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# FOCUS



UNRISD

No. 2, September 1996

## on integrating gender into the politics of development

Since the first issue of FOCUS, the UNRISD/UNDP project, Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives, has moved into its challenging phase of attempting to make an impact at the policy level through research on issues that are relevant to national policy agendas. The national workshops sponsored by the project provided an exciting opportunity for exchange between gender researchers/activists and policy makers on how gender issues impact on and are affected by macro-economic agendas. To sustain these dialogues, project steering committees have been established in the participating countries to guide the project's research programme and to ensure that its findings are fed into the policy-making process. This issue of FOCUS reports on progress made thus far in the project and highlights some of its forthcoming events. □

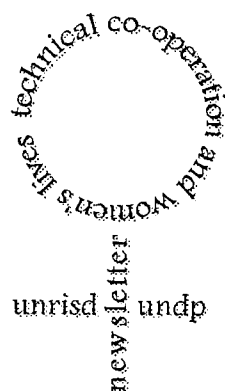


Panos Pictures/Heldur Nelocny

*Construction worker at the Bai Bang Paper Mill, Vinh Phu Province.*

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## unrisd

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous agency that engages in multi-disciplinary research on the social dimensions of contemporary problems affecting development. Its work is guided by the conviction that, for effective development policies to be formulated, an understanding of the social and political context is crucial. Working through an extensive network of national research centres, UNRISD aims to promote original research and strengthen research capacity in developing countries.



## Project overview

The Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives project, funded by UNDP and implemented by UNRISD, aims to strengthen the capacity of national researchers to analyse the way in which macro-economic policies impact on gender inequalities and to feed their findings into the policy formulation process. To realize these objectives at the country level, the project seeks to initiate debate and consultation — "policy dialogue" — among gender researchers, representatives of civil society and policy-makers from mainline economic ministries. In order to sustain and inform these debates, the project sponsors research on the gender dimensions of key macro-economic policy concerns.

Initiated in September 1992, the first phase of the project undertook a critical review of the way in which gender issues have been taken up by different policy-making institutions — including multilateral and bilateral agencies and national governments. The second phase of the project, completed in mid-1996, involved a series of national workshops that sought to initiate a process of dialogue between gender researchers/advocates and national policy makers in order to bring selected areas of macro-economic policy under gender scrutiny. The third phase of the project — the main research component designed to sustain the policy dialogues initiated at the national workshops — is now well underway in all participating countries. An international workshop planned for late 1996 will provide a critical and comparative assessment of the project's efforts to gender macro-economic policy.

Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives  
an  
UNRISD/UNDP Policy-Oriented Research Project  
INT/92/675/A/01

Its research themes include The Challenge of Rebuilding Wartorn Societies; Integrating Gender into Development Policy; Volunteer Action and Local Democracy: A Partnership for a Better Urban Future; Environment, Sustainable Development and Social Change; Crisis, Adjustment and Social Change; Participation and Changes in Property Relations in Communist and Post-Communist Societies; Ethnic Conflict and Development; Political Violence and Social Movements; and Socio-Economic and Political Consequences of the International Trade in Illicit Drugs. UNRISD research projects focused on the 1995 World Summit for Social Development included Rethinking Social Development in the 1990s; Economic Restructuring and Social Policy; Ethnic Diversity and Public Policies; and Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban Dimension.



## Letter from Dharam Ghai

Director of UNRISD

The central objective of the project on Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives is to enhance the gender sensitivity of development policies, with a particular focus on macro-economic policies. To achieve this objective, the project has attempted to collate existing knowledge in appropriate forms, generate new knowledge through field investigations, strengthen national expertise, and initiate policy dialogue among government officials, gender specialists and representatives of civil society organizations and development agencies. The past year has seen notable progress on all these fronts. Several Occasional Papers, synthesizing knowledge in some key policy areas, were published and distributed world-wide. They are being used increasingly in university teaching and in training courses for officials. The project organized two very well attended workshops during the Fourth World Conference on Women, thus continuing the Institute's policy of making substantive contributions to major world conferences.

National workshops — a key component of the policy dialogues — have been held in all the project countries. They were preceded by a review of research and policy in selected areas. They are being followed by field level investigations to generate new knowledge on issues identified by the

policy workshops. The results of this research will form the basis of further in-depth discussions among the interested groups with a view to reorienting existing programmes and policies to promote efficiency and gender equity. The entire process has benefitted from the advice of experienced gender consultants provided by the project to reinforce national expertise.

The forthcoming international workshop in Dhaka provides a timely opportunity for reflection on the project's methods and findings by researchers, activists, policy makers and donor agencies. In view of the intensified efforts in the aftermath of the Beijing Conference to integrate gender concerns into macro-policy formulation and analysis, the workshop should also provide a much-needed forum for discussion on progress made thus far and for devising strategies to tackle the remaining obstacles. □

# Wage Discrimination in Industry

Following up on themes raised in the background paper prepared by Saad Belghazi, debate at the workshop focused on female employment and the international competitive advantage of Moroccan manufacturing. Two main points emerging from Belghazi's research served to stimulate discussion throughout the day. First, on the basis of estimates of the level and correlates of pay discrimination in urban enterprises in Morocco, he has found that, while the manufacturing sector has been able to attract female labour, there is a marked gender wage gap of 41.2 per cent overall. In other words, if one were to take the "average" male worker, and to change only one of his labour attributes — his gender — this would lead to a 41.2 per cent reduction of his wage. Conversely, a typical woman worker would experience a wage increase of at least 41.2 per cent should her gender change to male. Perhaps one of the most significant findings of the research is that the gender wage gap cannot be explained away by educational differences. Overall, the average educational level of the female labour force is in fact higher than

that of the male workforce. The research shows that women holding high level degrees and middle management diplomas are strongly discriminated against in the urban labour force.

♦ ♦ ♦

## National Workshop: Women's Employment and Moroccan Competitive Advantage

26 July 1995

Rabat, Morocco

♦ ♦ ♦

Second, the research challenges the view that the decline in international competitive advantage in Moroccan manufacturing is due to the fact that wages are too high. It suggests instead that the real causes of the fall in competitiveness can be found in the dilution of trade preferences in the European Union. This leads Belghazi to put forward the hypothesis that competitiveness could be improved by rises in wages, because wage rises should prompt producers to make productivity improvements. As Susan Joeques put it, the research "provides

an important new argument, hinging on the determinants of productivity growth, indicating that promotion of wage equity is not only a desirable social goal but will make a positive contribution to export competitiveness and national economic growth in Morocco".

The findings of the paper provoked animated debate across the floor, with contributions from all sections of opinion. This can be attributed in part to the fact that the opportunity to discuss the gender dimensions of economic policies was a novel experience in Morocco — in the past, questions of gender equity have tended to be discussed mainly as human rights issues. Representatives from women's NGOs, however, insisted upon the importance of keeping the study in perspective, arguing that labour market issues were only part of a wider pattern of gender discrimination throughout Moroccan society. Participants agreed that there was a pressing need for further research on the substantive issues raised during the discussions, and immediately after the workshop a National Steering Committee was formed to guide follow-up activities and Phase 3 research in Morocco (see pages 5-6).

The workshop was jointly hosted by the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Aziz Belal (CERAB), Rabat, and UNRISD. The Bureau of Statistics provided the venue for the workshop. □

Report on Phase 3 Activities:

# Female Employment and Industrial Models

One of the key concerns that brought together the wide range of participants at the CERAB/ UNRISD workshop held in July 1995 (see page 4) was the apparent decline in the country's export prospects associated with loss of market share in the European Union, and its adverse employment outcomes.

fully achieved in the 1980s and the ability of the economy to generate a sufficient number of jobs to absorb new entrants to the labour force. There is much debate in Morocco as to the causes of the recent fall-off in the growth of exports, and suggestions that, for example, real wage reductions — similar to those

This raises the spectre of further intensification of gender differentials in wages — an area that was quantitatively explored in the background paper for the national workshop. It is thus not surprising that both policy makers and women's groups (concerned about the prospects and conditions of women's work in the modern sector) have shown interest in the follow-up research (Phase 3), which aims to bring new information and analysis to bear on these issues.

The research, which is being carried out by CERAB, explores two interrelated sets of issues. First, it seeks to show the significance of organizational (factory-level) and socio-cultural factors contributing to the creation of different occupational structures (division of labour, promotion and training prospects, wage levels, and so on) for male and female workers. Underpinning the research is the view that female subordination in the factory is not solely created by the world outside (education, training, domestic responsibilities, familial ideologies), but



*Panelists, National Workshop, Rabat, 26 July 1995*

This trend puts in doubt the national economic growth strategy that Morocco seemed to have success-

experienced in recent years in domestically oriented industries — may need to be brought about.

that there are concrete processes within the world of work itself that push male and female workers into different "career paths". The analysis will be based on information obtained through: a) structured and unstructured interviews with samples of employers and employees (both male and female) drawn from enterprises in the textile/clothing sector (carpets, knitwear and garments sub-sectors); b) in-depth case studies to construct the life histories of a selected number of female employees; and c) participant observation methods in the factories (where possible).

The second aim of the research is to explore the relation between models of industrial relations (and their wage structures) on the one hand, and export competitiveness on the other. The argument being made hinges on a different interpretation of the significance of wages to export competitiveness — one that sees wages not as a fixed, absolute component of production costs but as a functional factor that influences production methods and productivity. In other words, the hypothesis being tested is that low wages and hierarchical industrial models encourage low productivity. The research project is exploring this hypothesis focusing on the textile/clothing sector and using official statistics from both international (UNCTAD) and national (Ministry of Trade) data bases.

The field research should be completed by August 1996, and the preliminary research reports are expected by autumn 1996. CERAB/UNRISD will disseminate the findings of the research through a number of media: the project's National Steering Committee, which includes policy makers, trade unionists and researchers; a national workshop (provisionally scheduled for October 1996); and national written media (CERAB journal, selected weeklies). The research team will also participate in the international workshop that is being organized by UNRISD/CPD in Dhaka, 26-28 November 1996 (see page 24). □



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## The CERAB research team meets with industrial entrepreneurs

**Rabat, 12 June 1996**

*Upon the invitation of CERAB and the project co-ordinator, Rabea Naciri, an informal meeting was held on 12 June 1996 between the members of the Moroccan research team and six industrial entrepreneurs representing the carpet, garments and knitwear industries. The members of the research team explained the objectives of the on-going CERAB/UNRISD research programme and some of their preliminary findings. The lively discussions that followed centred around a number of common concerns: the stagnation in productivity and international competitiveness that marks the Moroccan garment industry and its implications for employment generation; the reasons for sub-contracting arrangements in garments manufacturing and their impact on wages; the cultural and historical underpinnings of Morocco's hierarchical (and "paternalistic") industrial relations; worker incentives and the quality of the work force. One of the entrepreneurs referred to the vicious circle of low pay-low labour productivity that undermines the garment sector. In contrast to the situation in garments manufacturing, the performance of Moroccan knitwear products on the international market has been impressive. How far the difference in the international performance of these two sub-sectors can be attributed to the nature of labour relations and wage structures was the subject of some dispute.*

# Non-State Employment for Women

Viet Nam's economic reforms (*doi moi*) imply far-reaching changes in the structure of employment. While there was optimism among workshop participants that, given the right mix of incentives and support, women are well-placed to take advantage of new employment opportunities being created by the economic reform process, there were very real concerns expressed about evidence of growing gender disparities in education and health indicators that may ultimately undermine women's ability to respond to new incentives.

Tran Thi Van Anh pointed out that retrenchment of workers from state enterprises and services has hit women particularly hard. One outcome has been the rapid expansion of women's employment in the informal sector. As regards the agricultural sector, where women comprise 60 per cent of the labour force, workshop participants observed that policies designed to improve productivity and open up new employment opportunities are by-pass-

ing poor women. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that education, training and credit programmes effectively reach women in both the urban and rural sectors.

♦ ♦ ♦

## **National Workshop: Employment Policy for Women for Industrialization, Modernization and Sustainable Development of the Country**

25-26 July 1995  
Hanoi, Viet Nam

♦ ♦ ♦

Social policy was another topic that received considerable attention during the workshop. Social sector reforms that have dismantled health, childcare, and education services, and have eliminated subsidies for essential goods, appear to be having a disproportionate impact on women and may negatively affect their

labour-force participation. There was lively debate over the impact on women's employment opportunities of the Labour Code's provisions on maternity leave and on protective legislation in areas of work considered dangerous for women. While there is much support for such legislation — intended to defend women workers' rights and interests — some questions were raised about possible unintended consequences. These might include pricing women out of the labour market, for example.

The workshop was organized jointly by the Centre for Family and Women Studies, Hanoi, and UNRISD. Workshop participants included representatives of government ministries, research institutes, and international donor agencies. A number of background papers were commissioned from various concerned ministries and organizations. □

## Report on Phase 3 Activities:

# Gender and Rural Employment

Viet Nam's national programme of economic liberalization, *doi moi*, introduced in 1989, shares much with market reform policies elsewhere: exchange rate, fiscal and interest rate reforms; promotion of private sector growth; and changes in foreign trade regulations.

While some of these policy reforms have improved the incentives for agricultural production, and have created an expanded range of trading and informal sector opportunities, the "winners" and "losers" are yet to be determined. More specifically, as far as the main research phase of the project is concerned, it is not yet clear how different categories of women will be affected by the changes that are underway. Despite women's active participation in agricultural production (in both collective and family-based farming), many fear that the re-emergence of the family-managed land system may undermine some of the labour rights that women had managed to gain under the former production system.

Phase 3 research in Viet Nam will look at diversification of the rural household economy, with specific attention to women's entrepreneurial activities. The research, which is being undertaken by the Centre for Family and Women Studies, will document the gender dimensions of the responses of rural households to the new economic opportunities provided by current policies to promote private entrepreneurship. The research will explore how far the gender division of labour in different types of households (in terms of headship, age and gender composition, and asset

holdings) explains their differential ability to respond to such incentives. Where returns to male-controlled enterprises are higher, the research will consider whether this reflects a rational division of household labour, based on comparative advantage of different members, or whether it reflects differential access to external resources (credit, inputs, technology, markets) and/or differential constraints faced by women due to the increasingly heavy burden of their responsibilities with the cut-backs in social sector investments.



Participants at the national workshop, Hanoi, 25-26 July 1995

The field research is being carried out in selected villages in both north and south Viet Nam. Following village-level surveys, samples of households will be selected for in-depth interviews to elucidate intra-household decision-making processes concerning production and distribution of resources. Because women in Viet Nam do the household budgeting and because the household is seen as a corporate venture (unlike, for example, in West Africa), it is often assumed that women do not need independent access to resources and that they have full control over household income regardless of who earns it. Preliminary investigation suggests that this is not always the case. The proposed research into the decision-making structure of rural households is the first of its kind in Viet Nam. Its findings should help to sustain the dialogue between researchers and policy makers on how far current macro-economic policies can meet the needs of rural women and their productive potential.

The field research should be completed in August 1996 and in September 1996, Tran Thi Van Anh will take up a six week fellowship at IDS, Sussex, where she will work with Naila Kabeer to analyse the data and write up the report. This arrangement, not to mention the sustained collaboration between the international consultant and the national research team to develop the research methodology and



Panos Pictures/ Sean Sprague

*Woman harvesting rice near La Cai*

to strengthen the technical and analytical skills used in the study, provides an example of the project's attempt to build research capacity. The final report should be completed by October 1996 and the national research team will present its findings at the international workshop

being organized by UNRISD/CPD in Dhaka, 26-28 November 1996 (see page 24). A final national workshop in Viet Nam is being planned for early 1997. □

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# Women's Employment in Export-Based Industry

In his opening remarks, Rehman Sobhan, Executive Chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), noted that policy-making in a democratic environment was no longer the monopoly of those formally associated with the government, but in fact an area of civic engagement including a broad cross section of civil society. The workshop encouraged such a process of engagement around a theme of interest to both women's activists and policy makers. It brought together representatives from government ministries, employers' associations, trade unions, NGOs working in the urban context and women's rights organizations.

In many developing countries, one consequence of trade reforms and macro-economic stabilization policies has been the growth of export-oriented industries, which have tended to be labour intensive, typically employing a high proportion of female workers. Not surprisingly, a principal focus of discussion at the workshop was the export-oriented garment industry in Bangladesh, a

major earner of foreign exchange, which uses predominantly female labour. Questions were raised about the terms on which female labour is being integrated into the labour market.

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## National Workshop: Gender Issues in Export-Based Industrialization in Bangladesh

27-28 October 1995  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

♦ ♦ ♦

Participants considered whether, as the employers claimed, women had a "natural" suitability for garment production or whether, as the trade unions and women's activists argued, their concentration in the industry was caused by their greater exploitability. A related set of issues raised by the latter group revolved around the hazardous working conditions and weakness of collective bargaining arrangements

in the garment industry. These conditions have given rise to protective legislation in importing countries, on apparently humanitarian grounds. Even though improved working conditions are essential from the point of view of workers' rights, concern was expressed about the negative impacts of these protectionist threats on retrenched workers who could develop few alternative survival strategies.

Another central theme discussed by participants was the implication of wage work on women's lives. There was much concern about the insecurities faced by young migrant workers in the urban milieu of a society where the public role of women is severely limited and emphasis was placed on the need for urban authorities (especially the police) to play a more supportive role. Some in-depth studies suggest, however, that although women workers are burdened with the double load of wage and domestic work, they are exercising greater say in intra-household decision-making, in some cases even to the extent of walking out of violent marriages. For many, the garment sector offers jobs that are preferable to those hitherto available to them, such as domestic work.

The workshop was jointly hosted by CPD, Dhaka, and UNRISD. A published report on the workshop is available from CPD: CPD Dialogue Report No.11. □

## Report on Phase 3 Activities:

# The Changing Pattern of Women's Employment

Most observers would agree that the pattern of women's employment in both urban and rural Bangladesh is undergoing rapid transformation. While there is a degree of consensus as to what the sources of these changes have been, their implications for women's lives — both in terms of modifications in intra-household gender relations and in the way women are being incorporated into emerging markets — are less well understood. These gaps in knowledge very often mean that "public actors" — the state, NGOs, trade unions and women's groups — are not sufficiently abreast of women's rapidly changing circumstances and demands in order to be able to respond with measures that will facilitate women's own survival and empowerment strategies. The purpose of the Phase 3 research is to throw light on some of the less well-understood aspects of women's incorporation into labour markets and their income earning prospects, in order to provide a more informed basis for the national "dialogue"

among public actors. A number of discrete, though interrelated, areas are included in the research programme that is being carried out by researchers attached to the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka. Here are some of the highlights.

As was documented in the background paper to the CPD/UNRISD workshop, women constitute the major part of the increase in employment in Bangladesh's export-oriented manufacturing, which has been heavily concentrated in the clothing/garments sector thus far. But will the reliance on female labour persist as export capacity is deepened and diversified in later stages of development? This question is being explored through a comparative study of the pharmaceutical and apparel industries: the former being a "traditional" activity that has undergone technological change to move into the export market, while the latter is a "new" activity that was launched as an export-oriented venture with a particular level of techno-

logical baggage. The introduction of new technologies, by altering the processes of production through automation, de-skilling of workers and augmenting the skill requirements of key jobs, can affect the extent and nature of women's employment. In this context, if certain supply-side constraints are not addressed through public policy interventions — in the areas of education, skill development and health care — the space created for female employment in the export sector cannot be retained and enlarged.

Another set of issues that emerged from the CPD/UNRISD workshop and its background paper was the impact of the household and its gender relations on the decision-making processes that prompt women to take up wage work in the modern sector. What types of households and what life cycle events trigger women to seek work in garment factories? Can the labour supply decision be characterized as "distress" selling of labour? What economic conditions

characterize labour supplying households, and how do these circumstances affect the way women's wages are viewed by household members (and the women workers themselves) and utilized by the household? What do the garment workers and their households think about the alternatives to garment factory work (and what are those alternatives)? All of

through which gender subordination is created and sustained within the world of work. In this context, how effective have unions/labour associations been in addressing women workers' needs in specific areas, such as wage negotiations, specification of contracts, job assignments and promotions, skill development and training, adherence to labour laws,

Steering Committee. The research team will also present its findings at the international workshop, jointly organized by UNRISD and CPD (Dhaka, 26-28 November 1996; see page 24). □



WCC Photo

Teaching sewing, Women's Career Training Institute, Dhaka

these issues will have a significant bearing on worker behaviour within the factory context, especially vis-à-vis management. This component of the research will be based on intensive interviews with a sample of factory workers and members of their households.

The growth in female employment in export-based manufacturing sectors in Bangladesh is raising new issues and concerns about working conditions of women workers, the prevailing employer-employee relations, and the various concrete mechanisms

and welfare issues such as security and housing? How far have these unions succeeded in influencing the attitudes of the structured national trade unions (which are often labour front organizations of various political parties) towards the concerns of female workers? And to what extent have the major political parties taken cognizance of these issues, as reflected in their policy proposals?

Preliminary research results are expected by autumn 1996. The findings will be discussed in several meetings of the project's National

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\* \* \*

# Export-Oriented Agriculture

On May 3-4, just before the presidential elections in Uganda, the Centre for Basic Research (CBR) and UNRISD held their first joint workshop at the Fairway Hotel in Kampala. According to many participants, the workshop was a great success in terms of focusing attention on the gender dimensions of agricultural policy, a critical aspect of the government's macro-economic agenda that has remained relatively under-debated. All sessions were lively, with real discussion and exchange of opinion on substantive issues of concern, and were impressively open and direct. Participants ranged from representatives of government ministries and international agencies, to NGOs, research and academic institutions, farmers' organizations, and a successful female entrepreneur.

The presentations and discussions were divided into four main sessions, covering four closely related themes: women's access to improved agriculture; gender issues and export-led growth strategies; food security; and institutional aspects of policy formulation and implementation. Following a keynote address by the UNDP Resident Representative, Babatunda

Thomas, the workshop was officially opened by Dr. Gashumba from the Agricultural Secretariat, whose presentation focused on the twin agenda of agricultural growth and poverty reduction in Ugandan macro-policy. To meet its target of at least 5 per cent growth in GDP per annum, he observed, "Uganda has no alternative but to adopt an aggressive export policy that successfully diversifies the export base to increase the ratio of exports to imports even as imports rise to support a sustainable growth in GDP".

♦ ♦ ♦

## **National Workshop: Gender Dimensions of Agricultural Policy in Uganda 3-4 May 1996 Kampala, Uganda**

♦ ♦ ♦

What emerged clearly from his presentation was that the focus of macro policy-makers is firmly on export growth, which, in the case of Uganda, means agricultural exports, and includes both the rehabilitation of

traditional export crops as well as the development of non-traditional exports, such as horticultural products. Any discussion of poverty and gender equity will thus have to be cognizant of these macro-policy concerns that underpin agricultural policies. As far as poverty reduction is concerned, are smallholders, especially those with lower resource endowments, sufficiently well-placed to take part in these revived and new markets? And as for gender equity — the focus of the discussions at the workshop — are women farmers in a position to enter the emerging markets in spite of the gender-related constraints under which they operate? Participants also questioned the impact that macro policies could have on women's workloads and bargaining power, as well as on food security.

Several presentations reflected on women's access to factor markets (land, credit, extension services, etc.) and product markets. In the case of female farmers, it is not just private traders and intermediaries who prevent the transmission of price incentives to the producer, but also their husbands who take over the actual selling of crops and the collection of payments. A disconcerting trend, noted by several speakers, was that, as traditional food crops like maize and beans have become commercialized in recent years, men have taken over the marketing and production decision-making, while women have

become marginalized from both processes. The fact that transport facilities remain inaccessible and male biased further exacerbates women's restricted access to market outlets.

Time/labour constraints were also identified as significant barriers that adversely affect women's access to improved agriculture (e.g., their ability to attend extension courses/demonstrations). In her discussion of the failure of the Uganda Commercial Bank Rural Farmers' Scheme (UCBRFS) to attract women clients, Gaudensia Kenyagi, of the Uganda Commercial Bank, referred to the Scheme's lengthy and time-consuming procedures as a major barrier to female smallholders who are very often overworked. By liberalizing collateral requirements, the Scheme had hoped to attract female farmers to the tune of at least 60 per cent of its beneficiaries; but in practice the percentage of female clients never exceeded 25 per cent. In view of the government's current efforts to set up a comprehensive nationwide Rural Finance Program, it will be interesting to see how far the lessons learned from the UCBFRS on constraints to women's access to credit will be taken into account.

Another recurring theme was how women farmers, by coming together in informal and flexible credit or labour groups, have tried to overcome their individual constraints, such as seasonal labour bottle-

necks and limited financing capacity (to pay for school fees or farm inputs). Several participants referred to the possible dangers of external agencies attempting to fund, formalize or control these groups: as Germina Ssemogerere, Makere University, remarked, some members can simply seize most of the benefits and use the group as a "ladder" for personal gain, or "brief case" groups can emerge that have no real activity. Given the current enthusiasm of donors for working through women's groups — especially in the context of credit and micro-enterprise projects — the concerns raised by the workshop participants highlight the need for re-thinking how to work with women's groups.

Brief discussion at the end of the workshop confirmed support for a steering committee to take forward the project, maintain momentum and links between government and those outside, and commission research. Follow-up activities are now being decided, and the research programme should be under way by the end of summer 1996. □

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UNRISD activities at the

# Fourth World Conference on Women

The Beijing Occasional Paper series (see pages 21-23) was one of UNRISD's main contributions to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, where copies of the papers were disseminated widely. Two events were also organized by UNRISD during the Conference. The first, a roundtable discussion on **Gendering Macro-economic Policies: Concepts and Institutions**, was held at the NGO Forum in Huairou. Presentations by the panelists — all researchers working in the area of feminist economics — attested to the considerable progress that feminist economists have made not only in challenging macro-economic models from a gender perspective, but also in presenting alternative models that incorporate gender as an analytical category. In her presentation, Nilufer Cagatay spoke of the extent to which apparently "genderless" macro-economic outcomes, such as agricultural supply response, expenditure patterns and growth

levels, are in fact deeply influenced by the way conjugal and gender relations are organized in different societies. The aim of new gendered models, she argued, is to provide formulations that may ultimately lead to alternative

macro-economic policies. In the course of the presentations, frequent reference was made to the need to find ways of feeding this emerging body of analytical work into the policy process and to the obstacles that hinder progress at



*Conference participants perusing UNRISD publications*

**Gendering  
Macro-economic  
Policies: Concepts  
and Institutions**

**NGO Forum, Huairou,  
6 September 1995**



**Panelists:**

Nilufer Cagatay  
*University of Utah,  
Salt Lake City*

Joanna Kerr,  
*North-South Institute,  
Ottawa*

Valentine Moghadam  
*World Institute for  
Development Economics  
Research (WIDER)  
Helsinki*

Ruth Pearson  
*Overseas Development Group,  
School of Development Studies  
University of East Anglia,  
Norwich*

**Chairperson:**  
Swasti Mitter  
*Institute for New Technologies  
(INTECH)  
Maastricht*



both the national and international levels. While highlighting the important advocacy role of gender lobbies, participants spoke of the danger of a potential split between feminist advocates and feminist

project. The aim of the panel was to critically assess progress in institutionalizing gender issues within different policy-making bodies over the past decade.



*Gender mainstreaming panel, 9 September 1995, Beijing*

economists owing in part, at least, to the technical language used by the latter. As Ruth Pearson put it, both groups must work more closely together, rather than in parallel, in order to create a clearer picture of what gender transformative policies would look like.



A second panel, jointly sponsored by UNRISD, UNDP and the United Nations Volunteers, entitled **Gender Mainstreaming: Obstacles and Opportunities**, was held at the Official Conference in Beijing. The panelists included gender researchers and practitioners, some of whom had been involved in the Phase 1 activities of the

Participants outlined some of the advances that have been made in promoting attention to women's concerns within government institutions and development agencies, including the setting up of women's units and the design of guidelines and action plans on women's issues. Anne Marie Goetz reflected on the factors that have contributed to such gains, particularly at the national level, including strong top-management support; strategic use of changes in political systems that provide opportunities to insert women's concerns into new power configurations; and a "critical mass" of women within public institutions and in civil society organizations.

While speakers pointed to a heightened gender sensitivity amongst development institutions, they also expressed concern about the incremental pace of change. Carol Narcisse raised questions about the gains that could be made from the setting up of gender checklists and guidelines aimed at "mainstreaming" gender when the overall policy environment, defined by the neo-liberal market agenda, effectively constrained progress toward gender equity. Rounaq Jahan questioned the desirability of the "integrationist" approach

goals. The importance of strong women's constituencies able to promote gender issues as legitimate economic and political concerns was reiterated by all speakers.



As a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, an UNRISD consultant is preparing a paper analysing the Beijing Platform for Action. The paper will assess how far the Platform for Action — and debates at the Conference and the NGO Forum — placed greater emphasis on economic issues,

## Gender Mainstreaming: Obstacles and Opportunities

Hosted by UNRISD/  
UNDP/UNV, Official  
Conference, Beijing, 9  
September 1995



### Panelists:

Anne Marie Goetz  
*Institute of Development Studies  
(IDS), University of Sussex,  
Brighton*

Rounaq Jahan  
*Columbia University,  
New York*

Carol Narcisse  
*Association of Women of  
Jamaica, Kingston*

Imelda Nicholas  
*Chairperson of the National  
Commission on the Role of  
Philippino Women, Manila*

### Chairperson:

Rosina Wiltshire  
*Manager, Gender in  
Development Programme  
UNDP, New York*



ILO, Geneva

*Street cleaners in Maputo, Mozambique*

to gender mainstreaming pursued by most development agencies, whereby gender concerns are simply added on to pre-conceived policies. Jahan argued instead for an "agenda-setting" approach in which women are able to play a role in defining development

including macro-economic and trade policies, than did previous UN conferences on women. It will also consider the extent to which the Platform for Action provides tools of economic transformation towards more gender equitable macro-economic policy. □

## Letter from Naila Kabeer

Senior Advisor



The Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives project has sought to address one of the key challenges facing gender advocates within the field of development: how can gender issues be considered within the macro-economic policy process at the key stages when priorities are being decided and resources allocated, rather than being added on after these decisions have already been taken? As one of the consultants who has worked with UNRISD on this project, I would like to point to what has been a valuable learning experience for me and one that will have a wider resonance for the development community.

Informing the project is the understanding that there are two kinds of limitations that help to explain why gender issues have not been prioritized within the macro-economic policy process thus far. At the intellectual level, the relevance of gender dimensions to macro-economic policy has yet to be demonstrated, using arguments that appeal to policy makers and are formulated in a language that is familiar to them. At the institutional level, the rules, practices, incentives and procedures that would help to centralize gender concerns as one of the "core competencies" of policy making bodies have not yet evolved in any coherent way. The UNRISD/UNDP Occasional Paper Series, published as part of this project, and authored by researchers with considerable experience in the selected topics, attempts to address some of these problems and draw out useful lessons for development policy makers and practitioners.

Four of the eight papers in this series (OPs 1, 2, 4, 6) are devoted to institutional issues. They trace the theoretical concerns underpinning the conceptual shift from "WID" to "GAD" approaches in the development arena, and assess the attempts of various national and international agencies to formulate and implement gender-related policy goals. Taken together, these papers point to the problem of incoherence in past efforts to institutionalise gender concerns: incoherence between the feminist advocacy within and outside the official agencies of development, and incoherence within the agencies themselves between the equity goals they profess and the practices through which they seek to implement these goals.

Agencies are constituted by their own particular visions, goals, histories, cultures and practices so that there is no universal set of strategies that will work in all of them. The challenge for gender advocates has been to find rationales and strategies that allow them to press for gender equity within specific organizational contexts without losing sight of the ultimately transformatory, and hence political, nature of this goal. In other words, as one of the papers points out, the institutionalization of gender concerns within mainstream development agencies entails working within a framework of prior constraints and negotiated compromises; it requires the bilingual skills that will enable advocates to straddle the dominant discourse within an agency as well as the oppositional discourse outside it. Above all, it necessitates nurturing networks and alliances that will be able to exert pressure from outside.

The three other Occasional Papers in the series (OPs 3, 5, 7) deal with some of the substantive issues prioritized in the policy dialogues conducted through the project: credit and the promotion of women's micro-enterprises; the rise in trade-related employment for women in industry and services; the gender dimensions of current demographic transitions and their implications for human-centred policies. All three papers provide a state-of-the-art overview of the relevant topic and make necessary links with macro-level policy and the project of mainstreaming gender concerns. It is also interesting to note that these papers, taken together, reproduce some of the tensions between "instrumentalist" and "intrinsic" forms of advocacy noted in the institutional arena (covered in OPs 2, 4, 6), but in this context the tensions arise in the strategies adopted to promote gender interests within policy discourse. Arguments couched in terms of efficiency and welfare considerations usually have a more immediate acceptability within mainstream development agencies. But do instrumentalist forms of advocacy help to promote the longer term, and more challenging, goal of gender equity as a self-evidently desirable aspect of sustainable human development?

The Occasional Paper Series has therefore played an important role in highlighting one of the perennial problems facing advocates attempting to promote gender equity in the policy arena: the tensions between efforts to get gender issues onto the mainstream agenda and efforts to reformulate the mainstream agenda from a gender perspective.

By documenting the way these tensions have been played out within different institutional contexts and different policy discourses, UNRISD will help policy makers, as well as gender advocates and activists, to appreciate better why these tensions arise, how they are manifested and the politics that underpin them.□

**Naila Kabeer** is senior advisor of the Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives project and a fellow of IDS (Institute of Development Studies), University of Sussex, UK.



## Gender Mainstreaming:

A Study of Efforts by the UNDP, the World Bank and the ILO to Institutionalize Gender Issues

by Shahra Razavi and Carol Miller

Since the 1970s, the international women's movement has called for the "integration" of women into the development process as a means of countering gender bias within development institutions. An early institutional response was the setting up of women in development (WID) bureaux. More recently, "mainstreaming" has gained currency amongst international agencies and governments as a way to bring women's concerns to the centre stage of development. In the three multilateral institutions examined in this paper, mainstreaming has involved efforts to "institutionalize" gender by integrating gender issues into the entire spectrum of activities that are funded and/or executed by an organization (i.e., projects, programmes, policies) and by diffusing responsibility for gender integration beyond the WID/gender units — through mechanisms such as gender training and gender guidelines — making it a routine concern of all bureaucratic units and all staff members.

In examining how multilateral agencies have taken up gender concerns, the paper assesses a number of factors that condition institutional response to outside pressures for change, including the organization's degree of independence from external pressures, the organizational mandate, ideology and procedures, and the existence and capacity of internal policy advocates and entrepreneurs. The main body of the paper assesses "institutional response" to the demands of the WID movement in the UNDP, the World Bank and the ILO respectively. As far as external pressures are concerned, while the

different governance structures and funding arrangements create different opportunities and constraints for WID/gender concerns, the influence of supportive donors, such as the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Canada, nonetheless emerges as a key factor influencing response in all three agencies. The organizational mandate presents different challenges to the WID/gender entrepreneurs in the different agencies. The ILO's social justice mandate has provided the most hospitable environment to WID/gender. At the World Bank, considerable entrepreneurship has been needed to bring out the economic and efficiency dimensions of gender, so as to "fit" the organization's mandate. At the UNDP, the initial lack of clarity in the organization's mandate to co-ordinate and administer United Nations resources made it difficult to develop a coherent and substantive approach to women's issues; the environment provided by the new human development mandate is more conducive to gender policy.

In all three agencies, pressure to "institutionalize" gender has led to the setting up of a range of new organization-wide procedures to mainstream gender (e.g. gender training, gender guidelines or "tool kits", new monitoring and evaluation mechanisms). The final section of the paper critically assesses the mainstreaming strategy and the procedural innovations it has promoted. □

# Trade-Related Employment

for Women in Industry  
and Services in Developing Countries  
by Susan Joeques



Expanding international trade in goods and services is providing new employment opportunities for women in many countries. But does this provide an avenue for the improvement of women's economic position? To address this question, Susan Joeques first summarizes what is known about the relation between growth in trade-related manufacturing capacity and the demand for female labour in Third World countries. Women have been the preferred labour force in a large number of export industries, and now comprise about one third of all industrial sector workers in developing nations.

The discussion then turns to the implications of the recent and rapid expansion of international transactions in services. While shifts in employment opportunities for women in industry can be attributed largely to trade liberalization, changes in service-sector employment are associated with broader processes of globalization. New jobs are being created in information-based industries that employ inexpensive, educated labour in developing countries for operations such as data processing. Transnational corporations are increasingly likely to make use of such low-wage labour, whether through establishing new offices in developing countries or simply through shifting some existing corporate functions to Third World settings.

Information on the gender implications of these developments is extremely sparse. But there is some evidence that the preference for female labour found in export manufacturing carries over into new

trade-related services, in both its low- and higher-skilled segments. Since women are already well represented in the service sector in developing countries, this is not surprising.

The paper provides information on the situation in five countries where the UNRISD/UNDP project on Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives has conducted policy dialogues on gender issues: Bangladesh, Jamaica, Morocco, Uganda and Viet Nam. It ends by identifying issues on which further research and monitoring are necessary, if adequate policies are to be designed. The first issue grows out of the possible relationship between consolidation of export orientation in manufacturing, on the one hand, and a growing wage gap by gender, on the other. A second involves the conscious effort to improve women's education and training, so that they will be less vulnerable to the labour displacement from new technology. Finally, it is important to examine the employment practices of transnational corporations and to enlist their support for gender equity. In all these areas of concern, there is a vast potential for international alliances between women's organizations worldwide; and indeed, given the globalization of the world economy, international action may be not only appropriate but necessary. □

UNRISD Occasional Paper No. 5  
Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995  
84 pages



## Femocrats and Ecorats:

Women's Policy Machinery in Australia, Canada and New Zealand

by Marian Sawyer

During the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) most member states of the United Nations adopted mechanisms to ensure that all government activity was monitored for its impact on women. This paper provides case studies of such "women's policy machinery" in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The title derives from the uneasy relationship between feminist bureaucrats (femocrats) and a new generation of decision makers guided by principles of "economic rationalism" (ecorats). The concern of femocrats for gender equity has come up against the belief of ecorats that public intervention in markets is counter-productive.

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**"...Marian Sawyer's excellent occasional paper [...] takes our understanding of mainstreaming considerably forward."**

**Gita Sen**

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In the three countries considered in the paper, the election of governments committed to broadening the policy agenda and fostering citizen participation presented opportunities to translate women's movement slogans into policy. Another enabling factor was a desire on the part of governments to be viewed as good international citizens. This was a significant policy resource for feminists operating both at international and domestic levels.

Women's policy machinery is the daughter of the women's movement and there is an inbuilt tension in this relationship. Women's policy units are accountable to government and not just to the women's movement, meaning that conflicts of interest and perspective are inevitable. Femocrats must demonstrate loyalty to government in order to be credible in their policy advice; policy brokering involves compromises — which, at times, has led to accusations of co-option. The location of women's policy machinery within the bureaucracy is explored in each case study, as is the importance of a well-organized women's movement outside government as a political base for feminist policy.

In all three countries women's policy machinery has survived changes of government as well as the increasingly unfavourable environment provided by gender blind economic rationalism. Strategic changes in discourse have been required that have their own side effects — for example, the presentation of child care or domestic violence as economic issues. Ultimately, the preservation of equity agendas requires not only routinized accountability mechanisms within government, but also strong pressure from outside. It is the combination of women working from inside and outside government that has proved most fruitful — even when it has amounted to achieving least worst outcomes. □

## Gender, Demographic Transition and the Economics of Family Size:

Population Policy for a Human-Centred Development

by Naila Kabeer



In theory, population issues should cover the full range of concerns from birth to death, as well as the quality of life in between. In practice, however, population policy has tended to become reduced to a question of numbers: how to reduce or — less frequently — to increase the number of people who count within specific categories in order to meet the objectives set out by those with policy-making power. This paper begins by looking at some of the major debates between economists and demographers who have, to some extent, addressed each other's arguments. However, their debates have been curiously insulated from questions and issues raised by a third group: feminist advocates and researchers. Yet the feminist perspective is crucial not only for making sense of aspects of population and development that a conventional economic or demographic analysis is poorly equipped to consider, but also for ensuring that population policies contribute to the developmental goals of human survival and well-being.

Drawing on the literature from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the author demonstrates how a gender analysis can provide the basis for integrating population, development and human rights perspectives in the policy arena. The author's gender analysis challenges the belief that economic growth in the East Asian economies was equitable by pointing to the severe gender inequities in family reproductive strategies that underpinned it. The analysis also challenges the frequently advanced claims that women's education and economic

autonomy will automatically lead to lower fertility rates, and that a single universal explanation can be found for fertility declines currently under way in the Third World.

The paper makes the case for a human-centred approach to the question of population and development. Despite claims made in policy discourse that lowering rates of population growth has positive developmental consequences, there is little evidence that past population policies have been motivated by a concern for human rights and well-being. The relationship between fertility decline and improvements in the rights and well-being of a population is generally weak and often non-existent. The author thus argues for retaining population questions at the centre of development policy but suggests that such policy needs to give fuller recognition to the intrinsic human dimension of the interrelationship between population and development, and, in particular, to the gender dimension of this interrelationship. □

UNRISD Occasional Paper No. 7  
Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995  
80 pages

## International Workshop

An international workshop entitled **Working Towards a More Gender Equitable Macro-Economic Agenda**, to be held in **Dhaka, Bangladesh, 26-28 November 1996**, is being planned to conclude Phase 3 of the Technical Cooperation and Women's Lives project. UNRISD, UNDP and the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, will jointly organize the workshop. Participants will include gender researchers/economists, members of the national research teams, national policy makers and representatives of selected donor agencies.

Using the findings of the project's country-level research and policy dialogues as a springboard for discussions, participants will scrutinize selected areas of macro-economic policy from a gender perspective, and analyse feminist strategies to feed this alternative thinking on the macro-economic agenda into the policy-making process. In addition to providing a forum for the dissemination of the project's research findings, the workshop will provide a unique opportunity for actors in the "policy dialogues" to assess critically the project's attempts to initiate dialogue between gender researchers/activists and policy makers. On the basis of the project's comparative findings, the workshop will also propose strategies for deepening and replicating the national level policy dialogues.

Following the workshop, UNRISD will prepare a report documenting the overall project findings and the substantive issues highlighted during the workshop proceedings.



## Upcoming publications

### OP8:

Economic Policies and the Beijing Platform for Action  
**Conference Report:**  
Synthesis Report of National Workshops



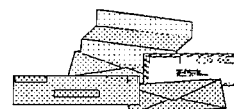
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