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FROM : Department of State

DATE:

SUBJECT : Request for USG Comments on the Celebration of International Women's Year. U.S.G. Proposal

REF : A-704

The Mission is requested to review the attached U.S. proposal for the observance of International Women's Year and, if it perceives no objection, to forward the document immediately to the United Nations Secretariat for the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women.

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Attachment

U.S. PROPOSAL FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR (IWY) 1975

I. Significance of the International Women's Year (IWY)

IWY should be viewed as an event which marks the great contributions of women by measuring current progress and setting future goals. It welcomes participation by all segments of the UN community and Governments for long-range effort to achieve the short range goals of the Year and to build a foundation for completion of the work in the decade that follows.

As an essential element in preparations for International Women's Year (IWY), the Secretary General should be requested to prepare a report for the consideration of Governments on what has been done by the United Nations Secretariat and the Specialized Agencies to improve the status of women since the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946.

Special attention should be given to the conventions and declarations drafted by the Commission itself, as well as to important documents of other UN elements such as the UNESCO Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination in Education, certain ILO conventions and recommendations bearing on women's employment, and actions to implement GA Resolution 2716, (a Program of Concerted International Action for the Advancement of Women), which established goals and minimum targets to be achieved during the Second Development Decade (DDII).

II. Central Theme

The central theme for the Year should be based on the principles set forth in the Preamble of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women:

> "...discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and with the welfare...of society, prevents their participation, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic, and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity;....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."

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III. Goals

A. The following goals are suggested for the International Women's Year:

1. To ensure for women equality of rights and opportunities with men in all aspects of society as set forth in existing international human rights instruments.

2. To ensure the full participation of women in international and national life, assuring them of freedom of choice and the development of individual potential, while emphasizing their contributions, responsibilities, and their increasingly important role in economic, social, cultural, and political development and advancement at all levels--international, national, and local; and

3. To increase women's participation in the development and advancement of friendly relations and cooperation among states and in the strengthening of world peace.

B. The following objectives are suggested for the attainment of IWY goals:

1. To ensure equality of rights and opportunities for men and women:

a. To achieve equality of educational opportunity for male and female students in admissions, and in curricular and non-curricular educational activities at all levels, including adult education and vocational training; and appropriate educational support services such as guidance, counseling, student aid, and child care;

b. To promote equality in the context of ensuring equal rights and responsibilities in the family and the home;

c. To ensure equal economic rights and opportunities, including equal access to employment, and equal pay for work of equal value.

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2. To ensure the full participation of women in international and national life; and to encourage the effective use of their potential in resolving today's economic, social, and political problems:

a. To recognize the value, for the country's overall development and advancement, of the current contributions and the untapped resources of women to the national economy through their work in the labor market, voluntary activities, and home management;

b. To improve the condition of rural women, including the provision of training in modern agricultural and technical methods on an equal basis with men;

c. To assure that educational and training opportunities in all fields are open to women and to actively encourage women to enter non-traditional occupations;

d. To ensure the active participation of women in policy formulation and decision-making at local, national, and international levels;

e. To provide comprehensive social services, including health care and child care programs;

f. To expand freedom of choice for all persons, women as well as men, in planning life patterns, with resultant opportunity to develop their potential as individuals.

g. To facilitate the implementation of that objective of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade which states that "the full integration of women in the total development effort should be encouraged," with the recognition that the achievement of development goals depends on the participation and support of all members of society.

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3. To increase women's contribution to the development of friendly relations among states:

a. To increase women's participation in national and international decision-making relating to the development of friendly relations and cooperation among states;

b. To encourage the further development of international programs of all organizations concerned with improving the status of women;

c. To facilitate a free flow of information and ideas among countries on the status of women and to promote the exchange of visits by women of different countries to study common problems, thus expanding areas of international cooperation and understanding;

d. To expand cooperative programs among women of different countries which would contribute to international understanding through shared endeavors.

IV. Achievement of Goals

A. The achievement of the goals may be affected:

1. Within the UN itself and within its family of agencies; and at

2. The international level;

3. The regional level;

4. The national level.

B. Goals may be achieved by a variety of means including:

1. Publicity and educational measures to arouse interest in and awareness of the goals of the IWY; and

2. Substantive activities in specific areas for the attainment of the goals of the Year.

C. These activities should be designed to have a continuing impact, and should be viewed as part of a sustained long-term effort to improve the condition of women and their contributions to society.

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Activities at National Level

A. Special acts of commemoration:

1. At Governmental level.

a. These acts might take the form of proclamations by the heads of states designating 1975 as International Women's Year and announcing the establishment of specific programs designed to promote equality between men and women, to ensure full participation of women in national life and to increase women's contribution to the strengthenig of international understanding.

b. Proclamation by appropriate local cfficials might also be made so that immediate recognition will be given to IWY.

c. Continuing reminders by the UN Secretary General to UN member governments of the need to include qualified women among nominees for Secretariat and other UN positions so that UN goals can be met and national quotas filled with representatives of both sexes.

2. At nongovernmental level.

a. Nationwide initiatives from nongovernmental groups--voluntary organizations in business, industry, and civic life, professional organizations, labor unions, educational institutions, student associations, mass communications media, etc., should be enlisted in order to: (1) help to bring progress in the area of women's rights and responsibilities; (2) increase participation in and support for the national and international women's movements; and (3) work toward promoting a full partnership between men and women;

b. Nongovernmental Organizations should be requested to prepare reports on what they plan to do in observance of IWY and how they plan to coordinate their work with other organizations and with the United Nations.

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B. Promotional and publicity measures:

1. Promotional and publicity measures should emphasize the main objectives of the Year, and might be conducted in urban and rural areas by means of:

Media

Newspapers and magazines
Films
Film festivals
Television
Radio-Spot statements
Documentaries
Public Service advertising

Conferences

Forums
Seminars
Speeches

Special exhibitions for showing among UN members and non-members

Organization of award programs to honor achievements by women in specific fields

Cultural events

Sports events

Written materials; Graphics
- Handbooks on IWY
- Distribution of UN instruments
- Pamphlets, posters

Commemorative postage stamps, first day covers, cancellations

Commemorative publications

Buttons, medals, and other insignia

2. Such measures would focus on the achievements of women in attaining the objectives to be commemorated and also on the contributions of women to the history and development of the world.

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3. Special material might be prepared and disseminated dealing with women's rights and responsibilities under the law and the causes of prejudice and discrimination against women, and ways of overcoming it, for use by:

Voluntary, civic, and community organizations
Government
Business, Industry, Employees
Professional and Educational Organizations
Commissions and Caucuses on Status of Women
Political Organizations

C. Educational Measures:

1. The development of educational programs:

a. To inform men and women of the legal rights of women, and of the means available for ensuring their enforcement;

b. To strengthen the opportunities for girls and women for basic education and upward mobility through education, with enlargement of freedom of choice and development of individual potential;

c. To provide career information, guidance and informed counseling to enlarge the perspective of women and girls for wider career choices; along with information on the right of individuals to freely determine the number and spacing of their children;

d. To promote new approaches to the achievement of equal access of girls and women to all levels of education, training, and employment;

e. To encourage students at all levels of education to study topics bearing on the status of women;

f. To provide information on educational and employment opportunities geared particularly to women who plan to resume their education or job training after a number of years at home.

g. To expand retraining programs for women who wish to enter the labor force.

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h. Promote equal participation of women and men in the labor union movement, and the access to positions of leadership for women within the unions.

i. To encourage voter organizations to organize seminars and workshops to prepare women for participation in politics at local, state, and national levels.

j. To ensure equal enrollment of women in executive leadership and management training programs.

k. To increase the number of women in diplomatic and foreign service schools to equal number of men enrolled in such programs.

l. Through the educational program of schools and the media, promote the equal rights and responsibilities of men and women in family life, i.e., family finances, family planning, child rearing, home management, and homemaking.

2. The preparation and dissemination of special material dealing with women's rights and responsibilities, and attitudinal factors that perpetutate discrimination against women, and ways of overcoming it, for use by persons engaged in all levels of education.

3. Special studies to be encouraged:

a. Examination of policies and practices in education with respect to eliminating discrimination and identification of those areas where corrective action is needed;

b. To review legislation to see whether there are matters discriminatory on the basis of sex. Introduce legislation to prohibit such discrimination;

c. Examination of the effects of working mothers on family relationships and the dual burden of household responsibilities on the working mothers;

d. Examination of how the educational achievement of women is actually utilized in working situations together with a review of the training needs of women in relationship to their educational or skills achievement;

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e. Examination of the day care services available to both students and working parents;

f. Enquiries into attitudes, customs, traditions, and practices which interfere with men's and women's ability to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with each other and suggested ways of assisting men and women to develop and sustain such a relationship.

4. Research and information:

a. Collection of data on the status of girls and women as students and faculty and administrators at all levels of formal education;

b. Comparison of national data on legal and educational positions of women with similar data for other countries;

c. Establishment of a clearing house to serve women in education and their counseling needs;

d. Working out of social indices on progress in the improvement of the status of women;

e. Consideration of special programs designed to facilitate social development and upward mobility of girls and women.

5. Projects:

a. Give technical assistance to commissions on the status of women where they exist and to other organizations actively concerned with status of women in education;

b. Work with appropriate Government officials, with professional organizations, and with voluntary organizations to improve the quality of counseling of girls and women;

c. Emphasize the link between literacy and human rights, and provide and encourage support for national efforts on the reduction of illiteracy;

d. Where no permanent organization exists, to continue the programs undertaken during IWY, consideration should be given to the establishment of permanent structures to continue their work.

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6. Financial aid--fellowships, travel grants:

a. Find means of assuring equal financial and other aid for women students, keeping in mind also the needs of those who are able to study only on a part-time basis;

b. Consider the needs of women who seek retraining in professional, technical, or other fields in order to facilitate their upward mobility.

7. Honorary degrees and awards:

Especially during IWY, encourage the awarding of honorary degrees to qualified women in recognition of their achievements and outstanding contributions to the education and advancement of women.

D. Establishment of national commissions:

1. A national commission, or similar body, could be established, if one does not already exist, with representatives of major national voluntary organizations, and where appropriate, local commissions or committees also, with a mandate to evaluate and recommend the measures and priorities required to ensure the full participation of women in all sectors of national life:

a. Under the commission, or similar body, there might be sub-commissions or working groups which would undertake fact-finding and comprehensive studies, and make recommendations for action in specific areas, such as:

(1) Participation of women in political life, including policy and decision-making and the inclusion of women in delegations to national and international meetings;

(2) Legal status of women;

(3) Education and training at all levels, and vocational guidance;

(4) Employment opportunities and conditions of employment (including the professions);

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(5) Extent of women's participation in the labor force and their positions within it, including the agricultural and service sectors of the economy;

(6) Availability of health and welfare services, including family planning services:

(7) Influence of scientific and technological developments on the position of women;

(8) Availability of child care facilities.

2. Special attention should be given to the different needs of rural, urban, and minority women in each of the areas mentioned in D-1 above.

3. A network of special counseling offices could be established to deal with problems relating to women's rights and their participation in national life, with competence also to handle complaints regarding infringements of women's rights.

4. Conduct searches of positions in political and civic affairs, and prepare women to hold the positions and follow up vigorous campaigns to place the women.

E. Minimum targets and specific goals:

Targets and goals to be achieved should be established for the attainment of the objectives of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the goals of IWY during the Second Development Decade.

F. Ratification and implementation of international instruments relating to the elimination of discrimination against women.

G. The Secretary General should send continuing reminders to governments of the need to place qualified women on national delegations for service at international conferences.

H. Where no permanent organization exists to continue the programs undertaken during IWY, consideration should be given to the establishment of permanent structures to continue their work.

VI. Activities at Regional and International Levels

A. Development of dynamic programs:

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1. Special efforts should be made at the regional and international levels to develop dynamic programs of action for the advancement of women.

a. Internally, within the UN itself and within each of the Specialized Agencies;

b. At the regional and international governmental levels;

c. At the international and regional levels of nongovernmental organizations.

B. Internally, within the UN and its family of agencies:

1. The Secretary General should ask the Administrative Committee on Coordination to prepare an in-depth report due in 1975 on the following aspects of the status of women:

a. What does the United Nations System do in respect to the status of women?

b. What are the future plans of the system for the next planning period?

c. How are the resolutions of the Commission on the Status of Women (and endorsed by ECOSOC) incorporated into the present and planned activities of the UN System?

d. What has the UN System done vis-a-vis hiring practices related to placing women in policy-making positions?

e. The ACC should establish a Subcommission of the Administrative Committee on Coordination under the Chairmanship of the Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

f. The Commission should further request that the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should be available for the 59th Session of the ECOSOC to be submitted through the Commission on the Status of Women.

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2. The Secretary General should bring to the attention of the UN System the importance of increased utilization of women in the Secretariats in decision-making positions, including positions which deal with matters not primarily concerned with women or having special relevance for women; in this connection, account should be taken of General Assembly Resolution 3009 (XXVII), on placement of women in senior and other professional positions by the Secretariats of organizations in the UN System.

3. The UN and each of the Specialized Agencies should establish specific targets to be achieved within their own programs for improving the status of women in line with the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women.

4. Establishment of machinery within the organization to ensure continued progress toward goals.

a. Development within the UN itself and within each of its Specialized Agencies of special machinery and the specific targets to be achieved within their own Secretariats for improving the status of women by the end of the Second Development Decade.

5. Continuing reminders by the UN Secretary General to UN member governments of the need to include qualified women among nominees for Secretariat and other UN positions so that UN goals can be met.

6. Other International Organizations at the regional level:

a. The Secretary General should request similar reports to be considered in conjunction with the Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination from other non-UN affiliated intergovernmental organizations (such as the OAS, OAU, Arab League, etc.) to be submitted in 1975.

7. The Secretary General should focus on the interrelationship between the IWY and the mid-decade review of the international development strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade and, specifically, should develop language designed to strengthen, elaborate, and expand on the present imprecise wording of the strategy relating to the "encouragement" of the "full integration of women" in the development effort.

8. The 26th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women should be moved forward to 1975 in recognition of and celebration of IWY.

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