

Progress report on the Beijing Platform for Action

1. Introduction

1. In the past five years, Ecuador has experienced greater political instability than other countries of the Andean region (it has had five different presidents during the period 1995-1999), and this has had a detrimental effect on the formulation and implementation of policy by the executive branch. The other democratic administrative institutions, notably the judiciary, have been more stable, but have lacked sufficient vitality to respond effectively, when there have been attempts to modernize the State and fight corruption.

Over the past five years, Ecuador has experienced greater political instability than other countries of the Andean region (it has had five different presidents during the period 1995-1999), and this has had a detrimental effect on the formulation and implementation of policy by the executive branch. The other democratic administrative institutions, notably the judiciary, have been more stable, but have lacked sufficient vitality to respond effectively, when there have been attempts to modernize the State and fight corruption.

One of the most important was the convening of the democratically elected National Constituent Assembly, composed of 70 representatives covering the full spectrum of political opinion, which wrote a new Constitution. The new Constitution incorporates the demands of some citizens' groups, particularly those of women's organizations and the National Council for Women (CCMAMU), pressure from the women's movement and the support of women serving as regular and alternate representatives to the assembly, who helped with their votes at crucial points to determine the shape

The new Constitution provides for a referendum for political rights, including the right to strike, and the right to be involved by the State in the absence of specific laws on the matter.

The Constitution provides for an Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Women has been set up. The Constitution also provides for an Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Women has been set up. The Constitution also provides for an Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Women has been set up.

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framework for progress in gender equality.

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5. The border conflict between Ecuador and Peru in recent years national growth and development. The hostilities that broke out have become full declared war had it not been for the mediation of friendly countries who constituted themselves guarantors of the peace. Hostilities occurred chiefly in the Amazonian jungle region, an area of low population density.

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6. On 26 October 1998, through the action of a body created for this purpose which had worked tirelessly since the close of hostilities, and the mobilization of a groundswell of social support for the process, the foreign ministries of the two countries and the political will of the two peoples, a peace agreement was signed in Brasilia, putting an end to a territorial dispute that had lasted 56 years and consumed vast resources in one purchase of war material that have gone to development. A significant role in the peace process was played by women's peace groups, who did not hesitate to issue joint statements with their Peruvian counterparts.

ow that its boundaries are set, many feel that Ecuador must turn its face and reallocate its resources from combat in defence of its frontiers to struggle against poverty, one of the great challenges for the next millennium. In fact, many of the advances made possible by political consensus expressed in national and local agreements on issues of democracy and development, both on the governmental level and within civil society, have been hindered by the lack of funds or financing to carry out what was envisioned.

external debt servicing consumes around 45 per cent of the Government's budget, its commitments to the international banking system, the country must neglect its commitment to address its domestic social arrears.

his period from natural disasters, including two earthquakes and heavy rains in 1998. The fragile ecosystem has been threatened by unsustainable use of land and water resources. Management of both the natural and man-made environment has been a priority for the central government.

9. Nor has Ecuador been exempt from the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, including landslides due to the instability of the environment, on an ever-increasing scale. More and more citizens' groups have been formed to negotiate and apply pressure on the government in regard to specific issues. Women's groups have been chiefly concerned with the following themes: combating violence against women, enhancing women's political participation, and establishing legal and administrative mechanisms to achieve gender equality at the national and local administrative levels.

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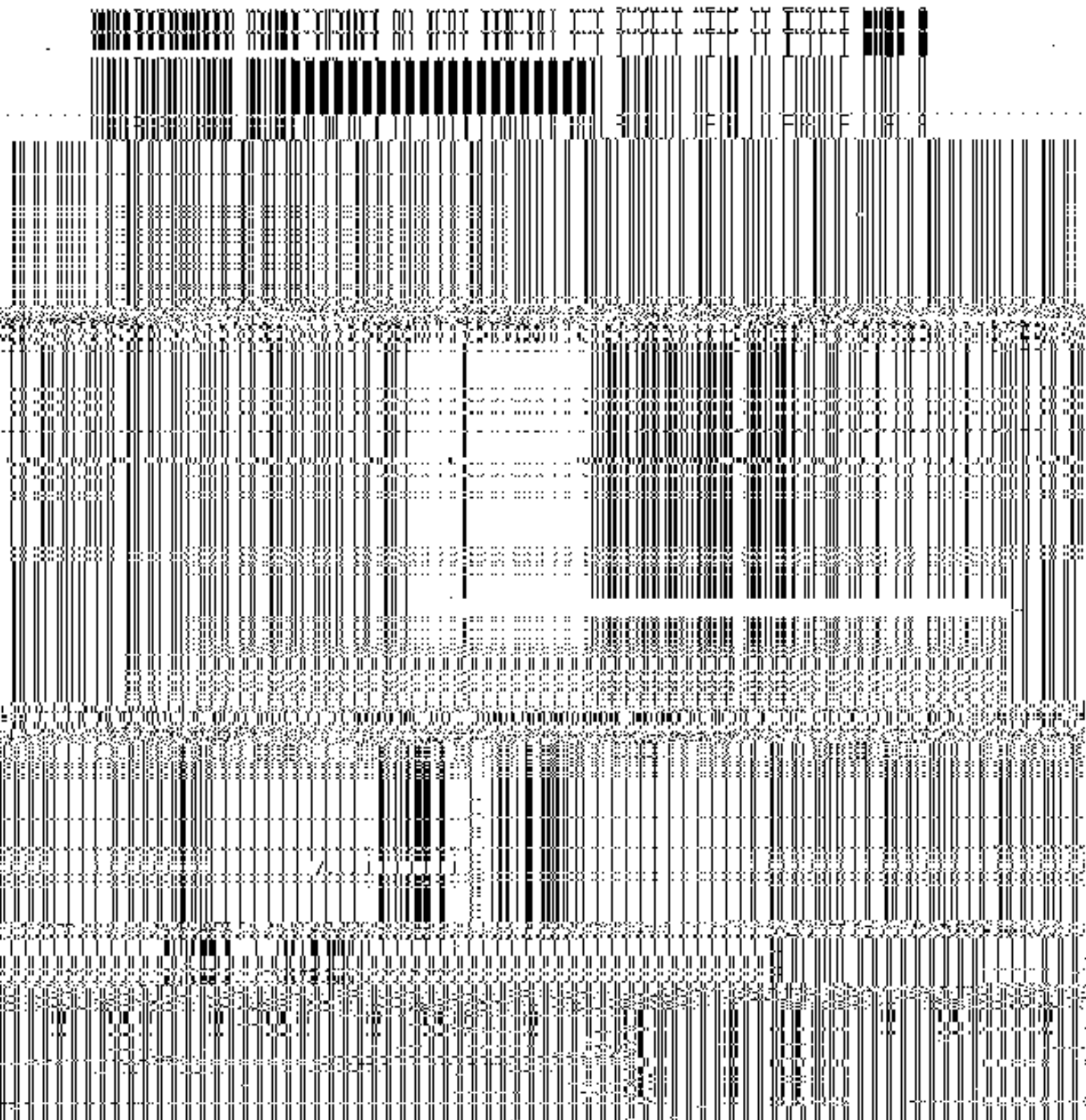
es from 5 per cent to 18 per cent at the highest levels of the  
the election of women to 13 per cent of the legislative seats are

in women  
judicial

unprecedented achievements in this country and should help to ensure that a

eu across the board in public policy.

gender perspective will be incor



Part One

2. Overview of trends in achieving gender equality and women's advancement

2.1 Creation of the National Council for Women

12. The National Council for Women (CONAMU) was created on 24 October 1997 by presidential decree<sup>1</sup> published in the Official Register No. 182 for 28 October 1997. Its activities are based on the Equal Opportunity Plan for

National Directorate for Women's  
of the 12 areas of critical  
attack on

10. Subsequently, the National Constitution  
Constitution Article 41, which reads: "The  
policies for achieving equality of opportunity  
specialized entity which shall function as  
Constitution also stipulates that a gender  
the Government's national planning system.

11. In keeping with the process of modern  
for women is a modern, participative techni  
board composed equally of government officials and women  
society. The composition of the board facilitates a full  
the functioning of the state and meets the need to ensu  
continuity while fulfilling the Council's mandate to ad

12. The Council's general objectives are to formulate  
policies characterized by gender equity in order to qua  
opportunities and rights, enhance their access to the sphere  
and ensure that they are included in economic and social dev  
and benefits.

13. The Council is the main body for the formulation of policy together with the National Planning  
Board (CONPLAN) of

14. The Council is also coordinated with the Ministry of Education, Health  
and Labour. It also coordinates with the Ministry of Education,  
Housing and Urban Responsibility with the Ministry of the  
management of special public programs for women and the family.

15. The Council works in conjunction with the National Institute for Women's  
Affairs. It also works in conjunction with the National Institute for  
of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) and the National Institute for  
1995), the National Institute for Children and the Family (INCEFA) and the

16. Institute for Agrarian Development (INDA)

17. In addition, the 1998 Constitution called for an enormous legislative  
to formulate new or amended codes and laws. The time of working  
was working with the congressional committee for women, children, youth

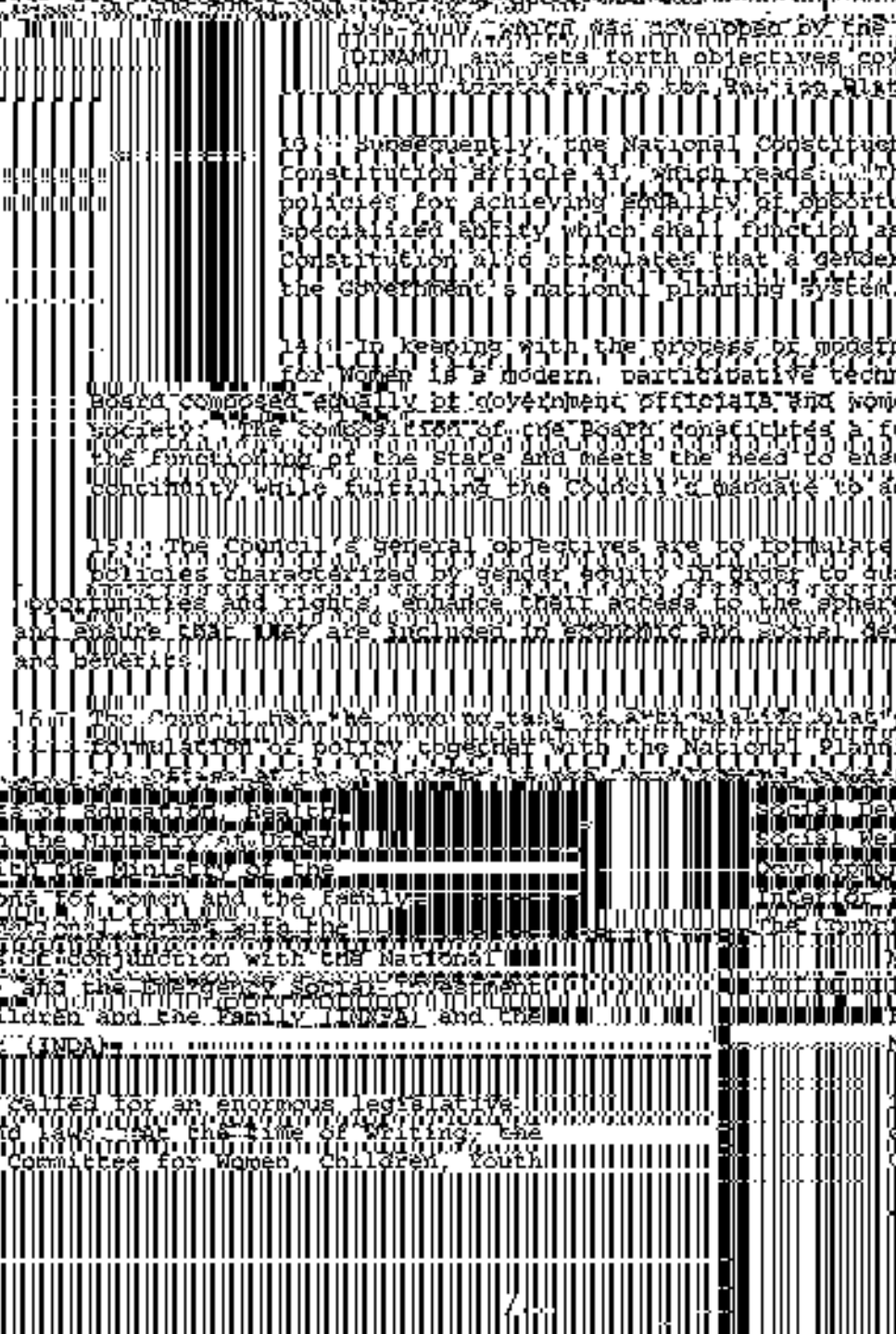
Executive Decree No. 764.

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... and the Family to move to  
... working groups with technical and political support  
... and the participation of civil society and the  
... the plan was to work on amending  
... and repealing others as unconstitutional

... undertaken by the present Government  
... the National Cabinet of Governors and will

... decentralization and  
... as an excellent opportunity for women to  
... exercise of citizenship; it is therefore working with the municipalities to  
... support activities in the areas of education, health, human rights, development  
... and political participation, with emphasis on gender equity.

... Over the next few years, the Council has decided to give priority attention  
... in its work to four areas compatible with national policy:

- ... Social integration and citizenship
- ... Social investment and productive development
- ... Overcoming poverty, and

Implementation of the Equal Opportunity Plan and other achievements

The commitment made by Ecuador at the Fourth World Conference on Women in  
1995 fell into two parts: (a) identifying critical areas of concern:  
poverty, violence against women, unequal access to the benefits of development,  
inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all  
levels and (b) identifying strategic objectives, strategies and goals:  
participate in the benefits of development and overcome the inequality of  
power and decision-making between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.

The Equal Opportunity Plan for 1996-2000 is one of the chief political  
technical tools for designing and implementing policies, whether general  
sectoral or narrowly targeted, aimed at building more equitable relations  
between men and women. The plan, drawn up through a participative process  
involving regional workshops, identifies eleven priority areas for action:  
poverty, education and training, health, violence, the economy, participative  
power and decision-making, human rights, the media, the environment, the girl  
child, and institutional mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the plan.  
each of the critical areas of concern. The issue of refugees and displaced

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22. Once the decision was published, the National Directorate for Women began to coordinate implementation of the Plan. The Council subsequently took up the task of coordinating efforts and creating appropriate institutional mechanisms to ensure that, with the funds it had mobilized, the Plan's basic principles would be realized through annual target-setting and follow-up. The basis of

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plan developed by the National Planning Office (ODEPLAN) with technical advisory assistance from the Council. This was the first time that there

the opportunity to share in and direct influence central government agencies government planning. A gender perspective was introduced through the interaction of Government and civil society. In this instance the Council's Governing Council and representatives of the women's movement who acted as consultants in the formulation of policy at the agency

29. Between 1995 and 1998, other general policy strategies had been formulated, including the National Social Development Plan for 1996-2005, intended to comply with the aims of the World Summit for Social Development. Also during that period the Secretariat of State for Social Development (SDES) was formed, composed of the Ministries of Education and Culture, Health, Labour, Human Resources, Social Welfare and other government agencies with responsibilities in the social area, such as the National Council for Women (CONAMU), the National Institute for Children and the Family (INNA) and the Emergency Social Investment Fund (FISE) for the purpose of coordinating public social development policy, defining a social agenda and planning its implementation and subsequent evaluation.

30. The secretariat has responsibility for developing an integrated planning system, in coordination with the National Planning Office, for efficient management of social development policies; draw up the social agenda for approval by the President; and operational plan management. The secretariat is responsible for spending and investment in the social area. The National Council for Women (CONAMU) was the Chairwoman of the Secretariat was the Minister of Education who expressed her desire to ensure that the body should be representative in its work

and formulated in recent years reflect the nation's priorities and the critical areas of concern of the population. These plans, such as the National Social Development Plan for 1996-2005 prepared by the National Directorate for Women and the National Secretariat for the Social Front (SFR) and the National Development Plan prepared by the National Development Council, place priority on such areas as: a vulnerable groups, socio-economic activation, women addressing discrimination, strengthening decision-making, and achieving equality.

the National Planning Office in 1998 with 1998 by the National Council for Women incorporated the most important

the National replaces the previous body responsible for general state plan Development Council (CONADP)

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Council, as described in more detail below. Through the Integrated Social Plan, the Secretariat of State for Social Development targeted these policies towards the poorest segments of the population. The central Government subsequently incorporated them in the broader Ecuador 2001 Strategy.

33. The National Human Rights Plan for 1998-2002 developed jointly by the Government and civil society, with efforts on the two sides coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Latin American Institute for Social Science Research (ILDIS), respectively, places priority on the issues of civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; collective rights; and human rights of racial/ethnic segments of the population. The latter includes specifically the rights of women, young people, children, sexual minorities, older persons, disabled individuals, and indigenous peoples. The Ambassador for Women has been designated under the Office of Human Rights and the Office for Women's Rights.

34. As part of the Andean subregion and member of the Andean Community, the common objective was to create a legal framework for the Andean region. Ecuador is a party to the Andean Social Charter adopted at the second Andean Social Summit held in 1993. This instrument places stress on democracy and human rights; social integration and poverty eradication; the family; youth, children and adolescents; older persons; indigenous; black and Afro-

The Standing Committee for Women, Youth, Children and the Family of the National Congress, which was created in 1998, is a permanent body that monitors the implementation of the principles set forth in the new Constitution in two areas: (a) new legislated laws in the form of codes regarding children and adolescents; a family code; an labour act; a paid domestic labour act; a women's heads of household act; and amendments to the acts concerning violence in the household act; a youth act; and (b) amend education, disability, the elderly, against women and the family, education, bank, handicraft development, regarding expansion of the National Development the municipal civil registry, agricultural development, social security, and the health, labour, social and pens codes.

35. The Council has incorporated these four areas into the Ecuador Social Agenda for the Twenty-First Century. The agenda is a development strategy that is reflected in the general development plan and compatible with national policies for assisting women and life realizing through the exercise of their rights, improving their quality of life, and promoting their economic and social participation. These four areas are:

1. Social and citizenship, participation and security, an area that is related to the active reform, with the aim of influencing (through the Standing Committee for Women, Children, Youth and the Family) 24 pieces of

social integration relates to congressional development





rights guaranteed by the 1998

medium-term programmes household; it comprises t for generation of the exercise of rights.

public policy on the urban and ices, urban development and educational reform (especially ucation and competitiveness, ation, social security.

and decentralization. The area also covers policies for roles and promoting cultural change, especially through the and cultural activities.

stitutions, an area that relates to mainstreaming the gender planning process on the national, provincial and district decentralization policies. The latter policies are part of the ring the State and aim at bringing about broader social

legislation to be enacted to give effect to the Constitution.

Poverty reduction, an area that covers short-targeted at poor women, particularly women health initiatives in health, nutrition, education, s productive employment, local housing programme

Social investment and equity, an area that cov rural levels regarding access to resources and housing, land tenancy, food and nutrition poli curriculum reform), teacher training, vocational generation of productive employment and labour

health sector r democratising f communications

Modernizing Sta perspective" into levels and into strategy for mo

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- Ecuador 1998: Objectives, Policies and Strategic Guidelines.<sup>2</sup>
- National Human Rights Plan, Chapter on Women, 1998.
- Agenda for Development: Ecuador in the Twenty-first Century.<sup>3</sup>
- National Human Rights Operating Plan, Government-Civil Society, 1999.

Ecuador Social Structure 2000	POLICY AND LEGISLATION
<p>Organic Law of the Judiciary            Judicial Reform Act, Juvenile Code and Penal Code            (during the period 1995-1998).</p>	<p>Amendment of the Labour Code,            Act, Labour Statute Act, Free Maternity Code (bills and amendments introduced during the period 1995-1998).</p>
<p>Register No. 1 of 11 August 1998.</p>	<p>Reform of the Constitution of 1998.</p>
<p>Workshop on the legal amendments            National Council for Women, the congressional            government and civil society in general.</p>	<p>Creation of working and coordination            relating to women between the            Committee for Women, the women            1998.</p>

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- Creation of the Office of Deputy Ombudsman for Women, 1998.
- At the present time, Ecuador has women in high-level appointed or elected posts: one is Attorney-General, four are cabinet ministers, one is Vice-Chairman of the National Congress, one is a member of the Commission, one represents the government as Ambassador to the States, one is a governor, 15 percent of regular or life the Congress are women, and there are a number of women members of the Congress.

Corruption  
United  
deputies-in

During the period 1996 to 1998, a woman was Vice-President and Interim President of the Republic. Of the regular representatives to the National Constituent Assembly in 1997-1998 seven were women, and women chaired four of the nine

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message "Combining sex and violence" are spreading in the time along directed towards children and adolescents.

of the Beijing Platform for Action, implementation has been...  
...of government (the country has had five Presidents, three elected by popular vote and two chosen by military conflict and serious problems of internal unrest, as described, have made it hard to find and implement a... identified as having high priority in the Equal Opportunity and other National Plans.

38. Reforms to the public sector have resulted in a... the state and cutbacks in public spending, primarily...  
...depressed social investment. The process may result in a loss of civil servants, who make up a large proportion of the State's... striking access to basic services for the poorest groups.

39. Social security coverage, which was not given the highest priority in the Equal Opportunity Plan, has been eroded considerably by cuts such as loans and the freeze on retirement pensions because of... owed by the government and private enterprise to the Ecuadorian Institute (IBSS). The situation could be aggravated by the... of... a change that would be especially... the interests of rural women and girls, who have unsatisfied... Social Security programme going back 18 years.

40. Although women's contribution to development is now given... in the media than prior to 1995, there is still much to be done... the mass media. There has been a considerable increase in...  
...and adolescents.

limited access, funding delays and the absence of inter-agency coordination programmes and projects for women have undermined their sustainability and efficacy. Evaluation of gender-based projects has shown that many have gone uncompleted for lack of training or technical advice or have cost overruns. Of the 1000 projects of the 1980s, 20% were successful. The 80% failure rate is in both government initiatives and private development programmes.

and agencies of the United Nations system and bilateral agencies. The gender equity policies prepared by the UN agencies are not being fully implemented in the non-governmental sector. Moreover, not all international agencies have gender specialists or funding earmarked for projects and girls or with a gender perspective. In consequence, the gender perspective in practice has little or no attention. The withdrawal of some cooperation agencies from Ecuador has also been marked specifically for gender in development, as

despite the professional levels women have reached in both traditional and non-traditional fields.

47. In business, women are heavily under-represented in management levels. Business owners still entrust management jobs to men, even though there are already women in the country with sufficient training to fill them. The world of finance is still virtually closed to women, with one or two exceptions.

48. Communications media: It is striking that since the issuance of the Principles of Action for Labor most of the country's newspapers now give full coverage to commemorative days, such as 8 March or 25 November<sup>10</sup> and (at least those with wide circulation) have regular women's pages, which are no longer limited to topics that fit the traditional role perception but also discuss women's political and cultural activities.

49. Academic circles: One of the biggest achievements of Ecuadorian women is the massive increase in their enrolment and attendance at universities in all subjects, including programmes that were originally designed exclusively for men. In science and engineering, some young men perceive their presence as a competitive threat. According to surveys done specifically for this report, particularly when the women produce innovative ideas. Student associations in the various faculties have women among their leadership, but in terms of leadership of the general student body of the university, the highest level, women generally remain absent. One instance of a woman belonging to the general body in a public university in recent years, institutions of higher learning, both public and private, have been incorporating a gender perspective in their courses.

deposited their entire life savings in the banks). The measure did not even make exception for children's food allowances deposited in the accounts of children's courts; it also had the effect of freezing the funds of non-governmental organizations.

52. Figures for 1997 showed 52 per cent of Ecuador's population living in poverty; according to World Bank data, 15 per cent of the population was below the indigence line and another 35 per cent below the poverty line. At the time of the last census (1990), women made up 50.3 per cent of the population, a figure slightly higher than that recorded in the earlier censuses of 1962 and 1974. According to the 1990 census figures, 50.4 per cent of women were living

in cities. Although the fertility rate has been declining, the national average is still 3.6 for the period 1989-1991. It is still higher than the average

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57. With respect to wages, the 1995 survey shows that women earn 27 per cent less than men for their labour, a figure similar to that for the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. The pay disparity is even greater in the rural

received 18.4 per cent of total labour income, men 81.5 per cent

areas where it reached 37 per cent in 1994

despite attaining an average level of formal education

men (9.4 years versus 9 years in 1993), urban women are

in domestic service and other low-paid occupations

higher than the employed predom

Part Two

3. Financial and institutional measures

3.1 institutional mechanisms put in place to follow up and implement the Platform for Action

52. Since the Conference in Beijing, in all three branches of government, mechanisms have been instituted with the function of implementing and following up the agreements, directly or indirectly. These include the National Council for Women (CONAMU) itself, the executive branch agency with responsibility for guiding gender policy, the congressional Committee for Women, Children, Youth,



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communications information centre. It is headed by an Executive Director, who is appointed directly by the President of the Republic in Executive Office, which works in coordination with a Governing Board composed of representatives from other government bodies and agencies and three representatives from the women's movement. It also has an administrative and financial section and

coordinates specific institutional support initiatives with various ministries and policies in the country, especially those needed by women or which have a special focus on women's or gender issues. At the time of writing, the Council had initiated a process of evaluating compliance with the Equal Opportunity Plan, will provide precise data on the process in implementing each of its commitments.

Financial mechanisms -- !!! !!!

Before the National Council for Women had established an allocation plan for a National Directorate for Women in the Office of Ministry of Social Welfare, laboring sufficient support, the Directorate could now negotiate for additional funding from international cooperation funds.



72. Since the Council is not an executing agency, the items in its budget relate only to current expenses (salaries, materials, supplies, travel, expenses for communications and publications). There is no fund for investment costs (land and equipment).

73. For operations, the Council has obtained international cooperation from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which provided the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 1997-1999. UNICEF in this case was acting as administrator of funds from the Kingdom of the Netherlands (under a cooperation programme). At the time UNICEF was acting as administrator of funds from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, additional international funds were being sought from the Governments of France and Spain and from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

competitive process that takes into account not only technical skills but also the sensitivity required to fulfil the Council's functions.

3.3 Similar mechanisms for follow-up to other conferences

75. Mechanisms for follow-up of the various international conferences within the central planning agency is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Congress. Since the National Congress is the highest authority in Ecuador, the National Commission of Women (IACW) coordinated through the National Commission of Women (IACW).

76. Among the main activities in the preparation of the report of Ecuador for the seventh session of the National Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean: October 1997.

the report of Ecuador on a system of indicators for follow-up of the Platform for Action adopted at Belem do Para, Brazil, in 1995.

Publication of the platform adopted at Belem do Para (various printings).

the report of Ecuador under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1998.

National Development Council (CONADE), now the National Commission of Women (IACW).

- \* System of indicators for follow-up of item 18 of the Plan of Action adopted at the Summit of the Americas; August 1997.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Quito, 1999.

Consultation Meeting of Women of the Andean Countries, 1996.

Dissemination and discussion of the Optional Protocol prior to its approval to build consensus between the Government and civil society with regard to Ecuador's Ratification, 1998.

Commission on the Status of Women in 1998 and 1999. Attended the forty-second and forty-third sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1998 and 1999. Special Meeting of Wives of Heads of State and Government in the Americas, 1998.

Mechanisms for Institutionalizing a gender perspective in government offices, Quito, 1999. International affirmative action seminar, to discuss institutionalizing a gender perspective in government offices, Quito, 1999. International seminar on the theme, "Our girls, entitled to childhood", and others.

Follow-up initiatives are official and coordinated by the National Council for Women and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. For that purpose, the High Commissioner has asked for recommendations and comments. For that purpose, the High Commissioner has a human rights section and an international affairs section.

2.4. Role of non-governmental organizations in follow-up activities

Non-governmental organizations have taken on a new role particularly since 1993, in preparing for and following up on the commitments of the global platform for action and the regional programme of action. The presence of the global platform for action and the regional programme of action has attracted attention and visibility to the women's movement in the country, particularly in terms of its involvement in the design and adoption of public policies. These instruments have also created a framework enabling the government to move forward in setting up institutions, mechanisms and laws to promote the full exercise of

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...this statement indicates that organized civil society has been constantly involved in follow-up of the Platform...

...a regional symposium on the... productive health rights, held in Quito... American and Caribbean Women's Health... on Fund (UNFPA) and (b) a symposium in... Development, organized by the... Quito, 1998.

...the Political Coordinator for Women... offan women, the Women's Movement for... issues agreed upon by Ecuador in... and some that were rejected by the Government. They have undertaken... initiatives to implement and follow up on the theme of political participat...

important