Analysis

"The States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status". These solemn promises are included in Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. For millions of girls they are still far from reality and inaccessible. In real life, girls are clearly discriminated against from the earliest stages of life.

Under-nourished, maltreated and under-educated

The Platform for Action of Beijing concludes: "Girls are often treated as inferior and are socialized to put themselves last, thus undermining their self-esteem. Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream".

Raised to become second-class beings

In some parts of the world, men outnumber women by 5 in 100. The reasons for this include abortions of female foetuses, female infanticide, discrimination against girls in food allocations, hard work and neglect of their health. These selective practices related to girls' health and nutrition have serious consequences: according to the Platform, 450 million adult women are stunted as a result of childhood malnutrition.

What adult women experience as continuously excessive demands on them has often been learned in childhood. The double burden of domestic and professional work is often preceded by the expectation that young girls manage both school and - frequently more demanding - domestic chores at an early age. The Platform identifies this dual responsibility as a major cause of early drop-out from schooling. In some countries, the number of educated children has grown in the last two decades, but boys have fared proportionately much better than girls in this context. In 1990, 130 million children had no access to schooling; of these, 81 million were girls. The Platform attributes this to traditional attitudes, child labour, early marriages, lack of funds and adequate schooling facilities and premature pregnancies. In some countries, the shortage of women teachers may also be an obstacle for the enrolment of girls. Inequality continues in the educational system itself through gender-biased teaching and curricular materials and discrimination in classroom interaction and teachers' attitudes.

Scholastic and domestic chores: a double burden on the shoulders of the young

The number of girls in secondary schools remains extremely low in many countries. Often they are not given the opportunity or the encouragement to pursue scientific and technical education and training, in particular. The Platform notes a tendency to exclude

girls from social, political and economic life in early childhood. Boys are encouraged to participate, girls are not.

Exclusion from birth

Each year 15 million girls aged 15 to 19 give birth. Pregnancy and delivery in childhood or adolescence mean a particularly high risk for the mothers. Their children have a higher level of morbidity, and infant mortality is also higher. Early pregnancies and deliveries are obstacles to better educational, economic and social opportunities of women and their children.

Too much force, too little information: too many children become mothers

There is no protected space for girls, they are defenceless in the face of attacks. "Sexual violence and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV / Aids have a devastating effect on children's health, and girls are more vulnerable than boys to the consequences of unprotected and premature sexual relations".

Violence and exploitation are ever-present

Girls are more vulnerable than their male opposites to all kinds of violence due to factors as youth, social pressures and lack of protective laws. Disabled girls face additional risks due to their disabilities. According to the Platform, some children need special protection, "especially the abandoned, homeless and displaced, street children, children in areas of conflict, or children who are discriminated against because they belong to an ethnic or racial minority group".

Strategies and actions to be taken

Against this background, the Platform formulates the first strategic objective in the name of gender bias in politics: "Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child". The following eight actions, proposed to the global family, are targeted towards concrete sets of problems:

- Discriminatory cultural attitudes and practices must be firmly eradicated by all those concerned.
- Girls' needs and opportunities require more sensitive measures.
- Equality in education and training.
- Equality in matters of health and nutrition.
- Exploitation of child labour must be eliminated.
- Girls must be better protected at work.
- Girls must be encouraged to participate in social life, their status in the family must be improved.
- Violence against the girl-child must be stopped.

The Platform proposes 58 specific actions with the aim of implementing these objectives.

Violence against the women of tomorrow must be stopped

Of all the international agreements which are binding under international law, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 has achieved the highest degree of ratification.174 States had ratified it by the end of 1994. In accordance with the Vienna

Conference on Human Rights, the Platform for Action demands that the still-existing gap in ratification be closed.

Ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and monitor its full implementation

The States that have ratified the Convention commit themselves to its full implementation by "the adoption of all necessary legislative, administrative and other measures and by fostering an enabling environment..."

Any injustice and obstacles in respect of inheritance faced by girls must be eliminated by legislation "that guarantees equal right to succession and ensures equal right to inherit, regardless of the sex of the child". Data collected for policy-making and decision-making of all kinds and for concrete programmes, for example in health and education, must include a gender perspective.

The existing disparities between girls and boys in primary education must be eliminated as a first step. Questions of health and nutrition must be part of literacy programmes for the benefit of girls. The Platform proposes for those girls who remain excluded from formal education to be promoted by so-called functional literacy programmes. Equal access to secondary education should be ensured by the year 2005 and equal access to all forms of higher education to follow suit. Special incentives, for example scholarships, should be introduced to increase enrolment and to improve retention rates of girls. The Platform focuses attention on the weakest members in the system, also in education: It emphasizes the right to full participation in social life for girls with disabilities; additional efforts are required for their educational needs in particular.

Equal access to secondary schools by the year 2005

In line with the tasks related to violence against women, the Platform calls upon Governments to protect girls against violence more effectively. There is a lack of legislation "protecting girls from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, genital mutilation, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography...".

Effective prevention of violence

Girls who have become victims of violence need better and more assistance. It should be provided through age-sensitive, discreet and safe programmes which offer medical, social and psychological support services. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Platform demands active protection of children from economic exploitation. It advocats a minimum age for access to the labour markets for girls as well to be incorporated in national legislation.

More assistance for victims of violence

Health education must be clearly reoriented towards the needs and concerns of girls and must ensure intensive information regarding the physiology of reproduction, reproductive and sexual health. This applies also to information about the risks of HIV infection, Aids prevention and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Protect girls' health

The Platform recalls the relevant agreements made at the International Conference on Population and demands their implementation. For the benefit of girls' physical and mental health, discrimination in food allocation and health care must be eliminated. Primary health-care programmes must be augmented. In view of improved availability of prenatal sex determination, the Platform is afraid of a further increase of abortions of female foetuses, as long as son preference persists. It is therefore necessary to address the underlying economic and social causes of this preference in order to eradicate all existential disadvantages for girls.

Comply with Cairo agreements

After Beijing: Follow-up or Business as Usual?

The strategies and commitments agreed upon at the Fourth World Conference on Women far exceed the results of previous world conferences on women. Whether this will contribute to an improvement of the situation of women world-wide depends on how seriously the problems diagnosed in Beijing are taken and on whether they are translated into practical policies.

By adopting the Platform for Action, the 189 Governments present have committed themselves to the full implementation of the results of the 4th World Conference on Women and the inclusion of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes.

Concrete steps towards a follow-up of the 4th World Conference on Women and the implementation of its results were also agreed in the Platform for Action. Apart from Governments, all civil-society institutions are called upon to examine their objectives and programmes at the national level in the light of strategies adopted in Beijing. However, primary responsibility rests with the Governments. For example,

- national plans of action should be developed by the end of '96; the NGOs should be encouraged to contribute to the process;
- public funds should be allocated for the benefit of women, or public budgets be adapted to provide women with access to public expenditure;
- national women's organizations and all institutions which might contribute to the implementation should be allocated appropriate funds.

A large number of measures are also listed for the international level, ie for the nations represented and their sub-organizations. At the same time, the United Nations plays a key role in monitoring. The body responsible is the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which is also mandated to report on progress made in implementing the Platform for Action in the members states. Each of the annual meetings of the CSW focuses on major areas of concern of the Platform. In the run-up to each meeting, progress made within the United Nations system is also assessed. The NGOs accredited in Beijing will be invited to the annual meetings.

In order to facilitate preparation among women's organizations at the national and regional levels and to enable them to influence their Governments, priority topics have been identified for the CSW meetings in the years to come. (PFA=Platform for Action):

1997:

- Education and training of women (PFA, Chapter IV, Section B)
- Women and the economy: (PFA, Chapter IV, Section F)
- Women in power and decision-making (PFA, Chapter IV, Section G)
- Women and the environment (PFA, Chapter IV, Section K)

1998:

- Violence against women (PFA, Chapter IV, Section D)
- Women and armed conflict (PFA, Chapter IV, Section E)
- Human rights of women (PFA, Chapter IV, Section I)
- The girl-child (PFA, Chapter IV, Section L)

1999:

- Women and health (PFA, Chapter IV, Section C)
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (PFA, Chapter IV, Section H)

A Final Report and Forum Documentation is also available now from the organizers of the NGO Forum in Huairou.¹

Furthermore in the event of questions arising, all NGOs can contact the established Focal Points, of which the majority also act as a monitoring group for the implementation of the Platform for Action in their region. (contact address for Europe: Danielle Bridel, Int´l Liaison, ECE Working Group, IH NGO CSW, Office E2-1, NGO- Lounge, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10).

At several points, the Platform emphasizes the important role of NGOs in the follow-up process. World-wide, NGOs are trying to do justice to this role by disseminating information about the Conference and its results and by urging their Governments to implement the promises made in Beijing. The Platform for Action also provides for NGOs to be consulted and included in the design of the national Plans of Action.

Women's organizations are using the national, regional and international networks established by the 4th World Conference on Women for successful lobbying. For example, the International Women's Tribune Center (contact address: 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA) provides continuous information about the results of CSW-meetings and collects and disseminates information in respect of implementation at a national level or within the United Nations system.

(As far as Germany is concerned, the Platform for Action has so far been largely regarded as a relevant input to development policy only; the content of the Platform for Action has not yet been accepted as part of the national policy on women's issues or as a general topic cutting across all areas of politics. This indifference became especially apparent during the general debate of the German Parliament on the 4th World Conference on Women: The Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Rita Süßmuth, was not able to stop Members of Parliament from leaving the hall, even with her remark that "the topic is not meant as an invitation to leave the hall". The moderator of the Follow-up Conference on March 11th, 1996, in Bonn, Maria von Welser, remarked in this context: "The content of Beijing has been neglected in the discussion about the 4th World Conference on Women". This still holds true. It has not disappeared from the political debate in Germany, it has not even arrived.)

¹Facilitating Committee of the NGO Forum on Women '95:

NGO Forum Final Report

⁻ Look at the World Through Women's Eyes: Plenary Speeches from the NGO Forum on Women, Beijing '95

NGO Forum '95 Newspapers, available from *Women Ink, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA