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Letter from Richard M. Fagley to Marcia Ximena Bravo, April 28, 1975

Richard M. Fagley

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Recommended Citation

Fagley, Richard M., "Letter from Richard M. Fagley to Marcia Ximena Bravo, April 28, 1975" (1975). *Mildred E. Persinger Papers*. 328.

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cc: Mrs. Mildred Persinger ✓

WORLD RELATIONS
FDIA

APR 29 1975

April 28, 1975

Ms. Marcia ~~Ximena~~ Bravo
Organizing Committee, I.W.Y. Tribune 1975
Room #815, 345 East 46th Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Marcia:

Brigalia Bam, the head of our W.C.C. delegation at Mexico City, and Helen Spaulding of our W.C.C. Women's Desk have written about 3 Third World women who are strongly recommended for participation in the Tribune, but would need financial assistance. Mildred Persinger asks me to pass their names on to you for sending them applications, even though what assistance may be available won't be known until mid-May.

The names and addresses of the 3 women are as follows:

Mrs. Agnes Loyal, Principal
Lal Bagh Girls' Inter-College
Lucknow - 226 001, U.P., India

President of the Asian
Women's Conference

Miss Bertha Vargas
Apartado 3994,
Lima, Peru

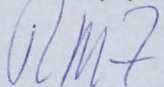
Works with rural women,
mostly Indians

Mrs. Dorothy Mosery
Box 2212
Durban, South Africa

A South African black
nurse, working with poor
slum and peasant women.

I enclose for your information a copy of the revised draft joint statement on the Plan of Action and rural women, that the NGO Committee on I.W.Y. asked me to prepare.

Sincerely yours,


Richard M. Fagley

RMF:MK
Enc.

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Y

The Draft Plan and Rural Women

1. The major contribution of rural women to the production, as well as preparation, of food in developing countries was recognized more fully by the World Food Conference than by any previous world congress. The draft World Plan of Action for the I.W.Y. Conference in Mexico City provides another leap forward, by citing, in more than a score of paragraphs, various measures that need to be taken to help meet the neglected claims of the overburdened women and girls that toil in the fields and the kitchen gardens, tend the animals, fetch the water and firewood, as well as tending to the various household chores - all with the most primitive technology. The draft calls inter alia for better training and technology for rural women in their agricultural and household tasks, improved infrastructural services, better health and nutritional care, more access to cooperatives, the recruitment and training of volunteer task forces to provide extension services at the village level, and more opportunity for rural women to participate in development planning. The points form a highly welcome step forward, and we strongly urge the Conference to support them.
2. Greater justice for the peasant women is basic to the cause of human dignity and equality, as well as the war on hunger and indeed the struggle for development with a human face. In view of the long ages of neglect, it is doubly urgent that the Conference do its utmost to build upon the good beginning provided by the draft, to fashion a more adequate Plan of Action in this crucial area. It is important to spell out ways by which village women can be helped to acquire a package of skills, to do their work with less wasted labour and with more opportunity for self-development. It is also important to challenge traditional societies to accept a more equitable division of labour between peasant men and women.

3. In support of a strategy of self-help, external assistance needs to stress village-centered research and technology in differing cultures, on the points where improved techniques and tools can do the most to ease the burdens of peasant women and enhance the effect of their work, e.g., in improving the kitchen garden, improving the wood-lots or other sources of fuel, providing simple carts for transport, simple machines for threshing and grinding grain, and as the draft indicates, providing more accessible supplies of safe water.

4. Another important point for research and the extension of appropriate technology is the need to help country women develop their own cash crops or related products. Many need an opportunity to engage in small-scale industry in slacker periods. Building an economic stake in their society is one way of advancing their status.

5. In this connection the draft rightly emphasizes the importance of rural women participating in cooperatives or forming their own. The broader significance, however, of organizations for the advancement and liberation of peasant women needs to be stressed. Through a wide variety of their own organizations they can develop the mutual support to undergird their individual efforts to improve their position. As the E.C.A. brochure, Women of Africa Today and Tomorrow, states in its concluding words on 'Action by Women Themselves':

Each women's organization is formed with specific purposes - economic, social, political, civic, cultural. Each has contributed to the advancement of African women. Through increasing the support given to their organizations, women can marshal their strength and influence. Each organization can play an active part in helping women to accept their responsibilities and reach their full potential as citizens contributing to the rapid development of their countries.

6. We urge the Conference, Governments, and Non-governmental Organizations to take the steps essential to help meet these objectives.

RMF:MK