

**ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL****CONSEIL  
ECONOMIQUE  
ET SOCIAL**E/HR/ST/9  
6 May 1946

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SUMMARY RECORD OF FOURTH MEETING OF THE  
SUB-COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Held at Gillet Hall, Hunter College, New York  
3 May 1946 at 10:50 A.M.

Members Present:

Mrs. Bodil Begtrup, Chairman  
Miss Minerva Bernardino  
Miss Angela Jurdak  
Miss F. Kalinowska  
Mme. LeFauchaux  
Mrs. Hansa Mehta  
Mrs. W. S. New  
Mr. Cassin  
Mr. D. Brkish

} Ex Officio

The chairman opened the meeting at 10:50 AM and called for suggestions on the provisional agenda (document E/HR/ST/2).

Miss Jurdak proposed that the agenda be amended under the headings - size and composition, programme, policy, executive office, liaison, personnel, budget and rapporteur's report. Her proposal was adopted unanimously.

Size of Sub-Commission

The chairman proposed that the members should discuss the question of the definitive composition of the Sub-Commission and called for opinions. Miss Bernardino considered that three more members should be added to the present strength of the Sub-Commission, selected on a regional basis. Mrs. New agreed that this was a good practical number for working efficiency. Miss Jurdak considered that under the terms of reference it was not necessary to recommend an increase in the composition. The chairman read document E/27 and said that while she considered that Miss Jurdak was correct in her interpretation, nevertheless her impression was that, since they were a Nuclear Commission,

it was expected that there would be recommendations from the Sub-Commission for an increase in their numbers. It was, however, for the members to decide.

Miss Jurdak thought that the members should weigh the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the membership. Mrs. New gave one advantage as the necessity for general universal representation of women's activities. For instance, she would like to have someone from England or those countries who were very advanced in women's work.

Miss Jurdak gave the disadvantages as:

- (a) the smaller the body the more efficient it could be
- (b) if there were a limited budget, a larger Commission might mean that the programme would have to be cut down.

Miss Bernardino considered it more important to hear the voice of women from different parts of the world than to consider the question of budgetary limit. The chairman suggested that they did not know what the budget proposals would be and considered that the members were free to discuss definitive composition without budget considerations. Miss Jurdak agreed that in that event the minimum figure should be fifteen (15), provided that the members' reasons for wishing it so were stated clearly. The motion that the Sub-Commission consider that its future composition should be fifteen (15) members including three (3) members from the Human Rights Commission was then adopted unanimously.

#### Composition of Sub-Commission

The chairman then went on to discuss how the Sub-Commission should be composed. Mme. LeFauchaux considered that members might be chosen for national rather than for personal qualifications. For example, one might recruit women with different experiences from different countries, in particular those who had taken part in the resistance movements in occupied countries. Mrs. Mehta did

not agree. Admittedly women in occupied countries had contributed magnificently to the war but she considered that the war had nothing to do with the Sub-Commission's purpose which was to raise the status of women. Mme. LeFauchaux admitted Mrs. Mehta's point and explained that so many countries had been cut off from others during the war that she felt that women who had had such widely different experiences in different fields should be brought together.

The chairman then asked whether members should be appointed as governmental representatives or in a personal capacity and called for opinions. Miss Bernardino moved that persons be appointed in the same way as before by the Economic and Social Council in their individual capacity. The motion was seconded by Mrs. New. Mr. Brkish felt that there was a lot to be said for having all governmental representatives. Miss Kalinowska considered that if backward countries were to be represented, it would be preferable to choose people for their personal qualifications. The question was raised as to how the appointments had been actually made and whether governments had any say in the selection. A member of the Secretariat explained the background of the appointments to the present nuclear Commissions. The chairman of the Economic and Social Council had invited each member of the Council to make one nomination for each of two or three Commissions. Members were free to nominate nationals of other countries and in some cases had done so. The Sub-Committee then agreed on a selected list and this list was approved by the Council. In each case and for these nuclear Commissions, members were appointed in their individual capacity. It was left open for the Commissions to make recommendations on their final composition.

Mr. Cassin said that the Human Rights Commission had had the same problem to decide and they felt that individual capacity was preferable. It was, nevertheless, important to have government

support and their Commission had, therefore, considered that each government should nominate two experts, one of their own nationals and one other. The Economic and Social Council would then have a list of about one hundred (100) names from which to select and a good choice would thus be provided. Mr. Brkish considered that this proposal was good. Mrs. Mehta considered that governmental representation was undesirable since the Sub-Commission should be absolutely free from governmental control.

Miss Jurdak wished to stress the principle of having individual representatives. The Sub-Commission was an international body and should be free from party politics. Mme. LeFaucheux then moved an amendment to Miss Bernardino's motion to the effect that the Economic and Social Council should obtain the approval of governments.

Miss Kalinowska supported the amendment from the practical view that individuals could not obtain results without support from their governments. After some discussion it became clear that the Economic and Social Council would not appoint any person who was not persona grata with his respective government. No such provision actually existed in the rules but this practice had been followed with the appointments to the nuclear Commissions. Mme. LeFaucheux said that this explanation satisfied her and she, therefore, withdrew her amendment and suggested an unanimous vote on Miss Bernardino's motion that the Sub-Commission recommends that the members of the Sub-Commission shall be appointed by the Economic and Social Council in their individual capacity. The motion was adopted.

The chairman then took up the question of regional selection of members. Miss Bernardino proposed the name of Dr. Bertha Lutz, a Brazilian woman of outstanding qualifications. The chairman suggested that it was necessary first to decide on the Sub-Commission's programme before names were discussed. When the time came to discuss

names, there were various suggestions from women's organizations which must be brought to the members' notice. Discussion on this point was therefore postponed and the question of term of office was taken up. Several members felt that there should be some continuity in the present membership since those who were planning the programme for the future should have an opportunity to carry it out. The Sub-Commission would report to the Commission on Human Rights who in turn would report to the Economic and Social Council. The Council's report would not be ratified by the General Assembly before September and therefore the Sub-Commission's work would not be put into effect before October or November 1946.

The chairman pointed out that the present membership expired on 31 March 1947 and although the members were eligible for re-election, it was by no means certain that they would be re-elected. Miss Jurdak moved that in view of the fact that the present Sub-Commission is eligible for re-election and that its work cannot begin before October or November, 1946, it is recommended that members be eligible for re-election for a period of three years commencing on the first of April 1947, to serve effectively during the period of initiation. The chairman moved that the Sub-Commission also recommend that after this period a sound system of rotation shall be put into being. The motions were adopted unanimously.

The question of attendance at meetings was then discussed and it was agreed that there should be a recommendation to the Council that members should attend regularly. With regard to alternates, it was agreed that the Sub-Commission might have to follow a general system laid down for all Commissions and a motion was adopted that:

the Sub-Commission recommends that in the case of an emergency alternates may be designated according to the rules of the Economic and Social Council.

The chairman proposed that discussion on the question of the frequency

and location of future meetings of the Sub-Commission should be postponed since it would be necessary to harmonize with the programme of the Commission on Human Rights.

Miss Bernardino proposed that the Sub-Commission should resolve itself into a drafting committee to prepare a draft programme of work for discussion and her proposal was adopted.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Sub-Commission should take place on Tuesday, 7 May at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

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