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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Twenty-sixth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 653rd MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 28 September 1976, at 2.35 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. COCKCROFT (United Kingdom)

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(agenda item 4) (continued)

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THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, 1976-1985
(agenda item 4) (continued):

(b) THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE AND RELATED QUESTIONS INCLUDING TECHNICAL
CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES (E/CN.6/594 and Corr.1, 594/Add.1; E/CN.6/682)

1. After a procedural discussion in which the CHAIRMAN, Ms. BOKOR-SZEGO (Hungary), Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Miss GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico), Mrs. ROMANOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. EHSASSI (Iran), Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt), Mrs. HIRLEMAN (France) and Mrs. DEVAUD (France) took part, the CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to consider document E/CN.6/L.682.
2. Miss TYABJI (India) said she believed that she could accept the first part of the document on behalf of the Asian group, since it contained general observations and recommendations which the Commission was not called upon to amend.
3. Miss GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico) said that she would appreciate clarification of paragraph 9. The first part of the paragraph indicated that organizational structures should be strengthened at all levels, but the last sentence conveyed the impression that they should be strengthened at the national level only.
4. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) thought that paragraph 9 was simply intended as a general statement indicating the need to strengthen machinery and organizational structures for the programme for the Decade at the international, regional or national level alike. It might, in fact, be better to delete the last sentence in the paragraph.
5. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) said that, in point of fact, paragraph 9 reflected the views of her own delegation, which considered that structures at any level should be flexible and responsive, and that work at the international level should be designed to reach the country level. If not, it would be a mere bureaucratic exercise and would not serve any purpose.
6. Miss GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico) said that, having heard the explanation by the representative of Egypt, she understood the need to retain the sentence which might, however, be redrafted.
7. The CHAIRMAN requested the delegations of Mexico and Egypt to work together on a new version of the last sentence of paragraph 9.
8. Mrs. LAMINA (Indonesia) said that her delegation could accept the first part of the working paper. It believed that paragraph 6 was particularly useful and timely because Governments alone could not achieve all the objectives of the World Plan and the programme for the Decade; non-governmental organizations should therefore be associated with the implementation process.
9. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to section I, said that her delegation appreciated the good work done by the Secretariat in such a short time. It appeared to have taken account of the main documents adopted at the

international and regional levels upon which the programme for the Decade would be based, and had referred to the Declaration of Mexico, the World Plan, regional plans of action and regional resolutions, as well as General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions. Her delegation endorsed the reference to the importance of national action, supported by action at the regional and global levels. Paragraph 3, which listed minimum objectives for regional plans of action, referred to the very difficult problem of increased employment opportunities for women and the reduction of unemployment. Her delegation believed that the objective in that regard should be the complete elimination of unemployment by the end of the Decade, and she proposed that sub-paragraph (d) should be redrafted along those lines.

10. Noting that the number of seminars organized by the United Nations had declined considerably in recent years, she said that her delegation regarded seminars as an effective and productive method of work and considered that more should be organized in connexion with the Decade. In conclusion, she felt that the first part of paragraph 10 might be amended to read "substantial resources" rather than "resources of great magnitude".

11. Mrs. ROMANOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that her delegation appreciated the working paper produced by the Secretariat. She agreed with the Soviet representative's remarks on paragraph 10, but thought it might be sufficient to say "require resources, both within".

12. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) said that her delegation was satisfied with the way its position had been reflected in the working paper. It nevertheless proposed that the title of section I should be amended to read: "The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace - Policies, Principles and Mandates".

13. Mr. LEHMANN (Denmark) said that, as his delegation had not had time to study the working paper in sufficient detail, it reserved its position on the document as a whole and, in particular, on section I, paragraph 1, which referred to various General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, on some of which his delegation had voted against or abstained.

14. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) said that her delegation found section I of the working paper to be generally acceptable, although it had some questions, particularly concerning paragraph 3 (d).

15. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) said that her delegation also considered section I to be generally acceptable. It nevertheless reserved its position on paragraph 1 (a) and (c), which referred to certain General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions with which it had not been in agreement. It also reserved its position on paragraph 11, which did not specify the financial implications of the use of "adequate resources from the regular budget".

16. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) said that the substance of the working paper was generally acceptable to her delegation which was, however, concerned about the wording of paragraph 1 (a), (b) and (c). For example, the reference in paragraph 1 (b) to General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX), on which her delegation had abstained, might prevent her delegation from approving that paragraph.

17. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that section I.3(a) to (n), should be placed in quotation marks because it was a direct quote from paragraph 46 of the World Plan of Action. The same drafting change should be made in the case of paragraph 4(a) to (c), which had been directly quoted from paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX).
18. Ms. HOERZ (German Democratic Republic), referring to section II.C. entitled "Increased involvement of women in political life and in international co-operation and the maintenance of peace", said that as the maintenance of international peace and security was an essential condition for the well-being of all mankind, the United Nations Decade for Women should also be proclaimed as a decade for the achievement of progress in bringing about general and complete disarmament, in destroying nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and in promoting the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Similarly, measures should be taken during the Decade to increase the participation of women in the struggle for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination and apartheid, and all States which had not yet done so should be urged to ratify the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. In that connexion, she noted that resolution 3 adopted by the World Conference of the International Women's Year had requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the effects of apartheid on the status of women. Her delegation would circulate a working paper on that subject at a later meeting.
19. Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden) said that his country had reserved its position on some of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions mentioned in section I.1.(a) to (c). Those reservations were still valid.
20. Ms. LAMINA (Madagascar) said that the working paper was generally acceptable, and explained that some of the provisions of the programme for the Decade were already being implemented in her country and preparations were being made for the implementation of others. However, her delegation was of the opinion that the words "Sex Discrimination" in the title of section II.A. should be replaced by the words "Discrimination against Women".
21. Mrs. MORIYAMA (Observer for Japan), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that, in general, the working paper prepared by the Secretariat gave a clear idea of the goals and objectives of the Decade for Women and provided excellent guidelines for the activities to be carried out by countries with a view to implementing the programme for the Decade.
22. Mrs. JANJIC (International Labour Organisation), speaking on behalf of FAO as well as the ILO, said that section I.1. of the working paper should contain a reference to the decisions and resolutions adopted by the specialized agencies during the International Women's Year. She therefore suggested the addition of the following two sentences after paragraph 1 (a): "In addition to the above-mentioned resolutions, a number of decisions and resolutions were adopted during the International Women's Year by the specialized agencies. These texts give a special mandate to these organizations concerning various

technical subjects which are included in the programme for the Decade and for which they should, in accordance with the mandate given to them as members of the United Nations family, continue to be responsible".

23. Ms. SANDLUND (Sweden), referring to section II.A. relating to "National Action 1976-1980", proposed that, since her country had not yet taken a decision on how to guarantee the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of sex - a matter which was usually discussed in the course of collective bargaining between employers and trade unions - paragraph (a) on page 8 of the working paper should be amended to read: "The principle of non-discrimination on grounds of sex should be guaranteed through constitutional and legislative or other appropriate measures".

24. Mr. ESHASSI (Iran), noting that the programme should give the highest priority to the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, proposed that section II.B., paragraph 1 (d), should be amended to read: "The regional centres and regional economic commissions and other regional intergovernmental organizations (Inter-American Commission of Women and Arab Women's Committee) should co-ordinate their activities with those of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women".

25. He also proposed that the following new paragraph 2 should be added after paragraph 1(d):

"2. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women should not only be part of general research and methodological activities, but should also be regarded as one of the cornerstones of programming aimed at the integration of women in development.

In embarking upon its work as soon as possible, the Institute, in addition to the aims and objectives established for it by the Economic and Social Council, should:

(a) Constitute one of the basic elements of the programme for the Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1976-1985, in accordance with the goals of the World Conference of the International Women's Year; and

(b) Make a substantial contribution to the preparation of the World Conference to be held in 1980".

Subsequent paragraphs would be renumbered accordingly.

26. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) proposed that the following new sub-paragraph (iii) should be added to section II.B., paragraph 1 (b):

"(iii) The United Nations should stress the importance of assistance from individuals from non-governmental organizations and Governments for consultative services related to the implementation of the World Plan of Action, particularly during the Decade for Women, 1976-1985.

"The United Nations should develop a corps of women experts, responsible to the Commission on the Status of Women, which would be available on a regional basis for consultations and for reporting on various aspects of the implementation of the World Plan of Action.

"Such services would include responding to requests from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and national machinery and voluntary associations, as well as key government personnel, for guidance in the adaptation of the Plan to specific country needs.

"Consultants should be prepared to provide guidance on the following:

1. How to design projects from the Plan;
2. How to adapt the Plan to the national development priorities of the country;
3. How to develop and justify project proposals;
4. How to obtain government and private support;
5. How to utilize the coalition concept in uniting large numbers of women's groups in support of projects which provide long-term benefits to women;
6. How to work with and strengthen national machinery or develop the necessary machinery where it does not exist for sustained attention to programmes and projects and to ensure a greater amount of support for the effective implementation of the World Plan of Action during the Decade for Women".

27. That amendment was designed to facilitate the work of the Commission and the implementation of national, regional and international programmes for the Decade for Women.

28. Miss GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico) requested the Secretariat to specify the number of the Economic and Social Council resolution referred to in section II.A. 2 (a), and the number of the Commission resolution referred to in section II.A. 3 (b). Referring to the first paragraph on page 8, she said that courses in subjects other than home economics and the stereotyping of roles should also be provided for both boys and girls as a means of eliminating inequality between men and women.

29. Her delegation fully supported the amendments to section II.B. proposed by Iran and relating to the establishment and the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. With regard to section II.B. 2, on the improvement of the data base and information necessary for drawing up programmes and policies, she said it was not clear which general and specific studies had already been completed and which were now being carried out. Moreover, paragraph 2 (b) (i) should indicate that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women would take part in the survey of existing data and information.

30. Section II.B. 3 (a), referred to the elaboration of a joint inter-organizational programme for the Decade for Women. That programme had, however, been mentioned in document E/CN.6/594 as the "joint inter-agency programme". The Commission should decide exactly what the title of that programme would be. Lastly, she said that her delegation did not understand how the specialized agencies would be able to concentrate action on the "national development planning and monitoring systems" referred to in section II.B. 3 (a) (iii).

31. Mrs. DEVAUD (France), speaking on a point of order, protested that her delegation had had time to read only the first part of the working paper and therefore considered it improper for the Mexican delegation to comment on, and propose amendments to, all sections of the working paper at the present stage.

32. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that ample time had been allowed for the submission of amendments prior to the preparation of the working paper by the Secretariat. While delegations should not be barred from making minor changes in the text at the current stage, the submission of sometimes lengthy amendments of substance requiring considerable time for translation and study would inevitably hamper progress and might even prevent the Commission from completing consideration of the programme for the Decade at the current session. If it was to achieve results, the Commission should follow the procedure it had itself established and conduct its work in a more rational fashion.

33. The CHAIRMAN assured the USSR representative that translations of the new amendments to the working paper would be made available to the Commission as soon as possible.

34. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) pointed out that the deadline which the Commission had established for the submission of amendments to the Working Group had passed. While they might now refer to amendments which had not been incorporated in the working paper, delegations should not, in her view, introduce entirely new points, for time was short. She suggested that the Working Paper should be discussed paragraph by paragraph, with statements being limited to five minutes.

35. Miss TYABJI (India) associated herself with the comments made by the representatives of the USSR and Egypt concerning the submission of amendments and suggested that, in order to save time, the working paper should be discussed by sections rather than paragraphs.

36. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said she was quite alarmed by the length of some of the amendments already submitted and the promise of more to come, for the Secretariat could simply not cope with them, draft resolutions and the Rapporteur's report at such a late stage in the session. Since it was usual for instruments as important as the programme for the Decade, for which the working paper was intended to serve as a basis, to be incorporated in a General Assembly resolution, the problem of the time needed to study new amendments might be solved by a decision of the Commission to transmit the programme to the General Assembly through the resumed session of the Economic and Social Council.

37. The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to consider the working paper paragraph by paragraph.

Section I. General Observations and Recommendations

38. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, she would take it that the Commission approved the Egyptian proposal that the title of the section should be amended to read "The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace - Policies, Principles and Mandates".

39. It was so decided.

Paragraph 1

40. The CHAIRMAN suggested that discussion of the paragraph should be postponed until delegations which had expressed reservations on it had been able to consult their Governments.

41. Mrs. HIRLEMAN (France) suggested that it might be sufficient if such reservations were noted in the summary record of the meeting.

42. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) supported the Chairman's suggestion. Delegations having reservations could hold consultations that evening and report back to the Commission the following day.

43. The CHAIRMAN said it was hoped that the consultations would result in a simple formula, which could perhaps be incorporated in the final version of the working paper as a foot-note.

44. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) emphasized that her delegation, which had reservations concerning several points in the document under discussion, would be satisfied if they were noted in the relevant paragraphs of the summary record and, at most, if a foot-note calling attention thereto was included in the final version of the working paper.

Paragraph 2

45. Mr. LEHMANN (Denmark) proposed that the words "as adopted" should be added after the word "documents".

46. It was so decided.

47. Paragraph 2 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 3

48. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to her proposal to replace the word "reduction" in sub-paragraph (d) by the word "elimination".

49. The CHAIRMAN explained that the text could not be changed because it was a quotation from the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year. The amendment might be made at some other point in the working paper where the same phrase occurred.

50. Paragraph 3 was adopted.

Paragraphs 4-8

51. Paragraphs 4-8 were adopted.

Paragraph 9

52. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) announced that, following consultations between her own delegation and that of Mexico, the latter had accepted the final sentence of the paragraph.

53. Paragraph 9 was adopted.

Paragraph 10

54. Mrs. CADIEUX (Canada) drew attention to the reservations expressed by her delegation concerning the budgetary resources for the programme.

55. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the phrase "of great magnitude" should be deleted.

56. It was so decided.

57. Paragraph 10 was adopted as amended.

Paragraph 11

58. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France) recalled her delegation's reservations concerning the term "adequate resources".

59. Mrs. CADIEUX (Canada) drew attention to the reservations expressed by her delegation concerning the budgetary resources for the programme.

60. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) proposed that the beginning of the paragraph should be amended to read: "A readjustment in priorities within the regular budget ...".

61. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that the United States amendment might confuse the issue, for it could be taken to mean that the Secretariat should carry out its duties under the programme using only the staff it already had, and that would be impossible. The provisions of paragraphs 16 and 17 of General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) should be taken into account with regard to the resources required for implementation of the programme. The Secretariat had submitted its proposals for the medium-term plan to the Policy and Programme Co-ordination Committee of the Economic and Social Council, which had decided that the programme for the Decade should be included in the list of activities requiring a greater than average increase in staff resources. The Secretariat had also prepared revised budgetary estimates for 1977, and they would be considered by the General Assembly at its next session.

62. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) withdrew her amendment.

63. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that she had expressed concern earlier that paragraph 11 seemed to be at variance with the provision concerning "existing resources" contained in paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX). As the Commission could not very well give the impression that it was attempting to reverse a decision of the General Assembly, she proposed the deletion of paragraph 11.

64. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) found the paragraph acceptable, for it simply stated the Commission's view that the Secretariat department which would be responsible for implementing the programme would require greater resources than were at present available to it.
65. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat found the paragraph acceptable in its present form and hoped that it would be retained.
66. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said she appreciated the Secretariat's concern. However, the Commission had already indicated in paragraph 10 what the implementation of the programme would entail, and it was simply not competent to tell the General Assembly and its Fifth Committee how and where the resources in question should be found, as it appeared to be doing in paragraph 11.
67. The CHAIRMAN explained that the paragraph was intended only as a recommendation to the General Assembly. If necessary, note could be taken of the USSR representative's objection.
68. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) agreed with the Chairman concerning the intent of the paragraph, and said that the Commission had a right to draw the attention of the competent United Nations organs to what it considered to be necessary for its own Secretariat. Strengthening of the Secretariat was essential if the programme was to be carried out. In her opinion, the paragraph should be retained and any reservations recorded.
69. Ms. SANDLUND (Sweden) said that it was extremely important to retain paragraph 11 in order to ensure that the Secretariat would be adequately equipped to perform all its duties connected with the Decade.
70. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) believed that the Commission was competent to make recommendations to the General Assembly of the kind contained in paragraph 11. Naturally, as the USSR representative had said, the final decision on such recommendations lay with the higher body.
71. Ms. SNYDER (Observer for the Economic Commission for Africa), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said she would like to point out for the information of her colleagues that the four regional commissions had been assigned only two United Nations regional posts, namely, one in ECLA and one in ECE. She hoped that in future more full-time posts would be made available for them.
72. Mrs. ROMANOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that her delegation reserved its right to revert to and comment on paragraph 11, for she shared the views of the USSR representative on the matter.
73. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that paragraph 11 could be reworded in the form of a flexible recommendation or request which would be acceptable to all delegations. In her opinion, no final decision on that paragraph was called for.

74. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France) said that she agreed with the representative of Iran that the Commission had the right and duty to make a recommendation; however, she did not feel it was necessary to take a formal decision on that point.

75. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the paragraph could be reworded in the form of a recommendation by the use of the words "is desirable".

76. Miss TYABJI (India) supported that suggestion, but thought that the paragraph should be redrafted to state that adequate resources should be found, as the Assistant Director had indicated that it was unlikely that they would be found.

77. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) explained that the Commission was not called upon to take any decision in the matter, as the actual decision was the responsibility of the Fifth Committee.

78. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France), supported by Ms. BOKOR-SZEGO (Hungary), said that the French text should be brought more into line with the original English.

79. Mrs. SAYLO (Indonesia) said she was satisfied with the Assistant Director's explanation; after all, paragraph 11 was not a recommendation but only a statement, and she felt that it was fully in line with General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX).

80. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representatives of the USSR, France and Hungary should try to agree on a satisfactory text for paragraph 11.

81. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France) proposed that the paragraph should be amended to begin with the words: "It would be desirable that adequate resources from the regular budget ...".

82. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) suggested that it might be sufficient merely to replace the word "essential" in the second line by the word "desirable".

83. Miss TYABJI (India) thought that "desirable" was too weak. She proposed that the paragraph should be amended to read: "It is recommended that adequate resources from the regular budget both for staffing for Headquarters and for the secretariats of regional commissions be provided, as they are essential to ensure the continuity ...", etc.

It was so decided.

84. Paragraph 11 was adopted, as amended.

85. The CHAIRMAN noted that the Commission had adopted section I, subject to certain reservations with regard to paragraph 1.

Section II. Specific areas for action to attain to threefold objects of the Decade

A. Formulation and Implementation of International Standards to Eliminate Sex Discrimination

86. Ms. LAMINA (Madagascar) proposed that the words "Sex Discrimination" in the sub-heading should be replaced by the words "Discrimination against Women".

Paragraph 1

87. Ms. BOKOR-SZEGO (Hungary) said that, although she was fully in favour of the idea behind sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), she personally would prefer the following text: "It would be desirable that the General Assembly should adopt the convention as soon as the Commission on the Status of Women had completed its preparation of the text, and that the convention should enter into force as soon as possible".

88. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) said that her delegation preferred the original text; in her opinion, the words "It would be desirable ..." would weaken it.

89. Miss TYABJI (India) agreed.

90. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) said that although the Commission could not fix any dates, it might express the desire that the Convention should be adopted and enter into force within a certain time.

91. Mrs. HEIKAL (Observer for the League of Arab States) speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, suggested the addition of a sub-paragraph (c) to the effect that the United Nations regional commissions, as well as the competent regional intergovernmental commissions, should take all appropriate measures to disseminate information concerning all United Nations instruments in the field of elimination of discrimination against women and should encourage the Governments in their regions to adopt and implement such instruments.

92. Mrs. SALYO (Indonesia) considered it only appropriate that the time-table in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) should be expressed in a positive manner.

93. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) said she could see no objection to the dates prescribed in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), as they were not of a mandatory nature but merely a recommendation by the Commission with regard to one of the targets of the Decade for Women. Her delegation also supported the suggestion made by the Observer for the League of Arab States.

94. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) said she failed to see how the Commission could set any satisfactory deadlines, for it was still uncertain when the convention would be completed.

95. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), replying to a question asked earlier by the Mexican representative concerning section II.A.2.(a), said that the relevant resolution was Economic and Social Council resolution 1667 (LII) of 31 May 1972, which had established a consolidated system of reporting on instruments concerning the status of women. A report on that matter was to be found in document E/CN.6/592.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.