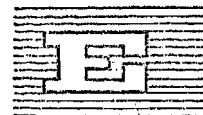


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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Resumed Twenty-sixth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 664th MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 8 December 1976, at 10.5 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. GONZALEZ de CUADROS (Colombia)

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INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN (agenda item 3) (continued)

(a) DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

(E/CN.6/591, Corr.1 and Add.1; E/CN.6/L.699; L.700; L.701; L.702 and L.703)  
(continued)

Sixth preambular paragraph

1. Miss TYABJI (India) felt that the clause "and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity" in the original draft seventh paragraph of the preamble (E/CN.6/591, annex III) was of some importance and should be retained. She proposed that it should be added to the end of the sixth preambular paragraph as drafted in document E/CN.6/591/Add.1.

2. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) said that her delegation supported the Indian amendment.

3. The sixth preambular paragraph was adopted as amended.

Seventh preambular paragraph

4. Miss HOERZ (German Democratic Republic) proposed the addition of a new seventh preambular paragraph submitted by her delegation (E/CN.6/L.703); the subsequent draft preambular paragraphs would have to be renumbered accordingly.

5. Mrs. COCKCROFT (United Kingdom) suggested that the proposed additional draft paragraph could be improved by deleting "implementation of the" and by changing "fundamental human rights including those of women" to "fundamental rights of women", which seemed more appropriate in a convention concerned primarily with discrimination against women.

6. Mr. VAN DUYSE (Belgium) felt that the preamble to a convention should be as concise as possible. In the view of his delegation, the substance of the proposal submitted by the German Democratic Republic had been covered by the first and second preambular paragraphs which contained references to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) said that his delegation could accept the German Democratic Republic's proposal, as amended by the representative of the United Kingdom.

8. Mrs. BOKOR-SZIEGO (Hungary) also supported that proposal, as amended by the United Kingdom representative. Referring to the Belgian representative's comments, she said that the ideas contained in the German Democratic Republic's proposal were among the most important in the convention. All the objectives of the convention must be reflected in the preamble, and omission of the ideas contained in the German Democratic Republic's proposal would detract from its value.

9. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that her delegation supported the German Democratic Republic's proposal, as amended by the representative of the United Kingdom.
10. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) said it would be difficult for her delegation to accept the German Democratic Republic's proposal. The objective of the draft convention was the elimination of discrimination against women, and not the elimination of colonialism and racism on which conventions had already been adopted. The preamble to the draft convention under discussion should be brief and relate only to questions of direct concern to women.
11. Nor could her delegation accept the premise inherent in the German-Democratic Republic's proposal that effective disarmament and the elimination of colonialism and racism were indispensable prerequisites for the enjoyment by women of their fundamental rights. Women might have to wait a long time if effective disarmament had to be achieved before they could enjoy their rights.
12. Begum FARIDI (Pakistan) said that her delegation wholeheartedly supported the German Democratic Republic's proposal, as amended by the representative of the United Kingdom.
13. Mrs. TRAPOTE (Cuba) said that her delegation also supported the German Democratic Republic's proposal, as amended by the United Kingdom representative.
14. Mr. VALLARTA (Mexico) said he appreciated the points made by the representatives of the German Democratic Republic and Canada. In his opinion, any list of indispensable prerequisites for safeguarding the rights of women should include elimination of the gap between developed and developing countries; the question of underdevelopment could not be ignored.
15. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) said that achievement of the objectives listed in the German Democratic Republic's proposal was important for the promotion of human rights in general and women's rights in particular. She agreed with the Canadian representative, however, that it would not be reasonable to expect women to wait until all those objectives had been achieved before they could exercise their rights. She suggested, therefore, that the word "prerequisites" might be replaced by, say, the word "conditions". She also agreed that the elimination of underdevelopment should be added to the list of objectives; that might be done by adding such words as "and its long-standing effect on development" after the word "colonialism". An informal group could be set up to try to work out a text acceptable to all delegations.
16. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) endorsed the views of the Canadian representative. The wording of the German Democratic Republic's proposal was a source of concern to her delegation. The Belgian text (E/CN.6/591/Add.1), under which the right of women to participate fully in policy planning would be recognized, and which also met the Mexican representative's point concerning the question of underdevelopment, was preferable.

17. Mr. LEHMANN (Denmark) said he had no objection to the substance of the German Democratic Republic's proposal. That proposal did, however, refer to objectives which were different from those aimed at in the convention. As the Belgian text was more in keeping with the objective of eliminating discrimination against women, it would seem preferable to work on that text, possibly adding to it some of the ideas contained in the German Democratic Republic's proposal.
18. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France) agreed with the ideas expressed by the Canadian representative as well as with the Belgian representative that the text of a preamble should be brief and not go into detail. Her delegation therefore favoured the Belgian text.
19. Miss TYABJI (India) noted that the Belgian text, as it stood, contained two different ideas and suggested that the idea concerning development should be singled out. That could be done by deleting the phrase "the welfare of the world and the cause of peace" and replacing the word "require" by the word "requires".
20. She also suggested that, in the text proposed by the representative of the German Democratic Republic, the words after "self-determination" should be deleted and replaced by "are vital to the fundamental rights of women in the safeguarding of which women should play their full part".
21. Mrs. GUEYE (Senegal) proposed that the word "apartheid" should be inserted after the word "colonialism" in the text submitted by the representative of the German Democratic Republic. Furthermore, as complete development implied economic development, which could not be achieved without the adoption of a new international economic order - the basic element of which was the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States - a reference to those concepts should also be included in the amendment.
22. Mrs. HERRAN (Colombia) endorsed the Mexican suggestion that a reference to the importance of eliminating underdevelopment should be included in the preamble.
23. It might be possible to reconcile members' points of view if the words "indispensable prerequisites" were replaced by the words "important elements".
24. Her delegation could support the logical amendment to the German Democratic Republic's text proposed by the representative of India.
25. Mrs. ROMANOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that her delegation supported the German Democratic Republic's proposal, as amended by the representative of the United Kingdom. The ideas contained in that proposal must be reflected in the preamble if the objectives of the convention were to be achieved; indeed, effective disarmament would make it possible to reallocate the enormous sums currently spent on defence to meet social needs throughout the world, particularly in the developing countries. Consideration might also be given to the amendments suggested by the representatives of Senegal and India.
26. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) felt that the text proposed by the representative of the German Democratic Republic was not inconsistent with the Belgian text, in which the emphasis was different; in point of fact, the two texts complemented each other. The ideas reflected in the Belgian text were important; they were taken from the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and should be included in the Convention. The text proposed by the representative of the German Democratic Republic could be inserted either before or after the Belgian text.

27. Mr. VALLARTA (Mexico) said it would be very difficult to enumerate all the prerequisites for the safeguarding of women's rights. His delegation could, however, accept the German Democratic Republic's proposal provided it included the ideas suggested by the representative of Senegal. For instance, the words "implementation of the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States and the achievement of a new international economic order," might be inserted after the words "Affirming that". The minimum his delegation could accept would be the insertion, after the words "Affirming that", of the words "elimination of the existing gap between developed and developing countries,".

28. In conclusion, he said that although the resources that would be released by effective disarmament could undoubtedly be used to serve social purposes throughout the world, he did not consider that effective disarmament was an indispensable prerequisite for the safeguarding of women's rights.

29. Princess PURACHATRA (Thailand) agreed with the representatives of Denmark and Iran that the ideas reflected in the Belgian text were important. She moved the closure of the debate so that an attempt could be made to prepare a compromise text that would include the ideas contained in the Belgian text and the proposal of the German Democratic Republic, together with amendments suggested by other delegations, including those of Senegal and Mexico.

30. The CHAIRMAN asked whether any member opposed the motion.

31. Miss TYABJI (India) suggested that more time should be allowed for discussion. She did not know, for instance, whether her delegation's amendment to the German Democratic Republic's proposal had been accepted.

32. The CHAIRMAN observing that no other member wished to speak against the motion, put it to the vote.

33. The motion was adopted by 8 votes to 1, with 10 abstentions.

34. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representatives of Belgium, Canada, the German Democratic Republic, India, Mexico, Pakistan, Senegal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, together with any other representatives interested in the question, should form a working group and try to draw up a text acceptable to all delegations.

35. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) asked whether he was correct in assuming that the establishment of a working group did not preclude the resumption of the discussion on paragraph 7 in the Commission when the group had submitted an agreed text.

36. The CHAIRMAN assured him that his assumption was correct. He suggested that the working group should meet forthwith and that the Commission should consider the working group's text and the remaining preambular paragraphs at the following meeting.

37. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.