

PROGRAMME 3. ACCESS TO SERVICES

Increasingly, the central role played by women in maintaining family health and well-being, particularly that of the young, the elderly and the disabled, is being recognized. As a result, new attention is being given to adapting social services and infrastructure to the needs of women. Nevertheless, in many countries the majority of women continue to have only limited access to clean water, firewood or other energy supplies, primary health care, adequate nutrition, child care and care for the elderly and disabled, literacy training, education, housing, sanitation and transportation.

Maternal mortality and morbidity are very high in many countries. Nutritional anaemia is common in many countries, especially among pregnant women. Such factors as an inadequate or inappropriate diet, infections, poor hygiene and environmental conditions, excessive work-loads, and pregnancy prior to full physical and psychosocial maturity pose risks to the health or even the life of women and may also adversely affect the health of their children.

The importance of this programme for the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies has been emphasized by the Commission on the Status of Women and by the Economic and Social Council. It continues much of the major work that has been initiated during the Decade to increase the provision of services to women. The programme presupposes that the wide variety of existing activities to increase women's access to appropriate health, education, family planning and social infrastructure will continue. It emphasizes a few key areas where a concerted effort during the plan period can have major effects, such as extending the coverage of appropriate health-care services, further reducing female illiteracy and making the provision of child-care facilities a social and community norm. The programme thus focuses on developing and adapting services to the specific needs of women and on closing the gap between men and women in access to social services.

Subprogramme 3.1 Health, nutrition and family planning

Intergovernmental objectives

- (i) To achieve the goal of health for all by the year 2000 with a focus on the health of all women for their own sake and that of their children and future generations;
- (ii) To promote the effective participation of women in development and in the achievement of the goal of health for all.

United Nations system objectives

- (i) In strengthening and developing health-care systems based on primary health care in an increasing number of countries, to promote the health of women of all ages, to establish appropriate health programmes that meet their needs in an accessible and socially acceptable manner, and to redress inequalities in women's health care;