

# International Decade for Women, International Year of Youth - 1983

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## Introduction

The United Nations came into existence in 1945 with a membership of 51 nations. A channel for citizen participation was created through the Non-Governmental Organizations representatives (NGO's). NGO's reflect the importance of grass-roots participation in the world assembly.

Now in 1983 there are 158 member states. Citizens often feel removed from the deliberations even though they may benefit from any programs of human concerns, such as conferences and years which alert the international community to the situation of the environment, of children, the disabled, the aging and youth.

The Charter of the United Nations opens with the Preamble, "We the peoples." The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods works actively in areas of concern in order to renew and reinforce the involvement of citizens in international issues through the United Nations. NGO active participation, within the respective countries of our worldwide Federation, is essential to maintain the United Nations as a forum for peace and international cooperation.

## International Decade for Women

### Issue

- 1) To help insure increased cooperative efforts on behalf of women around the world.
- 2) To prevent the politicization of the forthcoming World Conference for the United Nations Decade for Women, scheduled to mark the end of the Decade in 1985.

## Background

The end of the International Decade for Women will be marked with a conference in the summer of 1985. The decade inaugurated in 1975 with high hopes and the themes of equality, development and peace, the two previous conferences, one in Mexico City in 1975 and one in Copenhagen in 1980, proved to be platforms for the vilification of Israel. Nevertheless, the condition of women was improved in developing countries, not only by raising consciousness about the situation of women but also by the actions of governments, NGO citizen groups and women themselves.

NFTS has been involved in the decade for Women from the beginning. Sisterhood is represented in the United Nations NGO Committee on the decade as well as in a coalition of Jewish international NGO's. As planning proceeds for the 1985 conference in Nairobi, NFTS together with other Jewish and non-Jewish women continues actively to monitor deviations from the stated goals of the decade and to work to achieve equity and opportunity for women.

In the United States, Sisterhood women participated in the Houston National Women's Conference in 1977, where a National Plan of Action was adopted; in the Continuing Committee of this Conference; and in the Jewish Women's Caucus. The National Plan of Action adopted at the National Women's Conference, November 18-21, 1977, Houston, Texas, states in its declaration a theme relevant to NFTS, "We are here to move history forward."

## Resolution

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods urges its members throughout the world:

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- 1) To provide information to and educational programs for their Sisterhoods about the goals of the 1985 Women's Conference.
- 2) To call on their national governments to take all steps necessary to prevent the politicization of the forthcoming World Conference for the UN Decade for Women.
- 3) To form coalitions with other women's organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, to foster understanding of differences and of common interests in the advancement of the position of women.

## International Year of Youth

### Issue

Young people are the future of the world. Although their lives are overshadowed by grave problems of poverty, health, education, violence and unemployment as well as the arms race and nuclear destruction, they nevertheless evidence creativity, energy and optimism. Often excluded from planning and implementing programs that affect their lives and future lives, they require a special and concerned effort to provide channels of expression and opportunities for action.

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, from its establishment in 1913, has held the interests of youth as a central concern and area of action. Sisterhood has promoted and sustained programs not only on behalf of youth but also those in which youth themselves are partners and participants.

### Background

The General Assembly of the United Nations, in 1978, designated 1985 as International Youth Year (IYY) to be celebrated under the motto: "Participation, Development, Peace." A Draft Program of Measures and Activities was prepared in 1981. The program is action-oriented and underscores the current situation of the younger generation as well as major international programs with respect to cooperation in the field of youth. The program pays attention to the need to combat violence, drug abuse, criminality and terrorism among young people in many countries and attaches great importance to the direct and responsible participation of youth in the decision-making process in society. The program also includes a number of recommendations aimed at the intensifying efforts for education of the younger generation in the spirit of the ideals of peace, friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding and respect among peoples.

### Resolution

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods urges its members:

- 1) To prepare for International Youth Year by learning and sharing information about the situation of young people in their respective countries.
- 2) To include youth in planning and implementing programs that affect them.
- 3) To urge governments to develop employment, health, education, juvenile justice and other programs which touch the lives of as many young people as possible.
- 4) To encourage youth to participate in international, national, regional and local meetings.
- 5) To observe International Youth Year in the words of Carl Gershman, United States representative to the Third Committee on the United Nations, "As a tribute and celebration of the serious purpose, the creative approach and the adventuresome spirit of youth, not only in the United States but throughout the world."