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PROGRAMME 2. ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES, INCOME  
AND EMPLOYMENT

Women's access to productive resources, income and employment is impeded by a number of factors, including economic recession, scarcity of job opportunities, job stereotyping and low levels of investment in essential support services, such as child care and vocational and management training. Women's access to land, technology and credit continues to be restricted in many countries by customary law and practice. Although the wage gap between men and women has narrowed in some countries and sectors as equal pay legislation has been adopted, the record remains uneven. The domestic responsibilities of many women continue to inhibit their ability and inclination to perform shiftwork and overtime. Many seek part-time work, and many must interrupt their working lives to bear children, which affects their chances for job security, pay raises and promotions. Women are frequently not entitled to the tax and fringe benefits available to men and are commonly relegated to occupations that are poorly paid. Women who work in the informal sector of the economy are being threatened increasingly by the introduction of mass-produced goods and services, yet they lack access to the financing and skills needed to achieve the economies of scale necessary to compete with imports and new industries. Plans and projects for agricultural and industrial development do not yet adequately take into account the costs and benefits to women, and women are generally poorly represented in the planning process and priority setting.

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 the Economic and Social Council. The programme deals with the economic issues affecting women and development and the ways in which the talents and energies of women can be further mobilized as a contribution to development. While recognizing that legal equality in the marketplace is a pre-condition, the programme is designed to contribute to economic efficiency by increasing women's capacities and productivity and expanding overall employment opportunities. It includes the policy measures and practical actions necessary to create an environment in which women have greater access to the means of production. It proposes strategies that will help support and guide national efforts to enable women to participate fully and effectively in the development process, including national efforts to modify development priorities and modalities both as a prerequisite for women's participation and as a consequence thereof. It builds on women's significant, but largely unrecognized, contribution to the economy and proposes to develop support services for the family to allow parents to combine and harmonize their productive and reproductive roles. It emphasizes appropriate measures to assure women equal access to jobs and opportunities for career advancement.

In elaborating this programme, special attention was given to the information, analysis, suggestions and recommendations contained in the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development.