

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.

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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 in the process of specifying

consensus achieved some major advances in human rights, including the right to be involved in the process of specifying

that the international conventions and agreements to which Ecuador is a party should be taken as a source of law and might be invoked by the domestic laws on the matter.

The existence of an agency to guide public policy on gender (presently the Deputy Ombudsman for Women has been set up)

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

The Constitution also creates representatives of civil society to combat what is considered one of the nation's gravest problems.

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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 Ecuadorian people, 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, leaving its commitments to social development, health, education and housing must neglect its commitment to address international banking system, the country's domestic social arrears.

his period from natural disasters. In 1998, two earthquakes and heavy rains hit the coastal soils. The fragile ecosystem has been threatened by unsustainable use of land. 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 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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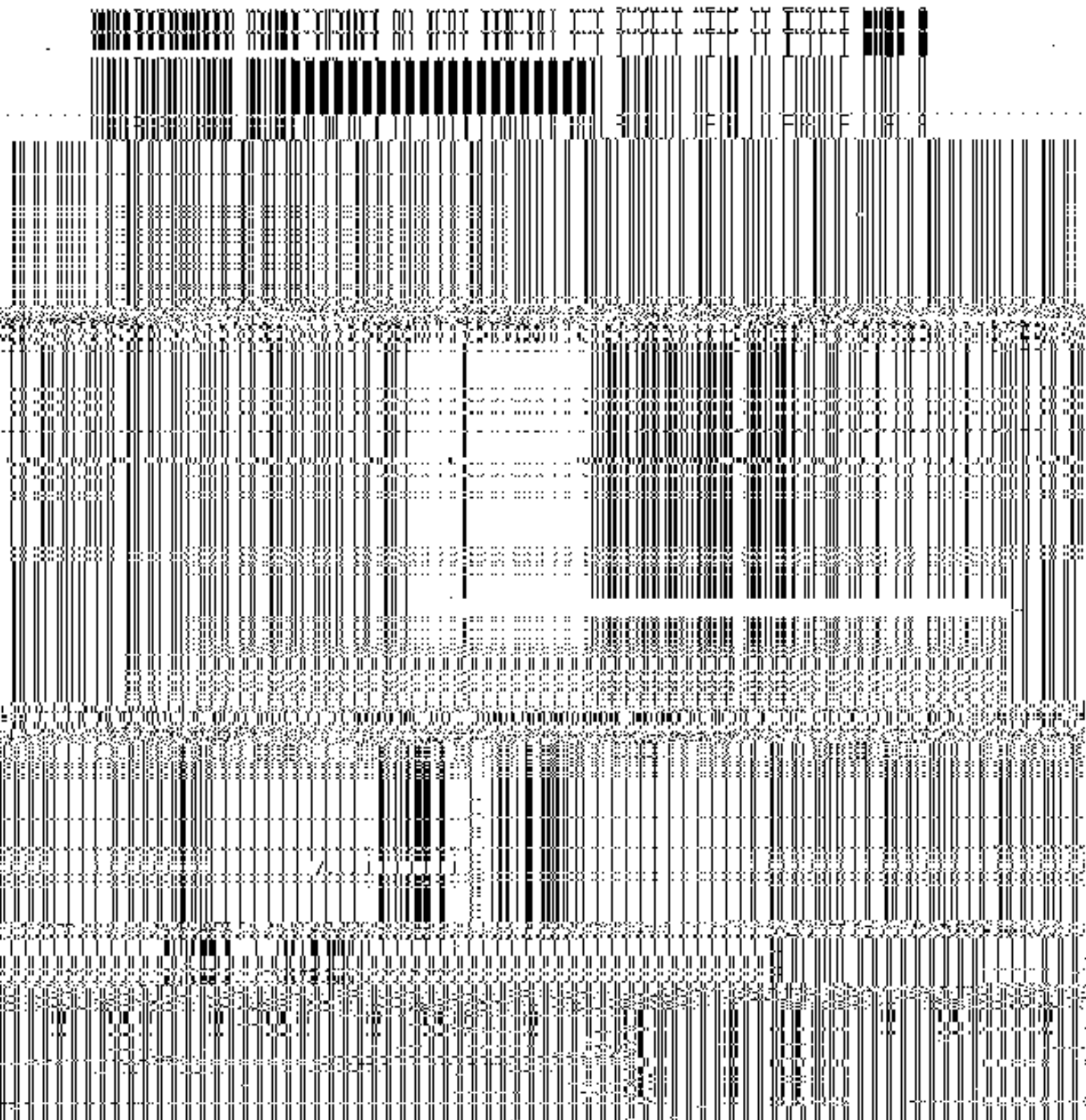
es from 5 per cent to 18 per cent at the highest levels of the
the election of women to 13 per cent of the legislative seats are

in women
judicial

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

eu across the board in public policy.

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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 decree¹ 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 Affairs (DINAMU) and sets forth objectives covering the 12 areas of critical

10. Subsequently, the National Constitution Article 41, which reads: "The policies for achieving equality of opportunity shall be incorporated in the Government's national planning system."

11. In keeping with the process of modernization for women is a modern, participative technical board composed equally of government officials and women

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

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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 first body to be created. The Chairman of the Secretariat was the Minister of Education who expressed her desire to ensure that the body should be representative in its work.

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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. A specifically mandated office to monitor the rights of men and women.

The Andean Social Charter is a part of the Andean subregion and member states. It is a common declaration of values, created under the Cartagena Agreement.

34. 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-

descendant peoples; environment and housing; and rural development.

35. The Standing Committee for Women, Youth, Children and the Family of the National Congress. This committee was created in 1995.

36. Principles set forth in the new Constitution in two areas: (a) new legislated 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; and against women and the family; education; bank; handicraft development; and expansion of the National Development

the municipal civil registry; agricultural development; social security; and the health, labour, social and penal codes.

37. The Council has been incorporated by the Council into the Ecuador Social Agenda for the Twenty-First Century. The agenda is a development strategy that is reflected in the

general development and compatible with national policies for enabling women to realize their rights through the exercise of their rights, improving their

These four areas are: (a) development; (b) social integration; (c) relations to the congress; and (d) congressional

38. Social integration and security as an area that is related to the active reform, with the aim of influencing (through the committee for Women, Children, Youth and the Family) 24 pieces of

legislation.



rights guaranteed by the 1996

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.²
- National Human Rights Plan, Chapter on Women, 1998.
- Agenda for Development: Ecuador in the Twenty-first Century.³
- 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 Embargo Act, Free Maternity Code (bills and amendments introduced).</p>
<p>Register No. 1 of 11 August 1998.</p>	<p>Reform of the Constitution of</p>
<p>Workshops 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 1995.</p>

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 negative results. The 80% success rate 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 were not 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 into effect, despite giving lip service in their objectives. Gender perspective in practice pay little or no attention to

the withdrawal of some cooperation agencies from Ecuador. Funds earmarked 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 November¹⁰ 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 in the background. At the same time, they have become an instance of a woman belonging to the leadership in student organizations.

50. 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

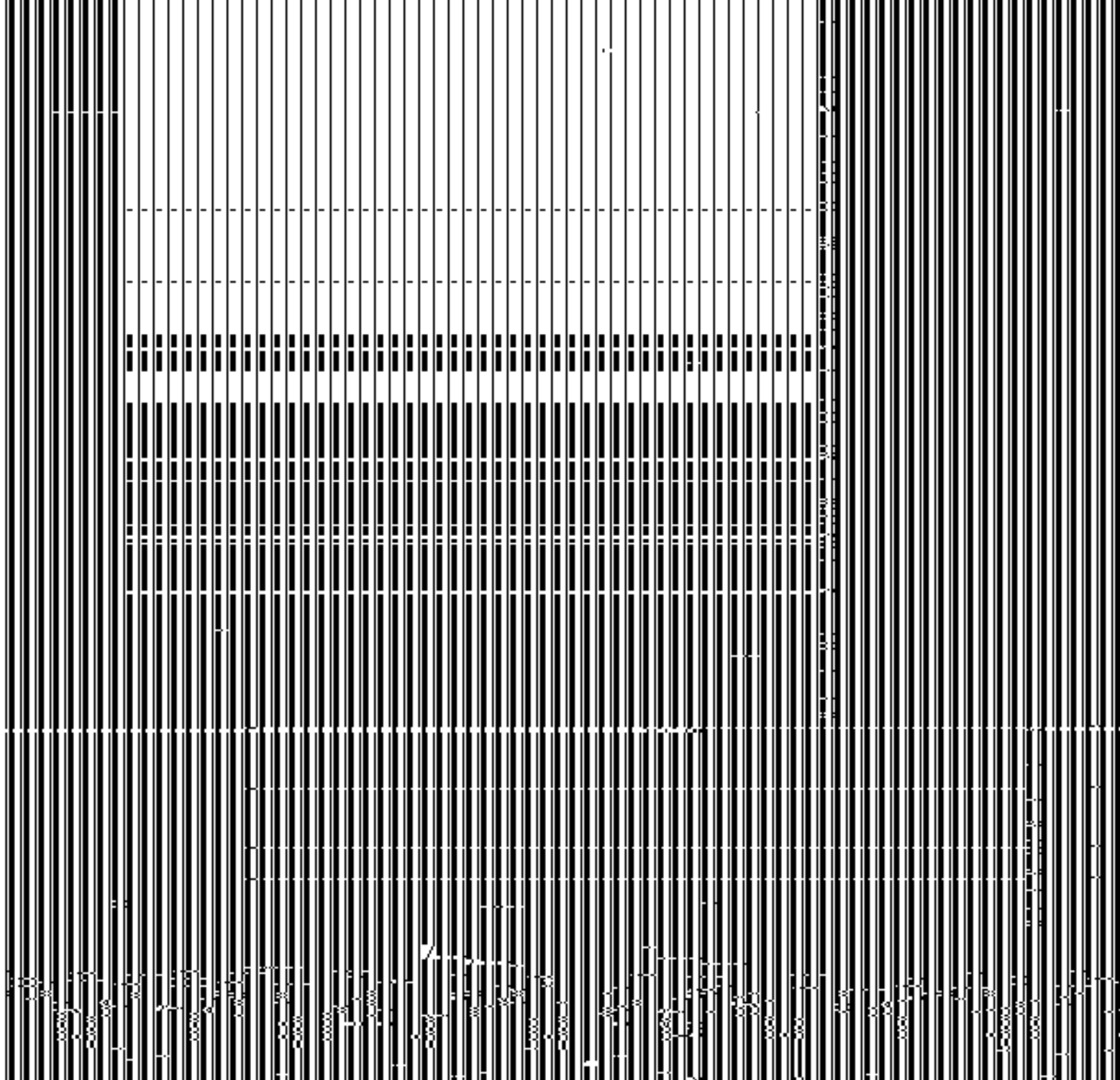
in cities. Although the fertility rate has been declining, the national average is still 3.6 for the period 1989-1991. It is still higher than the average

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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

ess, despite attaining an average level of formal education men (9.4 years versus 9 years in 1993), urban women are employed predominantly in domestic service and other low-paid occupations



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,

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 bilateral agreement) and the IDB (under a similar agreement). At the time the IDB 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 are established within the central planning agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Congress. Since the National Congress is the highest authority in Ecuador, the National Commission of Women (CONAMU) is coordinated through the National Commission of Women (CONAMU).

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 to the Platform for Action adopted at Belém do Pará, Brazil, in 1994.

Publication of the platform adopted at Belém do Pará (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 (CONAMU), Planning Office

- * 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 Women's Affairs after prior consultation with civil society and cooperation agencies. The Council is asked for recommendations and comments. For that purpose, the Office of Women's Affairs 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 participants 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... contribution of non-governmental... and Beijing agreements on sexual... in 1997 in coordination with the... Network and the United Nations Popu... preparation for the World Summit fo... Citizenship Forum of the Andean Sou...

...the Political Coordinator for Women... in Ecuador, the Permanent Forum of... Autonomy have incorporated in the... They have undertaken... initiatives to implement and follow up on the theme of political participat...

important