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Equal Partners: International Women's Year, 1975

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Guide To Resources

Commission on the Status of Women, Report on the Twenty-Fifth Session, 1974. United Nations, \$5.00.

Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. UN Office of Public Information, New York.

Background Papers, Equal Rights for Women, International Women's Year 1975. No. 518, UN Office of Public Information, New York.

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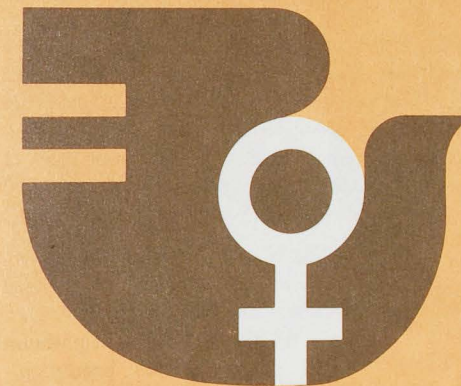
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equal partners



INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S YEAR
1975

1975 – Year to Promote Partnership

International Women's Year has been proclaimed by the United Nations as a call to action

- to promote equality between men and women;
- to integrate women into the total social and economic development effort of nations; and
- to recognize women's increasing contribution to strengthening world peace.

The Year came into being

- because, despite decades of progress in eliminating discrimination against women, in no country have they attained full equality; and
- because of growing global recognition of the importance of women in nation-building.

A wide variety of needs confront women around the world. They range from improving the lot of rural agricultural workers to securing equal access to policy-making positions. There are, however, many common concerns. Chief among them is lack of opportunity and adequate preparation for the full participation of women in their respective societies.



The biological symbol for woman, the mathematical sign for equality and the dove: The IWY 1975 emblem illustrates the determination to help women – half of the world's population – to participate on every level in the solution of the world's problems.

"It is important that everyone gives serious attention now to International Women's Year 1975 . . . we must think positively about how the position of women in their respective societies and in international affairs could not only be improved, but their large potential contribution better utilized for the benefit of all."

Kurt Waldheim,
Secretary-General of the United Nations

**The Theme for International Women's Year is
Equality, Development, Peace**

A Waste of Womanpower

Worldwide Facts and Figures

The general tendency in most cultures is to value males more than females:

- • Among the more than 700 million illiterates in the world, the majority are women, in some areas 80 to 85 percent.
- • In 1969, the percentage of females to males enrolled in higher education was: in Asia, 28 percent; in Africa, 25 percent; in Latin America, 34 percent; and in the Arab States 23 percent.*
- • Percentages of girls to boys enrolled in primary and secondary schools in the same regions in 1969 was, in most instances, under 40 percent. The average ratio of female to male enrollment in the 5-14 age group reached one to one only in Latin America and North America.
- • Although women constitute more than one-third of the world's gainfully employed labor force, they are in most countries concentrated in unskilled and low-paid jobs. Women's access to high-level, well-paid jobs is limited.
- • In the majority of countries, only a small percentage of women hold policy-making posts – whether legislative, judicial or executive.
- • In the U.S., the President's Council of Economic Advisors reported in 1973 that while 43.8 percent of working age women were employed, they were clustered in low-status jobs, and their pay averaged only 66.1 percent of men's wages.
- • To this date, under the laws of many countries, a married woman is deprived of a number of important personal and property rights, including the right to seek employment outside the home without her husband's consent.

*Latest U.S. statistics show 44 percent women vs. 56 percent men enrolled in High Schools and Colleges.

The United Nations Works for Women



"The full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women as well as men in all fields."
From the Preamble of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women



Commission on the Status of Women

Promoting women's rights in the political, economic, social, civil and educational fields is the chief concern of the *Commission on the Status of Women*, established by the UN in 1946. It is composed of representatives of 32 countries, including the U.S., elected by the UN Economic and Social Council.

In the Commission, delegates, usually women, from vastly different cultures pool forces and focus on the overriding issues that affect all women. Their efforts have resulted in the drafting of declarations and international instruments. Commission-sponsored seminars listed below are among several which have brought together women from all over the world to share their expertise on such subjects as:

Status of Women in Family Law (1953, Bogota, Colombia)

Participation of Women in Public Life (1960, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

The Family in a Changing Society (1973, London, England)

At its 25th Session in 1974, the Commission called for "intensified action" to secure legal rights for women where they do not now exist, and to close the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* status where such rights have legal sanction.

International Conventions

Among plans to mark IWY 1975, high priority is placed on securing ratification by all Governments of existing international instruments which explicitly or implicitly deal with the rights of women. These include:*

- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
- ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value.
- Convention on the Political Rights of Women.
- ILO Convention on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation.
- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.
- Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage.

*For explanation of these Conventions see Guide to Resources, "Human Rights".

Declaration Against Discrimination

Designed "to ensure the universal recognition in law and in fact of the principle of equality of men and women," the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1967) advocates:

- abolition of all existing laws, customs, regulations and practices which are discriminatory against women;
- equal rights to vote in all elections and to hold public office;
- the same rights as men to acquire, change or retain nationality;
- equal rights with men under civil law;
- equal educational rights with men at all levels; and
- equal rights in the fields of economic and social life.



United Nations Photo

UN Secretary-General Waldheim addressing 25th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. To his right, Assistant Secretary-General Helvi Sipila, Secretary-General of IWY and the UN Conference on Women; to his left, Leticia Ramos Shahani (Philippines), Commission Chairperson.

International Women's Year Conference

Highpoint of IWY 1975 will be an International Women's Year Conference to be held in Bogota, Colombia, during June. The conference is not regarded as an occasion to glorify women, but as a serious meeting of government delegates, women and men, to evaluate the status of women throughout the world today.

Special attention will be given to the situation of women in developing nations where their emancipation is essential to the progress of their countries. An action plan to increase all women's contribution to the achievement of global development will be an important agenda item.

The Tip of the Iceberg

One of the major significant issues raised by IWY 1975, is the relationship between the status of women's equality and family planning.

While addressing the *International Forum on the Role of Women in Population and Development*, 1974, Helvi L. Sipila, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs said:

"... population statistics are the tip of the iceberg only. Women are, if you will, the submerged two-thirds. It is women who give birth to children... women are more than half of the world's population... We cannot hope to create the necessary conditions for growth while leaving aside half of the human resources required for that growth."

The *Study on the Interrelationship of the Status of Women and Family Planning*, undertaken on the initiative of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1968, focuses on (1) the importance of family planning for women as individuals and its impact on their roles in society; (2) the status of women as a factor influencing family size and the birthrate, and (3) the implications for women of current population trends.

This study indicates that the educational level of women, the nature of their employment or occupation, their position in the family and in public life, all have a marked effect on family size. Women participants at the UN's 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest worked for the incorporation of these principles in the *World Population Plan of Action*.



United Nations Photo

UN-assisted project in Ghana: woman worker being trained for production of fibre bags.

Education + Employment = Equality

The equation is not as simple as the formula above, but facts and figures about the status of women worldwide tend to emphasize that learning and earning are essential avenues of advancement for women in both the developing and developed areas.

It is still a man's world according to a recent International Labour Organization (ILO) report, *Women Workers in a Changing World*. This document, reviewing the minimal progress made over the past decade, reveals: inequality of educational opportunities and lack of vocational training facilities for girls; lack of promotion and career advancement opportunities for women; inadequate application of the principle of equal pay for equal work.



United Nations Photo

Technical training institute in developing country. Who is absent?

Unequal pay for equal work is only one common condition which women from the developed and developing countries share. Similar disparities still exist between the sexes in many employment situations and in educational opportunities in both "have" and "have not" nations.

Consequently, many IWY 1975 activities are being planned to promote awareness of the plight of women, especially agricultural workers, and of the severe deprivation of basic opportunities they face. It is hoped thereby to strengthen the already existing sense of solidarity among women of the world, and the commitment of both men and women to make true equality a reality in every society.

You Too Can Participate In International Women's Year 1975

IWY 1975 requires global thinking. A multitude of initiatives are needed to further advance the status of women. Participation of men as well as women will be necessary to bring about re-evaluation and change of traditional attitudes and roles that hinder full attainment by women of their human, as well as social and political rights.

You and your organization can support IWY 1975 in the world, in the nation and in your community.

- • Encourage proclamations by Governors and Mayors. Cooperate with other groups in publicizing special IWY events.
- • Encourage media to observe IWY by carrying public service statements, programs and articles. Insist on standards which will enhance the image of women in all advertising and shows.
- • Promote distribution to schools, labor unions, businesses and other institutions of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, and related instruments. (See Guide to Resources)
- • Plan film shows and exhibits in libraries featuring women's contributions to their countries and their problems in achieving equal rights.
- • Provide local hospitality to women leaders from abroad who are working on programs sponsored by the U.S. Government or private groups. For information, contact COSERV, 1630 Crescent Place N.W., Washington, D.C.
- • Sponsor women experts for UN-assisted projects in developing countries. Send funds payable to the Special Voluntary Fund of the UN Volunteer Program, c/o The Secretary-General of the United Nations, New York, 10017.
- • Give fellowship aid to women students from developing countries. If your organization has a fellowship program, raise money for it; or contribute earmarked funds to your local university, or write to the Institute of International Education, 809 UN Plaza, New York, 10017.
- • Participate in the programs of your international affiliate; or suggest new programs for IWY 1975.
- • Cooperate with UNA-USA Chapters throughout the U.S. to carry out substantive community-wide programs on IWY-related topics.
- • Coordinate activities with organizations listed on back of this flyer; use recommended resources for discussions about IWY.

A Presidential Proclamation

calls "upon the Congress and the people of the United States, interested groups and organizations, officials of the Federal Government and State and local governments, educational institutions, and all others who can be of help, to begin now to provide for the observance of International Women's Year with practical and constructive measures for the advancement of the status of women . . ."

A recently enacted amendment to the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act states that U.S. aid "shall be administered so as to give particular attention to programs, projects and activities which tend to integrate women into national economies of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort."

- • Let the Agency for International Development (AID), which administers this Act, know your concern that it follow this directive.
- • Communicate your views to your Congressional Representatives and State legislators on other legislative issues influencing the status of women in the U.S. and the world.
- • Urge appointment of qualified women to posts of responsibility at the UN, as U.S. delegates to international conferences, and in the U.S.

Make a contribution to the *Fund for International Women's Year*. Money will be used to support a variety of IWY activities, including the International Women's Year Conference in June 1975, Bogota, Colombia. Make checks payable to the Fund for IWY, c/o the Secretary-General of the United Nations; Tax-deductible donations of over \$100, earmarked for the Fund for International Women's Year, may be made to UNA-USA, 345 East 46th Street, New York, New York 10017.

Don't stop with 1975. The remainder of the 70s and the decade of the 80s lie ahead. There is much to be accomplished before women and men are equal partners.

Don't Forget The Women In Your Own Community

Business, labor unions, institutions and voluntary organizations are increasingly aware of the need to eliminate discriminatory practices against women and to encourage their advancement. Some checkpoints (✓) to monitor:

- ✓ Do businesses and institutions hire women at all levels? Do they adhere to the principle of equal pay for equal work? Are working conditions, benefits and opportunities equal?
- ✓ Do political clubs and other associations encourage women to participate fully in their activities?
- ✓ Are elementary and secondary schools providing educational equity for girls? Are efforts being made to reduce sex stereotyping in curriculum and curriculum materials? Do physical education and sports programs provide equal opportunities for girls?
- ✓ Do colleges and universities discriminate against women in their admission policies? Are women accepted in all branches of higher learning, i.e. law, medicine, engineering, etc.?
- ✓ Are libraries and schools adequately supplied with appropriate educational materials without stereotyped images of men and women?
- ✓ Do media use program materials prejudicial to women? Do they carry talks, forums or articles showing women in all walks of life?
- ✓ Do facilities exist for counseling women on their legal rights and how they can be enforced?
- ✓ Has your State passed the Equal Rights Amendment?

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