action update...



King Cites Gains, Stalemates In Addressing Injustices

ACTION Deputy Director Mary King recently attended the 18-day World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, as a member of a 37-person United States delegation. Headed up by Sarah Weddington, assistant to the President, the U.S. delegation also included Perdita Houston, NANEAP regional director and Anne Turpeau of the Office of Policy and Planning.

The conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, July 14-30, was attended by 2,300 representatives from 145 nations-the largest meeting ever to address the concerns of women.

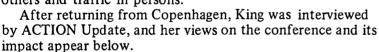
The conference marked the mid-way point of the U.N. Decade for Women (1975-1985), and member-countries gathered to evaluate progress of women over the last five years and to map out new strategies for the next five.

However, the women leaders who came to discuss women's roles in a man's world, encountered ongoing attempts to introduce issues not directly concerned with women.

In the end, the delegations from the United States, along with Australia, Canada and Israel voted against the final conference document-the World Program of Action-because of the inclusion of pro-PLO language and a call to eliminate Zionism, equating it to racism. Twenty-five abstentions, mainly by Western nations, were taken as a sign of support for the U.S. position.

The U.S. delegation, however, successfully either sponsored or co-sponsored resolutions on women refugees and displaced women, disabled women, international drinking water supply and sanitation needs, elderly women and economic security, battered women and family violence, and against exploitation of the prostitution of

others and traffic in persons. After returning from Copenhagen, King was interviewed



Update: What are your opinions on the final vote on the Program of Action - the four "noes" and the 25 abstentions?

King: On the positive side, we should not overlook the fact that 94 countries voted yes for the Program of Action including some regimes which are adamantly committed against the political participation of women. Although frustration in our own delegation ran high because we had to vote against the program, it is more important in the long term that nations whose governments now

fear the political awakening of women, have formally endorsed a program that changes the way the U.N. does business.

The other significant item to remember is that the U.S. did sign the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women along with 56 other countries. This may be potentially more significant on a long-range basis than even the Equal Rights Amendment.



PC Develops Improved Candidate Placement System

Peace Corps and the Office of Recruitment and Communications (ORC) have developed a new recruitment and placement system designed to match volunteers earlier with their overseas assignments and thereby increase the number of people accepted into the program.

Beginning this September, recruiters will no longer nominate PC applicants for specific assignments. They will, instead, match as many candidates as possible into one of about 40 broader initial area assignments. Each area assignment will contain basic skill criteria, the names of countries requesting those skills and the opening dates of programs using the skills. In order to be nominated into an assignment area, a candidate must meet or surpass basic skill requirements.

"Under our current system, candidates cannot seriously be recruited until after written training assignment criteria (TACS) for specific assignments are received from our PC countries by the Office of Volunteer Placement (OVP)," says Bob White, ACTION recruiter in the San Francisco Area Office, on detail to headquarters to develop the program. "That process leaves recruiters only a couple of months to identify, attract, nominate, evaluate and clear prospective volunteers."

Under the recently modified system, recruiters will be able to nominate more applicants, sooner. And with this modification, OVP can match candidates to their assignments at the time they are invited to a training program.

OVP will keep track of the number and skills of applicants placed in each area. That process, according to White, should enable OVP to match many more applicants against the TACS that come into PC headquarters some four months in advance of training. "A considerably higher acceptance rate will hopefully be a result of the earlier invitations," he says.

PC/OVP and ORC jointly developed the initial assignment areas based on recent TAC sheets and on information on the various skills used in PC countries.

One component of the new system is a computerized record of volunteer applications that will enable recruiters and placement officers to keep track of the data and to keep in touch with potentially qualified applicants, according to OVP staff member A. J. Simpson. This should make it easier to periodically send out individual letters to applicants waiting to be nominated, with information on current events and issues in the developing world and in Peace Corps. Applicants who have been nominated and are "on hold" will hear from PC every 30 days, as well "acceptees" who must wait several months before training begins.

This modified system is to be introduced at the Office of Recruitment and Communications' training conference currently being held in Rosslyn, Va



Recruiting in the nation's capital.

King (from page 2)

Update: What do you believe was the most important work done by the U.S. delegation?

King: Our delegation introduced a resolution on racism, based on the fact that women of color-two-thirds of the women of the world-carry a double burden... racism as well as sexism. Given the number of women affected worldwide, plus the lengthy debate on the issue, this was extremely important.

Democratically and historically, U.S. sponsorship was also important, since our country has an excellent record for self-reform and correcting wrongs and injustices.

Unfortunately, despite excellent support from many African nations, the resolution did not succeed as we had wished. The language of the Declaration of Mexico City, adopted at the initial women's conference in 1975, was added containing the argument that Zionism is a form of racism. This forced us to drop the resolution. Angola reintroduced it, and we ended up having to vote against what had been our resolution because of the implicit references to Zionism in the final text

Update: You were closely invoved in the preparation and presentation of the Resolution on Women Refugees and Displaced Women. What, specifically, were the goals of that resolution?

King: Women number two-thirds of the estimated worldwide refugee population of 15 million, so this is truly a "hidden" women's issue. We asked that the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) appoint more women to high level positions in that agency and that the U.N. involve women in the administration of refugee camps and programs. The resolution asked for better educational, health and nutritional camp facilities for women and children and, notably, that the countries of first asylum provide protection for refugee women in camps against physical assault, particularly rape. What we were really pushing for was an internationalization of the problem. This is a burden the world community must face. It is a global problem that demands a truly international response.

Following an hour-long debate, the resolution passed by consensus, after which long and spontaneous applause rang out in the hall. It was certainly a symbolic and moral victory as well as a practical one. This was the first time that women refugees had been addressed in the U.N. system. This resolution provides leverage and tools to change programs.

Update: Of all the resolutions that were adopted,

which do you think will have the most wide-ranging impact?

King: That's such a hard question to answer, since there were 29 resolutions adopted... Let me answer in a different way. The most consequential language at the conference from my perspective, was contained in a New Zealand amendment to the Program of Action. It actually changed the nature of the dialogue. It refers to, and I'd like to quote, "...the subjugation, exploitation, oppression and domination of women by men. Women are not simply discriminated against by the productive system, but subject to the discrimination that arises by virtue of their being the reproductive force." This really went to the heart of why there needed to be a conference at all.

In many countries the concept of equality is very hard to understand, since religion and culture dictate a subordinate, if not sub-human, status for women. Consequently, the amendment was hotly debated among the delegates. In my opinion, it's straightforward language that directly and unabashedly states the situation affecting women worldwide.

I also believe the refugee resolution the U.S. sponsored was very significant. In terms of what I described earlier, you can see how much this could mean to the UNHCR and to other U. N. agencies as well as governments that want to be more responsive to the plight of women refugees.

Update: Bringing all this back home, how could ACTION and Peace Corps support the next five years of the U.N. Decade for Women?

King: We already have a high level of awareness at ACTION and the Peace Corps. For instance, no other U.S. government agency had three representatives on the delegation. So the interests and concerns and the relevance of the programs of this "little" agency were well represented at the meeting.

I don't see any immediate screeching, shifting of gears in ACTION or Peace Corps as a result of this conference. I see rather, a deepening awareness of women's issues. I don't see our budgets changing, although I would hope there would be an intensification of some of the programmatic changes we have already made in sensitivity to women... Peace Corps' Women in Development program and the VISTA volunteers who work with some of the front-line women's issues. We are spearheading an effort through all of our programs to include women and to address the concerns of women. I believe we are ahead of, or in step with, many of the proposals contained in the Program of Action adopted at the conference. ACTION and Peace Corps have the satisfaction of knowing they're on the right track.

Staff Spotlight: Wilma Lloyd

There are always some employees in every organization about whom people say, "This place would collapse without....." That's the case with Wilma Lloyd, budget analyst for the Office of Communications.

After 24 years in the government, 18 of them with Peace Corps, VISTA, and with ACTION since the merger of federal volunteer programs in 1971, there isn't much about this agency and its programs she doesn't know. And, she has the ability to get things done.

People are always stopping by her office to get their questions answered, or asking her to explain the inner workings of a bureaucracy. In addition to pushing around Communications' \$1 million-plus annual budget, she's in charge of all personnel actions for the office. "That's all our permanent staff, plus temps," she explains. But Lloyd seems to thrive on being very busy.

"For example," she recalls, "back in the early days of Peace Corps, the staff was tireless. You could call these offices anytime-nights and weekends, and someone always picked up the phone. We worked around the clock."

Then, when she went to VISTA as secretary to Glenn Ferguson, the program's first director, the pace was similarly hectic but, according to Lloyd, "There was a real atmosphere of dedication, and I was lucky in that I had a lot of contact with volunteers then."

Prior to her Peace Corps and VISTA jobs, Lloyd worked for AID for four years, two of them as executive secretary to the executive officer of the AID mission in Monrovia, Liberia. "The Liberia tour was one of the most interesting things I've ever done!" Lloyd explains that she was slated to go to Kenya for AID, but while on home leave she met, and eventually married James Lloyd. They now have two children, Michelle, 12, and James, Jr., 8. "So, that was the end of my overseas travel," she says, only slightly wistfully.

Originally from Enfield, N.C., Lloyd returns to her home town at least twice a year. "Where is Enfield?" she is asked. "It's near Rocky Mount," she grins. "...Enfield is a very small town in eastern



North Carolina. I'm the youngest of eight children, and we grew up on a farm. Although my mother sold the farm and now lives in town, all of us, especially our children, love going down there."

Expect for the Liberia experience, Lloyd likes her present job best. "I've always enjoyed working with figures, and in a place like ACTION, things change by the hour—or by the minute," she laughs. "It really keeps me going. Every day is different, and in terms of my job I prefer it. I'd much rather work here than in an old, established, military-type agency where everything always seems to be in 1, 2, 3, order."

Lloyd majored in business administration at Morgan State College in Baltimore, Md., and has continued to take accounting, budget formulation and administration courses at American University and George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

"My long-range dream is to open my own business. I'd like to specialize in accounting, tax form preparation and provide a typing service," says Lloyd, who has been preparing tax forms privately for clients for many years.

Modest about her own skills and experience Lloyd, nevertheless, has received ACTION's Meritorious Award and Sustained Superior Performance Award. Her key role in the Communications' Office is well recognized by her co-workers. As Marylou Batt, director of Communications says, "We all rely on Wilma constantly—she keeps us on the right track and makes sense out of seemingly impossible situations."

VISTA Photo Contest Winners Announced

Winners of the VISTA Fifteenth Anniversary Celebration photo contest were announced recently. The contest theme was "Making a Good Place Better," and the winning photos were illustrative of that slogan. After deliberation by the judges, it was decided to award co-winners of the first prize in both the color and black and white categories.

Color category: 1st prize - Jeff Reiss, Sacramento, Calif., "Solar Retrofit" (Sacramento, Calif.), served as VISTA in St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1972-73. 1st prize - Paulette Frederick, Hollidayburg, Pa., "People of Philadelphia, Miss." served as VISTA in Philadelphia, Miss., 1976-77.

Black and White category: 1st prize - David E. Rhodes, Mount Pleasant, Pa., "Playground Project" (Portsmouth, Va.), served as VISTA in Pittsburgh, Pa., 1972-73. 1st prize - Byron & Jan Brown, Richmond, Calif., "Black guitarist with pipe" (location unknown), served as VISTAs in Pasco, Wash., 1971-72.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

Editor's note: The negative for Jeff Reiss' winning entry had not been received by press time, so ACTION Update was unable to include the photo in this article.



PAULETTE FREDERICK

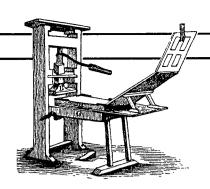


DAVID E. RHODES



BYRON AND JAN BROWN

What Others Say About Us



Editor's note: Periodically, ACTION Update plans to reprint articles from other publications and newspapers concerning ACTION--its policies, directions, programs, etc. If you have any articles you think would be of interest to our readers, please forward them to: Editor, ACTION Update, Rm. P-303, 806 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20525. We will be happy to consider them for publication. ACTION Update is particularly interested in stories from regional or local newspapers or publications. FIELD STAFF--please keep an eye out for articles worth sharing with our readers.

The following article entitled <u>Vigilance in</u> <u>ACTION: Keeping an Eye Out for Corruption by Celia W. Dugger, appeared in The Washington Post on July 26, 1980, and is reprinted with permission of The Post.</u>

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While other federal officials are hunkering down as the spotlight shines on federal contracts in agency after agency, ACTION is taking the opportunity to do a little bragging.

"We have a whole different way of doing business at our little agency that is a hope for the rest of government," says Don Green, an official with the federal volunteer agency.

Green and Sam Brown, ACTION's director, think they have a handle on the corruption problem with a set of self-imposed rules and an innovative way of enforcing them.

Though the \$100 million ACTION spends on outside contracts and grants is peanuts compared to the \$9.5 billion spent on consultants by the Department of Energy alone, ACTION officials tackle possible conflicts of interest head-on and with occasional self-mockery.

"We might be more venal if we had more money," says one ACTION higher-up.

Brown, though, discusses ACTION's purposes in a more solemn tone. "Public service is a privilege and ought not to be something which people see as a track to make a buck, but as a chance to serve the public," he says.

ACTION started its program three years ago when Brown found his agency mentioned in a gossip column, the location of advance reviews for many a scandal. The columnist intimated that ACTION was-horror of horrors-enmeshed in a conflict of interest.

Brown decided to look at the federal standards of conduct in force since 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson issued them. He says he found the regulations, which are supposed to be to bureaucrats what the Bible is to Christians, "lax and unenforceable."

The Administrative Procedures Act of 1946, an operating guide for federal agencies, allows agencies to adopt their own standards of conduct if they do not conflict with the federal standards, so Brown set up a task force to tighten ACTION's regulations.

The task force's goal was to clear up the relationship between ACTION employes and organizations that either had or were seeking ACTION grants or contracts. These are some of the regulations it drew up:

- A provision to prohibit an employe from participating in a decision to award a contract or grant to an organization with which he or she has been associated. This is meant to provide a "cooling off" time for a person who has just joined the government.
- A provision to prohibit an employe from associating with an organization that either has or is applying for a contract or grant with the agency. ACTION defines the words "associated with" to include being an executive or having a financial interest in such an organization.

The phrase also includes marriage. Last year, an employe's husband tried to get a contract with ACTION. The agency gave him a choice: the contract or his wife. He chose his wife, they say.

● A provision to prohibit an employe—for one year after leaving the agency—from working for an organization with an ACTION contract or grant in the area he or she worked on while with the agency. This regulation is directed at the "revolving door" phenomenon.

The task force also set up a new procedure designed to prevent conflicts of interest from developing:

Every new ACTION employe files a disclosure

(cont. page 8)

What Others Say... (from page 7)

statement listing the employers, financial institutions and other organizations he or she has been associated with in the two previous years. All those organizations are entered in a computer, with the employe's number.

Then, when an organization applies for a contract, its identity is automatically checked against the computer list. If it catches up with an employe and there appears to be a conflict, the application is flagged and the general counsel's office notified.

The general counsel then makes a recommendation about whether there is a conflict. If the employe involved objects, the general counsel calls a meeting of ACTION's Committee on Conflicts of Interest, composed of eight top agency officials.

Since the regulations went into effect in October 1978, the committee has met 11 times, considered 16 cases and found seven conflicts.

Director Brown believes that the procedure will help restore public confidence in government. It's not just public relations, he said. "It's a question of how people see and feel about our common endeavor."

Right now, general public confidence in the government regarding the endeavor of hiring consultants does not appear to be high.

ACTION, on its small scale, is trying to change that.

Oops We Gofed!

Despite rumors to the contrary, (ACTION Update, August 13, 1980 issue) Mel and Naty Beetle are not the only married couple at headquarters. Wedded bliss is still the word for Linda and David Price-both in Computer Services; Harriet and Jim Lancaster-she's with Peace Corps and he's with A&F; the Daniels-Juanita who works in Communications and James in Computer Services; Ann and Ron Bachand- A&F Classifications and PC/Africa, respectively; Rhonda and Calik Jabarei-she works in Accounting and Calik in Computer Services;

Judith Van Osdol, Health Services and Ken Van Osdol, PC Staging/Orientation; Melanie Williams, PC/NANEAP and Steven Sharp who works in Recruitment; Tanya George and David Weiss-Tanya's with PC/NANEAP and David works in the PC director's office; and Elaine Smithson and Charles Curry-she's president of the ACTION Employees' Union, and he's with PC/Latin America. Any other legally married couples in headquarters, speak now or forever hold your peace.

ACTION UPDATE

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