



Twenty-first session
Agenda item 56

DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST WOMEN

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mrs. Clara PONCE de LEON (Colombia)

INTRODUCTION

1. At its 1415th plenary meeting on 24 September 1966, the General Assembly allocated to the Third Committee the item entitled "Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women". The Third Committee discussed the item at its 1442nd to 1445th meetings, held on 1 and 2 December 1966.
2. In resolution 1921 (XVIII) of 5 December 1963, the General Assembly had requested the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on the Status of Women to prepare a draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women, with a view to its consideration by the General Assembly, if possible, at its twentieth session. It also invited Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies and appropriate non-governmental organizations to send to the Secretary-General their comments and proposals relating to the principles that might be incorporated in the draft declaration, with a view to their being brought to the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Economic and Social Council, at its resumed thirty-sixth session, transmitted this resolution to the Commission on the Status of Women.
3. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions, in March 1965 and in February-March 1966, prepared a text of the draft declaration, which it adopted unanimously on 8 March 1966.

4. By resolution 1131 (XLI), of 26 July 1966, the Economic and Social Council, to which the Commission had transmitted its report, decided at its forty-first session not to embark on a detailed discussion of the draft declaration but to transmit it to the General Assembly, together with the amendments submitted, the summary records of its discussions, the report of the Commission on the Status of Women and the summary records pertaining thereto.

5. Consequently, at its twentieth session, the General Assembly had before it the text of the draft declaration adopted unanimously by the Commission on the Status of Women at its nineteenth session, together with the texts of the amendments submitted at the forty-first session of the Economic and Social Council^{1/} and the summary records of the discussions on the subject at that session,^{2/} the report of the Commission on the Status of Women at its nineteenth session^{3/} and the summary records pertaining thereto,^{4/} and the report of the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly at its twenty-first session.^{5/}

6. Amendments to the text of the draft declaration were submitted to the Third Committee by Belgium (A/C.3/L.1386), the Byelorussian SSR (A/C.3/L.1406), Colombia and Jamaica (A/C.3/L.1401), Czechoslovakia (A/C.3/L.1403), Greece (A/C.3/L.1383/Rev.1), India (A/6349, annex II), Poland (A/C.3/L.1400 and Corr.1), Romania (A/C.3/L.1384), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/6349, annex II), and the United States of America (A/6349, annex II). At the 1443rd meeting on 1 December 1966 the representative of India withdrew the first two of her amendments contained in document A/6349, annex II.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

7. At the 1442nd meeting, held on 1 December 1966, the representative of Finland introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1413/Rev.1), sponsored by

1/ A/6349, annexes I and II.

2/ E/SR.1439; E/AC.7/SR.539, 540, 542-544.

3/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 7 (E/4175), chap. II.

4/ E/CN.6/SR.440-443, 445-449, 452, 454, 455, 461 and 464.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/6303), chap. XI, sec. XIII, paras. 498-502.

twenty-four delegations - Belgium, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, India, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Sweden, Turkey and Yugoslavia - in which the General Assembly, considering the large number of amendments submitted to the draft declaration at the forty-first session of the Economic and Social Council and the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, and, having been unable because of lack of time to give adequate consideration at the current session to the draft declaration and the amendments submitted, would: (1) request the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on the Status of Women to review the text of the draft declaration at its forthcoming twentieth session in 1967, bearing in mind the amendments submitted to it, and taking into account the discussions at the twenty-first session of the General Assembly; and (2) decide that the draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women should be given high priority at its twenty-second session in 1967.

8. During the discussion in the Third Committee, the view was generally expressed that, when adopted, the declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women would constitute a significant historical document. Many representatives expressed their gratitude to the Commission on the Status of Women for the valuable contribution it had made in preparing a draft text. It was generally considered, however, that further examination and re-drafting were necessary, particularly with respect to such controversial articles as article 6, concerning the status of women in civil law and in the family, and article 10, relating to the economic rights of women. The need for simplicity and clarity in a declaration of this nature was also stressed.

9. In discussing the draft resolution, many representatives expressed their regret that lack of time and the heavy agenda of the Committee prevented thorough consideration of the draft declaration at the current session. The majority considered, however, that a re-examination of the draft text by the Commission on the Status of Women, which had originally been entrusted by the Economic and Social Council with the task of preparing it, would be useful, since the amendments presented to the Council and the Third Committee of the General Assembly, as well as the discussions in these organs, contained important new ideas. Moreover, the Commission, whose membership had recently been enlarged, would have the benefit of

the advice of its new members as well as the experience of those members who had already worked on the text and knew the problems involved. Finally, it was considered that the adoption of the declaration by the Assembly at its twenty-second session in 1967 would make it possible to give the declaration maximum publicity in 1968, which had been designated International Year for Human Rights.

10. At its 1444th meeting on 2 December 1966 the sponsors of the draft resolution accepted an oral amendment by the representative of the United Arab Republic to include, in operative paragraph 1, a reference to the observations of Governments and to the discussions at the nineteenth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the forty-first session of the Economic and Social Council. Oral amendments by the representative of Finland to add to the penultimate preambular paragraph a reference to the increased membership of the Commission on the Status of Women and to delete the reference to lack of time in the final preambular paragraph was subsequently also accepted by the co-sponsors. The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

11. The Third Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 1921 (XVIII) of 5 December 1963 in which it requested the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on the Status of Women to prepare a draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women,

Noting with interest the text of the draft declaration adopted unanimously by the Commission on the Status of Women on 8 March 1966 and transmitted to the General Assembly by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1131 (XLI) of 26 July 1966,

Considering that the large number of amendments submitted to the draft declaration at the forty-first session of the Economic and Social Council and the twenty-first session of the General Assembly and the increased membership of the

Commission on the Status of Women justify a re-examination of the text of the draft declaration by the Commission,

Having been unable at the twenty-first session to give adequate consideration to the draft declaration and the proposed amendments thereto,

1. Requests the Economic and Social Council to invite the Commission on the Status of Women to review the text of the draft declaration at its twentieth session in 1967, bearing in mind the amendments which have been submitted^{6/} and taking into account the observations of Governments as well as the discussions at the nineteenth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, at the forty-first session of the Economic and Social Council and at the twenty-first session of the General Assembly;

2. Decides that the draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women should be given high priority at its twenty-second session.

^{6/} A/6349, annex II; A/C.3/L.1341/Rev.1, L.1383/Rev.1, L.1384, L.1385, L.1386, L.1400 and Corr.1, L.1401, L.1403 and L.1406.