



*The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development*

## CREATING LINKAGES: WOMEN, WORK, AND CHILD CARE

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THE CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES OF WOMEN'S LIVES: SHIFTING FAMILIES...	4
WOMEN'S WORK: A KALEIDOSCOPE OF HIDDEN COSTS...	7
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILD CARE: A CALL FOR INNOVATION...	9
PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES...	12
THE NEED FOR A RANGE OF OPTIONS...	13
CHILD DEVELOPMENT...	18
POLICY AND PROGRAMME IMPLICATIONS: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH...	21
PROGRAMMES IN BRIEF: THE INTERSECTING NEEDS OF WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN...	28
ETHIOPIA: PROVIDING CHILD CARE WITHIN THE FARMERS' COOPERATIVES...	28
COLOMBIA: FROM HOUSEKEEPING TO COMMUNITY ACTION...	30
BANGLADESH: COOPERATION AND DISCOVERY...	31
MOROCCO: A CRECHE FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN CASABLANCA...	32
SRI LANKA: CARING FOR CHILDREN AT THE WORKPLACE...	33
BRAZIL: INCOME-GENERATION FOR WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR...	34
SUDAN: THE INTEGRATED WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME...	35
PHILIPPINES: PROTECTING THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS...	36
VENEZUELA: AN UNCONVENTIONAL FORM OF CHILD CARE...	36
SUGGESTED READINGS...	37

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One of the extraordinary social transitions occurring in the last half of this century is the transformation of family structures and the rapid entry of women into the formal labour force. Throughout the developing world, families are shifting from traditional extended forms of social organisation to more nuclear or female-headed households. Women are also moving away from traditional work in subsistence agriculture and household management to new forms of employment in export-promotion zones and piecework occupations. These trends have disrupted

childcare patterns and practices that have for generations provided women with culturally appropriate solutions.

The complex interplay of political, social, cultural, and religious forces surrounding these issues were confronted by participants attending the UNICEF Innocenti Global Seminar on Women, Work, and Child Care held October 1991. As a contribution to the ongoing search for improved strategies that address the intersecting needs and rights of women and young children, this article summarises the range of policy options and challenges that evolved from the Seminar.

For the vast majority of women who are mothers, not only their role of bearing and caring for children but all their roles are central to their own welfare and their children's. Such activities as hauling water, planting crops, buying and selling at the market, doing piecework as a seamstress, working in a factory, or participating in a local women's group all directly contribute to ensuring a woman's survival or creating opportunities for the future. Fulfilling these multiple roles, however, places enormous demands on women's time and energy. The impact of a woman's work on the health and well being of her children and family is complex, and involves a potential for both positive and negative effects. Even at peak capacity, she must make complex trade-offs among her various roles. The inevitability of role conflict is underlined by the little recognised fact that labour force participation for women peaks in the 25- to 44-year age group, which is also the age when women have the most demanding child care responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

Current trends, including urbanisation, industrialisation, migration, and expanding access to education have, to some extent, created new opportunities for women. However, they have also disrupted many familiar cultural practices and survival patterns that women have developed over the years to cope with their multiple responsibilities. One aspect of family life affected by these trends is childcare, which is increasingly recognised as an area of critical, unmet need for the healthy development of children and for the changing economic and social circumstances of women's lives.

Throughout this discussion, *child care* is defined to include the behaviours of breastfeeding and feeding, providing shelter and supervision, and preventing and attending to illness, as well as providing a stimulating, safe environment for play, exploration, and social interaction. Recent research has emphasised that the quality of care, which is characterised by the motivation, skill, physical capacity, consistency, and responsiveness of the caregiver, is strongly linked to child survival and development. Some authors make a distinction between *compensatory care*, which returns a child to a previously accepted state of health or development, and *stimulating care*, which serves to promote further development, such as language and social development.<sup>2</sup>

To avoid definitional problems, we use the term *child care programmes* broadly to describe a range of services provided for a certain number of hours during the day and in a safe environment that contributes to children's full development by complementing the family environment and the

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations (1991), *The World's Women, 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics*, New York: United Nations Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Engle, Patricia (1992), "Care and Child Nutrition," theme paper prepared for UNICEF for the International Nutrition Conference (ICN), New York: Nutrition Section, UNICEF.

formal education system. The type of programme best suited to this "complementary" purpose will vary according to the age group concerned and the comprehensiveness of services provided, including health, nutrition, and developmentally appropriate learning contexts. How these needs can and should be satisfied varies widely according to the particular characteristics of the child's environment. From this perspective, the terms *child development programmes and childcare programmes* are used interchangeably.

Given the inevitability of women's multiple responsibilities if accessible, good-quality, non-maternal childcare is not available within or outside the household, both women and children are likely to suffer. In view of this situation, it is rather curious that empirical information from developing countries on how young children are cared for while their mothers work and how care behaviours affect child development, is, at best, scarce and scattered. Unlike the relationship between women's work and children's nutritional status (which has been extensively researched), the effect of women's work on children's care and development has not been considered in depth in any of the relevant social sciences or bio-medical disciplines.<sup>3</sup> Any consideration that has been given to the latter topic appears to have been peripheral to other research concerns. Furthermore, the data that do exist are not sorted according to children's ages, which is a significant shortcoming, since the adequacy of a child care method or programme depends largely on children's developmental needs and capacities. Often based on small samples, the available data provide little insight into the multiplicity of arrangements undertaken over time to ensure childcare.

In spite of the limited empirical data, evidence strongly indicates that developing countries' current level of childcare provision fail to meet the present needs of both mothers and children. Moreover, those concerned with the quality of care both for women and their children maintain that this situation is likely to worsen, with the demand for non-maternal child care continuing to increase while care provisions remain static or even decrease. Unfortunately, relevant social and economic factors, combined with insufficient assumption of parenting responsibilities by fathers, support this pessimistic view.

It is clear that the developmental costs of inadequate childcare are high. Children lacking appropriate care are exposed to a clustering of risk factors such as illness, poor nutrition, family stress, and nonstimulating environments. The long term costs can be measured in terms of school dropout, unemployment, delinquency, and the inter-generational perpetuation of poverty and failure. The period of early childhood provides a window of opportunity, a chance to generate long-term benefits by making at least small positive changes in the young child's environment. Thus, the increasing child care needs resulting from changes in family structures and women's work patterns, combined with recognition of the developmental needs of the child, provide a powerful argument for governments, employers, communities, and families to identify culturally appropriate and affordable solutions to the provision of adequate child care. The need for adequate childcare programmes is no longer questioned. The challenge now is to determine how they can be best implemented.

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<sup>3</sup> Leslie, Joanne (1989), *Woman's Work and Child Nutrition in the Third World* in J. Leslie and M. Paolisso (Eds.), *Women, Work, and Child Welfare in the Third World*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

If such programmes are to be implemented and sustained at the level and scale required, they must be accompanied by revisions in family law, employment legislation, social policies, and some traditional practices. While cultural norms, personal attachment, and perhaps even biological instincts reinforce a mother's commitment to care for her children, the role and responsibility of fathers must no longer be ignored. Efforts to devise and implement family policy and legislation supportive of shared parental responsibility must be explored. Furthermore, we must look seriously at the opportunities to enhance the complementary rights of both women and children through the implementation of the relevant international conventions. This will facilitate women's and children's progression from an often severely disadvantaged status to one where their mutual achievement of rights and equity is perceived as an interconnected strategy for realising human potential.<sup>4</sup>

The following discussion explores the causes and consequences of changes in women's work environments on the provision of quality childcare. Following consideration of a range of complementary child care options, we propose a set of policy and programming recommendations.

### *The Changing Circumstances of Women's Lives: Shifting Families*

Only quite recently has the extent of diversity and fluidity in family structures and in resource flows within families begun to be appreciated for its policy implications, and not simply as a curious phenomenon for the social sciences. The model of a family in which one male head of household has economic responsibility for and control over one wife and their children has never been the norm in many parts of the world, and even where it is and has been the case, this model's prevalence is declining. Historical factors responsible for diversity in family structure include, among others, differences between and within countries in population density, mortality patterns, main sources of food, and religious beliefs. External influences, notably colonialism and the slave trade, added further diversity by imposing legal and economic structures that disrupted traditional family and social patterns. More recently, family structures throughout the world have undergone further changes in response to industrialisation, urbanisation, population growth, increasing longevity, and migration. Related to these more "measurable" processes are a number of cultural phenomena, such as changing belief systems and prevailing social values.

One notable trend in most of the developing world is a general decrease in the average household size. The factors underlying this decrease are perhaps even more dramatic than their net effect, particularly in terms of the impact on women's lives. One important factor contributing to the decrease in average household size has been declining fertility. Over the past 25 years, total fertility rates have declined significantly in all regions of the world except in sub-Saharan Africa. The most dramatic declines occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean (down from 5.5 to 3.4 births per woman) and in East Asia (down from 5.2 to 3.0 births per woman). Even in sub-Saharan Africa, however, it is important to note that although average fertility rates have not

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<sup>4</sup> Goonesekere, Savitri (1991), "Women's Work and Child Rights in South Asia: Conflicting Interests or Complementary Strategies," a paper presented for the Third Innocenti Global Seminar: Women, Work, and Child Care: Casablanca, Morocco, UNICEF.

changed significantly since 1965, certain countries have already recorded a significant decline in fertility, and demographic experts predict as much as a 50 percent decline in regional fertility over the coming 25 years.

A second important trend that has influenced household size is the effect of increasing life expectancy combined with the male-female differences in marriage patterns. Because women initially marry younger and live longer than men do, the ratio of widows to widowers is about 4 to 1 throughout most of the world. In addition, compared with women, men are more likely to marry or remarry in their later years. Among people aged 60 and older, for example, about 75 percent of men compared with only 40 percent of women are married. The net result is that an increasing proportion of older women live alone, again contributing to the decline in average household size.

Migration, both rural-to-urban migration and, to a lesser extent, international migration, has also had a significant effect on family structure, separating male and female partners, as well as generations, from each other. With regard to rural-to-urban migration, there seem to be two distinct patterns in the developing world—one in which it is primarily men who migrate to cities, and the other in which it is primarily women who migrate.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, almost two thirds of rural-to-urban migrants are women, and over half of them are under 15 years old. While women migrants have greater economic opportunities in cities, they tend to be extremely vulnerable, both personally and economically, because they leave family and social networks behind and bring few skills and resources with them. The other pattern of rural-to-urban migration, which predominates in sub-Saharan Africa and in most Asian countries, is that of young men going to cities in search of work, leaving women, children, and the elderly on farms and in rural villages. Most women who are left behind in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia find themselves with heavier workloads. Although some receive remittances, many do not.

Interestingly, however, studies from both Egypt and South India have noted that where women are left not only with more work but also with more decision-making power, their status and self-confidence improves. Whether the migrants are women, their male partners, their children, or entire families, there are few women whose lives have not been influenced by the escalating pace of migration in the developing world.

Both of these trends—declining household size and migration—have contributed to the single most important trend in family structure that has occurred in the last 25 years: the greater number of female-headed households. Though there have been, and continue to be, important discussions about how female-headed or female-maintained households should be defined, it is nevertheless possible to obtain a reasonably accurate minimum estimate of prevalence. Usually, a woman is recorded in official statistics as the head of a household only if she lives alone, or if there is no able-bodied adult male living in the household (when present, an adult male is assumed to be the main source of economic support for the household). According to even this relatively conservative definition, almost 30 percent of households in Latin America and the Caribbean, over 20 percent of households in sub-Saharan Africa, and about 15 percent of

households in East and Southeast Asia are female-headed. In North Africa and in West and South Asia, the proportion tends to be much lower—only around 5 percent. Between half and a quarter of women householders in the developing world are widowed and/or over age 60. Many elderly or widowed women heading households live alone, whereas others have responsibility for children or grandchildren living with them.

While it is important to distinguish among different types of female-headed households (for example those where women live alone, those where the only other household members are dependent children or elderly, those where there are other able-bodied adults in the household, those that receive remittances), in general, households headed by women are poorer than those headed by men. The disadvantage of female-headed households seems to be much more severe in Latin America and the Caribbean than in other regions; this fact may be linked to the differential patterns of migration discussed above. Most female-headed households in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, for example, are rural, and they are frequently found to be no worse-off and, indeed, are sometimes better off than male-headed households at approximately the same income level. The absence of a male adult from the household does not necessarily have a negative effect, since this change may be accompanied by a remittance greater than or equal to his net contribution to the household when present. A man's net contribution to the household income is determined not only by the income he earns but also by the share of full household income that he consumes. If a male takes advantage of his superior bargaining power by claiming a disproportionate share of the total income, the household may actually benefit economically from his departure.

Nevertheless, in Latin America and the Caribbean, most female-headed households are urban, and seem not only to be poorer on average than male-headed households, but also to be less well off even when the income level is the same. Contributing factors are a higher dependency ratio in female-headed households, the more limited types of work available to women, smaller land-holdings, fewer secondary earners, and the fact that women's child care and household work constrain both the time they have to earn an income and the time they have to obtain social services.

In considering the effect of family structure on women's lives, not only is it important to take into account the scope of differences in size and composition of families, but it is also essential to recognise that patterns of decision-making and resource flows among co-residential and non-co-residential family members show great variability. The accepted microeconomic model of the family as a cooperative, joint, utility-minimising unit is increasingly coming under question. It has been found, for example, that compared with male-earned or -controlled income, income earned or controlled by women is more likely to be used for the benefit of the entire family or children (as opposed to the benefit of the individual income earner).

In addition, the compound effect of increasingly monetised economies, greater individual geographic mobility in search of work, and greater mobility and instability in adult sexual relationships seems to have weakened the overall claim of women and children upon male incomes and support. Since this has not, in most cases, been accompanied by greater government support to women and children, or by improvements in women's economic productivity, the consequence has been an increase in the relative poverty of women and children.

## *Women's Work: A Kaleidoscope of Hidden Costs*

Women's work is obviously not new; women have always worked. Moreover, women's work—not only their household maintenance work and childcare, but also their food production or income generation—has always been essential to family survival. However, there have been significant changes in the patterns of women's work. The second half of this century has seen significant increases in the female proportion of the total paid labour force and in the proportion of women 15 years of age or older who are in the paid labour force. These trends began earlier and have been most dramatic in the industrialised countries, but have also been significant in the developing countries. Although there are important regional and sub-regional variations, available data suggest that in developing countries as a whole, between 1950 and 1985, the proportion of women aged 15 or older in the paid labour force rose from 37 to 42 percent. This figure undoubtedly represents a lower bound on the true extent of women's current economic participation. Difficulties associated with defining and categorising non-paid labour, as well as cultural preconceptions about the appropriate economic role for women, allow for a systematic and large underestimation of the scope of women's contribution to the economy.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of their limitations, available data highlight important regional differences in the extent of the increase in women's labour force participation as well as in the types of work that have accounted for most of the increase. The highest levels of economic participation on the part of women are found in East and Southeast Asia, where 50 to 60 percent of women aged 15 or over are economically active, and where women represent 40 percent of the total labour force. However, these proportions have risen little if at all over the last 20 years, and agriculture continues to provide the main source of work for women in Asia.

In contrast, urban growth has significantly changed economic opportunities for women in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the percentage of women who are economically active rose from 26 to 32 percent between 1970 and 1990, with service sector jobs accounting for most of the increase. In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of economically active women is high, but it appears to have actually declined from slightly above to slightly below 50 percent in the period since 1970. The vast majority of these women work in agriculture, but unlike other regions, only small proportions are paid for their labour. In North Africa and Western Asia, the most striking aspect of the phenomenon is the low level of women's participation in the overall labour force (under 20 percent), although even in these countries there has been a notable increase in the percentage of economically active women as well as in women's share of the total labour force.

Traditional patterns for women have almost invariably involved long work hours, usually significantly longer hours than for men, at least in rural areas. Recently, however, the effects of population growth, environmental degradation and/or male migration have, in many places, made the circumstances under which women carry out traditional work increasingly demanding. For example, deforestation, particularly in Central America and South Asia, means that women have to walk further to find fuel. Increasing pressure on arable land means that women also walk further to reach less productive fields, and frequently have less help from men in strenuous tasks

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<sup>5</sup> Joekes, Susan (1987), *Women in the World Economy*, New York: Oxford University Press.

such as land clearing. Smaller family-size and children's increased school attendance, while desirable trends in and of themselves, mean that women receive less help from children. One study in Kenya found that agricultural marginalisation and environmental deterioration were increasing the work burden for women of reproductive age more than for other members of the household, with measurable negative effects on their nutritional status and on the prevalence of chronic disability.

Particularly in recent years, women's increased economic activity has been not so much a response to a wider range of opportunities for women as a response to the erosion of family incomes. Faced with reduced access to male-generated incomes, which are themselves declining in much of the world, more women are entering the labour force and working for longer hours than ever before. Unfortunately, given the constraints on women's productivity due to their limited skills, their lack of access to credit, and the demands of their multiple responsibilities, for most women the only way to increase their income is to increase the number of hours they work. The necessity of working longer hours further reduces women's opportunities for the acquisition of skills and may impair their health and nutritional status, thus setting up a vicious cycle in which lower productivity leads to ever more desperate efforts to increase hours of work. Women's work burden has increased in recent years partly because rising poverty has forced them to devote more time and effort to income generation. At the same time, they have had to put more time into household maintenance and caregiving in response to a decline in public and private social and health services, accompanied by the erosion of traditional family support systems taking place in most countries.<sup>6</sup>

The 1980s might well be called the decade of labour deregulation. For many newly industrialising countries, prevailing economic strategies have led to increased employment with lower incomes and decreased job security. These strategies have also brought a renewed surge of feminisation of labour activity. The types of work, labour relations, income, and insecurity associated with women's work have been accompanied by a drop in men's employment as well as by a "feminisation" of many jobs traditionally held by men.<sup>7</sup> Economists have proposed several explanations for the increase in women's labour force participation and simultaneous decrease in male participation. Outward-oriented development strategies based on export-led industrialisation have brought a rapid growth of low-wage female employment. A rise in the female proportion of productive wage workers has been observed in all countries that have pursued the export-led industrialisation strategy, including the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore and Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Indeed, no country has successfully industrialised or pursued this development strategy without relying on a massive expansion of female labour. In the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) of many newly industrialising countries, it is not uncommon for as many as three-quarters of all employees to be women.

Many of the reasons for the feminisation of the labour pool are well known. Much of the assembly and production work is semi-skilled and lowly paid. The social and economic oppression

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<sup>6</sup> Joeekes, Susan (1991), "Women and Structural Adjustment: Operational Implications for the JCPG Member Agencies," Brighton, Great Britain: Institute of Development Studies.

<sup>7</sup> Standing, Guy (1989) "Global Feminization Through Flexible Labor," *World Development*, 17 (3), p. 1077-1095.

of young women, particularly in Asia, has resulted in low aspiration and "low efficiency" wages. Women are prepared to work long hours for low wages, and when their productivity declines they are quickly replaced by new and vulnerable cohorts. Most of these women begin with no skills, acquire no skills on the job, have no health, maternity, or pension benefits, and have no job security. They are constantly at high risk of losing their employment, and once they do, factors such as age, childcare responsibilities, or poor health limit their ability to find alternative employment.

Another aspect of the structural adjustment strategy affecting women's employment patterns is labour market deregulation. As of late 1990, 109 countries had ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention No. 100. In a disproportionate number of countries with large export processing zones including Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand, the Convention has not been ratified. Other countries, such as India, have gender-based minimum-wage requirements in certain industries on the grounds that women perform less-arduous work. It is no coincidence that this shifting pattern is closely related to the erosion of labour regulations. There has been explicit deregulation, in which formal regulations have been eroded or abandoned by legislative actions, and an implicit deregulation characterised by inadequate implementation or systematic bypassing of existing regulations.

In general, stabilisation and adjustment strategies have resulted in a deflation of aggregate demand, leading to higher unemployment in the more formal sectors and widespread resort to informal survival strategies among the poor, particularly in urban areas. The result has been that both men and women have increasingly turned to self generated employment in the informal sector, either as a supplement to formal sector earnings or as their sole source of support. Women have long been concentrated in such informal activities, both as petty traders or "pre-entrepreneurs" and as dependent wage workers in family enterprises. Very little has been done to enhance the status and living standards of such workers.

The overall trend towards increased economic participation on the part of women has occurred throughout the world, and seems likely to continue, perhaps even at an accelerated pace, given the recent shift to increasing numbers of export-led, market-oriented national economies. However, as this brief review indicates, what might appear to be economic gains for women in the changing labour market are offset by a pervasive and continuing job insecurity, which is often combined with a need to work longer and more-burdensome hours. As the next section makes clear, these trends have posed painful dilemmas for women with child care responsibilities.

### *Implications for Child Care: A Call for Innovation*

Women's work in developing countries is by no means new; neither is their use of non-maternal care. Sources of non-maternal child care can be divided roughly into four types. The first (and unfortunately frequent) child care arrangement used throughout the world, is "non-existent" child care—children simply being unattended while mothers are otherwise occupied. The second type of arrangement is care provided by other members of the household, frequently by older siblings. The third pattern involves reciprocal exchanges of child care or other services among

members of a residential or kin group, usually without any financial compensation. The fourth type is a combination of formal and informal child care services, where child care is provided for a fee in the home (of either the child or the provider) or in an institutional setting.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that although it is widely assumed that traditional patterns of women's work have been and continue to be easily combined with child care responsibilities, this is not always the case. Many tasks associated with home maintenance and subsistence agriculture involve women travelling considerable distances, sometimes carrying heavy loads. Women frequently choose to leave older preschool children behind, and in some cultures, even to leave nursing infants behind, out of concern for dangers the child might be exposed to, or because of concern that the children might slow the work down. Nonetheless, historically, the location of much of women's work in or near their homes, the likelihood that women lived with or near extended family, and the presence of older children at home throughout much of the day all helped women to accommodate their other responsibilities while ensuring minimally adequate care and supervision of their children. The changing circumstances of women's lives have made many of the traditional options for child care either unavailable or unsuitable.

The trend towards greater women's participation in the labour force in the developing world, and towards a larger proportion of women working in salaried jobs in some regions, have undoubtedly increased the number of women experiencing incompatibility between economic activities and simultaneous child care. The type of work or the location of work often makes it difficult, dangerous, or prohibited to bring children along. Sometimes, even more than the type of work itself, transportation to work (travel by foot in rural areas, or by crowded public transport in urban centres) present barriers to women bringing their children to the work site. Some of the most desirable employment options for women (either because they are less arduous, such as retail or clerical work, or because they are well paid, such as some factory and assembly line jobs) are precisely the ones that mothers of young children cannot even consider unless they have access to reliable child care. Even where there is no apparent incompatibility—for instance women doing outwork at home or working as traders in the market—concurrent productive work and child care may be problematic and unsatisfactory to both mother and child.

Changes in family structure, as well as the fact that an increasing proportion of families live in urban settings has created their own set of child care dilemmas. Child care problems associated with rural-to-urban migration are not only due to the greater pressure experienced by urban women to generate income and the greater probability that they will have jobs in the formal sector. Problems also hinge on the fact that the normal pattern in rural-to-urban migration is for some, but not all, members of an extended or even nuclear family to migrate to the city. Thus, women are forced to enter the labour force but lack the kin network that they might have been able to rely on for child care. Sometimes residential support networks can replace kin networks in urban areas, but there will still be a difficult period of formation after each new move. It takes time for women to feel both the right to ask for assistance in child care, and confidence in the quality of care that non-family arrangements will provide.

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<sup>8</sup> Joeques, Susan (1989), "Women's Work and Social Support for Child Care in the Third World" in J. Leslie and M. Paolisso (Eds.), *Op. Cit.*

Household size and composition are relevant to child care because they determine both the availability of non-maternal caretakers and women's choices about working arrangements. Declining fertility rates and reduced average household size mean that women have fewer older children as well as fewer other adults in the household to assist in the provision of child care. Small households in general, and female-headed households in particular, may be even more disadvantaged than they appear. They may be less likely to have established strong positions within a kin or residential network, since they have limited time or resources to provide reciprocal services. The trend towards greater participation of girls in schooling, while benefiting the health, status and opportunities for girls and women, has reduced the availability of sibling care for preschool-aged children.

The relationships through which women's work affects the development of young children are extremely complex. The maternal factors that influence the quality of child care include health and nutrition, education, child development beliefs and values, social support systems, quality of substitute caregivers, and intra-familial status and decision-making power. The degree to which these maternal variables are operative is directly influenced by the characteristics and circumstances of women's work, including but not limited to the following: income, technical and material conditions of production, energy expenditure, time allocation, absence from home, exposure to hazards, and control over and access to resources.

As women inevitably shoulder multiple responsibilities, the lack of good-quality non-maternal child care will negatively affect both women and children, but it may also have broader negative consequences. Child care programmes have the potential to exert a direct and positive influence on at least three groups of beneficiaries. In the first instance, employers who provide access to child care facilities benefit from decreased absenteeism and an increase in labour force productivity and responsibility. Moreover, the availability of child care has the potential to increase the productivity of self-employed women as well as the productivity of those engaged in agricultural activities. Women's own physical and mental health can be dramatically improved by decreasing the stress associated with inadequate child care arrangements. Perhaps the most powerful beneficiary is the young child whose critical needs for health, nutrition, safety, protection, and early learning experience can be supported and enhanced through the provision of both formal and informal child care arrangements. Availability of child care programmes also has the potential of releasing female siblings from child care responsibilities, thus improving the rates of primary school enrolment, retention, and performance.

Women's increased vulnerability resulting from market deregulation, insecure and poorly paid work situations, and from the erosion of social and family support, combined with increased recognition of the developmental needs of the young child, provides a powerful argument for government employers, communities, and families to identify affordable child care solutions. The question that confronts us all is how and under what circumstances quality services can be implemented and sustained. The following section reviews the range of available programming options to increase the availability of affordable good-quality child-care programmes.

## *Programmatic Issues*

It has long been widely accepted that good health and nutrition support the psychological and social development of the young child. Less widely recognised, however, are the most recent findings that developmentally sensitive interaction with a child—interaction that satisfies the child's need to grow socially, psychologically, and cognitively—has a direct and measurable impact on both the health and the nutritional status of the child. The scientific evidence accumulated during the past decade demonstrates powerfully the importance of the early years of the child's life and the long-term benefits associated with increased investments in well-conceived and properly managed programmes. In addition to having the confidence provided by scientific evidence, those involved in the translation of theory into action should have a sense of optimism. In the past, policy-makers have been forced to rely on data from the industrialised world to justify their investments in early child development activities. More recently, a growing body of data from the developing world also indicates the long-term benefits of early child development programmes, as reflected in increased primary school enrolment, and enhanced school progress and performance. These data not only reinforce the assumption that similarly positive effects of early interventions are possible in the developing world, but also reinforce the assumption that the potential for bringing about improvements may be greater when social and economic conditions are more severe.

Although the implications of these interactive effects are of considerable importance for the health and well-being of children, they have been generally overlooked in development planning for children. Some of the resistance to early childhood development programmes stems from misconceptions about the factors that optimise or constrain children's early development. Rather than attending to the interrelations between growth and development, sceptics of child development efforts regard change in a sequential fashion, placing survival goals first, followed by efforts to address the quality of that survival. Moreover, attention to the integrated or holistic needs of children crosses bureaucratic lines, rendering no one institution with specific programmatic responsibility or commitment.

Another source of resistance is the erroneous perception that young children are passive recipients rather than active creators of their own knowledge. It is sometimes argued, moreover, that the coping strategies developed by families and communities to care for the needs of young children are quite sufficient and should not be interfered with by forces external to the familial unit. In this perspective, learning begins upon entry into primary school and not, as the scientific evidence powerfully demonstrates, from the moment of birth through the active interaction of infants with people and things in their environments. Policy-makers have also rejected proposals for early childhood development programmes, based on misleading assertions related to high costs or the need for sophisticated teaching methodologies and equipment and based on fear of overburdening formal school systems with the responsibilities for preschool programmes.

In spite of this resistance, hundreds of programmes and projects have underscored the possibilities for early child development programmes to foster children's abilities to cope with and creatively adapt to their environments. The expansion of child programmes in the developing world over the last decade has been dramatic. For example, in Korea from 1982 to 1986, the

percentage of children attending early child development programmes increased from 8 to 57 percent. The expansion of governmental centre-based programmes stemmed in part from the increased need for child care services resulting from women's entrance in to the labour force. This expansion is also seen in Sri Lanka's efforts to cover all 5-year-old children by extending downward the age of entry primary school and transforming the first year of schooling into a kindergarten for all. Thailand now provides some form of preschool for approximately 24 percent of all children between the ages of 3 and 6 in centre-based programmes combined with parental education activities. In the Philippines, 19 percent of all children aged 3 to 6 participate in an early childhood enrichment programme that promotes learning opportunities to disadvantaged preschool children in a structured centre-based setting. In China, the All China Women's Federation has created over 200,000 local parent-education programmes within the past 4 years. The curriculum emphasises the interaction between physical, nutritional, and psychosocial dimensions of development. The programme, designed in collaboration with the community, is integrated into existing preschools, or primary schools, or offered in conjunction with periodic medical visits.<sup>9</sup>

## *The Need for a Range of Options*

The rapid growth in programme experience has provided a wide range of examples and insights to be drawn upon in future programming efforts. In an attempt to counter the narrow, "institutional", often expensive, and age-restricted image associated with preschool programmes, a typology of seven complementary programme approaches to early childhood development has been developed. These include the following:

*Delivering a service.* The immediate goal of this direct approach is to enhance child development by attending to the immediate needs of children in centres organised outside the home. These are, in a sense, substitute or alternative environments to the home.

*Educating caregivers.* This approach is intended to educate and empower parents and alternative caregivers in ways that improve their care and interaction with the child and the immediate environment.

*Promoting community development.* This strategy stresses community initiative, organisation, and participation in a range of interrelated activities to improve the physical environment, the knowledge and practices of community members, and the organisational base. It allows common action and improves the base for political and social negotiations. Although not necessarily focused on the needs of children, this approach has proven to be a useful strategy to which early child development initiatives can be linked.

*Strengthening national resources and capacities.* The institutions responsible for implementing programmes require financial, material, and human resources with a capacity for the planning, organisation, and implementation of innovative techniques and models.

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<sup>9</sup> Landers, Cassie (1990) "Early Child Development", Innocenti Global Seminar Report, Florence, Italy. UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

*Advocating to increase demand.* This programme approach concentrates on the production and distribution of knowledge in order to create awareness and demand. It may function at the level of policy-makers and planners, or it can be directed to the general public by changing the cultural environment that affects child development.

*Monitoring social, legal, and regulatory dimensions.* A potentially critical strategy is to develop supportive legal frameworks to increase awareness of rights and legal resources among both women and children and to move towards more effective use of legislation. This includes better monitoring and enforcement of labour legislation and regulations to protect both working children and working women with infants and young children; policy and legislative or regulatory reform to encourage, where appropriate, suitable daycare facilities at or near women's workplace; utilisation of regulatory controls provided in ILO conventions and of recommended mechanisms to extend the scope and raise the standards of protective measures that favour working mothers with young children. (See Box 1). These include, for example, maternity protection, maternal leave and benefits, and appropriate support to breastfeeding mothers during the first 4 to 6 months following birth.

*Developing national child care and family policies.* Family policies supportive of women and children can include providing parents with increased time to meet their childrearing and child-care responsibilities, taking measures to encourage increased possibilities for child care by grandparents or other adult family members, and giving parents cash benefits or tax credits to assist them in meeting the costs of childrearing and child care. Financing these alternatives should explore private or cooperative initiatives, time allotments, financial benefits and service provisions, and innovative joint public/private arrangements. Tax or other incentives can also help to encourage family-sensitive employment practices among the rapidly growing formal or quasi-formal enterprises and export-oriented industries.

Although all of these seven approaches are intended to enhance early child development, each has different immediate objectives and is directed towards a different audience or group of participants. Table 1 summarises the beneficiaries, objectives, and illustrative models for each of these seven complementary strategies.

Any comprehensive plan for enhancing child development must pay attention to all seven of the approaches identified in Table 1. The emphasis given to any single approach within the overall strategy will, of course, vary considerably depending on the conditions of the setting in which the programme is being developed.

Three sets of considerations are helpful in overcoming the piecemeal approach that has unfortunately dominated policy in the past. The first set of considerations has just been described: the complementary approaches outlined in Table 1. A second set of considerations consists of guidelines indicating that programmes should be comprehensive (able to deal with a full range of health and developmental needs); participatory and community-based; flexible and adjusted to different socio-cultural contexts; supportive of and built upon local ways that have been devised to cope effectively with problems of child care and development; financially feasible and cost-effective; and capable of reaching the largest possible number of at-risk children. The

third set of considerations relates to a programme's ability to target specific age groups with developmentally appropriate interventions. Thus, the tendency to restrict programming for child development to a particular age group is counteracted by the need for programmes to cover the prenatal period, and the early childhood period, which extends from approximately age 3 to age 6 and includes the critical transition from home to school.<sup>10/11</sup>

Innovative programming efforts incorporating the three sets of considerations we suggest are numerous. UNICEF and collaborating international organisations—including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank—have contributed to this mix of complementary strategies. In addition, private foundations, such as the Bernard van Leer Foundation, Save The Children, and the Aga Khan Foundation, have long supported the implementation of comprehensive early child development activities. These programmes seek to attract large numbers of children, with particular emphasis on children under 2 years of age.

Unfortunately, most of these early child programmes only indirectly responded to the child care needs of mothers. Many programmes only operate for 3 or 4 hours a day during the week. The overall goals of the majority of time programmes are to develop a child's learning skills or to address nutritional or health issues. The preschool bias among programmes favours attention beginning at age 3 or 4, leaving the needs of working mothers with younger children largely unaddressed. In addition, the quality of the programmes is often so poor that positive benefits to the child are minimal, and in some instances negative outcomes may be apparent. The failure of such programmes to combine their child-centred approach with the needs of working women is discouraging.

Child programmes tailored specifically to meet the needs of working women have identified several potentially effective strategies. For example, India's mobile creches, located at construction sites, are small-scale day care facilities that provide services to female construction workers with small children. The classic factory day care facility, propagated by the International Labour Organisation in the early decades of this century, was also designed to serve a specific sector of working women. However, the success of these initiatives has been limited, at best, as employers often chose to replace women workers with men rather than assume the costs of day care. Moreover, the absence of programmes has been blamed on problems of transporting children to workplaces, variations in working hours, and the dangerous environments characterising many work settings. A third type of programme, such as the one operating in Senegal, involves rural agricultural workers. In this project, mothers provide care to groups of children on a rotational basis. Cooperatives of women rice planters operate day-care facilities during seasons of peak demand.

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<sup>10</sup> UNICEF (1989), *Programme Guidelines: Early Child Development, Volume 5*, CF/PROG/IC/89-016, New York, NY: Programme Division, UNICEF.

<sup>11</sup> Myers, Robert (1992), *The Twelve Who Survive*, London, Great Britain: Routledge.

The Programmes in Brief section of this issue reviews initiatives that have attempted to address simultaneously the multiple needs of working women in providing quality care for their children. The range of activities in Venezuela, Morocco, Ethiopia, Brazil, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, among others, underscore the variations in women's work and child care responsibilities resulting from the complex interplay of political, social, cultural, religious, and economic forces.

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## BOX 1: THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION AND WORKING WOMEN

A wide range of international labour and related social issues are regulated through standards provided by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). International labour standards are contained in conventions and recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference. The rights of all workers are equally addressed by conventions concerning basic human rights, conditions of work, social security, employment and labour relations.

In 1975, concern was expressed about the relationship between equality of opportunity and treatment and the protective measures contained in early ILO standards. This relationship was examined in more detail by the International Labour Conference in 1985 where different views prevailed. Some members argued that special protective measures should be kept to a minimum; others proposed that they should be strengthened in order to achieve full equality. Some expressed the view that measures designed to promote equality should not jeopardise the rights that women had already achieved, while others were concerned special rights could lead to further discrimination. As the massive entry of women into the work force was irreversible, a major challenge was to modify the distribution of tasks within the family, raise women's consciousness of their roles and potential, and transform traditions. In 1989, a meeting of experts concluded that measures should be taken in all countries to review all protective legislation applying to women in the light of new scientific knowledge and technological progress, and to revise such legislation according to different national contexts. Throughout this debate, the need for measures to protect the reproductive function of women was never questioned, and the importance of protecting the reproductive function of men was also emphasised.

Protection of maternity and reproduction are contained in the Maternity Protection Convention no. 103 and Recommendation no. 95 (1952). The convention applies to women employed in industrial and commercial undertakings, other non-industrial and agricultural occupations, and to those engaged in domestic work or housework. The terms apply to any pregnant woman and her children, irrespective of age, nationality, race or creed, and marital status. Maternity leave is one of the most basic forms of protection for working women. It allows time for rest during the last weeks of pregnancy, care for the newborn, and a continuous source of income and employment security after the delivery. Article 3 of the convention explicitly confirms the right of every woman worker to maternity leave. National policies that limit eligibility to full-time workers contravene this requirement. While the duration and distribution of maternity leave may vary widely, women are entitled to a minimum period of 12 weeks, of which at least 6 are taken after delivery. After a woman returns to work, Article 6 provides for nursing breaks that, in practice, average from 60 to 90 minutes per day.

Maternity provisions also include cash benefits to compensate for the loss of earnings due to suspension of the employment contract and to provide medical benefits including prenatal and postnatal care. To avoid discrimination that might result if employers were required to pay for maternity benefits, the Convention asserts that employers shall not be individually liable for the cost of such benefit. Article 4 provides for a level of cash benefits of not less than two-thirds of the woman's previous earnings. This amount generally varies from 50 to 100 percent of those

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earnings, or is determined by a wage-ceiling fixed by specific social security policies. Contrary to these ILO standards, benefits are sometimes expected to be paid for by the employer. This practice encourages employers to evade their obligations and is a major obstacle to women obtaining maternity benefits. As specified in Article 6 of the Convention (No.103), it is unlawful for the employer to dismiss a woman during her maternity leave entitlement. A large number of countries provide protection against dismissal during maternity leave, while others provide employment security throughout the pregnancy. The protective measures contained in the Convention (No. 103) are reinforced by protective health measures included in other ILO conventions and recommendations. For example, the Maternity Protection Recommendation (No. 95) prohibits night work and overtime work for pregnant and nursing women, provides for adequate rest periods, and also recommends that work harmful to a woman's health should be prohibited.

Adapted from Marie-Claire Seguret, "Women Workers and Child Care International Labour Standards." A paper presented for the Third Innocenti Global Seminar: Women, Work, and Child Care, Casablanca, Morocco, UNICEF, 1991.

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## *Child Development*

Several factors seem to characterise successful child development programming efforts. Of primary importance is a strong political commitment that enables identification of the resources needed to achieve a set of clearly specified programme goals and objectives. Political support is also critical to ensure stability, commitment, and continuity of programme leadership. Additional characteristics of these programmes include application of media channels to create demand for services, development of simple and efficient information systems to monitor progress and measure performance, and implementation of flexible interactive training approaches that combine short-term instruction with ongoing field-level supervision and follow-up.

Programming success in early child development activities is consistently characterised by a well-defined set of variables that recognises the simultaneous nature of survival and development and the interaction among the child's physical, mental, social, and emotional capabilities. Another characteristic defining success is the emphasis placed on empowering mothers (and, unfortunately, only rarely, fathers) and communities with the knowledge and skills needed to provide for the health, nutrition, and developmental needs of their children. Sustainable programmes are able to identify local patterns and practices of childrearing that have for generations provided culturally appropriate solutions. Once identified, this knowledge is used to inform the design of locally appropriate programmes integrating, when appropriate, new information and the creation of innovative solutions. Successful programmes encourage a level of participation beyond the formal definitions of community participation and include children as active participants in the creation of their own knowledge. Moreover, early learning is not dependent on the utilisation of expensive equipment and learning tools but can be developed

through the application of low-cost materials combined with a caregiver familiar with a creative training curriculum and motivated by an ongoing system of rewards and incentives.

In spite of increasing programmatic activity, millions of young children and families are without these critical child care services. Although a detailed analysis of care programmes in the developing world is not available, there is a general awareness of major geographic areas of inactivity. The factors influencing national policies on child development are many and complex, reflecting unique historical conditions, widely differing national attitudes, and a variety of political and economic realities. While considerable progress has been made in many countries in Latin America and Asia, programmes are virtually nonexistent in many parts of Africa. The majority of innovative programmes find themselves unable to secure sustainable sources of revenue necessary to expand coverage while maintaining programme quality. Standards of quality control incorporating elements of staff/child ratios, training and supervision, health, nutrition and safety, developmentally appropriate child-centred learning, and family partnerships need to be defined and monitored.

The current set of strategies is more successful in reaching the 3- to 6-year-old age groups than in reaching high-risk mothers and infants during the prenatal period and the first 2 years of life with integrated programmes that provide the appropriate balance of health, nutrition, and psycho-social components. The vertical thinking and sectoral competition characterising government bureaucracies and international donors as well as child care providers often conflict with this need to provide a comprehensive set of services. Recognising that parenting is a shared responsibility, programmes also must make much greater efforts to involve fathers' participation in child care. The failure to do so threatens the viability and effectiveness of the family, the most fundamental of all social institutions. The challenges to meeting the child care needs of working mothers are set before us. These challenges require long-term commitment by professionals across many disciplines to address issues related to actual rather than theoretical integration and convergence of services. How and when to involve government and employers in the complex process of expansion and how to define the critical components of programme quality are pressing concerns. Without commitment to the infrastructure needed to supplement intensive training courses with ongoing supervision and follow-up, the kinds of programmes we consider essential will remain an ideal. Experience suggests that monitoring and information-management systems are of particular importance to enable programmes to adjust to constantly changing circumstances. Finally, we must continue to allow for systematic interaction among families, children, and communities. Programmes should not only incorporate and build on parental wisdom but should also begin to identify the culture-specific opportunities for partnerships with mothers and fathers that are open to us, for a brief amount of time, during the child's passage through infancy and early childhood.

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**Table 1**

***Early Childhood Care and Development: Complementary programme Strategies***

<i>Programme Approach</i>	<i>Participants/Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Models</i>
1. Delivery service	-The child 0-2 years 3-6 years 0-6 years	-Survival -Comprehension development -Socialisation -Rehabilitation -Improvement of child care	-Home day care -Integrated child development centres -"Add-on" centres -Preschools (formal/non-formal)
2. Educate caregivers	-Parents, family -Siblings -Public	-Create awareness -Change attitudes -Improve/change practices	-Home visiting -Parental education -Child-to-child programmes
3. Promote community development	-Community -Leaders -Promoters	-Create awareness Mobilise for action -Change conditions	-Technical mobilisation -Social mobilisation
4. Strengthen national resources and capabilities	-Programme personnel professionals paraprofessionals	-Create awareness -Improve skill -Increase material	-Training -Experimental, demonstration projects -Strengthening infrastructure
5. Advocate to increase demand	-Policy-makers -Public -Professionals	-Create awareness -Build political will -Increase demand -Change attitudes	-Social marketing -Ethos creation -Knowledge dissemination
6. Develop supportive legal framework	-Working women with young children -Working children	-Increase awareness of rights and legal resources -Increase use of ILO legislation -Increase monitoring and compliance of international conventions	-Workplace -Day care facilities -Protective environmental standards -Maternal leave and benefits -Support breast feeding for working mothers

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7. Develop national child care and family policies	–Families with young children	–Encourage family-sensitive employment practices	–Innovative joint public/private arrangements –Tax incentives for formal, quasi-formal private enterprise
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## *Policy and Programme Implications: Towards an Integrated Approach*

Economic recession, structural adjustment, high inflation, and rising unemployment will continue to severely undermine the survival and well-being of women, who constitute the majority of the population in many countries. Increasingly, women and adolescent girls, especially in Africa and Latin America, are forced to work long hours for minimum wages in the barely profitable informal sector. Women heading their own households with high child-dependency ratios are particularly vulnerable. Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have reported increases in malnutrition among children age 5. Although women's nutrition is not well reported, the low-birth weights in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South Asia suggest a continuing problem. In areas of the world afflicted by armed conflicts, droughts, and other disasters, women are forced to work in increasingly harsh environments to support themselves, their children, and their families.

In this milieu it is readily apparent that the benefits of collaboration between those concerned with the healthy growth and development of children and those interested in the social and economic roles of women have tremendous policy implications for planners in these respective fields.<sup>12</sup>

For those concerned with women's issues, collaboration provides a more complete grasp of women's multiple responsibilities and multifaceted contribution to families, communities, and societies. Collaboration also generates a broad-based, critical perspective for monitoring the progress of policy and project interventions targeted to women. By challenging the simplistic notions of women as mothers or as workers, this perspective provides a more accurate basis for understanding women's as well as families' coping and survival strategies. In addition, this perspective, with its focus on child care and health, provides additional insights into the distribution pattern of resources within households. Most importantly, it recognises that women's work choices are almost always influenced by their need to care for and nurture their children.

For those who focus their professional energies on enhancing the healthy growth and development of children, collaboration provides additional insights into the lives of mothers of

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<sup>12</sup> Leslie, Joanne and Buvinic, Mayra (1989), "Introduction" in J. Leslie and M. Paolisso (Eds.), *Op. Cit.*

young children. First, it enlarges the range of available strategies to integrate efforts to enhance women's own economic, educational, and health status and well-being. Second, it requires that a broad set of factors be considered in the design, implementation, and evaluation of early child development programmes. Third, better recognition of women's multiple roles and responsibilities provides a more realistic appreciation of the various constraints women face in adopting new practices and utilising existing services. Finally, an appreciation of the variability in women's work patterns makes it clear that child development programmes must be developed with sensitivity and the capacity to adapt to women's work environments.

Capitalising on the collective energies and common goals of these two groups, several strategic policy and programme implications for women, their work, and their need for child care can be put forth. The recommendations, which are summarised in the following section, include issues related to increasing awareness and improving policy analysis; strengthening data resources; monitoring social, legal and regulatory dimensions; and creating linkages between child care and women-in-development initiatives.

*Increasing awareness and improving policy analysis.* Most countries made commitments during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) to give priority to the formulation of coherent national and sectoral policies for the advancement of women. However, this objective remains to be achieved in many developing countries. An analysis of barriers to the formulation of these policies indicates that the absence or inadequacy of national policies on gender issues and women's status is due to insufficient political will, cultural barriers, lack of reliable data, and frequent changes in the institutional base for policy formulation. Policy-oriented research, on the impact of economic crises and structural adjustment on women, needs to receive greater attention. Technical assistance may be needed to collect the gender-specific data and develop the relevant socio-economic indicators to improve policy formulation.

Policy-makers need to foster opportunities to support existing arrangements and create new mechanisms for articulating women's concerns and monitoring their progress. Also, support is needed to strengthen capacities for better coordination among governmental agencies to promote policies in favour of women. Special efforts are needed to ensure that the results of research and policy studies reach key decision makers in and outside government. With a strong emphasis on issues relating to employment generation and poverty alleviation, policies should highlight the need for supportive services for child care, family planning, education, training, and other basic services, especially for female-headed households. Key decision makers need to intensify advocacy and other support to empower women's groups, organisations, and networks to be fully involved in the economic, social, and political decision-making process. Changes resulting from democratisation and political reforms offer dramatic new opportunities for the political empowerment of women and their more effective organisation at the local and national levels.

*Strengthening data resources.* The need for gender specific data is a common theme that cuts across all issues related to women, work, and child care. Understanding the division of labour and resources between women and men is central to understanding a country's economic and social conditions. Lack of sensitivity towards gender differences leads to inadequate planning, implementation, and evaluation of programmes. Issues related to the status of women and their

full participation in development activities affect the achievement of strategic objectives. Thus, it is important to identify (and, if possible, measure) women's contribution as participants in, agents for, and beneficiaries of programme objectives. In addition to the need for gender-disaggregation of existing data, proponents of women's initiatives require new indicators and models in order to grasp the complexities, monitor the trends, and anticipate future outcomes resulting from the rapidly changing circumstances of women's lives. The limitations of existing data sources regarding women's labour force participation and patterns of family structure and formation are particularly relevant.

The "invisibility" of women workers in labour statistics is well established. A wide variety of labour relations are compressed into the four standard classifications: self-employed worker, employee, unpaid family worker, and wage worker. To understand the mechanisms of labour participation, we need data on the factors influencing women's control over economic decisions. For example, we need instead information regarding women's control over means of production such as land, raw materials, tools and workplaces. Women usually have little or no control over these factors, as their labour status is often determined by middlemen who own the equipment and contract the labour. Women are therefore often exploited by merchants or manufacturers who charge them excessive amounts for materials so their net income is less than it may appear for piece payments. Because of missing or inaccurate data, we have relatively few insights into women's control over proceeds of output or the income derived from work. Crude earnings are often misleading indicators of net disposable income. Women may receive very little net disposable income for themselves or for their children because of deductions made by other family members or intermediaries. Thus, when designing relevant policies and effective international assistance strategies focussed on women's income generation, we should focus not only on the relative invisibility of working women, but also on mechanisms to overcome the limitations and distortions inherent in conventional data collection and systems of data analysis regarding employment and income.

A second area of concern is the pattern and structure of female-headed households. Given the absence of consistent time-series data on family formation and structure, little is known about the determinants and prevalence of female headship. We can assume, however, that the incidence of female-headed or -maintained families is likely to increase as a result of many factors, including unabated adolescent fertility in some parts of the world, continuing age differences at marriage in other areas, increasing rates of marital disruption, changing attitudes and belief systems regarding families, and male and female migration.<sup>13</sup>

*Monitoring social, legal, and regulatory dimensions.* Women's low social status often begins at birth, when sons are preferred to daughters. Undervaluation of women's work and a perception of daughters as a social and economic liability influence a family's and a society's differential investments. Custom, as well as religious and civil laws in many countries, discriminate against girls and women, even where the national constitutions accord them equal rights. The most

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<sup>13</sup> McGowan, Lisa (Ed.) (1990), "Notes from the Seminar Series: The Determinants and Consequences of Female-headed Households," New York, NY: Population Council/International Center for Research on Women.

serious concerns include issues related to women's rights in marriage, inheritance, land and property ownership, employment, access to credit, and domestic violence.

In this context, especially in low-income countries, national or state laws and regulations have rarely been viewed as relevant or indeed necessary to support practical strategies for improving the economic conditions of women. The experience of the past decade serves to highlight the absence of a supportive legislative structure. Constraints that inhibit the economic and social rights of women have seldom been removed. Legal rights and measures that are supportive of women have not been adequately developed. Changes, when initiated, have usually remained as nonbinding social policy. In many countries, the existence of personal or customary laws continues to give legal validity to discriminatory practices and are a barrier to acceptance of a uniform legislative policy.

The failure to mobilise legislative, judicial, and regulatory reforms may be viewed as an indication of ineffective political action and lobbying on women's issues. Without lobbying power, organisation and access to legal assistance, it is unlikely that a supportive legal framework will be developed. Thus, the notion of empowerment through legal rights must be seen as a strategy for ensuring that women receive equitable treatment, especially in terms of employment and access to key social services. It is also a method of stimulating women's participation in development activities.

To increase awareness of rights and legal resources among both women and children and to move towards more effective use of legislation and improved compliance, the following specific measures are recommended:

- Better monitoring and enforcement of labour legislation and regulations to protect both working children and working women, especially pregnant women and those with infants and young children; full recognition of the special needs of low-income women who are also heads of households; legislative reform where necessary.
- Policy and legislative or regulatory reform to encourage, where appropriate, suitable day-care facilities at or near women's workplaces (including in markets and other informal work-sites), as well as child care combined with formal or non-formal educational opportunities for women.
- Improved monitoring and enforcement of laws on compulsory and free primary education; strong advocacy for the adoption of such laws, when necessary; efforts to minimise the indirect or hidden costs of basic education, including school materials, uniforms, and transportation.
- Legislative, regulatory and other pressures, such as social action litigation, where possible, to eliminate gender stereotyping, especially in school curricula and the mass media (including in commercial advertising), combined with affirmative action to make boys and men more aware of and prepared for their own childrearing responsibilities.
- Policy, legislative and other measures to encourage later marriage and child-bearing, especially where teenage pregnancy is a serious problem, including measures to promote what UNICEF describes in its *1992 State of the World's Children* report as the "responsible planning

of births”; in some countries, when necessary, special measures need to be taken to enforce existing laws concerning the minimum age of marriage.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there is a much stronger mandate to cooperate with governments and others in seeking compliance with these sorts of standards. An important element of the strategy to improve compliance and enforcement of this instrument is the reporting and monitoring process set up by this convention. The fact that this process is both mandatory and public (including encouragement of public scrutiny of official reports) provides a key opportunity which UNICEF, other concerned agencies, and NGOs should not neglect. For UNICEF it also represents a challenge to broaden the framework of the situation analysis and monitoring and evaluation processes associated with its regular country programmes.

This broadened approach should include support enabling governments and NGOs to review pertinent legislation relating to children and women in order to promote compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and with other relevant international laws and covenants.

Finally, the international labour conventions provide opportunities for better monitoring and enforcement of legal norms and regulations for the protection of women workers, with particular attention to the explicit and implicit deregulation of labour legislation in sectors dominated by women. Of special importance is the utilisation of the regulatory controls provided in ILO conventions and mechanisms to extend the scope and raise the standards of protective measures that favour working mothers with young children.

*Creating linkages: child care and women-in-development initiatives.* Whatever possibilities there may be for strengthening the ability of families to provide child care at home, the fact remains that the current level of services is highly inadequate. Moreover, the demand for non-maternal child care will continue to increase while current services may not only fail to expand but actually be reduced in some countries. In spite of this situation, there exists considerable experience regarding a variety of affordable quality programmes, formal and non-formal. What is needed, therefore, is the concerted will of governments, employers, and communities to implement and sustain these initiatives. In defining options, however, it is important to recognise that the majority of low-income women are employed outside the formal sector and are therefore little affected by legal statutes. Given the wide variation in women's work patterns and family structures, a range of complementary alternatives must be rigorously pursued. In measuring programme coverage, success must be seen as the sum of diverse, small-scale programmes that can respond to particular needs and circumstances.

Clearly, existing and new programmes need to find better ways to strengthen traditional patterns of care. When available, care by members of the extended family should be strengthened by providing caregivers with education, training and access to existing supportive services. However, it is recognised that traditional strategies, such as the removal of older siblings, most notably girls, from school to act as caregivers must be replaced. In addition, efforts to support mothers so they may stay in close contact with or closely supervise the care of their infants during the first year or two of life, while maintaining their ability to earn income, should receive greater attention. In

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<sup>14</sup> UNICEF (1992), *1992 State of the World's Children*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

addition to paid maternity leave (or cooperative maternity insurance) for women in formal sector jobs, improved marketing and incentives for home-based production should be developed for women in the informal sector.

Governments must play a role in defining and monitoring standards of quality control for both formal and informal child care initiatives. Poor-quality programmes with inadequate staff and facilities may have a negative impact on children and generally may not be utilised by women and their families despite their need for services. In addition, high-quality child care programmes simultaneously address the needs for care and development of the young child. Programmes must move beyond a custodial view and recognise the need to provide a comprehensive range of health, nutrition, and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children. Low-cost strategies for providing a mix of approaches are feasible.

Perhaps the most encouraging opportunities are those that incorporate a child development component into existing interventions designed to improve the overall status of women. For example, women-in-development initiatives designed to increase earning capacities have included a range of strategies such as application of "appropriate technology" to help decrease the time spent in domestic activities, development of credit schemes, implementation of training and education programmes, and provision of organisational assistance to women engaged in market activities. Both the scale and the success of these initiatives could be enhanced by incorporating components to address the child care needs of parents with young children.<sup>15</sup>

Another approach involves the development of alternative forms of child care in an "appropriate technology" framework. Recognising the need to relieve women from the burden of domestic chores, many appropriate technology projects have been supported. Of particular relevance are those initiatives that reduce the time spent in getting water, fetching firewood, and processing food. With the exception of the introduction of bottle-feeding, which is rarely beneficial to the young child and often dangerous, less consideration has been given to alternative "technologies" or forms of child care. Such an approach might concentrate on neighbourhood care in homes and the development of indigenous learning materials for both children and parents.

A second strategy is suggested by the possibility of developing credit schemes to support alternative child care initiatives. A home day-care programme in Colombia exemplified the opportunity for collaboration between credit schemes and the provision of adequate child care. In this programme, women are provided with credit, enabling them to make improvements in their homes, which are then used as home day-care locations.

In an effort to increase the quality of care provided through such programmes, a suggestion focuses on skill training programmes. A wide range of training programmes designed to increase the income-earning capacity of women has been implemented. While some effort has been made to upgrade traditional skills, many programmes have resisted reinforcing traditional activities and their accompanying low levels of prestige. As a result of this bias, child care training as a potential income-earning activity has been ignored. In addition, when such training does exist,

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<sup>15</sup> Landers, Cassie and Leonard, Ann (1992), "Women, Work, and Child Care," *UNICEF Staff Working Paper 10*, New York, NY: UNICEF Publications Division.

programmes have focused exclusively on children's needs with little attention given to the needs of women. These minimal short-term training schemes lead to jobs with "gratuities" well below the minimum salary. Better training gradually leading to improved rates of pay could have tremendous benefits for both women and children.

Finally, because of the powerful impact of education on women's lives, the benefits of women's literacy and education must be recognised. For example, higher levels of education are associated with decreased fertility rates, increased birth-spacing, and improved health and nutritional care of children. In the long term, improving women's educational opportunities may provide the most promising of all available strategies. Educational discrimination begins for many girls as early as the preschool period. Thus, efforts to attack disproportionate rates of illiteracy among women must include attention to the preparation of girls for primary school. It has been shown that early care and development programmes provide one opportunity for overcoming gender inequalities that are already in place at the time of school entry. In addition, one of the barriers to young girls' education relates to their care and nurturing of younger siblings. Innovative strategies, such as locating preschools in close proximity to primary school, should be seriously pursued.

To maximise and ensure positive benefits to both women and their children, these recommendations must be seen as complementary and reinforcing strategies. While poverty and work have not prevented women from contributing to child survival and development, clearly the quality of care from a child development perspective will be affected by illiteracy, economic pressure, and the stress of combining work with family responsibilities. Women's lack of skills and bargaining power clearly diminishes their capacity to provide the best quality care for their children and encourages the exploitation of young girls within and outside the home. Although different situations in distinct countries and cultures, which often reflect varying degrees of discrimination against women and the girl child, require careful analysis, the commonalities far outweigh the differences, and there is much to be gained by pursuing this topic on an international level, as well as on national and sub-national levels.

This article has been adapted from J. Himes, C. Landers, and J. Leslie (1992), *Women, Work, and Child Care, Innocenti Global Seminar Report*, and is available from UNICEF/ICDC, Piazza SS Annunziata, 12, 50122 Florence, Italy.

Working women's needs for adequate alternative child care are not being met. Informal care in the home, although preferred, is not sufficient to meet the demands of working women. A range of programming options that can provide adequate care at reasonable cost needs to be explored.

No one programme solution exists. Given the wide range of variation in women's work patterns and conditions, no one model can be sufficient. Therefore, the provision of child care on a large scale must be conceived of as the sum of diverse, small-scale programmes that are able to respond to particular needs and circumstances.

Strengthening traditional patterns of child care is a viable option. The care provided by extended family members or neighbours can be strengthened by providing caregivers with education, training, and access to existing support services. The flexibility, accountability, and affordability of supporting these informal strategies must not be underestimated. However, traditional strategies that remove older siblings, most notably girls, from school need to be replaced, so these youngsters are not deprived of the chance of an education.

Policies to support mothers direct care of the infant in the first year of life must be strengthened. The importance of breastfeeding for the health and development of the infant, as well as the infant's need for attachment to a consistent primary caregiver, is well known. Thus, social policies facilitating maternal care in the first year of life must be supported.

Child care programmes must simultaneously address both the care and the developmental needs of the young child. Programmes focusing on young children's learning potential must also respond to the need for child care. In addition, existing child care programmes must move beyond a custodial view and recognise the need to provide a developmentally appropriate environment for the children under their care.

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## *Programmes In Brief—The Intersecting Needs of Women and Their Children*

### *Ethiopia: Providing Child Care Within the Farmers' Cooperatives*

The Melka Oba Farmers Producers' Cooperative is located about 120 kilometres southeast of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city. Accessible by road all year round, the cooperative is situated on a plain flanked by hills, dissected by the Awash river flowing west to east. The region is hot and dry with very limited rainfall, making farming activities unreliable for subsistence. Except for fruit trees and a few shrubs, the land is completely deforested. As part of Ethiopia's land reform policy, the government resettled 192 farmers and their families in Melka Oba. They organised themselves as a producers' cooperative and began growing fruits and vegetables for the local

market. Cooperative members are divided into working teams to carry out farming activities: two teams in the orchard, two teams in cereal production, one team in growing vegetables, and two teams serving as sentinels against thieves and wild animals.

An assessment of the situation in Melka Oba prior to the start of the day care programme revealed that the women were overworked in comparison to the men. Their tasks on the farm and the housework left women little time for relaxation. No health services were available, and children lacked proper care. The community did not have a clean and safe water supply or environmental sanitation. Consequently, most children suffered from such common health problems as diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, conjunctivitis, malaria, and respiratory infections. Infant mortality rates were reported to be unusually high. As women received only 45 days leave after delivery, mothers went quickly back to work in the fields for the entire day. This practice resulted in a dramatic decrease in breastfeeding. Also, children were often neglected after their mothers resumed work in the fields. Although an elementary school was located about 6 kilometres away, the absence of a day care centre had forced the community to turn their eldest children into baby sitters instead of sending them to school.

In 1982 the situation of women and children in Melka Oba was brought to the attention of the Integrated Family Life Education Project (IFLE) when the cooperative requested assistance from the district administrators to establish a day care centre. IFLE is a semiautonomous agency supervised by the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and financed by UNICEF. The establishment of a creche and a kindergarten was considered an urgent need on Melka Oba, also, in part because a day-care centre could serve as entry point for later initiatives in child survival and the promotion of various social services.

The first phase of the project was to establish a day-care centre that would include a child development curriculum. The day-care centre started with 100 children. Children aged 45 days and older are cared for in the creche, and the kindergarten looks after children 4 to 6 years of age. The centre operates on a flexible schedule, trying as much as possible to coordinate with the working hours of the mothers. Mothers with infants are now able to visit the creche several times a day to breastfeed their babies. A typical day at the centre includes various indoor and outdoor activities. Daily lesson plans generally follow the national preschool curriculum, and the centre provides immunisation and health-care services. The establishment of the creche and kindergarten in Melka Oba was a great relief to parents and especially to working mothers. Production in the cooperative system has increased because women are better able to concentrate on their tasks while their children are adequately cared for.

In addition to providing a relatively healthy environment and a balanced diet, the day care experience is meeting children's developmental needs as well as stimulating their learning in all areas. This foundation provides for a smoother transition to and better performance in school. In fact, a critical problem faced by the community was the placement of children from the preschool in regular primary schools once they completed kindergarten. Because parents were anxious that their children continue their education beyond preschool, they put pressure on the Ministry of Education. As a result of these developments, an elementary school has now been established in Melka Oba. In addition, a functional literacy programme for adults has also been started.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from UNICEF/Ethiopia, P.O. Box 1169, Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

## *Colombia: From Housekeeping to Community Action*

The first women's clubs in Colombia, organised by the Coffee Growers' Federation Cafeteros focused on homemaking and nutrition. In 1972, Save The Children started working in Guadalupe, a warm mountain valley south of Bogota, in cooperation with the Cafeteros and the Peace Corps. Initially, communities were helped to build schools, aqueducts, and roads. A few years later, in 1976, Save The Children launched a women's programme in Guadalupe and Sibundoy, a fertile valley on the Ecuadorian border populated by two Indian groups. The women's clubs initiated their activities under the leadership of young women elected from community members.

Originally, the objectives of the women's programme were to strengthen financial management and organisational abilities. With local women in the leadership role, the women were willing to take control over their economic lives, and loan funds were established. Clubs then organised in regional associations that managed and operated loans to finance such activities as garden plots, a milk cow, home improvement, or small business operations. Progress has been steady but slow. Experience has demonstrated that the more profitable projects have been initiated by members having appropriate technical experience and training. Members of El Porvenir club in Sibundoy, for instance, have been able to use their craft and artisan experience to market their products and build a profitable handicraft business. A club in Ubaque that borrowed money to purchase a small herd of milk cows asked the government's adult training programme (SENA) for a course on making yogurt and cheese. The women launched their business without needing further loans, and it now provides employment for all the club members. The economic results of the women's programme must be assessed within the limitations of extremely poor rural settings, where people eke out a marginal life on the fringes of a cash economy. One of the benefits of the programme has been to create employment and income-generating activities for women. Four club stores in Sibundoy pay wages of approximately US\$40 per month to women who otherwise would have no income. But perhaps the most important results are less tangible—the ability of some club members to keep financial records, the smiling openness of those who hid their heads in shyness when the clubs were first organised, or the young men who now attend the club meetings with the young girls they are engaged to marry.

Apart from credit activities, the most common activity of the women's clubs is health education. All but a handful of the established clubs have carried out successful campaigns to promote boiled water, child weighing, vaccination, and training in child nutrition. Many of the clubs have small pharmacies, and the Public Health Service has trained members to sell and administer drugs. As three-fourths of the club members have children under age 15, the health and nutrition benefits to children from club activities are very important. The popularity of milk cows, the presence of home and club vegetable gardens in almost every hamlet with available land, the widespread use of the clubs for health education, and the increasing school attendance among children of club members are indicators of a broader impact. The women's programme has been

highly successful in a myriad of efforts. It has been able to integrate the activities of individual local clubs into larger associations while helping women tap into the training and resources provided by Save The Children and other agencies. Although long-term difficulties with training and transportation have continued to limit the achievements of the programme, the staff members have responded creatively with their limited means.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from Women's Livelihood Support Office, Save The Children, 54 Wilton Road, Westport, Connecticut 06880, USA.

### *Bangladesh: Cooperation and Discovery*

Bangladesh's 90 million people live, struggle, and die in a land that is both beautiful and disaster-prone. Eighty-five percent of the population live in villages characterised by poverty, malnutrition, disease, and lack of opportunities. The average life-expectancy is only 46 years, the adult literacy rate is estimated at 24 percent, and the population density is reaching about 1,675 persons per square mile. This difficult context for development is compounded with further cultural, social and economic constraints affecting women's situation in particular. Village communities are fatalistic and male-dominated and each woman is supposed to share her husband's fate. She is required to remain secluded in the family compound, or *hari*, with other family relatives. The fact that it is not acceptable to engage in activities outside the home restricts women's opportunities greatly. Bringing women into the mainstream of village and city life has been a priority of the government since 1971. Although ongoing efforts are promising, a gap still exists between advocacy and planning at the national level and at the village level. National and international private organisations work in the villages throughout the country to help bridge this gap. Save The Children has been working with women in Bangladesh since 1977. The ultimate goal of the women's programme is an expanded world for women—a world where they can venture outside their homes and into their villages. In this new world women can participate more fully in income-generating activities, benefiting themselves and their own families. At the inception of the programme in 1981, both women and men from the villages showed great resistance to joining programme activities. Specifically, they feared that the status of their families would be jeopardised if women participated in new activities outside the house. Men felt threatened and became suspicious that their authority would be taken away. Although these problems were not resolved at once, over time, women overcame their initial hesitancy. Also, men expressed less resistance as they became aware that the programme would help their wives and daughters bring home some extra income.

Following the first stage of group formation and building, project activities began. Each group at the village level became involved in the activities it desired, at the rate the group chose. Over a period of 4 years, this resulted in the establishment of a balanced and integrated programme for women in all villages. On the one hand, savings groups have become one of the most popular activities; these groups provide women with counseling, and access to funds and financial security in times of need and crisis, which is a crucial help in an environment where husbands often desert or divorce their wives. On the other hand, a total of 189 groups are engaged in income-generating projects, such as raising livestock, making rope, and cultivating and

processing rice. Savings group meetings provide an occasion for the introduction of other development activities, such as child care and health and nutrition education. Because land in the family compound is traditionally in the hands of women, they have always been interested in improving their home gardens. Maximising the use of this land for food production has become a major thrust of the women's programme. Through nutrition education, for instance, these gardens have turned into "nutrition gardens" where more vegetables are grown and used for the family's meals.

As the programme has developed, benefits have been felt immediately at the household level through increasing incomes, which women use to improve their families' condition. Male opposition has faded as men have witnessed women's achievements. The courage shown by this generation of women will surely be felt by the next. Today nearly 3,000 women participate in the programme actively. As a seed is nurtured and grows, so can woman's self-image. That self-image has grown to the point where many women believe they can do something to improve their condition—and they are doing it in large numbers.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from Women's Livelihood Support Office, Save. The Children, 54 Wilton Road, Westport, Connecticut 06880, USA.

### *Morocco: A Creche for Women Workers in Casablanca*

Casablanca is the largest city in Morocco and the most powerful economic centre in the country. Due to modern communication and transportation systems, Casablanca has developed rapidly and attracted new industries, commercial activities, and investment. However, while Casablanca has succeeded in attracting profitable business, it has also appealed to large numbers of migrants from the rural areas. Because of its size and anonymity, the city has also attracted unwed mothers seeking to avoid the censorship of cultural and religious traditions. In Morocco, as in the other nations of the Maghreb region, Islam is the religion of the state, and family law is regulated according to its principles. Therefore, according to Moroccan law, unmarried mothers and their children have no legal rights. Children of unwed mothers are not entitled to their father's surname, and if their mother is unknown, they may carry no name at all.

Terre des Hommes, a nongovernmental organisation that has operated in Casablanca since 1983, established a number of day care centres/creches for single or divorced mothers and widows with young children. The first visit to the centre is meant to help mothers regain their self-confidence and to encourage the belief that despite their difficult position, they can keep their children and care for them. Women are encouraged and supported in their search for a safe place to live and a stable job. Their children, in turn, are admitted to one of the sections of the centre, according to their age and level of psychomotor development. The day care centre in Casablanca serves children from birth to 7 years of age. It includes a baby ward for 15 children (0 to 18 months), an infant ward for 20 children (18 months to 3 years), and two children's wards for 50 children (3 to 5 and 6 to 7 years). Activities at the centre are aimed at enhancing the psychological, social and motor development of children. For children over 6 years, most activities are especially designed to provide them with the necessary tools to start primary school. Since the majority of the

mothers lack sufficient means and time to prepare meals, children's nutritional needs are mostly met at the centre.

The centre also offers some services to the 70 mothers whose children attend the creche. For most of these women, the centre represents a quick stop on their daily way between home and work. However, all too often these women lead isolated lives both at home and at work. As a result, they express an enormous need to confide in someone, to talk about their problems, and to receive some support. Groups have been organised at the centre to provide support and basic training that may help women get better-paid jobs.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from Terre des Hommes, 25 Bis, Bd Abdellatif ben, Kaddour Quartier Racine, Casablanca, Morocco.

### *Sri Lanka: Caring for Children at the Workplace*

Strong traditions of social welfare in Sri Lanka have given the island very high indicators of physical well-being. Impressive national statistics, however, have tended to hide the existence of deprived pockets within the population. Perhaps the most deprived group—economically, politically, and socially—has been plantation labour, the descendants of Indian immigrants brought to work on Sri Lankan plantations in the mid-19th century. Based on the cultivation of tea, rubber, and coconut, the plantation system is dominant in the country's economy. It is the biggest contributor to the GNP, the biggest earner of foreign currency, and largest employer.

With the switch to tea cultivation, the numbers and proportion of women on the estates increased rapidly. The proportionate numbers of children on estates also increased, and both women and children became a good source of cheap, docile labour. In the early 1980s women formed 27 percent of the total resident estate population and over 50 percent of the work force; children amounted to 46 percent of the resident population, whereas the country's proportion of children under 14 is 36 percent.

Children between ages 14 and 16 are legally part of the plantation labour force; they are used for weeding and receive a special children's rate of pay. However, young children help their mothers in plucking tea, and the increased output is registered as part of their mothers' work. Children, especially girls, also perform other household tasks, and it is their unpaid domestic labour that often enables their mothers to go out to work. In the 19th century, women's plantation wages were 25 percent lower than men's. What is more striking is that over the decades, this proportion has hardly changed. Even today, the estate women and children remain at the bottom rung in terms of quality of life. An estate woman works from 7:30 am until 4:30 pm. On occasion, in the "flush" season, she starts plucking work at 6:00 am if there is a good crop. But it has been estimated that with her labour in the home as well as on the plantation, she works 18 hours daily. The tasks of childbearing and child care fall on these overburdened workers. The estate women traditionally eat whatever remains after the men and children have been fed. It is therefore not surprising that such overworked and undernourished mothers give birth to weak babies or that the rates of infant and maternal mortality on estates are higher than in the rest of the country.

In 1977, UNICEF initiated a national programme aimed at improving the facilities and services of existing creches in the estates. As a result of the UNICEF programme, approximately 800 creches have been upgraded, and creche attendants have been appointed and provided with basic training in the care and nurture of infants. These caregivers are now equipped adequately to look after the children and to advise mothers coming to the creche on such matters as nutrition, hygiene, and general health matters.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from UNICEF/Sri Lanka, P.O. Box 143, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

### *Brazil: Income-Generation for Women in the Informal Sector*

This programme represents UNICEF's attempt to respond to the economic needs of women in Northeastern Brazil who had been victims of unemployment and declining living standards as a result of the harsh economic crisis over the 1980s. Seventy percent of the 42 million population of the Northeast live in poverty, and the weak economies of the regional cities have not been able to absorb the massive flow of migrants driven out of their rural towns by drought and conflicts.

Women are among the most affected groups in the region and many are forced to look for means of survival in the informal sector of the economy. The introduction of this project is an important institutional response to the needs of women who are involved in economic activities within the informal sector. The project covers 3 of the 9 Northeast state capitals—Salvador, Sao Luis, and Natal— and has established local nongovernmental institutions that provide credit, training, and advisory services in each city. In an effort to expand the scope of the programme within the region, UNICEF used a portion of the programme funds to provide technical assistance to the women's income-generation initiative of the Child Pastoral Programme (CPP). The CPP is a nationwide plan of the Brazilian Catholic Church that has created a grassroots network of volunteer community leaders. The network has been highly effective in reaching some of the poorest and most isolated communities in the interior of Northeast Brazil. Other activities of the CPP include maternal and child health and nutrition education. With funding from the Brazilian government, the programme supports productive activities by women's groups by providing interest-free loans with flexible repayment schedules.

In December 1990 a thorough evaluation of the programme in Salvador, Sao Luis, and Natal showed that most beneficiaries had been able to raise their incomes and start their own business as a result of the project's assistance. Each enterprise received a credit of US\$550, and only 1 percent of outstanding loans are delaying payment. During the period of participation in the project, the overall real increase in revenues for the small enterprises ranged from an average of 47 percent in Salvador to 177 percent in Sao Luis, and an average of 28 percent of the participants benefited from stabler employment.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from UNICEF/Brazil, Edificio Seguradoras, 13 andar, Bancario Sul, 70072 Brasilia DF, Brazil.

## *Sudan: The Integrated Women's Development Programme*

The Kordofan region in central Sudan was seriously hit by the major drought that affected the country in 1984 to 1985. The region is characterised by remote villages whose population lives under conditions of extreme poverty. The economy of the Kordofan region is not completely monetised, and its people are largely integrated into a barter system. Although land is not scarce, it is barely productive. Even poor women have easy access to the land and are intensively involved in farming. Their role in subsistence agriculture is increasingly important because of high rates of male migration during drought and famine. The Integrated Women's Development Programme (IWDP) was initiated in 1987 and sponsored by UNICEF, the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, the Ministry of Education, and the Regional Cooperative Administration. The objective of the IWDP is to improve the household food security by increasing women's access to productive resources and skills. By 1990 the project covered 156 villages, and there were approximately 30 women participating in each village.

Three of the projects that are part of the programme have been particularly successful. First, the plan for the support of the *jubraka*, the traditional homestead farming; wherein women in the region traditionally produce staples, legumes, and vegetables on a plot near their home. The *jubraka* play an increasingly important role in the maintenance of the household food security during and after the drought. The project therefore consisted in skill training and introducing of simple technology such as the provision of hand-pumps, to increase the global productivity of the *jubraka*. Second, is the project directed at the improvement of the traditional cheese-making industry. Nomad women, who are traditionally responsible for the milk production from their goats and cattle, responded positively to this initiative which also included skill training activities. Third, is the restocking project aimed at reestablishing women's herds of goats, which had been decimated during the 1984 to 1985 drought. Each beneficiary, in this case, received two female goats and is expected to repay two female offspring within two years. This project addresses a resource controlled by women traditionally and shows good potential for sustainability.

The IWDP represents a progressive and innovative initiative that should be appreciated for its flexibility and ability to meet women's needs. The strength of the specific projects within the programme is built upon the specific conditions provided by the environment, the traditional occupations of women, and their access to productive resources. This programme also exemplifies an alternative approach to the support of women's traditional productive roles within subsistence economies where monetary interventions are not yet relevant. Finally, it is particularly important to point out that the IWDP departs from relief-oriented approaches even in areas prone to natural calamities.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from UNICEF, Women's Section, Programme Division, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

## *Philippines: Protecting the Legal Rights of Migrant Women Workers*

A unique feature of Philippine employment patterns is the increasing number of Filipinos working overseas, which has grown from 314,284 in 1982 to 449,271 in 1987. In 1987, 40 percent of overseas contract workers were women, who dominate the entertainment, office work, and service sectors. This upsurge is indicative of the difficulties women face in finding jobs in the domestic economy. The very high incidence of women employed as domestic help abroad, most of whom have college education, highlights the tremendous pressures on women to find employment. Moreover, if they are married, the repercussions fall on their families.

Policy measures taken to address the employment problem of women aim at reducing the unemployment rate of the female labour force, creating income-generating opportunities for women, and providing equal opportunities for women in all endeavours. The Comprehensive Employment Development Programme (CEDP), launched by the government in 1986, was largely responsible for the unemployment rate drop from 11.8 percent in 1986 to 11.2 percent in 1987. Small-scale community projects, such as construction of school buildings, water supply projects, and farm-to-market roads, have been given support and funding. The programme's major elements have now been institutionalised. These include tapping of the population in areas where projects are to be implemented, opening up the bidding process to the public, and close project monitoring with the help of nongovernmental organisations.

Three measures were adopted by the Department of Labour and Employment to safeguard the rights and protect overseas women workers from employer or recruitment abuses: the model contract, or contract review; the pre-departure orientation seminar, providing information on the host country; and the Labour Attache Office maintained by Philippine embassies in major labour-importing countries to help workers abroad find solutions to their problems. At home, the Bureau of Women and Minors, in turn, establishes day-care centres, women's welfare facilities, and training centres for women to acquire skills and training. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme redistributes lands to tenant-farmers, and provides such support services as transfer of technology, irrigation, credit facilities, marketing assistance, rural infrastructure, and training.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from the Department of Labour and Employment, General Luna Street (corner Muralia Street), Intramuros, Manila, Philippines.

## *Venezuela: An Unconventional Form of Child Care*

During the last few years, the difficult social and economic situation in Venezuela has dramatically affected the low-income classes and poor households. In response to a deteriorating situation, in 1989 the Venezuelan government started developing the National Plan to Fight Poverty, which aimed at solving the needs of the poorest sectors. As part of the new social policy of the country, the government coordinated the implementation of a series of programmes oriented towards improving globally the attention and care of children. Great emphasis was then

placed upon the plan for massive extension of the Day Care Homes Programme sponsored by the Ministry of the Family.

The day-care homes are an unconventional form of child care created in 1973. The approach arises from a solution that working mothers had traditionally resorted to in many urban settings. It consisted of leaving their children in neighbour's homes while they were working outside the house. From the beginning, the programme was satisfactorily implemented. The programme's fundamental objective is to provide child care services on a daily basis to low-income homes with children from 0 to 6 years of age. Comprehensive care is provided for children in the areas of education, health, nutrition, affection, and recreation while their parents are at work.

The programme operates in conventional houses equipped to provide adequate attention to groups of up to eight preschool-aged children. A volunteer "caretaker-mother" is present in the house every day and tends a group of children who live in nearby areas. She is responsible for providing children with a clean, secure, and pleasant environment. The children arrive at the home early in the morning and, depending on the needs of their families, stay there a few hours or the whole day. The national government is directly responsible for the coordination and financing of the programme through the Ministry of the Family. The Ministry formulates the guidelines of the programme and supervises the implementation and operation of the homes. Also, the Ministry coordinates the participation of different public and private institutions that provide technical and financial support to ensure that the houses meet the basic hygienic and safety requirements. Since 1989, when the programme initiated its expansion, the number of day care homes has increased considerably. Essential support to this process has been given by nongovernmental organisations as well as urban communities themselves. By the end of 1990, there were 10,793 day care homes and 731 multi-day-care homes serving 101,986 children from low-income families.

Further information about this programme may be obtained from the Legislative Commission for Women's Rights, National Congress, Avenida Universidad (esq. San Francisco), Edificio Centro Mercantil, Piso 1-Oficina 1-5, Caracas, Venezuela.

### *Suggested Readings*

***Women, Demographic Change, and Economic Growth in Asia, the Near East, and Eastern Europe: Conference Proceedings.*** US Agency for International Development (1990).

This series of papers was developed to assist agencies in rethinking their policies and programmes as they might directly or indirectly affect women's participation and family-planning programme performance. Topics include income and fertility, female education, women and the law, and women in agricultural economics. The papers present lessons learnt from the advanced developing countries and from women's participation in the economies of Eastern Europe. This publication and a list of additional publications can be requested from the Publications Manager, Office of Women in Development, US Agency for International Development, Room 3725A NS, Washington, DC, 20523-0041, USA.

*Working Towards Change*. Workers' Educational Association (1987).

This package has been designed to help tutors develop their own practice in women's education on the basis of their particular skills and interests. It can be used individually or in groups as part of a training programme and presents general issues related to managing groups as well as suggestions for courses on specific women's topics. This package is available from the Community Education Development Centre, Lyng Hall, Blackberry Lane, Coventry CV2 3JS, United Kingdom. Tel: (203) 638670 Fax: (203) 681161. Price: £5.95.

SEEDS: Supporting Women's Work in the Third World. Edited by Ann Leonard (1989).

Seeds is a collection of eight portraits of unique development projects organised by and for women in the developing world. The projects were specifically designed to involve women in decision-making and income-generating activities. Hence, they have been training grounds for leadership and provide useful models for study and action. The authors summarise obstacles, accomplishments, and especially workable strategies for organisation and change. The publication is available in English from The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 311 East 94th Street, New York, NY 10128, USA. Tel: (212) 620-3182. Price: US\$29.95.

*Women, Work, and Child Welfare in the Third World*. Edited by Joanne Leslie and Michael Paolisso (1989).

In the last decade the survival and healthy development of children and the social and economic role of women have received increasing attention. The primary focus of those concerned with issues related to women in development has been on ways to enhance women's economic opportunities. This has led to a tendency to either de-emphasise women's child care responsibilities or assume that substitute caregivers can provide equally good care. Similarly, those concerned with child survival and development have tended to view women primarily as instruments for producing healthy children, minimising the opportunity costs of women's time and the genuine need for many mothers to earn income during the years they are raising children. This book represents one of the first efforts to bring together the work of those interested in studying simultaneously women's roles and child welfare in the Third World. The case studies included illustrate the multifaceted nature of women's work and child welfare as well as the benefits of utilising a variety of research approaches and methodologies. This publication is available from Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, CO 80301, USA.

*Greater Expectations*. Tricia Szirom and Sue Dyson (1987).

The aim of activities and strategies described in this book is to help girls and young women become more able to take control of their own lives, through raising their awareness and self-esteem and building skills and confidence. The activities, covering a range of topics including health, education, and employment, are clearly outlined and well-resourced with relevant materials. This publication is available from the Community Education Development Centre,

Lyng Hall, Blackberry Lane, Coventry CV2 3JS, United Kingdom. Tel: (203) 638670. Fax: (203) 681161.

Women, Poverty and Resources. Ponna Wignaraja (1990).

Over the past decade, both women's movements and national policy-makers in South Asia and elsewhere have begun to recognise the crucial linkage between gender and equity in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. That poor women have the least access to basic needs is being increasingly realised both within the family and outside it. Based on extensive field experience, the author outlines an alternative approach for alleviating poverty that affects rural and urban women, and argues that the solution lies in knowledge and collective action by women's groups using local resources primarily. As a result of a thorough search for development alternatives, this book goes beyond a mere critique to the conventional frameworks of development action and thinking, and it provides not only elements of an alternative theory but also methodology for participatory action. This book is available from Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 32 M-Block Market, Greater Kailash I, New Delhi, 110048, India.

The following books, documents, and papers on the subject of women, work, and child care may also be of interest.

*The Vulnerability of Female-Headed Households: Policy Questions and Options for Latin America and The Caribbean.* Mayra Buvinic (1990). Economic Commission for Latin America, Santiago, Chile.

*Care and Child Nutrition.* Patricia Engle (1992). UNICEF/Nutrition Section, New York, NY, USA.

*Women on Their Own: Global Patterns of Female Headship.* Nancy Folbre (1991). The Population Council/ICRW, Washington, DC, USA.

*Women's Work and Social Support for Childcare in the Third World.* Susan Joeques (1987). The Population Council/ICRW, Washington, DC, USA.

*Parental Leave and Child Care.* Edited by J. Hyde, et al. (1991). Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

*Women, Work and the Need for Child Care.* Cassie Landers and Ann Leonard (1992). UNICEF, Staff Working Paper 10, New York, NY, USA.

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*Early Child Development (Innocenti Global Seminar).* Cassie Landers (1989). UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, Italy.

The World's Women, 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics. United Nations (1991). New York, NY, USA.

*Child Care: An Annotated Bibliography*. International Labour Organisation (1990). International Labour Bibliography No. 5, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland.

*Child Care Services for Working Parents*. Marie-Claire Seguret (1981). International Labour Review (120) 6, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland.

*Women—A World Survey*. Ruth Sivard (1987). World Priorities, Washington, DC, USA.

*Programme Guidelines Volume 5, Early Childhood Development*. UNICEF (1989). UNICEF Programme Division, New York, NY, USA.

*Maternal Mortality, A Global Factbook*. World Health Organisation (1991). Division of Family Health, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland.

The following documents may be obtained through the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) 1717 Massachusetts Ave., N.W, Suite 302, Washington, D.C.20036. Tel: (202) 797-0007. Fax: (202) 797-0020.

*Women's Ventures: Assistance to the Informal Sector in Latin America* edited by Marguerite Berger and Mayra Buvinic (1990).

*Sex Differences in Access to a Small Enterprise Development Fund in Peru* by Mayra Buvinic and Marguerite Berger, (1990).

*Women's Roles in Maintaining Households: Poverty and Gender Inequality in Ghana* by Cynthia Lloyd and Anastasia J. Brandon (1991).

*The Determinants and Consequences of Female-Headed Households* edited by Lisa McGowan (1990).

*Women in Agriculture: What Development Can Do* by Mayra Buvinic and Rekha Mehra (1990).

*Poverty and Progress in the Third World* by Mayra Buvinic and Sally W. Yudelman (1989), available in English and Spanish.

### ***Information Sources***

The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) is at the centre of efforts to eliminate traditional practices that are detrimental to health. Working with 21 African national committees and counterparts, IAC sponsors initiatives directed at reducing certain traditional practices concerning women, such as, genital mutilation,

nutritional taboos, forced feeding, and early childhood marriage. The IAC was created in 1984 and a 10-year Plan of Action was developed to underline IAC's commitment to collaboration in the effort to promote safe motherhood. IAC has recently produced a training and information campaign package to educate village women about the harmful effects of many traditional practices. The training package is available in French and English from Inter-African Committee on Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, 147 rue de Lausanne, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: (41 22) 731 24 20/732 08 21. Fax: (41 22) 738 18 23 or IAC c/o Economic Commission for Africa/ATRCW, P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Tel: (25 11) 51 72 00. Fax: (25 11) 51 46 82.

The Upper Midwest Women's History Centre has started a programme on development education. The programme goals are

- To give workshops on how to integrate women's perspectives into development education.
- To disseminate women and development curriculum appropriate for secondary to adult-level students.
- To set up a network of educators committed to development education with an emphasis on women and development issues.

The programme also includes three instructional units, namely the adult-level, the introductory instructional, and other area-studies instructional unit. Each unit focuses on the concerns and contributions of women in contemporary Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The units have been pilot taught and evaluated by scholars and readers from the world areas under consideration. For further information, please contact Upper Midwest Women's History Centre, Central Community Centre, 6300 Walker Street, St. Louis Park, MN 55416, USA. Tel: (612) 925-3632.

The International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC) was established as a follow-up to the International Women's Year Tribune in Mexico, 1975. In attempting to respond to requests for information and assistance from many of the 6,000 women who had attended the conference in Mexico, IWTC has grown into a communication and technical service for more than 16,000 women in 160 countries. IWTC seeks to ensure that women have the information, training, technology, and tools with which to become active participants of women-oriented development programmes, policies, and projects. IWTC also publishes *The Tribune*, a quarterly newsletter, available in English, French, and Spanish. Further information may be obtained from the International Women's Tribune Centre, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 687-8633; Fax: (212) 661-2704.

The Women and Development Programme (WDP) at the Commonwealth Secretariat assists Commonwealth governments to advance the interests of women through training programmes, and the exchange of experience, research, and information. The WDP, which was initiated in 1980, acts as a focal point for meeting the needs and priorities of Commonwealth women and their governments and for identifying key areas of action. The WDP is committed to involving women in policy-making and decision-making processes, particularly in the mainstream development of their countries. Information about the WDP's activities is distributed through

*Link-in*, a quarterly newsletter published in English. Further information about the WDP may be obtained from the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, United Kingdom. Tel: (44-71) 839 3411. Fax: (44-71) 930 0827.

The Women and Infant Nutrition Support Project (WINS) assists developing countries in their efforts to improve infant feeding practices and reduce malnutrition in women and young children. With support from the United States Agency for International Development, the project provides a range of services to countries that are implementing projects in nutrition and primary health care. In order to promote sound growth and development, the WINS Project addresses the entire continuum of nutritional needs from birth through 3 years of age. WINS also concentrates on meeting the nutritional needs of women before and during pregnancy and lactation and on supporting women and families to meet the nutritional needs of their children.

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), established in 1976, works to improve the economic, health, and social status of women in developing countries worldwide. Focusing on the dual economic and family responsibilities of most women in the developing nations, ICRW's programmes attempt to influence development planning and policy to ensure that development intervention enhances women's earning power, strengthens their participation in the economy, expands their contribution to economic development, and improves their health and social status. ICRW provides technical services to development agencies in the design and evaluation of development projects. The Centre also sponsors a fellowship programme for women from the developing world who are development specialists or researchers. Detailed information about the ICRW's activities, programmes, and publications may be obtained from International Center for Research on Women, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 302, Washington, DC 20036, USA. Tel: (202) 797-0007. Fax: (202) 797-0020.

Save The Children has recently established a Women's Livelihood Support Office in order to facilitate the organisation's increased commitment to women's economic productivity. The new office, based at the headquarters of Save The Children in the United States, works across sectors to help field offices develop, test, and document strategies that support women's livelihoods and have a positive impact on their efforts to meet the needs of their children. Further information about Save The Children's women's programmes and projects may be obtained from Save The Children, 54 Wilton Road, Westport, CT 06880, USA. Tel: (203) 221-4000.

The following councils, departments, commissions, and semi-autonomous organisations within the United Nations may provide information on women's issues:

- **UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**, UNDP, 1 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 906-5000.
- **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, Special Unit for Women, Population, and Development, 220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017-5880, USA. Tel: (212) 297-5141.
- **United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)**, Cesar Nicolas Penson 102-A, Santo Domingo 21747, Dominican Republic. Tel: (809) 685-2111.

- **UNICEF**, Women's Section, Programme Division, 3 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 326-7000.
- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**, Working Conditions Department, 4 route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Tel: (41-22) 799-6111.
- **Commission on the Status of Women**, UN Headquarters, S-2977E, New York, NY 10017, USA. Tel: (212) 963-5734.

Additional information may be obtained from the following organisations:

- **ISIS**, Casilla de Correos 2067, Leon 1735, Correo Central, Santiago, Chile. Tel: (56-2) 490-271.
- **SEMNET**, Raga Endsons Building, P.O. Box 54562, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (254-2) 744-997.
- **Asia and Pacific Development Centre**, Women-in-Development Programme, Tesiaran Duta, P.O. Box 12224, 50770 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- **Interamerican Commission of Women**, Organisation of American States (OAS), 1889 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, USA. Tel: (202) 458-6084.
- **Interamerican Foundation**, Women-in-Development Programme, 1515 Wilson Boulevard, 5th Floor, Rosslyn, VA 22209, USA. Tel: (703) 841-3800.
- **United States Agency for International Development**, Women-in-Development Section, Bureau for Science & Technology, Department of State, Washington, DC 20523--1815, USA. Tel: (202) 647-3992.
- **The Population Council**, One Dag Hammarksjold Plaza, New York, NY 10117, USA. Tel: (212) 339-0500.

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