

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## SEVENTH SESSION

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MEETING

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Headquarters, New York

### C O N T E N T S

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**Chairman:** Mr. S. Amjad ALI (Pakistan).

*In the absence of the Chairman and of the Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Begtrup (Denmark) took the Chair.*

#### **Draft convention on political rights of women (A/2156, A/2156/Add.1, A/2172, chapter V, section XII, paragraphs 620-624, A/C.3/L.330) (continued)**

[Item 61]\*

1. Begum LIAQUAT ALI KHAN (Pakistan) said that the opening to signature of the convention on the political rights of women, as a result of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, would act as an impetus to women throughout the world. In countries like Pakistan, where women had only recently become aware of their political rights and responsibilities, it would spur them to greater interest and activity in the movement for their social advancement.

2. Until relatively recently, the women of Pakistan had remained apathetic, ignorant and unaware of their civic and personal rights and responsibilities, owing to neglect of the Islamic injunction that education was a sacred duty for every Moslem man and woman. That had been due, *inter alia*, to custom, usage, the impact of alien ideas, beliefs and institutions and subjection to alien rule.

3. There seemed to be a widespread misconception that the Islamic systems of law, under the influence of the Shariah, denied women equality of rights with men. The fact was that for more than thirteen hundred years Islamic systems of jurisprudence had recognized woman as a person under the law in her own right, independent of her parents or husband, enjoying all the personal rights that men enjoyed.

4. The political awakening of the women of Pakistan dated from the birth of the movement for independence under the leadership of the late Mohammed Ali Jinnah,

whose intense feeling for the part that women should play in the nation's life had led him to denounce the seclusion of women as a crime against humanity.

5. The second great impact on the social and political consciousness of Pakistani women had come from the terrible conditions, the mass flight and the destitution which had followed partition in the north of the Indo-Pakistani sub-continent. Hundreds had come forward to administer succour; responding to the call for volunteers, they had organized and distributed relief for months to the refugees. Their newly-born enthusiasm for social welfare had led them on 22 February 1949 to form a permanent organization, the All Pakistan Women's Association, a voluntary and non-political national organization with branches in all the provinces and in many of the districts. Membership of the Association was open to all women irrespective of colour, caste or creed. Subsequently, the Association had extended the scope of its activities from emergency relief to a wide social field. It had established a domestic science college in Karachi, thanks to a grant of \$US500,000 by the Ford Foundation; it had sent representatives to a number of international conferences of women; and it had been accorded consultative status by the Economic and Social Council. It had succeeded in bringing out women of all classes to work for the betterment of living conditions. Women had joined the professions and the civil service and had engaged in commerce and industry. They had volunteered to serve in the Women's National Guard, an auxiliary of the Pakistani armed forces.

6. The Constituent Assembly had extended adult suffrage to women in the provinces of the Punjab, Sind, the North-West Frontier and East Pakistan, where more than 70 million of the total population of 76 million lived. Under laws enacted in 1951 and 1952, any citizen of Pakistan who had reached the age of twenty-one was qualified to vote in provincial elections and to be elected to the provincial legislatures. Women

\* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

enjoyed the same rights as men with regard to voting for and election to local boards and municipalities. The provisional Constitution reserved seats in the provincial legislatures for women, including women of the minority communities. The women of Pakistan were confident that the Constituent Assembly, in which women were represented, would guarantee them full equality of political rights in national elections.

7. In the civil service, the qualifications for recruitment, conditions of service, remuneration, prospects of promotion and pension benefits were the same for men and women, except for a few posts in which conditions of service were deemed too rigorous for women. A growing number of women were qualifying for posts through competitive examinations.

8. At first sight, it might seem remarkable that the equality of women and men under private and public law in almost all spheres of activity should have been achieved without suffragette agitation. Yet, a closer study of Islamic philosophy and jurisprudence would show that such equality was the characteristic principle underlying the whole organization of Islamic society. That principle had been embodied in the Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 12 March 1949, proclaiming that the future Constitution would guarantee the principles of freedom and equality as enunciated by Islam.

9. According to the Shariah, as developed by the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which governed the status under private law of the great majority of the Pakistani people, liberty was the fundamental basis of law, and the science of law was defined as the knowledge of rights and duties whereby man was enabled to observe right conduct. The concept of equality was a corollary to the concept of brotherhood, and was thus reflected in every aspect of law, both public and private.

10. With regard to the draft convention on political rights of women annexed to the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330), the Pakistani delegation would support the Netherlands amendment (A/C.3/L.329/Rev.2) to the preamble, and articles 1 and 2 as they stood. Pakistani public law actually went further than those articles, inasmuch as seats were reserved for women in the provincial legislatures.

11. Her delegation would make certain reservations to article 3 with regard to the interpretation of the right of women to hold public office in respect of the military services and a few civil service posts under the provincial and central governments. It shared the United States representative's doubts as to the meaning of the phrase "exercise all public functions" and would support the amendment she had proposed orally at the 474th meeting to the effect that the words "related thereto" should be inserted after the word "functions".

12. It could not accept the USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1) to articles 1, 2 and 3. The extension of the non-discrimination principle to include nationality would bind States to grant equal political rights to aliens and nationals.

13. The insertion of the article proposed by the USSR for inclusion as article 4 (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1, point 4) was unnecessary; it was a fundamental rule of international law that obligations under treaties should be carried out in good faith.

14. Her delegation would reserve its views on the USSR amendment (A/C.3/L.328, point 1) to article 7-A of the original text (A/2156/Add.1, annex II) until the Committee had agreed whether any of the articles should be made subject to reservations.

15. It could not accept the USSR amendment (A/C.3/L.328 point 2) to article 10, since that would entail a departure from the generally accepted practice of referring disputes concerning the interpretation of conventions to the International Court of Justice.

16. She preferred the original text of article 8-A (A/2156/Add.1, annex II) to the text proposed by the USSR for insertion as article 5 (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1, point 4), since the former virtually reproduced the article which the General Assembly, under resolution 422(V), had requested the Commission on Human Rights to insert in the draft international covenant on human rights. The Charter imposed certain responsibilities on the United Nations and on the administering Powers in the matter of enabling the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories to achieve self-government or independence and with regard to their economic, social and educational advancement. The granting of political rights to women in those territories would contribute to a speedier achievement of such advancement and would thus be consonant with Articles 73 and 76 of the United Nations Charter, particularly with Article 76 c, which specifically referred to non-discrimination as to sex. The application of the convention to those territories should therefore be obligatory and would not seem, on the basis of the information on the status of women in the territories given in documents E/CN.6/137, E/CN.6/138 and E/CN.6/163, to present any insurmountable obstacles.

17. Mrs. SPERANSKAYA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on a point of order, explained that the revised USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1) had been moved to the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330); the amendment (A/C.3/L.328) to the original text of article 7 (A/2156/Add.1, annex II) still applied to it.

18. Mr. DUNLOP (New Zealand) observed that, if the convention had consisted only of articles 1 and 2, it would have been accepted almost unanimously.

19. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that article 3 should be retained even if it gave rise to reservations or prevented some countries from ratifying the convention in the near future. The text had been exhaustively considered by the delegations most interested in it and it was unlikely that any better wording could be found to cover the differences between the construction of the terms in the various languages and the differences between the systems of public administration involved. The words "to hold public office" and "to exercise public functions" expressed somewhat different ideas, but no short term expressing both ideas could be found common to all the official languages. Jury service was probably an example of a public function and might fit in both the English and French versions of the existing text; but it might not be called a public function in other languages. The special conditions, and even privileges, which several countries had found it necessary to provide for women in order to achieve a measure of equality showed that there could

be no absolute equality between men and women in that respect and thus that no more than equivalent rights could be ensured them. There would have to be a certain flexibility in the interpretation of so short and simply worded a convention, and it was to be hoped that the unlimited reservation clause proposed by the USSR delegation (A/C.3/L.328, point 2) would not be necessary.

20. The Commission on the Status of Women had decided that there should be a special convention on the political rights of women because the issue was so clearly defined and had thought that its adoption should not wait on that of the covenants on human rights. The inclusion of the USSR amendments would destroy the simplicity of the draft. Although there was no disagreement with them in principle, they would introduce problems which the Committee had not been studying. Furthermore, there might be so few countries which could honestly ratify a text including the USSR amendments to the three main articles that the convention would be nothing more than a pious expression of hope. The three main articles should stand as they were, after the variations in the texts pointed out by the Belgian and Mexican representatives had been cleared up.

21. The Netherlands amendment (A/C.3/L.329/Rev.2) to the preamble merely made the wording more precise and should be accepted.

22. He was satisfied that combat duty with the armed forces was not intended to come within the meaning of article 3 of the draft convention (A/C.3/L.330, annex). Article 9, on disputes, required further explanation; the draft convention before the Committee was a new form of convention and he was not sure how far article 9 was appropriate to it.

23. Mrs. EMMET (United Kingdom) observed that since war had become total and women must necessarily share its hazards equally with men, they should also share the hazards of peace in the hope that it might be maintained. It was not good, perhaps not even right, that men should continue to carry the whole responsibility for great political decisions alone. The pressure for political rights, then, was not an assertion by angry militant women demanding power, but an offer of true companionship in the difficult tasks which confronted the world.

24. In the United Kingdom the political disabilities of women had been largely overcome and progress would be made in removing those few which remained. It was felt, however, that a process of education was better than revolutionary methods and, accordingly, that a convention was not a good substitute for a process of social education, reinforced by the provisions in the Charter of the United Nations dealing with human rights. To isolate the rights of women in a separate convention weakened rather than strengthened their case. In the past, accordingly, the United Kingdom Government had abstained from supporting the draft convention. Although it still did not see the need for it, and while it knew that customs could not be radically changed overnight by the adoption of a convention without damaging the body politic, the United Kingdom delegation did not wish to obstruct or oppose the objectives of the convention.

25. It was prepared to vote for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330), since it was favourable to the wishes of so many other delegations and to the rights of women. That did not mean, however, that it was prepared to become a party to the convention immediately. The United Kingdom did not become party to conventions unless its laws were in complete conformity with them.

26. Her delegation was unable to support the USSR amendments for reasons similar to those given by previous speakers. The picture given by the USSR and other representatives of the life of women in the United Kingdom had been fantastic.

27. The draft convention should be kept as simple and realistic as possible in order that as many delegations as possible should be able to vote in favour of opening it for signature.

28. With regard to the formal articles, which had not received nearly as much consideration as legal texts required it was not clear why in articles 5 and 6 States were given a choice between signing with subsequent ratification, in the normal way, and depositing an instrument of accession. The accession procedure had hitherto been reserved for States which wished to become parties to an instrument already in force.

29. Article 7 apparently permitted reservations to any or all of the provisions of the convention and thus seemed to incorporate the USSR amendment (A/C.3/L.328, point 1). The final sentence meant in effect that the unanimity which was intended to underlie that multilateral convention could be broken up by a whole series of bilateral agreements regarding the extent to which the obligations should be applied. But the whole object of multilateral conventions was to obtain agreement among a number of States; there was small value in a multilateral convention to which everyone who disagreed could also become a party.

30. It was to be hoped that the sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330) would not accept the joint amendment (A/C.3/L.332) reproducing article 8-A of the original draft (A/2156/Add.1). The absence of any provisions whereby States could apply the convention separately in respect of the various territories for whose foreign relations they were responsible meant in fact that the benefits of the convention would be denied to the inhabitants of all the territories concerned until the provisions of the convention could be applied to every one of them. The inclusion of a clause expressly confirming such a retrograde step would not be in the best interest either of the peoples to whom the convention should be applied or of the convention itself; it would make it impossible for her to vote for it.

31. The Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.333) would not prevent her from voting for the convention, although she would have preferred no amendment at all.

32. She would support the retention of article 9 as it stood and oppose the USSR amendment to it (A/C.3/L.328). The International Court of Justice was the proper body to protect the international rule of law.

33. The CHAIRMAN requested the Assistant Director of the Division of Immunities and Treaties in the

United Nations Legal Department to reply to certain points raised by the United Kingdom representative.

34. Mr. COX (Secretariat) stated in reply to the United Kingdom representative's questions regarding articles 5 and 6 of the draft convention that the alternative methods of signature followed by ratification and the mere deposit of instruments of accession were provided for the convenience of States which might not have an authorized representative present to sign an instrument. It was no longer true to say that the normal process was that of signature and ratification and that accession could take place only after the instrument had entered into force; that had formerly been the usual approach, but the United Nations had provided alternative procedures in the case of many of the instruments concluded under its auspices.

35. With regard to article 7, he pointed out that the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2156/Add.1) gave several alternatives for the article on reservations and expressed no views as to which alternative should be selected. The version which appeared in the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330) had already been used in the case of the Convention on the Declaration of Death of Missing Persons.

*Mr. Ali took the Chair.*

36. Mr. MANI (India) fully supported the purposes of the convention, which corresponded with current practice in India.

37. With reference to article 1, he pointed out that Indian women could vote on equal terms with men in elections to the Central Parliament and to the state legislatures. Many women had voted in the recent elections. Moreover, the Constitution provided equal opportunities for all citizens, without any discrimination, to be appointed to any public office. Women had been in the vanguard of the independence movement and had refused preferential treatment when they had been offered it.

38. The principles of article 2 had also been applied in India. Many women had been elected to the Central Parliament, state legislatures and local administrative bodies. Article 3 was in full accord with the Indian tradition of giving women positions of trust and responsibility. The Chairman of the Indian delegation to the United Nations was a woman who had been an ambassador to the USSR and the United States of America. Women held important ministerial posts; one was the Governor of a state and many others held executive and judiciary posts and were doctors and teachers. He did not, however, interpret the provisions of that article to mean that women should be employed for all functions: the nature and conditions of the tasks to be fulfilled must have an important bearing on the choice of persons. It seemed to be self-evident that combat service was not implied.

39. With regard to the USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1) to the draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330), although the amendments to articles 1, 2 and 3, specifying the types of discrimination to be prohibited, corresponded fully to Indian practice, care should be taken to avoid weakening the convention by the introduction of provisions which did not relate exclusively to the political rights of women. Moreover, the amendments might lead to controversy and it was essential

to adopt a draft which secured the largest possible measure of assent. Amendment 4, providing for a new article 4, seemed to be unnecessary, since the adoption of the convention would in itself be a generating force for the rights of women everywhere and would render the undertakings referred to in the amendment redundant. The Indian delegation was not in favour of amendment 5, relating to article 9 of the draft convention, and preferred the text given as article 10 in the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2156/Add. 1, annex II).

40. His delegation would vote for the Netherlands amendment (A/C.3/L.329/Rev.2), which improved the original text by introducing the idea that participation in government might be either direct or through freely chosen representatives.

41. India had been a co-sponsor of the joint amendment (A/C.3/L.332) calling for the inclusion of the original article 8-A (A/2156/Add.1, annex II) after article 7 of the convention because it had felt that the usefulness of the convention would depend on its applicability to colonial and Trust Territories. The administering Powers, however, had opposed the inclusion of such an article on the ground that in some territories application did not depend on the administering Powers, but on local legislatures, and that the convention would create legal difficulties. Whatever the merits of that argument might be, the efficacy of the convention would depend on the number of States which signed it, and if the administering Powers were prevented from signing by the inclusion of the article, both their own peoples and the inhabitants of dependent territories would be denied its benefits. To avoid such an eventuality, his delegation had withdrawn its sponsorship of the joint amendment and had itself submitted an amendment (A/C.3/L.333), restating article 8-B of the original draft.

42. Although the Indian delegation preferred the text of the joint amendment, it considered wide support of the convention to be the paramount consideration. Article 8-B was considerably weaker than alternative 8-A, but contained in its first phrase a reference to universal applicability which was in advance of the attitude of the administering Powers, who wished to eliminate any reference to a colonial clause. In that connexion, he pointed out that the French text of the phrase did not clearly convey the idea that the territories concerned were those for which a State bore international responsibility. The stipulation by a State ratifying or acceding to the convention that it might not apply to certain of its territories should cover the legal difficulties to which some of the administering Powers had referred. It was inconceivable that any such Power would use that escape clause to tell the people of a dependent territory that, while it wanted its own women to have equal rights with men, it would deny such rights to the women of the territory.

43. He agreed with the United Kingdom representative that reservations would tend to weaken the convention and that article 7 should be clarified. The purpose of the article was to ensure that no legal difficulties would exist at the time of signature and that States might make reservations concerning the measure of applicability of certain articles.

44. His delegation would have some comments to make on the question of military service in connexion with article 3.

45. Mr. JOUBLANC RIVAS (Mexico) and Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) stated that the Spanish text of the Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.333) was even further from the English text than was the French text and asked that the Secretariat should make the necessary changes. Since the texts would be equally authentic, an effort should be made to use proper legal terminology throughout the draft convention.

46. Mr. TASWELL (Union of South Africa) pointed out that the recognition of women's political rights was a recent development even in advanced countries. Hence, universal recognition of such rights had to depend on education and enlightenment. Local customs in some countries militated against the grant of rights to women and changes in the social structure of such countries would be harmful and would be resisted by the women themselves. Although the rights might seem to be fundamental, the issue should not be forced. A case in point was the new Constitution adopted by the Eritrean Assembly. Although it specifically granted the franchise to Eritreans of the male sex, it had been adopted by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee without a dissenting vote.

47. His delegation's vote would depend on the final text of the draft.

48. Mr. CAMPOS CATELIN (Argentina) stated that women in his country had had full civil rights since 1926 and full political rights since 1947, thanks to the untiring efforts of Señora Eva Perón, which had resulted in absolute equality of political, economic, social and cultural rights for men and women. Contrary to the Ukrainian representative's assertion, the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women had been obtained in Argentina since 1943.

49. His delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330) but agreed with the Mexican representative that a convention *sui generis*, like the one before the Committee, did not require a clause on disputes, since no reciprocal obligations were involved. The Argentine delegation would therefore prefer that article 9 should be deleted; if the majority wished to retain such an article, however, it would prefer the text proposed in point 5 of the USSR amendment (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1), which made no reference to the International Court of Justice.

50. Mr. DERINSU (Turkey) said that the democratic way of life had to be learned from early childhood in the family circle; education in democracy could not therefore be achieved if women were deprived of political rights. His country had granted women the right to vote in local elections in 1930 and had extended that right to national elections in 1934. Turkish women were entitled to join nearly all branches of the civil service and, in spite of their relatively recent emancipation, had greatly benefited the country by their work in various professions.

51. His delegation would vote for the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330) and would be guided, in voting on amendments, by the degree of simplicity of language, which it regarded as an essential factor.

52. With regard to article 3, it was not clear whether the terms "public office" and "public functions" had the same meaning and whether the term "public office" was intended to include military service. His Government would make reservations on that point, since compulsory military service did not apply to women in Turkey.

53. His delegation was in general agreement with the formal clauses.

54. Mrs. ROOSEVELT (United States of America) referred to the concern expressed by the USSR, Ukrainian and Byelorussian representatives about the fact that women in the United States of America voted from the same legal residences as their husbands. That was true also of the men, whose legal residence was the family domicile shared by their wives. Such statements showed a lack of understanding of the importance of the family in all relationships in the United States, where the sharing of responsibility for family affairs was assumed. The same misunderstanding was evident in the Byelorussian representative's claim that the provision of crèches and nursery schools in the Soviet Union enabled mothers to fulfil their maternal functions and also to take part in public life. In the United States of America, motherhood was not considered to deny women a full share in public life; many married women took an active part in public activities and the majority of employed women were married.

55. The Soviet representatives seemed to wish the United States to discriminate against men. In that connexion, although literacy in English was a voting requirement in states where English was predominant, voters in the south-western states, where Spanish was frequently spoken, could qualify in either language. In no case was there any discrimination against women on the ground of sex. The same applied to the Negro vote. Great progress had been made in assuring Negro voters full security and the figures the Soviet delegations had quoted seemed to be out-of-date. Moreover, the implication that the poll-tax, which was still levied in only five states, prevented Negro women from voting was incorrect, since the poll-tax was a per capita tax which applied equally to White and Negro people of both sexes.

56. She was glad that Soviet women participated so widely in public life and that three Soviet women were representing their countries in the United Nations. It was to be hoped that the convention would lead to the participation of Soviet women in organs which determined the major policies of their government.

57. The USSR amendments (A/C.3/L.327/Rev.1) to the first three articles of the draft convention had been submitted to and rejected by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council on the ground that they were unnecessary in such a simple convention. The terms of the amendments were in fact discriminatory, because they enumerated a few grounds of discrimination and omitted others, notably the ground of political opinion, which seemed to be an essential factor in an instrument on political rights. In any case, such an enumeration was confusing and limiting.

58. The proposal to qualify the phrase "publicly elected bodies" in article 2 was also unnecessary, as was the addition of the proposed article 4 on legislative implementation. The convention itself was sufficient. The proposal to settle disputes by arbitration, rather than by referring them to the International Court of Justice, was contrary to established United Nations procedure.

59. The provisions of the convention were already in effect in all territories under United States administration. Her delegation would not object to the inclusion of a clause on such extension to territories, and preferred the text of the Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.333) for that clause.

60. Her delegation did not believe that the provisions of article 3 applied to military service and was glad that many delegations held the same view. The United States also considered that the term "public functions" was co-terminous with the term "public office".

61. She thought it unnecessary to reply to irrelevant charges that had been made in connexion with the economic condition of women in the United States of America.

62. Mr. ABDEL GHANI (Egypt) was aware that his statement would sound a discordant note, but he was unable to agree with the many representatives who had said that the adoption of the draft convention on political rights of women would encourage the countries which had not yet done so to grant women political equality with men. In his view, the adoption of the draft convention would arouse the opposition which existed in those countries and would hinder the very cause the Committee wished to promote.

63. He appealed to the Committee to defer action on the draft convention until the two covenants on human rights had been adopted by the United Nations, which was likely to take place at the eighth session of the General Assembly. Article 2 of the draft covenant on civil and political rights (E/2256, annex I, part B) specified that the rights laid down in the covenant were recognized without distinction of sex, and there was a proposal by Chile (E/2256, annex II, part A, section II) to include another article reading: "The States Parties to the Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights." His delegation would support that proposal, as it had supported a Chilean proposal to include an article along similar lines in the draft covenant on social, economic and cultural rights. The adoption of the two covenants, and in particular the covenant on civil and political rights, would serve the cause of political equality more effectively than the proposed convention, especially since it would be attended by the same kind of world-wide publicity which had accompanied the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would be easier to persuade public opinion to accept a covenant dealing with all "members of the human family"—men and women alike—than a convention which would grant to women alone, political rights still denied to millions of men.

64. The long history of women's struggle for political rights in the Western world showed that all their courageous and self-sacrificing efforts had availed them little. It was only when women had had to replace

men in offices and factories and in the field during the First World War that they had been able, almost as a matter of course, to win recognition of their political rights, after having first won their economic independence. The same process had been repeated, on a still larger scale, after the Second World War.

65. In Egypt, too, women had achieved great progress, even in his own lifetime, and had done so without legislative measures and binding conventions. They had discarded their veils and, by taking part in the nationalist movement, had won a place for themselves side by side with the men. There were thousands of women in Egyptian universities; women were to be found in every profession and held important posts in government departments. Yet their astounding and indeed revolutionary progress had taken place quietly and naturally.

66. Although Egypt had not yet granted women their political rights, the Egyptian delegation could vote for the draft convention without difficulty, for several reasons. First, the overwhelming majority of educated Egyptians, including many religious leaders, were in favour of giving women full political equality with men. Secondly, the Government had recently taken a decisive step in that direction by recognizing three feminist parties, which was an indirect recognition of the right of women to take an active share in their country's political affairs. Thirdly, Egypt was drafting a new Constitution which would be patterned after the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and would secure to its people the greatest measure of rights and freedoms recognized by the most advanced States. Lastly, as the Iraqi and Pakistani representatives had explained, in all Moslem countries, including Egypt, women had always enjoyed complete civil rights, which were the prerequisite for political rights. It was noteworthy that, in countries in which women had won their political rights before their civil and economic rights, their participation in public life had been very limited.

67. The Egyptian delegation firmly believed, however, that to adopt the draft convention before the covenants on human rights would hinder the cause which it, like all the other delegations, had at heart. Nevertheless, in order to avoid giving the impression that it was opposed to the principle of political rights of women, it would not vote against the draft convention, but would abstain.

68. Mr. LAMBROS (Greece) said that his delegation was happy that the draft convention on political rights of women was before the Committee for final action. The text was in complete accord with legislation enacted in his country in the course of the year, granting women the full enjoyment of political rights. In spite of the Egyptian representative's misgivings, he felt that, as the Indian representative had said, the convention would prove to be a generating force for the rights of women everywhere, and he gave it his warmest support.

69. He also supported the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.330), which contained the text of the draft convention.

70. The three substantive articles of the draft convention were particularly satisfactory, being short,

clear and to the point, and constituting both a proclamation of principle and a legal text.

71. He agreed with preceding speakers that the words "public functions" in article 3 should not be interpreted to include military service, and was prepared to accept the United States representative's oral proposal (474th meeting) to insert after them the words "relative thereto", in order to make that point clear.

72. He also supported the formal articles in the draft convention. He would vote for the Netherlands amend-

ment (A/C.3/L.329/Rev.2) to the second paragraph of the preamble and for the colonial clause as worded in the Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.333).

73. Mrs. ROOSEVELT (United States of America) explained that the insertion of the words "relative thereto" had been merely a suggestion on her part; she would not press it as an amendment.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.