

Paragraph 40

The feasibility of policies, programmes and projects concerning women will be affected not only by their numbers and socio-economic heterogeneity but also by the different life-styles of women and by the constant changes in their life cycle.

Paragraph 41

The Forward-looking Strategies not only suggest measures for overcoming obstacles that are fundamental and operational, but also identify those that are emerging. Thus, the strategies and measures presented are intended to serve as guidelines for a process of continuous adaptation to diverse and changing national situations at speeds and modes determined by overall national priorities, within which the integration of women in development should rank high. The Forward-looking Strategies, acknowledging existing and potential obstacles, include separate basic strategies for the achievement of equality, development and peace. In line with the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women, acting as the Preparatory Body for the Conference at its second session, particular attention is given to "especially vulnerable and underprivileged groups of women, such as rural and urban poor women; women in areas affected by armed conflicts, foreign intervention and international threats to peace; elderly women; young women; abused women; destitute women; women victims of trafficking and women in involuntary prostitution; women deprived of their traditional means of livelihood; women who are sole supporters of families; physically and mentally disabled women; women in detention; refugee and displaced women; migrant women; minority women; and indigenous women". 10/

Paragraph 42

Although addressed primarily to Governments, international and regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations, an appeal is made to all women and men in a spirit of solidarity. In particular, it is addressed to those women and men who now enjoy certain improvements in their material circumstances and who have achieved positions where they may influence policy-making, development priorities and public opinion to change the current inferior and exploited condition of the majority of women in order to serve the goals of equality for all women, their full participation in development, and the achievement and strengthening of peace.

I. EQUALITY

A. Obstacles

Paragraph 43

One of the objectives of the Decade entails the full observance of the equal rights of women and the elimination of de jure and de facto discrimination. This is a critical first step towards human resource development. In developing countries inequality is, to a great extent, the result of underdevelopment and its various manifestations, which in turn are aggravated by the unjust distribution of the benefits of the international economy. The United Nations system, particularly the Commission on the Status of Women, has worked for four decades to establish international standards and to identify and propose measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex. Although much progress has been made in