

Food, water and agriculture

Paragraph 174

Women, as key food producers in many regions of the world, play a central role in the development and production of food and agriculture, participating actively in all phases of the production cycle, including the conservation, storage, processing and marketing of food and agricultural products. Women therefore make a vital contribution to economic development, particularly in agriculturally based economies, which must be better recognized and rewarded. Development strategies and programmes, as well as incentive programmes and projects in the field of food and agriculture, need to be designed in a manner that fully integrates women at all levels of planning, implementation, monitoring evaluation in all stages of the development process of a project cycle, so as to facilitate and enhance this key role of women and to ensure that women receive proper benefits and remuneration commensurate with their important contribution in this field. Moreover, women should be fully integrated and involved in the technological research and energy aspects of food and agricultural development.

Paragraph 175

During the Decade, the significant contribution of women to agricultural development has been more widely recognized, particularly their contribution in working hours to agricultural, fishery and forestry production and conservation, and to various parts of the food system. There are indications, however, that poverty and landlessness among rural women will increase significantly by the year 2000. In order to stem this trend, Governments should implement, as a matter of priority, equitable and stable investment and growth policies for rural development to ensure that there is a reallocation of the country's resources which, in many cases, are largely derived from the rural areas but allocated to urban development.

Paragraph 176

Governments should establish multisectoral programmes to promote the productive capacity of rural poor women in food and animal production, create off-farm employment opportunities, reduce their work-load, inter alia, by supporting the establishment of adequate child-care facilities and that of their children, reverse their pauperization, improve their access to all sources of energy, and provide them with adequate water, health, education, effective extension services and transportation within their region. In this connection it should be noted that the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, held at Rome in 1979, 12/ recognized women's vital role in the socio-economic life in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities as a prerequisite for successful rural development policies, planning and programmes, and proposed specific measures for improving their condition, which are still valid. The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women also included specific measures to improve the situation of women in food and agriculture, which remain a valid guide for action.

Paragraph 177

The General Assembly, in resolution 39/165 on the critical situation of food production and agriculture in Africa, confirmed the growing concern of the international community at the dramatic deterioration in African food and agricultural production and the resulting alarming increase in the number of