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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR - 1975

1. Background: The Preamble and Charter of the U.N. declare that the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter must be respected without distinction as to sex. The Charter implies that the U.N. will work for the elimination of discrimination against women on a global basis. These principles have been carried out, in part, by several U.N. actions, including:

- Establishment of a U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, first convened in February 1947;
- Unanimous adoption of a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in 1967;
- Initiation of a reporting system in 1968 on the implementation of the Declaration, based on biennial reports by the Member States;
- Special attention given to the role of women in development during the Second U.N. Development Decade (1970-1979), including the convening of an International Forum on the Role of Women in Development and Population, held in the U.S. in early 1974.

On December 18, 1972, in recognition of the 25 years of work by the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly designated 1975 as International Women's Year. The Economic and Social Council was assigned the task of organizing activities in recognition of the Year. In 1974, a special fund was established by the U.N. for voluntary contributions to the International Women's Year program.

2. Goals of International Women's Year: The General Assembly resolution of December 18, 1972 lists three central, interrelated aims for activities associated with International Women's Year:
  - Promotion of equality between men and women. This was later elaborated by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to include equality in law, economic rights, family responsibilities, decision-making at all political levels, and access to health care.
  - Support for the integration of women in the total economic, social, and cultural development effort.
  - Recognition (and encouragement) of the role of women in the development of international cooperation and world peace.
3. International conference: In May 1974, the Social Committee of ECOSOC voted approval of a resolution, co-sponsored by the U.S. and several developing countries, calling for an international





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conference to be held during International Women's Year. The conference, which will serve as the focus of the Year's activities, will convene in June 1975 at Bogota, Colombia. Topics on the agenda will include:

- Discussion of the extent to which the U.N. has implemented recommendations on the elimination of discrimination made by the Commission on the Status of Women;
  - Evaluation of current trends and changes in the roles of men and women in all fields of society;
  - Examination of major obstacles against the participation of women in the development effort, particularly in rural areas; and
  - Establishment of a plan of short-term and long-term action aimed at achieving the total integration of women in development and eliminating discrimination on grounds of sex.
4. U.S. participation: The U.S. has supported the concept of an International Women's Year since its inception and its delegation to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women has been active in obtaining acceptance of resolutions concerning the activities to be held during the year.

Participation on the national level began in September 1973, when the U.S. Center for International Women's Year was established in Washington. The Center, administered by Meridian House International under a grant from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, publicizes and correlates U.S. activities in observance of International Women's Year. On January 30, 1974, President Nixon designated 1975 as International Women's Year in the United States. He called for intensification of the national effort to advance the status of women further within the U.S. and suggested that the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment would be an appropriate form of observance.

Nongovernmental organizations are also making plans for participation in the Year by encouraging state and local officials to proclaim the Year for their jurisdictions and by forming International Women's Year support committees. They will also be involved in the increased emphasis on women's involvement in cultural and educational exchange programs.

Within this hemisphere, the Inter-American Commission of Women, a specialized organization of the Organization of American States (OAS), has declared 1975 as the Year of Women of the Americas. The Inter-American Commission, established in 1928, was the first official, intergovernmental body specifically created to secure the civil, social, and political rights of women.

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FURTHER REFERENCE: . "International Women's Year Proclamation" as in Department of State Bulletin of April 22, 1974.

. Women in the World series of the Bureau of Public Affairs' Office of Media Services.