

*executive committee of
the directing council*



PAN AMERICAN
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

*working party of
the regional committee*

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



97th Meeting
Washington, D.C.
June 1986

Provisional Agenda Item 3.2

CE97/12 (Eng.)
9 April 1986
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Resolution XIV of the XXXI Meeting of the Directing Council requests the Director to convene the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development once a year to monitor progress, to propose solutions to problems identified, and to promote concerted action on women, health and development. In response to this same resolution, the 96th Meeting of the Executive Committee (September 1985) expanded the membership of the Subcommittee from three to five member to broaden representation from the subregions of the Americas.

The Subcommittee members (Argentina, Bahamas, Canada, Honduras and Mexico) will meet from 16 to 20 June 1986 to prepare their report, which will be presented to the 97th Meeting of the Executive Committee.

In its Resolution XIV, the Directing Council also recommended that Member Governments review, reaffirm and renew their commitment to the goals of women, health and development (WHD); that they systematically integrate women into all levels of health planning, organization and delivery of health care; and that they strengthen the capacities of WHD Focal Points to stimulate appropriate action.

The Directing Council further requested the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to provide full support to the Regional Program on Women, Health and Development as an integral part of PAHO's overall responsibilities; to stimulate education for women as users and providers of health care; and to develop regional forward-looking strategies and guidelines for action to be integrated into plans for women, health and development in the countries of the Region.

In response to this, the Secretariat has developed draft forward-looking strategies and guidelines for action on WHD, which will be reviewed by the Subcommittee when it meets in June.

Also in response to the resolution, the Director established an Internal Advisory Group on Women, Health and Development, which has been meeting regularly since October under the chairmanship of the Assistant Director. The Advisory Committee developed goals, objectives, strategies and 1986 priorities for the WHD Program which were adopted by the Director (see Annex I), and is currently studying emerging WHD issues such as women's mental health and the health of women workers.

In preparation for its consideration of the Subcommittee's report and the ensuing discussions, the Executive Committee may wish to review Resolution XIV of the XXXI Meeting of the Directing Council (1985) (see Annex II).

Annexes

PROGRAM ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Achieving universal health will depend in large measure on achieving health for women, not only because they make up half the population, but because women's health is crucial to the health and development of present and future generations. Women are key providers and teachers of health care in the home, community and the formal health system. Women's health status affects not only their own contributions to family, community and societal welfare, it affects the health of their children and other family members as well.

"Women, health and development" (WHD) has become a short-hand term to denote the complex interrelationship of women's health and their social, political, cultural and economic status. Health both contributes to and results from development; poverty breeds poor health; and poor health affects initiative and productivity, perpetuating poverty. Prevailing customs and attitudes which assign low social status to women severely limit their educational and economic opportunities, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and ill-health. Therefore, WHD implies a dual approach: direct action both to improve women's health status and to bring about attitudinal and structural changes to promote economic and social progress by women.

Women's key role in primary health care began to receive attention as a result of the U.N. Decade for Women (1976-1985) and its World Conferences, the 1978 World Conference on Primary Health Care at Alma Ata, and the resulting global goal and regional plans of action to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000. In 1981, PAHO's Member Governments adopted a Five-Year Regional Plan of Action on WHD (1981-1985) to be carried out as an integral part of PAHO's and its Member Countries' health programs. However, in spite of the many efforts made during the past 10 years to improve women's status, it was recently confirmed at the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi that there are still many obstacles to improving women's health status and to their full participation in health and development, especially at the decision-making level.

PAHO's Program on Women, Health and Development aims to help PAHO and Member Governments fully integrate women and their needs into health and development activities in the Region in an ongoing manner. The goals and activities of the Program form an integral part of PAHO's regional strategies to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000.

The following describes the Program's long-term goals, general strategies and objectives, priorities for 1986 and coordinating mechanisms and institutional responsibilities.

GOALS

1. To focus attention on the health needs of women of all ages, to enhance their participation in social, political, economic and cultural development.
2. To ensure that a focus on women's health needs and risks becomes an integral part of regional and national plans of action to implement the strategies to achieve health for all by the year 2000.
3. To increase women's participation in planning, policy-making and decision-making in health and development at all levels of national and regional programs.
4. To promote activities that create positive attitudes and values which ensure the development and use of all human resources, regardless of sex.

STRATEGIES

1. Promotion and strengthening of WHD activities in all program areas, supporting technical cooperation, training, and advisory services for women, health and development; and establishing systems of monitoring and evaluating WHD activities.
2. Promotion at national and regional levels of increased research, data-gathering, and analysis to define problems and issues related to women's health and women's participation in health planning, policy-making and decision-making.
3. Promotion and dissemination of information on programs and activities in the Region which improve women's health and enhance their participation in health and development activities at the decision-making level.
4. Provision of guidelines and mechanisms whereby the Organization and the Member Governments can successfully integrate the WHD activities proposed by the UN "Forward-Looking Strategies" and UN, WHO and PAHO resolutions on WHD into all programs in the Region.
5. Strengthening linkages between and among women's organizations and formal health and development institutions to form a collaborative network in the Region.
6. Mobilization of resources to support operational programs related to WHD.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To define and implement specific areas and activities of technical cooperation in WHD within and among the countries of the Region.
2. To ensure that PAHO takes action to improve women's health and enhance women's participation in health and development as an integral component of each of its technical programs.
3. To establish mechanisms in PAHO and within the countries to collect and disseminate information that will permit the monitoring of women's health conditions, the sensitizing of decision-makers to WHD issues, and the monitoring and evaluation of WHD activities in the Region.
4. To establish mechanisms in PAHO that will promote career development for women and will facilitate recruitment of qualified female professionals.
5. To promote research on women's health status and women's participation in health and development, including determining factors and evaluation of technology.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR PAHO'S PROGRAM ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT, 1986

PAHO's Regional Program on Women, Health and Development will focus on the following three areas during 1986:

1. Selected health problems of women
 - a) Cervical cancer control;
 - b) Occupational health;
 - c) Reduction of maternal mortality;
 - d) Review of the situation of women's mental health in the Region.
2. Women as promoters of community health and development

Design strategies and develop and disseminate educational and training materials that will promote the participation of women's organizations and health workers in areas related to women's health and development.

3. Women as health professionals

a) Women as decision-makers

- Identify and contact women in high-level positions (ministers, vice ministers, national planners) in the Region to involve them in the goals and activities of the WHD program.

b) Status of women at PAHO

- Help to identify and recruit qualified women for professional posts, consultant assignments, research projects, and expert committees;
- Provide opportunities for training and career development for PAHO Staff.

COORDINATING MECHANISMS AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Regional Program on Women, Health and Development is coordinated by the Assistant Director who serves as Focal Point in charge of the PWD Unit. This Unit works with PAHO's technical programs to integrate technical cooperation related to WHD into all appropriate programs and projects. The Unit also monitors the progress made in developing WHD activities and establishes and maintains a network of information exchange and coordination with other organizations, both at the national and international levels. The majority of PWD's activities are carried out in direct conjunction with other PAHO programs at the national and Regional levels.

It is the responsibility of each of PAHO's programs to take action addressing women's health needs and recognizing and supporting their contributions in health and development. This requires that health and development programs incorporate the needs and requirements of women into their ongoing and new activities.

To coordinate, promote and develop WHD activities at the country level, each Government in the Region has designated a national coordinator or focal point. This individual or group of persons is usually within the Health Ministry or in a national office or bureau on women and development.

PAHO's Country Representatives (CR) have been designated by the Director as PAHO Focal Points in each country. Therefore, PAHO's Regional Focal Point works with the CR (or designated staff member in the country office) and national focal points to plan and carry out WHD activities at the country level.

The Internal Advisory Committee on Women, Health and Development, consisting of an interdisciplinary group of PAHO professionals, has been established to advise the Director on the planning, implementation and evaluation of the program. The Committee specifically, among other responsibilities, advises on providing cooperation to national WHD focal points and on coordinating, developing and promoting WHD activities within PAHO technical programs and units. The Assistant Director serves as chairperson of the Committee and PWD functions as its secretariat.

At WHO Headquarters in Geneva the WHD Focal Point is the Chief of the Family Health Division, who works closely with PAHO's Focal Point in coordinating policy on WHD, WHO's participation in UN activities and conferences, and WHD projects related to this Region.

The Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development of the Executive Committee meets in Washington, D.C., in June of each year, immediately before the Executive Committee meeting, to monitor progress, to propose solutions to problems identified, and to promote concerted action on women, health and development. Its members in 1986 are Argentina, Bahamas, Canada, Honduras and Mexico.



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XXXI Meeting

XXXVII Meeting

CE97/12 (Eng.)
ANNEX II

RESOLUTION XIV

WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

THE XXXI MEETING OF THE DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Acknowledging that the International Decade for Women has revealed that women's health is an important determinant of national development and that a nation's health is also dependent upon women's development, particularly in the sectors of health, education and employment;

Recognizing that women represent approximately 80% of all health care providers in the majority of countries of the Region, but are still underrepresented at policy, planning and decision-making levels;

Taking into consideration that the Region's poorest segments of urban and rural society are overrepresented by women, particularly those who have sole responsibility for children or who are aged and infirm;

Reaffirming the continuing importance of all PAHO resolutions dealing with women, health and development (CSP19.R27, CD23.R10, CD24.R25, CD27.R17, CD28.R15, CSP21.R27, CD29.R22, CD30.R6), as well as the most recent World Health Assembly resolution on the subject (WHA28.27);

Commending the Director on the achievements thus far in collaboration with the Member Governments, the interagency cooperation, as well as the beginning of collaboration with the nongovernmental sector, particularly in health education;

Further commending the Director for the notable progress in the establishment and development of WHD Focal Points in Member Countries and in PAHO, for the help and encouragement of the Regional Focal Point through field visits, workshops and seminars, for the important paper on cervical cancer, and on the recent publication on the health of women in the Americas;

Realizing that at the end of the Decade significant efforts are required to improve the health status of women and to enhance their effective participation in health care in the Region;

Furthermore, recognizing that the WHD goals and activities remain an integral part of the regional strategies to attain health for all by the year 2000 and, indeed, that its attainment is impossible without women's active participation as agents and beneficiaries; and

Acknowledging that the Forward-Looking Strategies recently articulated by WHO and more generally stated at the 1985 World Conference on Women require regional interpretation and implementation,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the Member Governments:

- a) To review, reaffirm and renew their commitment to the goals of women, health and development which address the physical and mental health needs of women in their productive and reproductive roles in the context of socioeconomic development and adopt effective action plans based on the Forward-Looking Strategies as well as the Regional Strategies to achieve health for all by the year 2000;
- b) To recognize the actual and potential contributions of women to the health sector and to overall socioeconomic development by working systematically to integrate women into all levels of health planning, organization and delivery of health care;
- c) To strengthen the capacities of WHD Focal Points to stimulate appropriate action and to monitor and report on progress attained.

2. To request that the Director:

- a) Reaffirm PAHO's commitment to carrying out the continuing mandates of the Organization related to women, health and development and the Forward-Looking Strategies by:
 - i) Providing full support for the Regional Program on Women, Health and Development as an integral part of PAHO's overall responsibilities, and ensuring that PAHO's programs focus clearly on women's health needs and contributions;
 - ii) Stimulating education for women as users and providers of health and, in coordination with other international organizations, encouraging Member Governments to assist women to overcome obstacles to the fulfillment of their roles in the health sector;
 - iii) Developing regional forward-looking strategies and guidelines for action to be integrated into short-term plans, medium-term plans, and long-term plans for women, health and development as part of the regional strategies to achieve health for all by the year 2000;
- b) Convene the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development once a year to monitor progress, to propose solutions to problems identified, and to promote concerted action on women, health and development.

3. To recommend to the Executive Committee that it expand the membership of its Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development from three to five members for the purpose of broadening representation from the subregions of the Region of the Americas.

(Approved at the eighth plenary session,
26 September 1985)



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97th Meeting
Washington, D.C.
June 1986

Agenda Item 3.2

CE97/12, ADD. I (Eng.)
23 June 1986
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In compliance with operative paragraph 2 of Resolution XIV of the XXXVII Meeting of the Directing Council, the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development met during the week of 16-20 June 1986 in Washington, D.C., to monitor progress, to elaborate Regional Forward-Looking Strategies according to those adopted at the Nairobi World Conference on Women, and to promote concerted action on women, health and development (WHD). In compliance with the same resolution, the membership of the Subcommittee was increased from three to five members (Argentina, Bahamas, Canada, Honduras and Mexico).

The Delegate from Mexico was elected by the Subcommittee to chair the Meeting. The Delegate from the Bahamas was elected as Vice Chair, and the delegate from Argentina as the Rapporteur. The Subcommittee then reviewed and adopted the agenda proposed by the Secretariat which included the Secretariat's summary of 1985-1986 WHD program activities and the Subcommittee's review of a draft of the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on Women, Health and Development.

The Delegate from Canada, who chaired last year's meeting of the Subcommittee, read the report submitted to the Executive Committee by the Subcommittee last year.

The members of the Subcommittee attended the United States government's National Conference on Women's Health sponsored by the WHD Focal Point for the United States of America on 17-18 June. Their attendance at the conference served to stimulate and complement the discussions and work of the Subcommittee members throughout their meeting.

I. WHD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOR 1985-1986

The Subcommittee was pleased to learn that the Director had established an Internal Advisory Committee to advise him on all matters pertaining to the Program on Women, Health and Development. The Advisory Committee has met regularly since October 1985 and developed a program for 1986, which was presented to the Executive Committee in Document CE97/12.

The Subcommittee examined the Secretariat's summary of WHD program activities and heard reports from PAHO's technical staff on various PAHO programs. The subjects reviewed by the Subcommittee were maternal care, cervical cancer control, health promotion, occupational health of women, women's mental health, and the status of women at PAHO. Based on the information presented by the Secretariat, the Subcommittee concluded the following:

Maternal Care: The problem of maternal mortality is a neglected tragedy in the Region. Rates vary considerably among and within countries and in many cases are unacceptably high. Specific targets should be established for the reduction of maternal mortality in the countries of the Region. Furthermore, more attention and resources should be directed to improved access to higher quality care and more efficient services, and the standardization of prenatal and perinatal care.

Cervical Cancer Control: Although PAHO is developing a series of activities to improve coordination and delivery of services in the Region, more efforts must be made to: i) increase awareness in the Region that cervical cancer is a public health problem; ii) to educate women, especially those at high risk, on the early detection of the disease; and iii) to ensure the timely treatment of the disease when it is detected.

Women's Mental Health: The Subcommittee reviewed a paper submitted by the Secretariat on the mental health of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Subcommittee members acknowledged this as an important first step in better understanding and addressing mental health issues for women in the Region. The Subcommittee requested that as its next step, the Secretariat prepare a comprehensive bibliography on the subject in cooperation with other health agencies, to facilitate further work in women's mental health by PAHO and its Member Governments.

Health Promotion: Participatory health promotion efforts are crucial to women's improved health status and access to health care. Therefore, health promotion involving women of all ages, especially in coordination with women's organizations, should be continued and strengthened. Furthermore, new methodologies and approaches should be developed, tested and applied to improve results.

Occupational Health: In light of the emerging issues and concerns for women workers in the Region summarized by the Secretariat, the Subcommittee suggests that, for its next meeting, the Secretariat present a state-of-the-art paper on the health of women workers in the Americas.

Status of Women at PAHO: The Subcommittee members met with the Chief of the Personnel Department to discuss trends in recruitment and training of female professionals at PAHO. Despite efforts underway, progress appears to be slow in increasing the percentage of women in professional posts, especially those at the P.4 level and above.

The Subcommittee suggests that the Secretariat prepare a report which shows the number and percentage of women in professional posts in 1975, 1980 and 1985 to analyze trends and to identify future possibilities for increasing the percentage of women, especially in the higher grade posts.

The Subcommittee further recommends that the Organization develop a plan in accordance with the WHO target of 30% women in professional and higher grade posts, in coordination with the Internal Advisory Committee on WHD and the Subcommittee, of the Staff Association on the Status of Women. The Subcommittee also recommended to the Director, and received his verbal agreement, to increase the participation of women on PAHO committees including the Director's Advisory Committee.

During its discussions with the Director, the Subcommittee expressed the need to increase the participation of nurses in the programs of the Organization, and to continue stimulating their training and incorporation into primary health care teams.

II. REGIONAL FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Subcommittee dedicated a major part of its work to developing the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on WHD. A draft of the Strategies was presented by the Secretariat, as requested in Resolution CD37.R14. The Subcommittee reviewed and revised the document to include eight strategies and a related series of activities to be developed. The eight strategies are based on the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies and the major characteristics of the countries of the Region of the Americas. The Subcommittee decided to present the Strategies to the Executive Committee for its approval and presentation to the XXII Pan American Sanitary Conference (Annex).

III. PROPOSED RESOLUTION

The Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development proposes that the 97th Meeting of the Executive Committee adopt the following resolution:

Proposed Resolution

WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

THE 97th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

Acknowledging that the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development, in compliance with Resolution XIV of the XXXI Meeting of the Directing Council, has met to monitor progress, propose solutions and promote concerted action on women, health and development; and

Having reviewed the report of the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development and the proposed Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on Women, Health and Development,

RESOLVES:

1. To transmit the proposed Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on Women, Health and Development to the XXII Pan American Sanitary Conference.

2. To recommend to the XXII Pan American Sanitary Conference that it adopt a resolution along the following lines:

THE XXII PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE,

Having reviewed the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on Women, Health and Development (WHD) prepared by the Special Subcommittee on Women, Health and Development and endorsed by the 97th Meeting of the Executive Committee;

Reaffirming the commitment of the Member Countries and the UN specialized agencies to the "Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000" (FLS) adopted by consensus at the U.N. World Conference on Women in Nairobi, in particular paragraphs 148 to 162;

Noting and supporting Resolution WHA39.18 of the World Health Assembly which endorses the FLS, advocates cooperation with other UN organizations in the implementation of the FLS, and requests a report to the Fortieth World Health Assembly on activities undertaken to implement the Strategies;

Reaffirming the importance of all previous PAHO resolutions on WHD, especially CD31.R14 which requests the Director of PASB to elaborate Regional Forward-Looking Strategies to be integrated into plans of action on WHD as part of the Health for All Strategies;

Reiterating that women's active participation as agents and beneficiaries is crucial to the attainment of Health for All by the Year 2000 in this Region and that WHD is an integral component of these efforts; and

Reaffirming the urgent need to improve the health of women in the Region and their access to quality health care,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on WHD as proposed by the 97th Meeting of the Executive Committee.
2. To urge the Member Countries:
 - a) To develop specific plans of action on women, health and development for the next five years (1986-1990) based on the strategies proposed by the Executive Committee;
 - b) To strengthen national focal points on WHD by delegating authority to them and providing them with the resources needed to best carry out their functions;
 - c) To ensure collaboration of interdisciplinary and intersectoral bodies in the implementation of national plans of action on WHD;
 - d) To make maximum efforts to improve women's health conditions, giving special emphasis to i) the reduction of the unacceptably high maternal mortality rates that exist within many Member Countries; ii) strengthening efforts to reduce cancer mortality in women; iii) reducing the specific health risks of women within worker health programs; and iv) improving conditions affecting women's mental health;

- e) To ensure that health services meet women's needs and to improve their access to health care;
- f) To establish mechanisms for improved collaboration with nongovernmental women's organizations in developing WHD activities.

3. To request the Director:

- a) To reaffirm PAHO's commitment to the Regional Program on Women, Health and Development, taking the actions necessary to implement the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies, paying special attention to the following actions:
 - i) Strengthening WHD focal points in the PAHO Country Offices;
 - ii) Establishing mechanisms for exchanging experiences among national focal points;
 - iii) Strengthening existing support mechanisms in the Organization for implementation of the WHD Program;
 - iv) Ensuring mobilization of the resources required for the implementation of the proposed strategies;
 - v) Stimulating collaboration with other agencies to coordinate activities and mobilize additional resources.
- c) To prepare a regional contribution to the progress report requested by the WHA in its Resolution WHA39.18, taking into consideration the strategies proposed by the Executive Committee and the most recent report submitted by the WHD Subcommittee;
- d) To establish a panel of experts in the Region to assist PAHO and the Member Government in the implementation of the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies on WHD;
- e) To ensure a more equal participation of women on all PAHO committees;
- f) To develop a plan to reach the target of 30% representation of women in professional and higher posts in PAHO.

CE97/12, ADD. I (Eng.)
ANNEX

FINAL DRAFT
REGIONAL FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES
ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

REGIONAL FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES
ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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REGIONAL FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES
ON WOMEN, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Achieving universal health will largely depend on achieving health for all women. This is true not only because women comprise half of the population, but also because their health is crucial to both present and future health and development goals. Women are the key providers and teachers of health care in their homes, their communities and in formal health systems. The health status of women affects not only the health of their children and other family members, but also their contribution to the welfare of their communities and societies.

"Women, Health and Development" (WHD) has become a short-hand term to denote the complex interrelationships between the health of women and their social, political, cultural, and economic situations. Healthier people contribute to and result from overall development. But poverty breeds poor health, and poor health limits people's productivity and capacities, thus perpetuating poverty. Prevailing customs and attitudes that discriminate against women severely limit their educational and economic opportunities.

In the majority of the countries of the Region, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, many complex factors contribute to women's disadvantaged situation. These factors include rapid population growth in the least-developed areas, large migrations from rural areas to cities, uneven income distribution, and cultural and social attitudes that restrict women's advancement in the work force and their ability to find adequate social support and health care for themselves and their families.

Within each country levels of development vary considerably but everywhere women, especially poor women and those belonging to minority groups, face special health risks due to their disadvantaged situation. Appropriate health care is being increasingly sought by all women. Rapid social change has led to the entrance of a large number of women into the labor force, changes in family and household structure and the growth of the population of women over 65, these changes have had implications for women's access to health services and for their health. Of course the situation varies greatly according to cultural, economic, and political factors and the health care systems within the different countries of the Americas.

Improving women's health conditions requires both actions directly related to health and changes in attitudes and institutional structures to promote the economic and social progress of women.

The key roles of women in primary health care began to receive attention as a result of and during the U.N. Decade for Women from 1976 to 1985. The 1978 World Conference on Primary Health Care at Alma Ata led to the global goal and regional plans of action to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000. However, despite efforts in the past ten years, the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi concluded that there are still many obstacles to improved health for women and to their full participation in health and development programs, especially at decision-making levels.

The Regional forward-looking strategies and proposed actions outlined in this document aim to identify and reduce risks to women's health and to promote the positive health of women at all states of life, bearing in mind women's productive role in society, as well as their responsibilities for bearing and rearing children. Women's health and their roles depend on broad considerations, including their access to appropriate health care, their employment, their education and their economic, social and cultural status.

The purpose of PAHO's Program on Women, Health and Development is to help PAHO and its Member Governments fully integrate women and their health needs into the health and development activities in the Region. The goals and activities of the Program form an integral part of PAHO's regional strategies to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000 (HFA 2000) and of the commitment to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY BASIS

Since 1980, PAHO has focused increasing attention on women's crucial role in primary health care as part of its overall strategies to achieve universal health. In 1981, PAHO's Directing Council adopted the Five-Year Regional Plan of Action on Women, Health and Development (1981-1985) and established mechanisms to coordinate and monitor the activities of the Plan. These included a Special WHD Subcommittee of the Executive Committee which meets yearly and Regional and national focal points.

The Five-Year Plan stresses that WHD activities be incorporated into regional and national programs. The governments have made varying degrees of progress in incorporating the Plan's goals and activities into their national health policies, plans and programs. This process has been facilitated in countries that have established interdisciplinary coordinating groups on WHD and Women's Bureaus and Offices that serve as focal points and have as their mandates to participate in the establishment of national priorities for WHD, develop integrated action plans and promote collaboration among various institutions and groups that carry out projects to improve the situation of women.

PAHO's Regional Focal Point has worked in close coordination with PAHO's technical programs to develop a series of WHD activities emphasizing research, training, information dissemination and program development. (A more detailed summary of PAHO's activities in the area of women, health and development during the years 1976-1985 can be found in PAHO's progress report to the WHD Subcommittee, Document CE95/8, ADD., Rev. 1, Annex 1.)

The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Nairobi in July 1985, assessed the Decade (1976-1985) in terms of progress made and obstacles encountered. The Conference generally concluded that, since 1975, the awareness of women's issues had increased, and that women have made legal, social and political advances. But at the same time, in the majority of the countries continuous stereotyping of women's roles; worsening economic situations resulting in reduction of resources for social programs; the persistently discriminatory attitudes of many people, especially decision-makers; the exclusion of women from policy formulation and decision-making; and the gaps between laws as written and as implemented, still proved major obstacles to women's progress. Another major obstacle identified was the lack of appropriate national machinery for the effective integration of women into the health and development process. Where the machinery exists, it is often lacking the resources, mandate and authority to be effective.

The Conference established that there is still a great need to recognize the extent and seriousness of the problems faced by women, and to direct the political will and the resources needed to solve these problems. As a result, a consensus was reached by 157 of the U.N. member states, including 34 from the Americas Region, to adopt the "Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" (FLS) for the period 1986 to the year 2000. The document includes a chapter on development containing sections on women's education, employment, and health.

In the section on health, governments are urged first to recognize the vital role of women as providers of health care both inside and outside the home, and second to create and strengthen basic services for the delivery of health care, with due regard to levels of fertility, infant and maternal mortality, the needs of the most vulnerable groups, and the need to control locally prevalent diseases. Furthermore, the strategies require governments to expand and improve the employment and working conditions of women health personnel and healthworkers.

The strategies developed at Nairobi further require that governments should, in cooperation with WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA, develop plans of action relating to WHD. Such plans should identify and reduce risks to women's health, and should promote their health at all stages of life, focusing on women's productive roles in society as well as on their participation in the bearing and raising children.

For its end-of-the decade report of the Director General, WHO developed forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women in health and development in the context of health for all. The WHO global, regional, and national strategies reflect recent regional discussions and resolutions on WHD issues. The WHO report concludes that if the goal of health for all is to be attained, more attention must be given to women's health and to their roles in health and development.

PAHO's Five-Year Plan on WHD, for 1981 to 1985, developed in response to the conclusions of the Mid-Decade Conference for Women in 1980, still provides valuable proposals for action in the Region. However, it does not fully reflect the recent lessons learned (e.g., importance of national focal points and emerging WHD issues such as women's mental health and occupational health) and the progress made in the Region during the past five years.

Taking all of the above into consideration, the XXXI Meeting of the PAHO Directing Council requested that the Director of the PASB develop "regional forward-looking strategies and guidelines for action to be integrated into short term plans, medium-term plans and long-term plans for women, health and development as part of the regional strategies to achieve health for all by the year 2000." (Resolution XIV, operative paragraph 2.a.iii.).

The strategies presented here were developed in response to this request and to the clear need for forward-looking strategies on WHD appropriate to this Region. Relevant portions of PAHO's Five-Year Plan on WHD, WHO's Strategies for WHD, the Forward-Looking Strategies adopted at the Nairobi Conference, and other recommendations for action resulting from Regional and national meetings and projects on WHD, have been integrated into the regional strategies and proposed actions on WHD.

The strategies are also based on the "Regional Strategies for Attaining HFA/2000," and their focus on the basic components of primary health care and the PAHO document "Managerial Strategies for the Optimal Utilization of PAHO/WHO Resources in Direct Support of its Member Countries."

The main emphasis of the forward-looking strategies is on action to be taken by countries at the national level from 1986 to the year 2000; recognizing that the country is PAHO's primary unit of production in terms of health activities and technical cooperation. Nevertheless, the PASB will continue to provide and strengthen technical cooperation on women, health and development to facilitate the necessary exchange of information in this field. The proposed actions include steps that should be taken within the context of primary health care, and are meant to serve as guidelines for developing specific plans of action, particularly for the period 1986 to 1990, based on each country's needs and priorities.

GOALS

1. Address the needs of women of all ages, to improve their health and access to quality health care services.
2. Promote and enhance the active participation of women in social, political, economic, and cultural development.
3. Identify and reduce risks to women's health and promote their positive health as an integral part of Regional and national action plans for implementing the strategies to achieve Health for All by the Year 2000 and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000.
4. Increase women's participation in planning, formulating policies and making decisions in health and development, at all levels of local, national and Regional Programs.
5. Promote activities that create positive attitudes and values that ensure the development and use of all human resources, regardless of sex, particularly in the health sector.

REGIONAL FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES (1986-2000)

The approach to women's health must be comprehensive, dynamic, and sensitive to in women's changing needs throughout their lives, to the needs of particularly vulnerable groups of women, to changes in women's roles both within and outside their families, and to social and economic changes in society.

The strategies are designed to guide PAHO and its Member Countries in promoting and supporting the mobilization of national will and of resources both for strengthening the capabilities and self-reliance of each country and for stimulating cooperation among countries in activities to promote WHD.

The status of women as well as their social, economic, cultural, and political conditions, vary greatly in the Region from country to country and within each country. Accordingly, each Member Country must determine both the steps to be taken and their order of priority based on an analysis of that country's particular situation regarding women's health and their participation at all levels in health and development activities. It is essential to establish national and local priorities and interim goals within the WHD context, because no country can successfully address all of its problems at once. WHD plans at all levels should be developed based on the feasibility of the proposed actions in terms of the prevailing conditions and should take into account the needs, possibilities, resources, and constraints of those involved. All WHD plans, whether national or local, should include specific, quantifiable objectives based on the priorities established and on the monitoring and evaluation of the planned activities.

Many of the indicators suggested in the Regional Plan of Action to Achieve HFA 2000 are directly related to WHD goals. These indicators can thus be used to monitor progress in improving women's health and strengthening their participation in health care. Relevant indicators include, for example, maternal mortality rates, the percentage of deliveries attended by trained personnel in accordance with established national norms, and the percentages of women using family planning services. Other HFA 2000 indicators, if broken down by sex, can provide useful information on women's health and development. Examples include life expectancy, morbidity and mortality rates for chronic diseases, and trends in the rates of mental disorders and of abuse of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

Although the indicators already included in the monitoring of the Plan of Action HFA 2000 provide the basis for evaluating women's situation and progress made in WHD, each Member Country should determine which indicators are appropriate for its own needs.

The following eight strategies are of key importance in reaching the goals established for WHD.

1. Strengthen WHD Focal Points and Development of Action Plans

Establish and strengthen focal points on women, health and development to advise, stimulate, coordinate and monitor activities that involve numerous program areas and require interdisciplinary collaboration. Develop, implement and monitor specific WHD action plans and projects at the Regional, national and local levels. (FLS paragraphs 148 and 161)

2. Collaboration within and among Sectors

Promote and strengthen the systematic incorporation of WHD activities into all health programs. Incorporate a clear focus on the health needs and priorities of women of all life stages into ongoing and new programs, and into Regional and national plans of action. This focus on women should ensure improved access to and quality of care for women of all ages, taking their cultural preferences and working patterns into account.

Promote and implement inter- and intrasectoral activities that meet the health and welfare needs of families, and that in particular meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups of women. Give special emphasis to the following: include health components in development programs geared towards women; give consideration to health aspects in developing population policies; and provide social support services for women at all life stages. (FLS paragraphs 142, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 1162, 164 and 176)

3. Research and Information Dissemination

Promote and develop research and data-gathering and its analysis, to define the problems and issues related to women's health and development and their participation in health planning, policy-making and decision-making. Integrate health systems research into the managerial process, to improve the planning, organization, and operation of health systems, taking into account women's health and development needs and priority areas of concern. Establish mechanisms to collect and disseminate information that will permit the monitoring of women's health conditions, the sensitizing of decision-makers to WHD issues, and the monitoring and evaluation of WHD activities at local, national and Regional levels. Health and development information should be disaggregated by sex and common indicators on women's status should be established for which data are collected and analyzed on a

periodic and regular basis as part of existing Regional and national information systems. (FLS paragraphs 155, 156 and 161).

4. Community Participation and Health Promotion

Ensure the active participation of communities, especially women and women's organizations (see explanatory note on page 18), in planning, implementing and evaluating national and local primary health care programs. Ensure that health and sexual education messages are relevant to women's needs and are presented in a participatory manner to both men and women.

These messages should promote attitudes, values, and actions in support of women as providers and users of health care services, and should encourage practices that promote health and prevent illness as ongoing components of women's lives. (FLS paragraphs 149, 150, 153, 156, 157, 160 and 163)

5. Professional and Technical Training and Career Development

Improve women's educational levels through continuing education and training in all health professions. Significantly increase the opportunities for women to participate in planning, policy-making, and decision-making at all levels of health and development programs. Encourage official policies to significantly increase women's access to career opportunities and salaries equal to those received by men in the same professions. Promote the recognition of the crucial roles women already play as providers of health care in their families and communities, as well as in the formal health sector. (FLS paragraphs 141, 142, 148 and 149)

6. Mobilize Resources

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of WHD activities by maximizing the use of technical, financial and personnel resources within and among countries. Member countries and PAHO should allocate adequate resources to ensure the successful implementation of the Regional Forward-Looking Strategies. Establish cooperative linkages and networks within and among countries, and with subregional and regional institutions and international and bilateral agencies. (FLS paragraphs 133 and 155)

7. Legislation

Governments that have not already done so should ratify and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Convention calls for the adoption of legislation and other measures necessary to modify or

abolish "existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices which constitute discrimination against women." (Article 2)

Furthermore, each Member Country should enact and enforce legislation and policies that facilitate the attainment of priority health objectives specific to women, ensure access to quality health services and social security for all, and that provide social support that responds to women's changing roles and their needs as workers in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. (FLS paragraphs 134, 139, 140, 159 and 162)

8. Access to Quality Health Services

PAHO and Member Governments should ensure that women have access to curative and preventive health care. Services should be in harmony with the timing and patterns of women's work, as well as with women's needs and perspectiveness. This should also include access to essential drugs and medicine. Wherever possible, measures should be taken to conduct general screening and treatment of women's common diseases and cancer. Appropriate health facilities should be planned, designed, constructed and equipped to be readily accessible and acceptable to women as users and providers of care. Maternal and child care services, including family planning, should be within easy reach of all women, as well as access to water and sanitation facilities. (FLS 151, 154, 155, 156 and 157)

PROPOSED ACTIONS (1986-1990)

Proposed activities are listed below for each of the eight strategies described in the previous section, to serve as a basis for developing national and local plans of action.

1. Strengthen focal points and develop plans of action

- Strengthen focal points, delegating to them authority so that they can plan and implement national plan of action on WHD, to be integrated into national health and development programs.
- Strengthen official and operating mechanisms for promoting, coordinating and implementing WHD efforts within the health sector.
- Develop or strengthen interdisciplinary coordinating bodies that support WHD focal points and include representatives from both governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- Develop national plans of action for WHD, which aim to incorporate actions addressing women's priority needs as integral parts of national health and development plans.
- Ensure that financial resources and technical cooperation are included in the national budget to implement the plan of action and specific activities of the focal point.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure the participation of WHD focal points in decision-making for national and international cooperation.

2. Collaboration within and among sectors

- Ensure, through working groups and other mechanisms, the coordination of the different health programs involved in actions for the improvement of women's health and development status.
- Establish mechanisms for intersectoral action, such as representation of the WHD focal points on multisectoral committees or councils on women's affairs and interministerial committees.
- Establish mechanisms of inter- and intrasectoral coordination with women's organizations to carry out activities that improve women's health and development status.
- Identify priority WHD issues and areas where needs can be met through collaboration among the different sectors within each

country, among countries and in cooperation with international agencies.

- Provide information on available sources of international cooperation for WHD and on donor agencies funding policies and procedures to focal points and women's organizations that might be eligible.

3. Research and information dissemination

- Ensure that information gathered for evaluating social development and general health situations and its trends is disaggregated by sex including systematic data and special surveys.
- Collect and analyze by sex, data used to determine actions needed and taken by countries to address maternal mortality and morbidity; mental health problems; tobacco use and drug and alcohol abuse; diabetes, hypertension and obesity; and major communicable and chronic diseases.
- Promote specific surveys to gather information on women's health needs that is not otherwise provided by ongoing information systems.
- Use periodic social or economic surveys to collect more specific data on women's health.
- Collect and analyze data from national and local surveys on the demographic characteristics of populations by age and sex across income groups to permit better utilization of such data by health policy makers.
- Promote the use of WHD information by health planners by presenting them with simple summaries and analyses of information on women's health status.
- Develop and support networks of persons interested in WHD issues by exchanging materials and coordinating contacts.
- Provide as part of adequate health care, essential information to women, on the control of diseases and illnesses with distinct manifestations in women, such as sexually transmitted and pelvic inflammatory diseases, mild or moderate depression, and female cancers.
- Promote and conduct research as needed on priority WHD issues. Examples include:
 - . the utilization of and access to health services for women of all ages;

- . women's roles as health care providers to their families and communities;
 - . the limitations and barriers that keep women from having equal working conditions as health professionals (including health workers and researchers) and decision-makers;
 - . the relationships between women's health and their work patterns, including the analysis of the physical, chemical, biological, and psychosocial conditions and risk factors which affect women in the workplace, and strategies to control them;
 - . the needs of working mothers, such as changes in policies affecting maternity leave, child care, accommodations for breast-feeding, and social security eligibility;
 - . the development and use of appropriate technologies; ensuring that women are involved in developing the criteria for selecting technologies and in the research to adapt technologies; developing new technologies and evaluating their effectiveness, safety and acceptability;
 - . women's nutrition, including food distribution and use by sex according to cultural patterns;
 - . the prevalence and patterns of use by men and women of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, with particular emphasis on the different reasons for abuse of these substances and appropriate measures to control substance abuse and its consequences;
 - . family violence against women and children the role of the health sector in controlling the incidence and consequences;
 - . contraceptive methods that are more effective, acceptable, and safe for both men and women and ways to ensure that women are informed of their options and risks in contraceptive use;
 - . sexually transmitted diseases and measures for their control.
- Conduct research on sectors and occupations where women workers are concentrated, developing effective preventive and control measures. Include studies of tasks, exposures, work sites and conditions, work-related health problems including stress and accidents.
- Publish and disseminate the results of research, to increase the understanding and awareness of both women's health situations and the actions taken to improve their health;

- Stimulate research groups to include issues on women, health and development in their projects or work programs.

4. Community Participation and Health Promotion

- Promote organized community participation especially for women interested in achieving health care through preventive measures and better utilization of available services.
- Promote organized participation of women in the design and evaluation of health and development programs.
- Establish an inventory of all women's organizations that work with WHD programs.
- Establish channels of communication and coordination between the formal health sector and women's organizations. For example, hold workshops for women's organizations and ministry of health personnel to develop shared programming, financing, and evaluation of projects. Develop mechanisms of communication to promote the awareness of and participation by women's groups in activities that promote health.
- Build linkages between women's organizations and groups, health personnel, and the staffs of national health agencies and individuals or groups designated as focal points.
- Devise mechanisms to involve women's organizations in decisions concerning all levels of the health care system.
- Incorporate information on such issues as women's self-care, cancer detection and control, women's nutritional needs, women's legal rights, day care services, and community participation, into programs providing health education for women.
- Provide education to women on their rights and responsibilities for their own health care. Respond positively to women's demands for health services that meet their needs and priorities.
- Ensure that health education is available to families, not only through the health care system, but also through formal and informal educational systems in which both parents and foster parents participate.
- Support community groups in carrying out activities such as fund-raising for local projects; training and education programs; advocating legislative reforms; and organizing programs for day care, care of the elderly, legal and career counseling, and consumer education.

5. Professional and Technical Training and Career Development

- Expand opportunities for women to participate in the full range of medical and health professions, by providing fellowships and management training.
- Establish national policies and mechanisms to intensify the education, training, and professional advancement of women to enhance their participation in management and technical fields.
- Improve training programs for health personnel and of other social sectors, including health education and community participation.
- Ensure that the training and continuing education of health workers includes information on women's health needs and the value of women's active participation in their own health care and that of their families. Ensure that this training is action-oriented and that its effectiveness is evaluated.
- Train health workers in techniques and methods to encourage community participation and ensure that these methods are incorporated into their ongoing work.
- Strengthen and support local capacities for gathering and analyzing information on WHD by training community personnel and women's organizations to collect data and to monitor health and socioeconomic status.

6. Mobilize Resources

- Guarantee maximum utilization of existing resources and its better efficiency to improve women's health.
- Ensure the necessary resources for the implementation of the WHD activities at the national and Regional level.
- Promote and develop social support measures for women to improve their working possibilities in and out the home.
- Strengthen national capacities to formulate projects suitable for international cooperation, by providing training on proposal writing and project development to national focal points and to leaders of women's organizations and community groups.
- Establish exchange visits and study tours among different sectors within the country and among countries within the Region to facilitate technical cooperation in women, health and development projects.

7. Legislation

- In accordance with the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, review and modify national policies and legislation to facilitate the provision of integrated family health care and equal access to health care and social security for men and women, focussing on WHD issues that have been established as national priorities. Examples include policies and legislation that:
 - . Prevent and control the abuse of women through violence, sexual exploitation and harassment, and provide adequate assistance to victims.
 - . Promote social support measures to meet the needs of working women;
 - . Provide safe and healthy working conditions for minors and women which recognize inter alia parental responsibilities, including breast-feeding and child care requirements.
 - . Protect the rights of elderly women to financial security and adequate health care, dignity and respect;
 - . Prevent occupational hazards to women and men, ensuring that industries that employ mostly women are included;
- Promote the dissemination of information on legal issues relevant to women's health and development status.
- Provide legal aid to woman to ensure their equal access to the law.

8. Access to Health Care

- Ensure the availability of adequate, appropriate and accessible health care services for women.
- Provide services to better meet women's needs and schedules, and provide information on available services to women and women's groups.
- Ensure that more efficient and effective services for pregnancy, birth and postnatal care are accessible to women, to decrease the maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates.
- Identify and support traditional practices, such as breast-feeding, that enhance the health of women and children.

- Promote measures to control cervical and breast cancer and ensure that they are included as part of integral health care for women.
- Incorporate information and advice on sexual growth and development, sexually transmitted diseases, and family life and family planning, into education and health care services for adolescents, consistent with the cultural setting and the policies of the national government.
- Design and implement programs for continuous care and education of the mother and family by trained health personnel ensuring quality services and access to care and education for self-care and family responsibilities.
- Expand or refine the provision of health services at work sites to address the needs of women, particularly the control of sex-specific health problems and stresses associated with women's multiple roles and responsibilities.

Explanatory note on women's organizations: The degrees to which women are organized into groups vary widely within the Region. In Canada and the U.S. there is strong tradition of non-governmental organizations, many of which are women's organizations or organizations where women are active. During the decade the international networks of women's organizations were strengthened.

Some countries have large central women's organizations, comprised of local committees or affiliates that work toward national economic goals as well as women-specific objectives. Most countries, however, have a potpourri of small or medium-sized groupings of women in voluntary social service agencies, trade unions, mothers' clubs, handicraft cooperatives and peasant organizations.

For a further definition and discussion of women's organizations, see "Report of the Technical Work Group on the Participation of Organizations related to Women in Primary Health Care Activities," 26-28 April 1983, Pan American Health Organization, Washington, D.C., Vol. I and II (pp. 3-10).

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