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Message to New Zealand Women's Meeting, May 18, 1977

Mildred Emory Persinger

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IWY TRIBUNE 1975 — NON-GOVERNMENTAL FORUM
WORLD CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

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NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017
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18 May 1977

MESSAGE

To: New Zealand Women's Meeting

From: Mildred E. Persinger, Chair, 1975 IWY Tribune

At this beginning of the UN Decade for Women, the condition of being female seems able to bridge barriers of social status, color, politics, wealth, poverty, education, and ignorance. Whereas women have historically worked together for reform from outside the political and economic system, now they are organizing information and resource centers, educational programs, and skills banks, equipping themselves to help run the system.

Where women may once have competed among themselves in order to enter this man's world, today women are building a mutual support community in order to change that world.

Although they seek power primarily to change the structures closest to them, women have also been alerted by the world dimension of IWY to others' claims for justice. Whether women be illiterate migrant agricultural workers in New Zealand or subsistence farmers in poor countries where imported patterns of industrial development have passed them by, their situation is worse because they are female. Reflecting on the bursting energy behind large plans and projects already underway, one is tempted to be utopian: if women together can practice sisterhood despite the threatening divisions in society, they may prove to be what one of the Tribune speakers (a man) said they are - "The only available new force for change in the World."

ROSALIND W. HARRIS, President, *Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with United Nations Economic and Social Council*

MILDRED E. PERSINGER, Chairman, *IWY Tribune Organizing Committee*

ANNE S. WALKER, Director, *IWY Tribune Project*