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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Resumed Twenty-sixth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 671st MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 13 December 1976, at 3.10 p.m.

Chairman:

Mrs. BOKOR-SZEGO

(Hungary)

CONTENTS

The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace,
1976-1985 (agenda item 4) (continued)

- (d) Preparatory work for the 1980 conference (continued)
- (b) The programme for the Decade and related questions including technical
co-operation activities (continued)
- (c) Review and appraisal of progress made under the International Development
Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade and in the
implementation of the World Plan of Action (continued)

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

(d) PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE 1980 CONFERENCE (E/CN.6/600; E/CN.6/L.713;
E/CN.6/NGO/258 and 259) (continued)

1. Mrs. FOUCHARD-LOPEZ (Observer for the Inter-American Commission of Women), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that the Inter-American Commission of Women had endorsed the United Nations Decade for Women, and was gearing all its plans and programmes to the achievement of the goals of the Decade.
2. She informed the Commission of the progress made in implementing the first stage of the Regional Plan of Action adopted in August 1976 at the Eighteenth Assembly of the Inter-American Commission.
3. The Inter-American Centre for Research and Training, which had its headquarters in Buenos Aires, would initiate work on a region-wide scale in April 1977, and would be in a position to co-ordinate its activities with the future United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which was shortly to be set up.
4. The Women's Bureaus, which had been established in most countries of the region and the national committees of co-operation, which were the basic organs of the Multinational Women's Centre (CIM), were also prepared to play a co-ordinating role in the implementation of both the world and regional plans.
5. Among the activities undertaken by CIM, she singled out for special mention the applied laboratory on the technical education of women; the nutrition seminar; the programme on the use of intermediate technology (mainly for rural women); the creation of means of financing the establishment of small enterprises or co-operatives; national integrated development programmes; the seminar on the new image of women, and the project entitled "Responsible parents".
6. Moreover, when the 1980 census was taken in Latin America, the data would be analysed by age and sex and related to a number of factors that would help in evaluating the role of women in society at the present time.
7. In an attempt to improve the co-ordination and integration of efforts, CIM had endorsed the recommendation made in the programme for the United Nations Decade for Women that a network system should be established between United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations system, the regional commissions, the regional intergovernmental commissions and offices of the specialized agencies to facilitate the exchange of information concerning projects and programmes, and mutual assistance to strengthen the integration of women in development on a world-wide basis (E/5894, II, B. 3 (c) (i)).
8. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the task of the 1980 conference would be to draw up a balance sheet of the activities of Member States, international organizations and specialized agencies during the five years that had elapsed since the Mexico City Conference.

9. The objectives of the Conference would be the same as those of the United Nations Decade for Women, namely, equality, development and peace. Those three objectives were closely interrelated. Referring to the case of the Middle East, she said that if there was no peace in one area of the world, all development efforts were in vain. She stressed in that respect that the huge sums spent on new and very costly weapons represented resources diverted from more profitable investment in development. Women, who accounted for one-half of the human race, had an active role to play in promoting development and peaceful co-existence.
10. The 1980 conference should also review the programme for the second half of the Decade. It should have before it the reports of the Secretary-General on that question, as well as on the three interdependent objectives for the Decade.
11. The work of the conference should be organized on the lines of that of the Mexico City Conference, and begin with a general debate in plenary on the three objectives of the Decade. The general debate would make it possible to analyse and supplement the reports submitted. It should be followed by work in the committees; whose number would depend on the resources and facilities available.
12. She supported the proposal that the conference should pay special attention to the important question of the situation of rural women.
13. The Secretary-General should organize seminars or symposia as part of the preparatory work for the 1980 conference. She recalled in that respect that, when it had been decided that the Commission on the Status of Women should meet once every two years rather than annually, it had been envisaged that regional symposia would be held in the years when the Commission was not meeting. Although that decision had not yet been carried out, she believed that symposia of that kind would be an excellent way to prepare for the 1980 conference. They could be devoted to specific problems, such as that of rural women, and be held on a national or international scale.
14. Participation in the 1980 conference should be broad and democratic, and include Member States, the specialized agencies and organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.
15. Careful thought must be given to the questions of the date, duration and site of the Conference, and the Secretariat should submit proposals on those matters to the Commission at its next session. Her delegation would have no objection if the conference were held in a Member State.
16. The working languages of the conference should be those of the United Nations, and its documentation should be available in all those languages.
17. With respect to parallel activities, she was doubtful about the value of a Tribune of the kind that had functioned in Mexico in a rather disorganized fashion. She was in favour of participation by journalists, and thought it would be useful if a certain amount of publicity were given to the conference immediately so that the women's organizations could prepare for it.

18. The events suggested by the Secretary-General to mark International Women's Day (E/CN.6/600, para. 37) seemed to be well-advised.
19. In her view, however, it would be premature to prepare an agenda for the conference at the present time because major changes might well occur before 1980; the agenda could be drawn up by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session on the basis of the Secretary-General's proposals.
20. Mr. KAMANAYANA (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) said that ESCAP attached great importance to the 1980 conference and hoped it would provide practical guidelines for the strengthening of regional activities aimed at integrating women more fully in the development process. ESCAP would be pleased to contribute to the preparation of documents on that topic, which should be accorded high priority in the deliberations of the conference. ESCAP also hoped to submit to the conference a report on the progress made in implementing the five-year Asian Plan of Action, which had been endorsed by the Mexico City Conference, and on the initial achievements of the recently established Asia and the Pacific Centre for Women and Development in Teheran.
21. ESCAP attached great importance in all its activities to questions affecting rural women, and therefore strongly supported the suggestion that the topic should be given priority in the agenda of the 1980 conference.
22. ESCAP would be glad to co-operate in the preparatory work for the conference, and particularly in the organization of consultative meetings or meetings entailing the active participation of non-governmental organizations, which had always played an important part in development activities in the region.
23. Mrs. DAHLERUP (Denmark) said that the Secretariat should make a special effort to prepare all the necessary documentation by April 1979 at the latest. The Commission should ensure that regional conferences were held one year before the conference, so that relevant problems could be discussed adequately in all parts of the world and at every level.
24. The CHAIRMAN said that the delegations of the Byelorussian SSR, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Sweden, Togo, the USSR and the United States of America had asked to speak the following day on draft resolution E/CN.6/L.713. She suggested that consideration of the text should be resumed at that time.
25. It was so decided.
- (b) THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE AND RELATED QUESTIONS INCLUDING TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES (E/CN.6/L.684/Rev.1) (continued)
26. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the revised text of the draft resolution on training for the preparation and implementation of project proposals, submitted by Denmark, Iran, Thailand and the United States of America (E/CN.6/L.684/Rev.1). If there were no objections, she would take it that it was adopted by consensus.
27. It was so decided.

(c) REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF PROGRESS MADE UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE AND IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PLAN OF ACTION (E/CN.6/L.696/Rev.1, L.711 and L.712)
(continued)

28. Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden) introduced the revised draft resolution on the preparation of a reliable data base and indicators relevant to the analysis of the status of women, sponsored by Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Greece, India and Sweden (E/CN.6/L.696/Rev.1).

29. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) said that the sponsors' aim was to improve the methodology for the collection of data used to analyse the status of women, because in many countries the data collected were of a general nature and not presented by sex. A presentation of that kind was necessary if the advancement of women and changes in their status were to be compared and evaluated. Indicators should be prepared on a regional basis, because comprehensive indicators could not reflect such changes correctly owing to differences in levels of advancement, literacy, etc. For instance, some of the indicators in paragraph 1 (a) were not generally applicable. The first aim, therefore, should be to select more or less universally applicable indicators. Europe already possessed a whole series of indicators, and the most meaningful should be singled out. The task would be difficult, but it would certainly be accomplished in the years to come.

30. The statistical work carried out must relate to the participation of women in the preparation of plans, and not simply in their execution. What must be determined was not only women's contribution - a somewhat passive notion - but rather their actual input. She emphasized that, in her own country, women's input had been considerable in recent years: by supplying the household with a second salary they had helped to raise levels of living, and, therefore, to increase consumption and promote economic expansion. It was the increased input of women that had to be evaluated throughout the world. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that draft resolution E/CN.6/L.696/Rev.1 would be adopted unanimously.

31. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) said that the sponsors of the draft resolution under consideration had done excellent work in developing guidelines for the preparation of socio-economic indicators suitable for analysing the status of women. In the United States, a major effort was made to prepare such indicators, which constituted a valuable tool in the struggle against discrimination against women.

32. Mrs. FOUCHARD-LOPEZ (Observer for the Inter-American Commission of Women), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said her Organization considered that the draft resolution on the build-up of a scientific data base and socio-economic indicators for measurement of the implementation of the World Plan of Action was most useful. She asked whether a reference could be made, in paragraph 1, which dealt with co-operation with various organizations, to the Inter-American Commission of Women which was helping to prepare the Inter-American census in which it was planned to use indicators concerning women's contribution to economic development.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that, if the wishes of the representative of the Inter-American Commission of Women were to be met, the wording of paragraph 1 would have to be changed; as drafted, the paragraph provided for the participation of United Nations bodies only.

34. Mrs. LORANGER (Canada) said that her delegation, which was a sponsor of the draft resolution, welcomed the request of the representative of the Inter-American Commission of Women. Appropriate wording could certainly be found to meet her wishes.

35. Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden) requested that the representative of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), which had been most helpful in the preparation of draft resolution E/CN.6/L.696/Rev.1, should be given the floor.

36. Mrs. Von BUCHWALD (United Nations Institute for Social Development) said that International Women's Year had created increasing awareness of the lack of information about essential facts concerning women's status. Information was necessary for effective action, planning and programming. One important step would consist in improving and expanding existing statistics; the Statistical Commission had been requested in the draft resolution under consideration to tackle that problem, taking into account articles 167-169 of the World Plan of Action. However, a further step would consist in using a set of valid socio-economic indicators on women which were difficult to obtain, especially in those developing countries which had not yet built up an adequate data collection infrastructure. It was symptomatic that least was known about those women in whom the Commission was particularly interested, namely, those living in rural areas.

37. With respect to paragraph 170 of the World Plan of Action, which she quoted, she said that, in connexion with its work on a research data bank of development indicators, UNRISD was trying to use a few indicators for which cross-national data could be obtained for females and males, namely, life expectancy, education, the economically active population in manufacturing, etc. However, the limitations of such global indicators had been stressed by participants at the Commission's previous session and had just been referred to again. It was for those reasons that UNRISD had launched a project on monitoring changes in the conditions of women, in close collaboration with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions. The aim of the project was to build up a set of socio-economic indicators that could be used in the national context for planning and programming. The first exploratory phase of the project, consisting of a pilot study in Ivory Coast, was underway. Six national studies would be carried out in developing countries in collaboration with competent national bodies provided the Institute obtained financial support from outside. Developed countries were invited to build up similar systems to monitor changes in the conditions of women. In the project in question, emphasis would be placed on trying out simple and practical data collection methods that could be adapted to national data collection capacities. In that sense, the project would be a contribution to the future International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

38. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) said that the sponsors of draft resolution E/CN.6/L.696/Rev.1 had decided to insert the words "particularly at the national and regional levels" after the words "statistical data" in paragraph 1 (a).

39. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt it might have been better to avoid such a detailed list of subjects in paragraph 1; the impression might be given that the list was exhaustive, whereas a number of important questions had been omitted. It would have been preferable to use a more general formula enabling the bodies in question to give thought to specific subjects that should be tackled, without having their scope limited.

40. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) suggested that the words "the regional commissions and intergovernmental commissions" should be inserted after the words "... WHO and FAO" in paragraph 1. Another way would be to group the organizations mentioned in the paragraph under the words "the United Nations system and the intergovernmental commissions".

41. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) said that she could accept the amendment suggested by the representative of the United States, but would prefer the words "the regional commissions and intergovernmental commissions" inserted after the words "national statistical offices".

42. Mrs. GONZALEZ DE CUADROS (Colombia) agreed that the regional commissions and intergovernmental commissions should be mentioned in paragraph 1.

43. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), replying to a comment by Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden), asked what was the meaning of paragraph 2; the phrase "on the basis of its work", in particular, was very vague in Russian.

44. Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden), said that paragraph 2 had been drafted in the light of paragraph 170 of the World Plan of Action. He felt that the representative of UNRISD would be in a better position to reply to the USSR representative's question.

45. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) considered that there was a considerable difference between paragraph 2 of the draft resolution and paragraph 170 of the World Plan of Action. In the latter paragraph there was no question of a data bank or a monitoring project; it was simply stated that the United Nations should, before 1980, prepare an inventory of social and economic indicators relevant to the analysis of the status of women in co-operation with the specialized agencies concerned, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the regional commissions and other competent bodies. If paragraph 2 of the draft resolution reproduced the text of paragraph 170 word for word, her delegation would be able to accept it, because its wording was unexceptionable and mentioned all the competent bodies. On the other hand, starting with the words "on the basis of its work..." the proposed text did not mean very much; it was unclear what data bank and what monitoring project were being referred to.

46. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) said that in her opinion the sponsors of the draft resolution had wanted to go further than the World Plan of Action; the resolution would be useless if it merely reproduced the wording of paragraph 170 of the Plan. It added something new, namely, it mentioned the data bank and the monitoring project; in short, it spelt out what was implicit in article 170 and would make it possible to make further progress.

47. Mrs. Von BUCHWALD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development) endorsed the comments of the French representative. The text of paragraph 2 had been prepared in close collaboration with the Research Institute for Social Development, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions, all of which were part of the United Nations system. It represented a first attempt to implement paragraph 170 of the World Plan of Action. The misunderstanding was probably attributable to the Russian translation.

48. Miss ST. CLAIRE (Secretary of the Commission) read out the two amendments to paragraph 1 which had been accepted by the sponsors. The words "regional commissions and intergovernmental commissions" should be inserted after the words "national statistical offices" in the introductory part of the paragraph. Secondly, the beginning of paragraph 1(a) would read "improved methods for the collection and tabulation of statistical data, particularly at the national and regional levels, to obtain ...". Paragraph 2 would remain unchanged.

49. Draft resolution E/CN.6/L.696/Rev.1 was adopted as amended by consensus.

50. Miss TYABJI (India), speaking as a co-sponsor of draft resolution E/CN.6/L.711, explained that its main purpose was to urge Governments to establish, at the national level, machinery to ensure the implementation of the measures provided for in the World Plan of Action and of the convention when it came into force. It was precisely at the national level that efforts had to be made, particularly in co-operation with the non-governmental organizations.

51. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) said that paragraphs 3 and 4 were intended to facilitate contacts between Governments and the United Nations. The correspondents it referred to could be sent the relevant documents and help to prepare the forthcoming conference.

52. Ms. FREDGARD (Sweden) proposed that operative paragraph 2 should be amended by the addition of the words "inter alia" after "represented by" and of the words "and men" at the end.

53. Mrs. GONZALEZ DE CUADROS (Colombia) supported the amendments proposed by the representative of Sweden which made the text clearer.

54. The Spanish text of paragraph 1 should be corrected, as it was not clear to what the words "cuando entre en vigor" referred.

55. In paragraphs 3 and 4, Governments were invited to appoint "national correspondents". However, the Spanish word "corresponsales" did not mean the same as the English word "correspondents"; it meant persons responsible for correspondence whereas, in those paragraphs, it was probably used to designate co-ordinators or persons responsible for implementing the Plan. She suggested the use of the word "co-ordinators".

56. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Russian text of paragraph 1 should also be corrected.

57. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had taken note of the comments by the representatives of Colombia and the USSR concerning the Spanish and Russian versions of paragraph 1.
58. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) said she was glad that the draft resolution had been submitted. However, she proposed that in the third preambular paragraph the expression "machinery at the national level", which some readers might have difficulty in understanding, should be made clear by adding to it words "such as national commissions or secretariats on the status of women".
59. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) supported the United States representative's proposal because the word "machinery" might raise problems if it was not explained. She too wondered about the meaning of the word "correspondents". It possibly meant people responsible for liaison between the United Nations and the national agencies and in that case the term "co-ordinators" might be used. It was also uncertain whether the Commission was empowered to propose that Governments should make changes in their internal organization.
60. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) explained that the term "national correspondents" was used in operative paragraph 6 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1852 (LVI). The Colombian representative had apparently been referring to the Spanish term "corresponsales" rather than the word "correspondents".
61. Mrs. GONZALEZ DE CUADROS (Colombia) supported the United States amendment; another possibility would be to say "for example the national commissions or the secretariats on the status of women".
62. In Spanish the word "corresponsal" could not mean someone who was participating in the implementation of the World Plan of Action; that was why she had proposed the word "coordinador".
63. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) felt that the functions of those "correspondents" would have to be specified. "Correspondent" and "co-ordinator" did not mean the same in English.
64. Mrs. GONZALEZ DE CUADROS (Colombia) considered that the word "correspondents" was much too vague, at least in Spanish. If the person appointed was to be really useful, he would have to be responsible not only for receiving communications or documents, but would also have to be in a position to take action with a view to implementing the World Plan of Action.
65. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) suggested the deletion of paragraphs 3 and 4, which created difficulties for some members of the Commission.
66. The amendment proposed by the United States representative to the third preambular paragraph was perfectly acceptable, but it would be well to add the words "for example" to take account of the differences prevailing in individual countries.
67. Her delegation agreed with the Swedish amendment to paragraph 2, but would like to amend it slightly to read: "Recommends that, in the establishment of such machinery, States make provision for the participation of representatives from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other agencies, as appropriate, which are in a position to promote equality ...".

68. Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden) supported the text read out by the representative of Canada, but suggested that "and other agencies as appropriate" should be replaced by "and other appropriate agencies". He also recalled that his delegation had proposed the replacement of the words "towards women" by "towards women and men".
69. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt), reverting to the question of national correspondents, emphasized the important role played by liaison offices during the International Women's Year. It would certainly be useful to retain machinery of that kind for the Decade for Women; it could take the form of correspondents, co-ordinators, liaison offices, etc.
70. Begum FARIDI (Pakistan) also emphasized the value of liaison offices. However, during the International Women's Year, the Pakistan Office had sometimes found that the information communicated by it had not been reflected in documents prepared at the international level. It was therefore important that national liaison offices should know exactly to whom the information collected at the national level was to be sent.
71. Miss TYABJI (India) shared the view of the Egyptian representative. The desire to retain machinery such as liaison offices or correspondents could be met by including a reference to such machinery in the new version of the third preambular paragraph proposed by the United States representative.
72. Mrs. THOMPSON-TRENOU (Togo) also considered that, if operative paragraphs 3 and 4 were deleted, the words "offices on the status of women" should at least be added in the new version of the third preambular paragraph; the word "offices" was used in that context by certain African countries.
73. The amendment proposed to paragraph 2 by the Swedish representative and amended by the Canadian representative was acceptable; however, she would like the end of the paragraph to read as follows: "the traditional attitudes of women and men towards each other". In the third world, in particular, not only men, but very often women themselves were convinced of the inferiority of women and were opposed to their advancement.
74. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) said that the sponsors of the draft had decided to delete paragraphs 3 and 4, which gave rise to too many difficulties. It would be simpler to adopt a very general and all-inclusive formula for the third preambular paragraph rather than to add such words as "offices on the status of women" or "correspondents" to the United States amendment. Her delegation therefore recommended that the following words: "such as national commissions, secretariats on the status of women, etc." should be inserted after the words "machinery at the national level".
75. Mrs. GONZALES DE CUADROS (Colombia) said that she would like the words "for example" to be added after "such as" in the Spanish text.
76. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to a purely drafting change to be made in the Russian text of paragraph 3; she assumed that the Secretariat would take the necessary action.
77. The third preambular paragraph was adopted as amended.

78. Ms. LORANGER (Canada) proposed that the following version of paragraph 2 should be adopted: "Recommends that, in the establishment of such machinery, States make provision for the participation of representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations and other appropriate bodies which are in a position to promote equality between men and women and to bring about changes in the traditional attitudes of men and women;".
79. Mrs. THOMPSON-TRENOU (Togo) recalled that she had proposed a slightly different wording for the end of that paragraph.
80. Miss TYABJI (India) said the co-sponsors had felt that the wording just read out by the representative of Canada was more general and more comprehensive.
81. Mrs. THOMPSON-TRENOU (Togo) agreed.
82. Paragraph 2 was adopted as amended.
83. Draft resolution E/CN.6/L.711 was adopted.
84. Miss TYABJI (India), introducing draft resolution E/CN.6/L.712 on behalf of the co-sponsors, said that it was the outcome of deep reflection on the role of the non-governmental organizations. Special attention should be given to the reports submitted by those organizations which worked at the grass-roots level and had acquired a considerable amount of practical experience.
85. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the co-sponsors to the fact that the draft resolution referred to the "machinery which will follow-up the implementation of the Convention"; in the circumstances, it might be better to defer its consideration until article 21 of the draft convention had been adopted.
86. Miss TYABJI (India) agreed that that would be more logical.
87. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.