

Part II

Women in cinema

Report of an International Symposium,
St Vincent, Valley of Aosta, Italy,
23–27 July 1975

Report of the symposium

Pursuant to a resolution adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its eighteenth session, an International Symposium on "Women in Cinema" was organized by Unesco in collaboration with the Autonomous Regional Government of the Valley of Aosta and with the co-operation of the Italian National Commission for Unesco. The purpose of the symposium was to provide an opportunity for women active in cinema from many different countries to exchange views on the various theoretical and practical considerations of their work, to discuss their mutual or different problems and points of view and to consider action that might be taken to improve their professional lives and the image of women projected in films.

Twenty-eight film directors, producers, actresses and critics from sixteen countries actively participated in the symposium. The list of participants was as follows:

Atiat El-Abnoudi	Egypt	Film-maker/Producer
Chantal Akerman	Belgium	Film-maker
Claudia Alemann	Federal Republic of Germany	Film-maker
Bibi Anderson	Sweden	Actress
María Luisa Bemberg	Argentina	Film-maker
Claire Clouzot	France	Film critic
Judit Elek	Hungary	Film-maker
Valie Export	Austria	Film-maker
Mira Hamermesh	United Kingdom	Film-maker
Isa Hesse	Switzerland	Film-maker
Anna Karina	France	Actress/Film-maker

Durga Khote	India	Actress, Film-maker/ Producer
Lila Kourkoulakou	Greece	Film-maker
Marta Meszaros	Hungary	Film-maker
Anne-Claire Poirier	Canada	Film-maker/Producer
Helke Sander	Federal Republic of Germany	Film-maker/Film critic
Helma Sanders	Federal Republic of Germany	Film-maker
Larissa Shepitko	USSR	Film-maker
Susan Sontag	United States	Film-maker
Sylvia Spring	Canada	Film-maker/Producer
Nicole Stephane	France	Producer
Charlotte Szlovak	France	Film-maker
Elda Tattoli	Italy	Film-maker
Agnès Varda	France	Film-maker
Maj Wechsleman	Sweden	Film-maker
Claudia Weill	United States	Film-maker, Camera- woman and Producer
Anna-Lena Wibom	Sweden	Film Historian/ Archivist
Mai Zetterling	Sweden	Film-maker

Mrs. M.-P. Herzog, Unesco's Director of the Division of Human Rights and Peace, and Co-ordinator of International Women's Year, opened the Symposium, chaired the plenary sessions and actively participated in all other meetings and workshops. Esta Marshall, consultant for the Symposium, Claudette Eleini, a lawyer from the Ligue du Droit des Femmes, Vivian Ostrovsky, women's film festival organizer, Gita Sellman, journalist, as well as the Director and another member of Unesco's Radio and Visual Information Division, also played active roles.

The participants decided to divide the symposium into two types of meetings: plenary sessions and informal workshops. The two major workshops were on: (a) money problems—distribution and production; (b) the image of women in film.

The rapporteur for the first workshop was Mai Zetterling (Sweden), for the second, Anne-Claire Poirier (Canada).

In addition to the discussions, a series of films made by women, many by the participants at the symposium, were presented.

Creation of "Film Women International"

The establishment by the symposium participants of the first worldwide association of women working in cinema, Film Women International, with headquarters in Stockholm, was undoubtedly the most concrete and positive result of the symposium. The new association was created in order to support and promote films made by women which reflect a truer image of women than that contained in most films and to denounce certain discriminatory sexist attitudes practised in the media.

Film Women International planned to create an international research and information centre on women's films, set up an archive of women's films and videotapes, assist in the publication of magazines, reports, books, etc., on women in cinema, foster the production of films made by women and find new ways to develop the distribution of such films.

Many goals and recommendations proclaimed during the symposium were thus built into the framework of a formal international association. This association would no doubt be able to implement the recommendations more effectively than could isolated individuals.

All women working professionally in the field of cinema or other visual media, as well as other women or women's organizations—national or international—that supported the aims of the association, would be accepted as members. The creation of national committees of Film Women International would be fostered.

Information concerning the possibility of Film Women International eventually becoming an International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) was immediately requested from Unesco by the newly formed association. (See pages 80–3 for text of the draft provisional statutes of Film Women International.)

Adoption of resolutions

The following resolutions were adopted during the symposium. Since the symposium participants decided unanimously to declare themselves the Constituent Assembly of the newly formed association, Film Women International, these resolutions can be considered the first public statements of this association.

1. We, the undersigned, participants and observers at the Unesco Symposium "Women in Cinema" held in Saint Vincent, Italy, on 23–27 July 1975, denounce the existing sexist image of women in the mass media, and appeal to women all over the world to examine carefully and analyse these images and to realize that they are living in a world of man-made images which do not faithfully reflect real women or deal fairly with the realities of women's experience. We urge all the women of the world to denounce these images and make an effort at counterpropaganda, insisting privately and publicly, and especially with their children, both boys and girls, that these images are *false*. We insist that all international and national bodies, both public and private, examine and change the public attitudes of *sexism*¹ in all mass media institutions.
2. We, the undersigned, participants at the Unesco Symposium "Women in Cinema" held in Saint Vincent, Italy, on 23–27 July 1975, declare our solidarity with all women film-makers who are deprived of their right to work or to circulate freely anywhere in the world. We affirm, as well, our support and solidarity with all women who suffer political, social, and economic oppression anywhere in the world because of their feminist or political views or activities.

Summary of discussions

The participants decided that it was essential that they quickly make personal contact with each other in small, informal groups and that the effectiveness of their discussions depended on a quality of communication based on specific personal relationships and discussion of personal experiences rather than the formality unavoidable at an "official" meeting. Therefore, after the introductory greeting by Mr. Carlo Benzo, Regional Adviser of the Government of the Valley of Aosta, an introduction and explanatory remarks by the President, Mrs. Herzog, and a few general remarks on the particular problems of women in the cinema in India (by Durga Khote) and in Egypt (by Atiat El-Abnoudi), the participants drew

1. Sexism: all discrimination on the bases of sex.

up a list of several topics that might be discussed in informal workshops. Topics chosen were: money—distribution systems and investment for film production; cinematographic form; all-women technical crews; the image of women in films; film archives; film criticism; technical and professional problems.

Workshops

Two major workshops were set up. The "Money Workshop" discussed the more practical aspects of film distribution, film investment sources and the creation of an international association of women working in cinema. The second workshop discussed the more theoretical problems of the image of women in films, the cultural mechanisms that create a discriminatory image of women and the possibilities of creating new forms in cinema to change this image.

The tone of the "Money Workshop" was both practical and sceptical, all of the members having had long experience, often disastrous, with the particularly difficult problem of convincing cinema industry investors that a film made by a woman was a "serious" proposition either for production or distribution.

A questionnaire was composed for distribution to all the symposium participants asking for details on all possible facets of their personal problems of production, distribution and income. Mai Zetterling (Sweden) suggested the creation of an international association grouping all women working in cinema for the pursuit of common goals. This proposal soon became the principal pre-occupation of the group. The ensuing meetings were devoted to the discussion and drafting of the provisional statutes of Film Women International.

The statutes were adopted unanimously at the last plenary session. The symposium officially founded Film Women International and voted itself the Constituent Assembly of this association. A Provisional Executive Committee was elected (see Article VIII of the Provisional Statutes) to prepare the final statutes and to organize a General Assembly of Film Women International.

The second workshop discussed several subjects related to the image of women in films, the role of women film-makers today in

various parts of the world and the need for the creation of a new cinematographic language to express feminist ideas. It was clearly demonstrated on several occasions that there are fewer differences and more similarities between the position of women in cinema in capitalistic and socialistic countries, and western and eastern countries than many of the participants imagined. However, it appeared that more satisfactory professional working conditions (equal pay, equal opportunity, etc.) existed for women film-makers in socialist countries.

The discussions were feminist in a fairly militant sense of the term. Many of the members of this group felt that they were victims of "a double oppression: class oppression plus sexist oppression". Underpaid and restricted by the lack of interesting employment opportunities, they were also performing all the unpaid, domestic labour of housewife and mother that is the common lot of most women.

Recommendations

Most of the recommendations made by the participants were incorporated in the draft provisional statutes of Film Women International and in the resolutions adopted. They dealt principally with the necessity for equality of opportunity for women in all aspects of their professional work and for a change in the images of women presented in films. The principal recommendations were to:

1. Examine and denounce discriminatory practices towards professional women in all the media on the grounds of sex and sexist practices;
2. Investigate and denounce the presentation of a false image of women in all the media;
3. Support, promote and distribute all films made by women which analyse feminine stereotypes and which create a new and truer image of women.
4. Catalogue, index, collect and conserve past and present films and videotapes by women; develop the widest possible distribution of films made by women in all the media in order to stimulate new audiences;
5. Ensure that women receive equal pay for work of equal value in the cinema industry;
6. Ensure that international and national organizations—both public and private—which subsidize film production and film-makers and which select scenarios and films practice no discrimination towards women;

7. Ensure equal representation of women on all international, national and local film festival juries and prize-giving selection committees;
8. Foster the widest possible communication among women in cinema all over the world; organize meetings, conferences, associations, film festivals and other cultural events to promote films made by women; assist in the publication of magazines, books, reports, etc., on women in cinema;
9. Find a new cinematographic language and new forms, outside the conventional idols and examples, to express a new image of women;
10. Develop a new anti-sexist film criticism;
11. Develop new collective ways of working in cinema such as all women crews, and other innovations that would provide a greater flexibility of roles and skills.

Films presented during the symposium

A programme of films by women was arranged as a complement to the plenary sessions and workshops. Film projections were held twice every day, at 11 a.m. or 4 p.m., and every evening at 10.30 p.m. The first showing on Wednesday evening, 23 July, was a retrospective of short films. It opened with the first explicitly feminist film, *La Souriante Mme Beudet* (Germaine Dulac, France, 1922) and continued with *Carmen* (Lotte Reiniger, United Kingdom, 1933), an animation film humorously treating the theme of Bizet's *Carmen*. *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren, United States, 1943), a classic film of the American avant-garde, and *Qu'est ce qu'être Femme?* (Agnès Varda, France, 1975) a film recently made for Radio France's series of films on women produced by women film-makers, completed the evening's programme.

The films shown on 24 July included *Djamilia* (Irina Poplavskaya, USSR, 1968, feature-length), a love story which takes place in a Kirghiz village at the beginning of the Second World War; *Wanda* (Barbara Loden, United States, 1970, feature-length), the story of a woman forced into total passivity by an environment totally lacking in opportunities for experience or growth; *La Triste Chanson de Touha* (Atiat El-Abnoudi, Egypt, 1972, short film), a day in the life of a troupe of itinerant street entertainers; and *Sedmikrasky* (Daisies), (Vera Chytilova, Czechoslovakia, 1967, feature-length), a condemnation of consumer-oriented, materialistic society told through the anarchistic misadventures of two 17-year-old girls.

On 25 July the symposium saw *Unter dem Pflaster ist der Strand* (Helma Sanders, Federal Republic of Germany, 1975, feature-length), a film about the disintegration of a love-affair between two

post-1968 political idealists; *El Mundo de la Mujer* (María Luisa Bemberg, Argentina, 1933), a short documentary illustrating the double stereotype of women as both sex object and housewife; *Le Temps de l'Avant* (Anne-Claire Poirier, Canada, 1975, feature-length), a film about abortion and the advisability of bringing a child into a hostile world; and *Joyce at 34* (Claudia Weill, United States, 1972, short film), a documentary dealing with the conflict between having a career as a film-maker and being a mother and the process of integrating work and family.

On 26 July, the films were: *Two Women* (Mira Hamermesh, United Kingdom, 1973, feature-length), a documentary comparing the life-styles of an English working-class housewife and a Hungarian woman scientist, and touching on various issues concerning woman in society such as inequality, economic exploitation and population control; *I Cannibali* (Liliana Cavani, Italy, 1969, feature-length), Sophocles' *Antigone* set in a modern totalitarian regime; and *Flickorna* (The Girls), (Mai Zetterling, Sweden, 1968, feature-length), a militant feminist film about the realization of their personal oppression as women by three actresses touring with Aristophanes' play, *Lysistrata*.

The final programme, on 27 July, comprised: *Promised Lands* (Susan Sontag, United States, 1974, feature-length), a documentary about Israel, its recent war and the memory of war; *Pieneta Venere* (Elda Tattoli, Italy, 1972, feature-length), a study of the relationship between class oppression and sexual oppression; *Adoption* (Marta Meszaros, Hungary, 1975, feature-length), a psychological study of a lonely working-class woman who wants to adopt a child; and *A Hungarian Village* (Judit Elek, Hungary, 1974, feature-length), a documentary depicting the life of teenage girls in a small peasant village.

Draft of provisional statutes of Film Women International

Adopted by participants at the International Symposium
on Women in Cinema

Article I

An international association, hereinafter referred to as the Association, to be called "Film Women International", is hereby founded.

Article II

The registered office of the aforesaid Association shall be in Stockholm and may subsequently be transferred to any other town or country by decision of a two-thirds majority of votes of members or their proxies at an extraordinary assembly.

Article III

The members of this Association shall be women who work in films and other women, or women's organizations, national or international, that adhere to the present statutes and subscribe to its aims as described hereinafter.

Article IV

The object of the Association shall be to support, promote and channel all films made by women which analyse feminine stereotypes and which create a new and truer image of women by

denouncing discriminatory attitudes on the grounds of sex and sexist practices in all the media.

- (a) The activities of the Association shall consist in the cataloguing, indexing, collecting and conserving of past and present films and video tapes made by women. The Association shall set up an international research and information centre for such films.
- (b) The Association shall assist in the publication of magazines, reports, books, bulletins, pamphlets, etc., on women in cinema.
- (c) The Association shall foster the production of films made by women.
- (d) The Association shall also make use of every means to ensure the widest possible distribution of films made by women in all the media, and to that effect shall devise new ways of reaching new audiences.
- (e) The Association shall also assist in the organization and preparation of meetings, conferences, round-tables, festivals and other cultural events.
- (f) The Association shall promote the widest possible communication and exchange among women in cinema all over the world, and shall encourage all kinds of subsidies.
- (g) The Association shall undertake any activities directly or indirectly related to the above aims.

Article V

The Association shall call for equal representation of women and men in all national organizations, both private or public, which subsidize film production and film-makers and which select scenarios and films. The same equal representation must be applied to juries of national and local film festivals. The Association shall insist on the equal representation of women and men on all international film festival juries and international film committees responsible for the selection of prize-winners.

Article VI

The Association shall demand equal pay for women in cinema for work of equal value to that of men.

Article VII

The Unesco Symposium "Women in Cinema", held in Saint Vincent, Italy, from 23 to 27 July 1975, has decided to found this Association and has voted itself the Constituent Assembly of the aforesaid Association.

Article VIII

The Constituent Assembly has decided by vote to set up a Provisional Executive Committee consisting of nine members and including a Secretary-General to be elected by this Constituent Assembly. The Secretary-General shall act as the Treasurer of the Provisional Executive Committee. The nine members shall be as follows: Claudia Alemann (Federal Republic of Germany); Maria Luisa Bemberg (Argentina); Claire Clouzot (France); Atiat El-Abnoudi (Egypt); Esta Marshall (United States); Anne-Claire Poirier (Canada); Larissa Shepitko (USSR); Anna Lena Wibom, Secretary-General (Sweden); Mai Zetterling (Sweden); Alternates: Valie Export (Austria), Mira Hamermesh (United Kingdom), Elda Tattoli (Italy).

Article IX

Members of the Provisional Executive Committee shall be deemed elected for a period of one year. This Committee shall be responsible for drafting the final statutes of the Association and shall prepare the General Assembly to which they will be submitted for approval. The General Assembly shall be held no later than 1 August 1976.

Article X

There shall be four categories of members of the Association: Founding Members, Active Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members. The Founding Members shall be all the undersigned who took part in the Symposium. The Active Members shall be any women working professionally in the field of cinema or other visual media. The Associate Members shall be other women or women's organizations—both national and international—who adhere to the present statutes and support its aims. The Honorary

Members may be all other persons who are accepted as members of the said Association following a two-thirds majority vote of the Provisional Executive Committee. The Provisional Executive Committee shall draw up lists of the four categories of members who are entitled to attend the General Assembly, but only Founding Members and Active Members shall have the right to vote.

Article XI

The Association and its Provisional Executive Committee shall be empowered to receive contributions, subsidies, grants, gifts, prize money and membership fees.

Article XII

Membership fees of the Founding Members and Active Members of the Association shall be, for the fiscal year 1975–1976, no less than 100 Swedish kronor (or US\$25). The Executive Committee shall give consideration to any special cases.

Article XIII

The Association shall be constituted for an unlimited time and can only be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at an Extraordinary General Assembly or their proxies.

It may be noted that these statutes have not yet been adopted in final form. According to Mrs Anna-Lena Wibom, Secretary-General of Film Women International, one necessary first step was the development of groups supporting women in cinema on a national basis. One national association has already been created, in Sweden, called the Svenska Kvinnors Filmförbund (Swedish Women's Film Association). It has over two hundred members, who are women involved in film and television.

Interviews of participants at the symposium

Some interviews recorded and assembled during or immediately following the International Symposium on Women in Cinema, by the Office of Public Information, Unesco

ATIAT EL-ABNOUDI (*Egypt*), film-maker and producer, 1971: *Le Cheval de Boue* (b/w., 12 min., 16 mm). Best short film of the year, London Film Festival, Gold Medal, Mannheim. 1972: *Ogniat touha el Hazina* ("The Sad Song of Touha", b/w., 13 min., 16 mm). French critics' prize, Grenoble. 1974: *Jumble Sale* (b/w., 30 min., 16 mm); *Deux Festivals à Grenoble* (b/w., 30 min., 16 mm); *Return Ticket to Cairo* (b/w., 45 min., 16 mm). 1975: *Abnoud, An Egyptian Village* (colour 16 min.).

Q. Why did you go over to the other side of the camera?

A. When you're an actress, you've got to follow the director's instructions. I wanted to have my own control over the subjects I was involved in. No one had ever asked me: what do *you* want? Creating images for oneself is the only way to feel powerful and able to do something. I think a director is like a god, creating everything; a woman too can be a god sometimes.

Q. Isn't it surprising for a woman to become a film director in Egypt?

A. No. The film industry began in our country forty-five years ago, and the first two producers were women. I began directing very late; at least twenty women were already working in films when I started, as editors, camera operators, sound technicians, etc. I had studied law, but I found that the cinema was the most suitable means for me to say what I wanted to say. It wasn't too difficult for me to get into the Cairo Film School and choose film directing. Nobody said "no" to me, and my husband and other people all encouraged me greatly. I was lucky enough to serve my apprenticeship without having to pay for it though I hadn't thought I would be able to study

directing without any money, or without having to go to a foreign country. As soon as the school was started I ran to it, and I found things easy. This is the result of social changes. *La Triste Chanson de Touha* is the first documentary ever made in this school.

Q. Does being a woman raise problems for you in your work?

A. If I've come up against some opposition, it's only because I'm a member of today's younger generation of Egyptian film-makers—but this is a normal phenomenon.

Q. How do you view your role as a woman in film-making?

A. In my films I feel very concerned with human beings and their faces. For the last forty-five years all one ever saw in our cinema was the luxurious life of our middle classes, never the people and never the poor. Similarly, in Egyptian films I never see any real roles for women showing them as they are in everyday life. They always are shown as belly dancers; the man approaches them in order to solve his own problems. These poor girls that men are all trying to seduce are often forced into becoming prostitutes or doing almost anything. This is hardly everyday life of women.

Q. What have you learnt from this Symposium?

A. The Val d'Aosta Symposium has given me confidence in myself and in my own career. These are not just trite words; many women are making films now and this makes me very pleased.

MARIA LUISA BEMBERG (*Argentina*), film-maker, 1970: *Crónica de una Señora* (feature—wrote screenplay and dialogue). 1973: *El Mundo de la Mujer* (documentary, 17 min., colour). Producer and director, 1975; *Triángulo de Cuatro* (feature—wrote screenplay and dialogue).

Q. You've already written the scripts of two successful full-length features. As a woman, it doesn't look as though you have a great deal of difficulty in making films in Argentina.

A. No, I think the financial difficulties are the same for any director. In Argentina, film-making is an artisan activity, only forty to fifty films are shot each year and there are tremendous financial difficulties.

Q. Why haven't you filmed your own scripts?

A. Maybe it's a kind of self-censorship that prevented me from

daring to take the initiative. But I'm working on a new script and after this Symposium I'm really determined to direct it myself.

Q. How did you begin?

A. I began six years ago with a script that was fairly successful; it was called *Chronicle of a Woman*. It was about a woman who apparently has everything: a husband, children, social status, and she's young and beautiful. Then a close woman friend of hers commits suicide. From that point on, she starts wondering what caused her friend to take her own life, and this leads her to reflect on her own life. She realizes, as she tries to become a person in her own right and not simply go on living her life vicariously through her husband and children, that she has never really been educated to become self-reliant. She lacks professional training and has no culture that she could use as a springboard for action.

And so she adopts an easy solution by falling into the arms of another man in order to forget her existential anguish. But then she realizes that her lover had also been the lover of her friend who committed suicide. So she finds herself in a kind of "no exit" confrontation and she's unable to find a way out, it's a real ghetto for her. This film was successful with women, but the reviews were terrible because, generally speaking, the reviewers are men who have difficulty in understanding women's problems. Still, this didn't prevent the film from being a commercial success. . . .

Q. What is your programme for the future?

A. A short film and a feature. The short film will be about a group of women I find very interesting: the chambermaids, cleaning women and domestic workers that usually come from the provinces to the big city in order to find a good job. They become marginalized because there's no trade-union to protect them, and they live in a kind of no-man's land between their employer's world and their own.

Q. Are you satisfied with the Symposium?

A. Yes, it was fascinating. It's rare that we can get together, exchange our impressions and see films produced by women. They're difficult to see because the commercial release of these films is usually uncertain. I've seen women here whose com-

petence and seriousness should definitely wipe out the frivolous and superficial image that we're still being given. Also, I had the impression that there was a bond of solidarity among all the participants that was very moving. This didn't surprise me: you find it in all groups, and especially in feminist groups.

ANNA KARINA (*Denmark*), actress and film-maker. Acted in: *Le Petit Soldat* by Jean-Luc Godard; *Une Femme est une Femme* by Jean-Luc Godard; *Bande à Part* by Jean-Luc Godard; *La Ronde* by Roger Vadim; *Tendre Requin* by Michel Deville; *L'Etranger* by Luchino Visconti; *Dragées au Poivre* by Jacques Baratier; *Des Filles pour l'Armée* by Valerio Zurlini; *Alphaville* by Jean-Luc Godard; *Le Plus Vieux Métier du Monde* by Jean-Luc Godard; *Pierrot le Fou* by Jean-Luc Godard; *Made in USA* by Jean-Luc Godard; *La Religieuse* by Jacques Rivette; *Justine* by George Cukor; *Laughter in the Dark* by Tony Richardson; *Michael Kolhas* by Volker Schloendorff; *Don Carlos* by Hans Geissendorffer; *Rendez-vous à Bray* by André Delvaux; *Pane e Cioccolato* by Franco Brusati; *L'Assassin Musicien* by B. Jacquot; *Roulette Chinoise* by Rainer Werner Fassbender; *Also es war so* by K. Thome. Director of *Vivre Ensemble*.

- Q. You've been involved in more than forty films as an actress, but you've only directed one film. Why?
- A. Yes, I've been in about forty-five films as an actress because I love the job, but I think that there comes a time when you really want to do something for yourself. Ever since 1962, when I was still married to Jean-Luc Godard, I really wanted to direct a film myself. At that time I was thinking of a film of a little one-act opera by Mozart called *Bastien and Bastienne*, but I didn't have the courage to make it. As one gets a little bit older, one's courage develops! So three years ago I launched out, and directed my first film *Vivre Ensemble*.
- Q. What kind of problems, if any, did you have for this film?
- A. As always, the problem is to find the money. You have to go and ask everyone for money, and say good things about yourself, but it's not always possible to "sell" oneself. . . . Besides, as an actress, you're catalogued. You're always being asked why you want to direct. I always reply, why not? Why not be interested in the whole process of cinema? I had nothing to do for six months, so I wrote the story and set up the film

myself. For the financing I spoke to a distributor whom I already knew well because he had distributed several of Jean-Luc Godard's films. He put up half the money I needed, and since I had no choice, I became my own producer, set up my own production company, and shot the film in four weeks and four days.

Q. Is there a specifically feminine sensitivity in art?

A. Women began to express themselves in the cinema very early on, but people aren't yet really used to women film-makers. There is a new and specifically feminine form of expression developing, because obviously a woman and a man dealing with the same subject will turn out two very different films. I want to make a film as a woman, I have no desire to try and make a film like a man, even if it's a thriller, a western, or a comedy.

Q. Are you being offered good parts at the moment?

A. You must be joking! I suppose there are a few good scripts around, with good parts in them, but nobody ever asks you to play them. Recently I've been offered a lot of idiotic parts, particularly for pornographic films. Nowadays it seems that you've always got to get undressed! Mind you, why not? But when you look at the old films, you can see that they knew how to be a lot sexier. . . .

DURGA KHOTE (*India*), Actress from 1931 onwards in 130 films. Producer and director of feature, documentary and advertising films since 1937. Awards: National Sangeet Natak Academy, and Government of India Padma Shri award for her contribution to Indian cinema.

Q. How did you get into films?

A. It's an unusual story. I began when I was twenty-four, when I already had two children. I was trying to find a way of earning a living so that I could raise them and give them the same kind of education I had received. Our family had been rich but there had been reversals of fortune. So the problem of educating my children was my great concern. When I was a child, I had adored the theatre. My father, who was also a great enthusiast, had been taking me there since I was five. The day

came when I had the opportunity of being in a film — I was no longer the age of the young heroines, but I was given other parts, and I had a great deal of success. This is why I went on with my career in the cinema.

Q. Was it easy for a woman to take up this profession?

A. When I began, there were terrible prejudices against artists of all kinds, whether dancers, singers, or cinema and theatre players. Because I began to work in this forbidden area, I was in fact banished from society. I was the first Indian woman from a respectable and well-known family to make a career in the cinema. In terms of the rules and principles of the social context I came from, I had fallen very low. Up to that time, women's roles had been played by men, and cinema was an activity for courtesans. The success I had right from the start changed this state of mind somewhat; things became a little easier and from that time on women became able to earn their living as in any other profession. Today, being a film artist is an enviable position, and this holds true for any job involving creativity and films.

Q. How did you come to work on the other side of the camera?

A. In those days there weren't any schools or diplomas; we had to learn everything by ourselves. It was a hard apprenticeship but there was no other way. And so here I am after forty-five years of experience, during which time I acted all sorts of parts, including mythological, historical and social roles. Since there are a thousand facets to film-making, I began to produce as well. I produced advertising films and documentaries because they took up less time and were less fatiguing, because I was a mother with a family to take care of, and I had domestic tasks as well. Here, too, everything worked out well. I was able to finance myself and acquire my own equipment. I have now been producing short films for twenty-five years.

Q. Have you had any particular problems?

A. As producer or as director I have always worked very closely with my technicians; they're a marvellous team of men and women, and we've worked in some of the most isolated areas of my country, such as the thick jungles of Orissa and the deserts of Rajasthan. I've never had any problems of relationships with them. On the other hand one can have language problems:

very few people understand English in India. This means that a director must know the main languages of the country, such as Hindi, Marathi or Bengali. My first feature came out in two language versions: Hindi and Marathi. One may also have to shoot in very difficult weather or physical conditions (when there's not enough water or food, or in extreme heat when shooting outside of the rainy season). One has to be able to adapt.

Q. Do you think a woman's success is more exceptional than a man's?

A. It is true that a successful work appears to be more remarkable when it has been made by a woman — and this doesn't just apply to the cinema. Nevertheless, in spite of all the problems associated with the conditions of women, women should not expect any privileges in their professional lives. In any case, the financial problems of the film industry are so huge that they affect everyone, whether man or woman.

What I think is that we, as women, are workers like any other, and that we are participating in the development of the film industry and the formulation of the world of tomorrow. We do not want to have an inferior status, but we want to achieve better working and living conditions through our own work, through our own initiatives, through our own ideals and our own creative possibilities.

Q. Can a symposium like this one contribute something new?

A. It can contribute a great deal, of course, but only if we don't limit our own vision of things by shutting ourselves into a narrowly feminist viewpoint or adopt any other limiting attitude. We've got to contribute to making films that will improve the image of women and make their lives easier. We've also got to make sure that all women working in the film industry are able to have satisfactory working conditions and proper possibilities for the future.

ANNE-CLAIRE POIRIER (*Canada*), film-maker and producer. 1962: *30 Minutes, Mr Plummer; Nomades de l'Ouest*. 1963: *La Fin des Étés*. 1965: *De Mère en Fille*. 1971-72: *En tant que Femmes* (a series of five films for television). 1973: *Les Filles du Roy*. 1974: *Le Temps de l'Avent*.

1976: *Les Femmes de l'Inde*. Producer of a film directed by Monique Crouillère.

Q. How do you explain the fact that there are so few women directors?

A. First of all, cinema is part of the world of industry and technology. Now, as women, we have always been taught the idea that technical matters were not our concern and that we weren't up to dealing with these matters. It's all right for a woman to drive a car but it wouldn't be appropriate for her to know how the engine works. I think that the cine-cameras and sound equipment scared away many women at the beginning, but this is disappearing. More and more women are coming into films, especially as editors. Of course editing is technical, but it requires great attention to detail—so it was suitable for women. But it's a very considerable door into film-making. I moved from editing to directing myself, and the fact that I started this way gave me an overall knowledge of film material. Directing a film means controlling it from A to Z, being responsible for it while working through a team. Since film-making is a co-operative effort, one has to find out whether one can run a team, so one has to dare.

Q. As a woman, what is the main obstacle you meet in your job as director?

A. First and foremost I think it's myself! I've been doing this job for fifteen years; I learnt to do it in a man's world, a world of male expression. I'd often ask myself what I ought to do in order to acquire their ease of communication and I didn't really know whether it should come from within me or whether it was part of the job I should be learning. At that time I used to behave a bit like a man and I was trying to develop qualities that weren't really my own. Of course, it enabled me to learn my job, but I think that in any form of expression—whether cinema or any other—this is a difficulty we all have to come to terms with. There is another difficulty, which is that of a more or less conscious discrimination. Personally speaking, I don't think I have ever been deliberately discriminated against by anyone at the National

Film Office where I work; but the subjects I would propose and the treatment I would be giving them would always be seen in relation to "what was being done". So I would try and do things according to the rules of "what was being done". It wasn't as good as the creativity that really came from within me, and which was obviously different.

Q. What have you learnt from this symposium?

A. What struck me was the force we represent when we're together meeting here for a few days; also, the isolation we shall all be returning to after this meeting is over. In that sense, I think that we're all individually in the same situation as all other women; and it's this situation of isolation that has got to be broken. There's been talk of collective money, collective intentions, associations and possibilities for distribution; but we should really realize that we're also faced with the necessity of changing the content of the whole notion of success in the cinema. The definition of success has been established by others than us; there is a current idea of what success consists of and film-makers go on working in these terms, but what's needed is to re-think and re-appraise it entirely.

What kind of films do we want to make? In Canada, and especially in Quebec, we live in a context in which we are dominated by a film imagery which is not our own. We live in a country which is entirely invaded by a foreign image, the American one. As women, our situation is similar: we are surrounded and dominated by masculine imagery and masculine concepts of cinema, which are not ours. This too must change.

AGNES VARDA (*France*), film-maker. 1954: *La Pointe Courte* (b/w, 90 min.), Prix de l'Age d'Or, 1955. 1957: *Ô saisons, Ô Châteaux* (colour, 22 min.). 1958: *L'Opéra Mouffe* (b/w, 17 min.). *Du Côté de la Côte* (colour, 27 min.), Prix Lumière, 1959. 1961: *Cléo de 5 à 7* (b/w, 90 min.), Prix Méliès, 1959. 1963: *Salut des Cubains* (b/w, 30 min.), prize at Leipzig short film Festival. 1964: *Le Bonheur* (colour, 90 min.), Prix Louis Delluc, 1966, Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, 1966, David Selznick Cup, Hollywood, 1966. 1966: *Les Créatures* (b/w and colour, 110 min.). 1967: *Oncle Yanco* (colour, 22 min., 35

min.), prize at the Oberhausen Film Festival. 1968: *Black Panthers* (colour, 27 min., 16 mm), prize at the Leipzig Short Film Festival. 1969: *Lions' Love* (colour, 110 min.). 1970: *Nausicaa* (colour, 90 min., 16 mm). 1974: *Daguerreostyles* (colour, 70 min., 16 mm). 1975: *Qu'est-ce qu'être Femme?* (colour 7 min., 16 mm). 1977: *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* (colour, 90 min.).

Q. One of your main problems is to find the financial backing to your films. But is it surprising that someone doesn't want to buy a cake with arsenic in it?

A. When you make films, you manufacture a product which is designed to be consumed by the public. At the present time, distributors don't feel able to present for consumption that product as it is conceived by many women, so we aren't given money. I'm not speaking especially for myself; I've found backing because I happen to produce a type of film which pleases people for the time being. But when I've made more difficult films, feminist films, I've had trouble in getting them financed. What's hard for a woman is not so much to make a career in films; it's only when you make films of a certain kind that you begin to come up against the difficulties of feminism. But even if it's a very slow process, I think we're strong enough to overcome these difficulties, because women have proved throughout history that they have an incredible amount of energy.

Q. Some women or all of them?

A. Some on behalf of all of them. You can't ask all women to become film-makers, but we want to enable those who have something to say in film to say it.

Q. What is the main obstacle that a woman film-maker like you has to face in France?

A. I've never had an obstacle as a woman film-maker, because I think that a phenomenon of being an exception comes into play; when you have one or two, or at least very few women in a male profession they are very easily accepted. Firstly, because they are the exception: it helps men have a clear conscience if they have a "weak female" around them. The problem gets more complicated when you have many women. As far as I'm

concerned, I've been making films for twenty years without any particular difficulty as a woman, but with a lot of difficulties as a film-maker, because I shoot films that resemble my ideas. But this doesn't mean that women don't have problems, because now that many of them are making films; they are turning into threatening competitors—and because of this they come up against many obstacles.

- Q. Is this the reason why there are very few woman directors throughout the world?
- A. No, there are many reasons for this. First of all, there's education. Women haven't been told that they could make films. They've been told that they can sew (either in high fashions or as simple seamstresses), or else that they can cook (only as simple cooks, however, not as "chefs"), but they have never been told that they could become film-makers in the same way they could become fashion stylists or cordon bleu cooks. True, the cinema is a difficult art, but the same applies to men (very few succeed in making a successful career in film-making); it's difficult, of course, but it's not reserved for men: it's an art for a human being. But things are changing because women are beginning to be told that not only can they devote themselves to this work, but that they can practise this craft as women, using their specific language, treating women's subjects and expressing a woman's viewpoint on all sorts of subjects.
- Q. Do you think that there is a specifically feminine creativity in art?
- A. The deep creativity of women has been stifled by a basically male-oriented culture, but most women like this culture because it is the one that they have assimilated through their education, the books they have read, and so forth. There's an enormous amount of work to be done by us, not so much to reject this culture, but to find out if there can or should exist a combined culture which would include an area in which women can find their own sources elsewhere and other than those sources men have taught them. For instance, there are beautiful films, masterpieces, which are misogynistic, where women appear as horrors, as rubbish, as betrayers, as imbeciles.

A time comes when women have got to realize this and they should no longer put up with being treated like zero quantities.

Q. Can an association of women film-makers change people's minds in the communication media?

A. As regards this symposium, I'd like to say that there's an enormous difference in comparison with the Mexico Conference. At no time did we want to imitate the huge international meetings of men; we began by leaving the conference room because it was too formal with our place-names and labels and our countries. We absolutely avoided attacking each other as socialist versus capitalist countries or developing versus developed countries. We were acutely conscious that over and above the culture, political system and cultural environment we lived in as individuals, women's problems were common to all. They are not always perceived in the same way, but they are the same for us all.

The point is not to change the minds of workers in the mass media, but the minds of the men who wield power over all the media, i.e. the directors of television networks, the distributors and producers, and all those who hold the purse-strings in all countries—and who are almost always men.

When they are given scripts by women, they're not interested. They have male reasons for this in addition to their purely critical reasons. We think that in all cinema and television committees, on all the juries where decisions are taken about what films should be shown to the public, women and men should be equally represented.

Q. Many women would be interested in film-making in order to be able to express certain ideas. What advice can you give them?

A. First of all, to have confidence in themselves, and realize that they have as many qualities and as much energy as men. Then, they should try, they should write, they should attack, they should invade any place where one can get hold of money. In every country where committees and subsidies exist for film-makers, women have got to be proposing subjects; when you've got fifty women proposing stories, you're forced to accept at least a few. Women have got to be present wherever there's a

chance of getting backing for their film – even if it's one chance in a hundred.

Some time after this interview, Agnès Varda talked about the Val d'Aosta meeting in a cassette-letter for the Belgian magazine *Les Cahiers du GRIF*:

It was a very interesting congress, organized by Unesco which alone could bring together women film-makers from all over the world.

First, the women were all really pleased to see each other. There was an atmosphere of kindness and friendship that one wouldn't have had if it had been a congress of men film-makers, because they felt that it's a normal thing to meet often at conferences. But we're still surprised that someone should have thought of having us meet, and we're delighted to see how happy the women are to be together, how tender they are, with a kind of soft complicity towards each other.

This is a feminine characteristic, a completely new professional feminine characteristic which struck us all from the very first day. It was more than a desire for friendship, it was a real quality of graciousness. . . .

So that there you had women coming from completely different political backgrounds who saw that they all had something in common that they wanted to express, with more or less consciousness and with more or less violence. . . . Women's feelings and women's sensations that they would like to see expressed on film. . . . Being a film-maker, a woman and a mother is difficult everywhere, even in countries where a woman is not basically considered to be the family maid. This difficulty in establishing a *modus vivendi* in the home when a woman is working as well as the man, and when the mother is working just as the father works, is a deep-seated problem. It doesn't present itself in the same way in all countries, but it's a problem that exists to a greater and lesser extent absolutely everywhere. All women film-makers are searching for something they want to say and express, in such a way that their work as film-makers will have a different colour, woman's colour.

Secondly, you come up against the difficulties of being a woman film-maker in the production and distribution structures which are misogynistic—like the other structures—and in which most women have more difficulty than men in having a script accepted, putting a cast together, and getting a good release for the film. This surprised the Soviet film-maker, who doesn't have these problems in her country, whereas the Italians have tremendous difficulty in imposing themselves as women.

Another interesting thing was the comparison between the different clichés associated with commercial cinema in the various countries. In France, as I said, the producers and audience want a woman in the cinema to be depicted in a romantic love relationship. For instance, a woman will be shown at work in a factory as a kind of sideline, with two or three scenes shot in the workshop, but the main emphasis of her existence will always be her relationship with her husband, her children or her lover. . . . So it's an uphill task to try and show pictures of women at work, which really correspond to reality. For example a woman doctor fighting to save a child (maybe it's too melodramatic, I know, but no matter), a woman engineer who's fighting to make her "place in the sun", a woman researcher, a teacher, a woman organizer who is fighting to get backing; all of these

struggles are never shown. This work and this struggle simply can't be expressed. It's hard to get the true picture accepted.

This made our Soviet colleague roar with laughter because, as she said, there was the opposite situation in the USSR. What wasn't acceptable there was to show a woman who is not working. It's politically unacceptable there. The images of idleness or women in love are the ones that are difficult to put across.

The Egyptian film-maker said that in Egypt it was impossible to imagine a film without a belly dance; it was an automatic component of women's film image.

So that in each country there's an image of woman, and it's an image that women film-makers want to fight against. They want to show other images of women that interest them as women, because they feel that they are the true ones. . . .

MAI ZETTERLING (*Sweden*), film-maker, 1960; *The Polite Invasions* (documentary). 1961: *Lords of Little Egypt* (documentary). 1962: *The Prosperity Race* (documentary); *The War Game* (14 min.), First Prize at the Venice Film Festival. 1963: *The Do-it-yourself Democracy* (documentary). 1964: *Alskande Par* (b/w., 118 min.). 1966: *Nattlek* ("Night Games", b/w., 118 min.). 1968: *Doctor Glas* (b/w., feature); *Flickorna* ("The Girls", b/w., 118 min.). 1972: *Vincent, the Dutchman* (colour, 60 min.). 1974: *Visions of Eight* (colour, 114 min., documentary). 1976: *We have May* (colour, 60 min.).

Q. You were an actress and you became a director. Why?

A. I am an active woman; I'm very unhappy when I have to sit and wait for things happen. Rightly or wrongly, I thought that I had masses of things I wanted to explore and say, that there were lots of subjects I wanted to raise questions about. As an actress one can't do anything about this because the work is given to us; we're forced to sit and wait until things turn up. And they don't often turn up as we would like them to. So I decided to take things into my own hands.

I wrote a great deal. I wanted to direct, make films and break into television too, because television is the medium that enables you to contact large numbers of people. If you're a painter or a writer, it's easy to start off, you set yourself up in your room or your studio, then you do your painting or write your book because it's become a kind of obligation. If you don't do it, you die. This is what I feel about certain subjects I want to raise questions about. As an actress, you have very little chance—or none at all—to do this, but as a writer or as a painter, you can. The canvas or the story belongs

to you from the beginning to the end. This is why I wanted to make films.

- Q. What do you think about the image of women in films today?
- A. It's not very good. Women are stereotyped; either we're the big boss's little secretary, or else we're prostitutes, or else we're misunderstood. But we're never strong and interesting human beings. And if by some chance the character has some strength, she's turned into a feminist, a blue-stocking and all the rest of it. It's a means of deriding us. We're never represented as independently interesting or fascinating people. We want this to change, and we want to participate in this process of change, and show a new and true image of woman; because women are becoming more and more positive. It's our turn now.
- Q. You shoot more documentaries than fiction films. Is this due to money problems?
- A. It's true that I work in both documentaries and fiction films. Directing a full-length fiction feature with actors and a script involves a huge amount of work. It interests me a lot, but only from time to time. Also, I love documentaries. It gets me out of my usual environment. I meet all sorts of people I didn't know anything about and I don't work with actors. A documentary brings me something inherently different. I hope to be able to go on directing both kinds of films, and to find a kind of balance between the two. It's a personal choice.
- Q. What's your main problem as a woman film-maker?
- A. Ask anybody this question, especially women directors, and they will all give you the same answer: money. You need so much! The world-wide crisis affects us all, including the film industry, and it affects us all the more as women. Many directors have great difficulties at the moment, but for women film-makers, these difficulties are compounded. Culturally speaking we are a "disaster area".
- Q. Do you think that there exists a specifically feminine expression in art?
- A. Of course, because we see things as women in our own manner. Our creativity is shown in different ways; our perspective is different, as is also our listening and how we express ourselves. We should put these elements of our experience as women in our films. The time has finally come to show ourselves. Up until

now only men were film producers and directors: women were shown on the screen from a male perspective. Henceforth our vision as women looking at ourselves will finally make us appear as we really are.

Q. What do you expect from a symposium like this one?

A. With a symposium like this as a basis, we have the possibility of asking Unesco to help us set up a real international organization for women film-makers, that can act as an information centre for us and our activities. Then we can really feel ourselves united, not just as "sisters" but as women who are real cinema professionals. We would then be able to draw on a permanent office with a secretariat and information and reception facilities.

It would be really important for us to be able to get together as a pressure group, not just to raise money for making films, but also to preserve the films that have been made by women, to get them known through festivals or by any other means. We've got to aim very high if we're going to get results. Discrimination against women directors is absolutely terrible. When one of them proposes a subject to a producer, she is told "This can't be one of our projects" or "What you're talking about there isn't at all lifelike". We have gradually discovered that our ideas can contribute to a vast political, social and cultural change. It's not just a matter of idiosyncratic female ideas that one or two women have put forward in isolation. They are ideas that are shared by women the world over, and I think they are going to make their presence felt and become more and more important.

LILIANE de KERMADEC (*France*), film-maker. *Aloise* (feature).

Liliane de Kermadec like some other invited film-makers, was unable to attend the symposium because of previous commitments, but she participated a few days later, in August 1975, in a round-table discussion organized by the film critic and journalist Claire Clouzot for the France Culture radio network. We present here some extracts of the remarks she made.

The director of *Aloise* was asked if the fact that a woman's meeting had adopted such "important and demanding recommendations" could be considered a good service rendered by women film-makers to themselves, in terms of their film public.

A. It's only with other women that we can have meetings, because as soon as we're with men, we're outnumbered. When I went to the International Film Festival in Moscow a few months ago, I felt very alone. Out of 380 films shown, there were only three films by women: *The Hour of Freedom has Come* by Heiny Srour, which was shown on the side somewhere, a documentary and my own film which had a slightly more official status because it had been requested. In the official competition, there were none at all. I was really frightened that there should be this disproportion, and even more so by the reaction of a director, who was a very sympathetic Georgian, and who never managed to assimilate the fact that I was someone who had actually made a film. I tried to talk about the "problem of women" at the press conference, and I felt very small, even smaller than I usually do, to tell the truth.

Q. The problems of financial backing, although no less difficult for men than for women, are probably greater when one is trying to make a certain type of film.

A. Yes, that's true. It's the problem of creating a different kind of cinema, and it would be dishonest to think that men are any better off. In fact, they are better off, but this is because they have more authority, because they're better known. If a man has made a short film, even a very short one, he'll be better known than a woman who has directed a full-length feature.

If we just consider the problem of trying to make a film that will not be solely for profit, I think then that men and women are in the same position. However, if we consider that filmmakers are people who are bearing witness, providing the viewpoints of their way of looking at things, then it is surely true that there is a complete lack of women's views and experiences in cinema. This is what we should be contributing.

We've got to tear ourselves away from the masculine models. We all live among the models entirely devised by men, in all structures. Everything is made by men, and this holds true for cinema as well. My own thinking is aimed at finding the means by which we can escape these models, at every level of life and in films. This effort will of course be reflected in what one says in a film when one makes it.

Q. What is your reaction towards films which are made against men and for women?

A. I don't know. I've come to think that if you want to make proper use of the cinema, in a reflective and motivated manner, you shouldn't use it for denunciation. I've thought about this a great deal and I'd like to be positive in the cinema. Here we come back to the problem of socialism, because of course it's much easier to make socialist films in socialist countries than in the capitalist world. This is probably why we have so much difficulty in talking about working women and women workers.

But what I think is important is to show a positive image of women in films, in other words to show ourselves as we think we are or as we'd like to be, or as we'd like our daughters and friends to be, and not as we have been seen and shown by men. I find that men are rather weak at the moment, and it is because they are in a very weak position that we're just in time to take up where they are leaving off.

GUNNEL LINDBLOM (*Sweden*), film-maker, 1976: *Paradistorg*. Gunnel Lindblom has acted in the films of Mai Zetterling and Ingmar Bergman, in addition to being one of the three woman directors in Sweden. Her film *Paradistorg* was presented *hors concours* at the Cannes Film Festival in 1977. Gunnel Lindblom was interviewed during the shooting of the television film *Loin des Chimères*¹ in May 1976, during which she stated:

First and foremost I'm a theatre actress. I've played many more parts in the theatre than in films, but in other countries I'm known only through the films I've been in. Becoming a director was a very slow process for me; I had to pursue a long path before taking the final step. I felt this to be a very important step for me.

I had always been surrounded by men directors, and I was convinced that I would never be able to organize this kind of work. This is the fear that most women have who don't dare face up to responsibilities when the opportunity to change arises. The same is true for actors. I think that many actors would like to direct, but they refrain—and this is all the more true with actresses—because of the very strong male domination in the profession.

I managed to convince a few men, amongst others a theatre manager, to let me direct a play. To my great surprise and pleasure my directing got very good reviews, which enabled me to go on with this type of work. If the critics had given this first effort a bad press, I might not have been able to continue, because a woman will get backing only once whereas a man will be given several tries. A woman has really got to prove that she knows, right from the start.

1. A television programme on women in the mass media produced by the Office for Public Information of Unesco.

Q. Three women are making films at the same time in Sweden. Is this sudden success for woman directors in your country just a fashion?

A. If this were true it would be a horrible thing. On the contrary I think it is the concrete outcome of a development that has been going on over several years. Films are generally produced by men and perhaps they have let themselves be gradually convinced that women directors also had to be given a chance. It's happened in other countries of the world, and in Sweden it must have been felt that it was time to try.

This development was absolutely necessary. Not only are most writers men who write about the problems that concern them most, which explains the fact that feminine problems are so rarely treated, but also the director is generally a man, so that at this stage an actress will have a lot of trouble in making her ideas felt.

Q. Are you satisfied with the image of women in films?

A. I think that a horrible image of women has become generalized, and it's very far from reality. It's very important that women recognize one another, that they see themselves represented in a realistic manner, that they no longer be considered as objects seen through the eyes of men.

Appendix: Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Introduction

The Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 7 November 1976. The Declaration sets forth the principles of rights for women on equal terms with men and calls for measures to guarantee their implementation.

The work on the Declaration began in 1963 when the General Assembly noted in a resolution that there still remained considerable discrimination against women, in fact if not in law, and asked the Commission on the Status of Women to prepare a draft Declaration aimed at eliminating such discrimination. The draft text, which the Commission adopted in March 1966, was considered by the Assembly that year and sent back to the Commission for further review in the light of additional proposals and Assembly discussions. The Commission adopted a revised text in March 1967 to which the Assembly gave high priority at its twenty-second session. After accepting the recommendations of its Third Committee for further amendments to the revised text, the Assembly adopted the Declaration.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women represents a milestone in the work of the United Nations to promote equal rights for men and women in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights. The Commission on the Status of Women may be expected in the future to concentrate its efforts on securing the full implementation of the Declaration through all the means available to it. The Commission recognizes that a first step in this

direction is to spread knowledge of the provisions of the Declaration and full understanding of their meaning among men and women throughout the world. A draft convention on the elimination of discrimination against women is also in preparation.

The General Assembly

Considering that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

Considering that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including any distinction as to sex,

Taking into account the resolutions, declarations, conventions and recommendations of the United Nations and the specialized agencies designed to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to promote equal rights for men and women,

Concerned that, despite the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other instruments of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and despite the progress made in the matter of equality of rights, there continues to exist considerable discrimination against women,

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

Bearing in mind the great contribution made by women to social, political, economic and cultural life and the part they play in the family and particularly in the rearing of children,

Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women as well as men in all fields,

Considering that it is necessary to ensure the universal recognition in law and in fact of the principle of equality of men and women,

Solemnly proclaims this Declaration:

Article 1

Discrimination against women, denying or limiting as it does their equality of rights with men, is fundamentally unjust and constitutes an offence against human dignity.

Article 2

All appropriate measures shall be taken to abolish existing laws, customs, regulations and practices which are discriminatory against women, and to establish adequate legal protection for equal rights of men and women; in particular:

- (a) The principle of equality of rights shall be embodied in the constitution or otherwise guaranteed by law;
- (b) The international instruments of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies relating to the elimination of discrimination against women shall be ratified or acceded to and fully implemented as soon as practicable.

Article 3

All appropriate measures shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women.

Article 4

All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to women on equal terms with men, without any discrimination:

- (a) The right to vote in all elections and be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- (b) The right to vote in all public referenda;

- (c) The right to hold public office and to exercise all public functions. Such rights shall be guaranteed by legislation.

Article 5

Women shall have the same rights as men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. Marriage to an alien shall not automatically affect the nationality of the wife either by rendering her stateless or by forcing upon her the nationality of her husband.

Article 6

1. Without prejudice to the safeguarding of the unity and the harmony of the family, which remains the basic unit of any society, all appropriate measures, particularly legislative measures, shall be taken to ensure to women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in the field of civil law, and in particular:

- (a) The right to acquire, administer, enjoy, dispose of and inherit property, including property acquired during marriage;
- (b) The right to equality in legal capacity and the exercise thereof;
- (c) The same rights as men with regard to the law on the movement of persons.

2. All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure the principle of equality of status of the husband and wife, and in particular:

- (a) Women shall have the same right as men to free choice of a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
- (b) Women shall have equal rights with men during marriage and at its dissolution. In all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount;
- (c) Parents shall have equal rights and duties in matters relating to their children. In all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount.

3. Child marriage and the betrothal of young girls before puberty shall be prohibited, and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Article 7

All provisions of penal codes which constitute discrimination against women shall be repealed.

Article 8

All appropriate measures, including legislation, shall be taken to combat all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

Article 9

All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to girls and women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in education at all levels, and in particular:

- (a) Equal conditions of access to, and study in, educational institutions of all types, including universities and vocational, technical and professional schools;
- (b) The same choice of curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard, and school premises and equipment of the same quality, whether the institutions are co-educational or not;
- (c) Equal opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
- (d) Equal opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult literacy programmes;
- (e) Access to educational information to help in ensuring the health and well-being of families.

Article 10

1. All appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure to women, married or unmarried, equal rights with men in the field of economic and social life, and in particular:

- (a) The right, without discrimination on grounds of marital status or any other grounds, to receive vocational training, to work, to free choice of profession and employment, and to professional and vocational advancement;

- (b) The right to equal remuneration with men and to equality of treatment in respect of equal value;
- (c) The right to leave with pay, retirement privileges and provision for security in respect of unemployment, sickness, old age or other incapacity to work;
- (d) The right to receive family allowances on equal terms with men.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on account of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, measures shall be taken to prevent their dismissal in the event of marriage or maternity and to provide paid maternity leave, with the guarantee of returning to former employment, and to provide the necessary social services, including child-care facilities.

3. Measures taken to protect women in certain types of work, for reasons inherent in their physical nature, shall not be regarded as discriminatory.

Article 11

1. The principle of equality of rights of men and women demands implementation in all States in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals are urged, therefore, to do all in their power to promote the implementation of the principle contained in this Declaration.

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