

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.6/SR.200
26 April 1955

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Ninth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDREDTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 30 March 1955 at 3 p.m.

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169.

<u>Chairman:</u>	Miss BERNARDINO	Dominican Republic
<u>later:</u>	Begum ANWAR AHMED	Pakistan
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mrs. RÖSSEL	Sweden
<u>Members:</u>	Miss CHAMORRO ALAMAN	Argentina
	Mrs. DALY	Australia
	Mrs. NOVIKOVA	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
	Miss TSENG	China
	Miss MAÑAS	Cuba
	Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX	France
	Mrs. GUERY	Haiti
	Begum ANWAR AHMED	Pakistan
	Mrs. DEMBINSKA	Poland
	Mrs. FCMINA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mrs. SAYERS	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mrs. HAHN	United States of America
	Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA	Venezuela
	Mrs. MITROVIC	Yugoslavia
<u>Also present:</u>	Mrs. LOPEZ	Colombia
	Mrs. de TEJEIRA	Panama
<u>Representatives of specialized agencies:</u>		
	Mrs. FIGUEROA	International Labour Organisation
	Miss SALAS	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<u>Representative of an inter-governmental organization:</u>		
	Mrs. de CALVO	Inter-American Commission of Women

PRESENT: (continued)

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category A: Mr. DESSAU

World Federation of Trade
Unions

Mrs. FOX

World Federation of United
Nations Associations

Category B and Register:

Miss GUTHRIE

International Alliance of
Women

Mrs. BEDARD

International Catholic
Child Bureau

Mrs. CARTER)
Mrs. PARSONS)

International Council
of Women

Mrs. HYMER)
Mrs. MEINANDER)

International Federation of
Business and Professional
Women

Miss LAGEMANN

International Federation of
Friends of Young Women

Miss ROBB

International Federation of
University Women

Mrs. WOLLE-EGENOLF

International League for the
Rights of Man

Miss LALONDE

International Federation of
Women Lawyers

Mrs. ROBERTS

Liaison Committee of Women's
International Organizations;
Associated Country Women
of the World

Mrs. EVANS

Pan Pacific Women's Association

Mrs. WALSER

Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom

Miss GAINES

World Assembly of Youth

Mrs. ANDERSON)
Miss FORSYTH)

World's Young Women's
Christian Association

Secretariat:

Mrs. TENISON-WOODS

Chief of the Status of Women
Section

Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER

Secretary of the Commission

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN: (a) REPORT ON OLDER WOMEN WORKERS (E/CN.6/251, 262); (b) REPORT ON PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN, INCLUDING COTTAGE INDUSTRIES HANDICRAFTS AND SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORK (E/CN.6/236, 238, 245, 267; E/CN.6/L.172, L.179, L.182 and Corr.1); (c) REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN TRUST AND NON-SELF GOVERNING TERRITORIES (E/CN.6/260 and Add.1 and 2, 255)

Mrs. RÖSSEL (Sweden) regretted that some non-governmental organizations whose representatives had spoken at the previous meeting appeared to consider that a woman who worked could not properly carry out her duties as a mother. It was both unjust and pointless to make such a judgment regarding a group of women who were the more deserving of the Commission's support because they had to cope simultaneously with their duties as mothers and as workers. Working mothers should realize that the happiness of their homes depended not on the amount of time they devoted to their families, but on the use they made of that time. The Commission and the non-governmental organizations should help them to find ways of leading a happy family life, taking into account the woman's role in society as well as her role in the home.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) and the CHAIRMAN, as the representative of the Dominican Republic, unreservedly supported the view of the Swedish representative.

Mrs. de CALVO (Inter-American Commission of Women) said that her organization was deeply interested in the problem of economic opportunities for women. It had noted with interest the findings of the meeting of experts on the utilization of female labour in the Latin-American countries organized by the ILO in December 1954 at Lima, Peru. The meeting's general findings with regard to placement, vocational guidance and training, labour legislation and technical assistance would serve as a basis for discussion at the tenth assembly of the Inter-American Commission of Women, which was to meet in May in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to consider the economic status of women.

In its report to the Commission's eighth session, the Inter-American Commission of Women had stated that it proposed to organize a meeting of experts and directors of women's employment bureaus of the American countries to study problems relating to the economic status of women workers.

(Mrs. de Calvo, Inter-American Commission
of Women)

That meeting would be organized by the Inter-American Commission in collaboration with the ILO. The Inter-American Commission was thus giving effect to the recommendations urging it to co-operate with the ILO.

Mrs. FIGUEROA (International Labour Organisation) wished to comment on the ILO report concerning the opportunities offered to women by handicraft and cottage industries, in connexion with the Pakistan draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.172).

The report before the Commission was the first ILO paper on the question, which was extremely complex because it affected most women workers in industrially less developed or under-developed countries and was closely linked with economic conditions in the various countries. The report found that the expansion of handicraft and cottage industries was economically beneficial in the industrially less developed or under-developed countries, provided cottage industries were complementary to rather than in competition with large-scale industry. The report also drew attention to the danger that cottage industries might, if not properly regulated, develop into a system of industrial homework and stressed the need to organize co-operatives to prevent women workers from being exploited by middlemen.

In view of the complexity of the question, she considered that the Pakistan draft resolution was correct in merely recommending that Governments should make use of the ILO report when plans for the development of handicraft and cottage industries were contemplated.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) expressed her appreciation of the ILO's report which provided useful information on a large number of countries. It indicated the importance of the development of handicraft and cottage industries for industrially less developed countries, and, at the same time, drew attention to the dangers involved. The expansion of cottage industries presented a real danger that the industrial homework system might also grow. During the early

(Mrs. Hahn, United States of America)

stages of industrial development in the United States, the industrial homework system had been very widespread: homeworkers had invariably been paid lower wages than other workers and had been handicapped in other respects. One of the most serious evils of the system had been that mothers frequently pressed their children into service. After long experience in trying to regulate homework, some of the industrial states had adopted legislation prohibiting it. In 1938, Congress had passed a federal act under which homework was prohibited in seven industries, including embroidery, gloves and jewelry. In other occupations, homework was strictly regulated.

She had stressed that point because the ILO report did not call attention to the danger that the industrial homework system might be accompanied by a spread of child labour. That aspect of the subject should not be overlooked in considering the desirability of expanding home handicrafts and cottage industries. However, she would support the Pakistan draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.172) because of the importance of cottage industries in under-developed areas.

Mrs. MITROVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the development of handicrafts and cottage industries was of vital importance to women in the industrially less developed countries. Although the ILO report made acceptable suggestions on the subject, it did not go far enough. The problem should be considered in the context of the general development of the under-developed countries. It would be desirable to show how the expansion of cottage industries and handicrafts could help to expand the market and absorb surplus agricultural manpower. As the Pakistan draft resolution pointed out the importance of handicraft and cottage industries in relation to general economic development, she would support it. She hoped that the Council would be able to utilize it in its future work on the development of economically under-developed countries.

She also supported, in principle, the Byelorussian draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.179) enumerating the main problems affecting women in the economic field. She hoped, however, that the Commission would be in a position at its next session to adopt draft resolutions on more specific and concrete problems.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) said that she would be able to support the Byelorussian draft resolution if its sponsor would agree to two amendments. Firstly, the words "granting women equal rights with men" in the second paragraph of the preamble should be replaced by the words "removing discrimination against women". Complete equality of rights was not desirable; legislation should protect women by prohibiting their employment in heavy or dangerous types of work. In the United States women were prohibited by law from working underground in mines and in road construction. Secondly, in the first operative paragraph the words "economic discrimination against women, including measures to provide women with suitable economic opportunities by granting them equal rights with men" should be replaced by the words "discrimination against women in respect to employment...".

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that she would like to consider the matter before accepting the United States amendment.

Miss CHAMORRO ALAMAN (Argentina) thought that if the Commission on the Status of Women was to be successful in its efforts, it must start by improving the economic status of women. She would therefore support the Pakistan (E/CN.6/L.182) and Byelorussian (E/CN.6/L.179) draft resolutions.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) proposed that the words "retirement, which shall not be compulsory for women at an age different from that for men" should be inserted after the word "rest" in the first operative paragraph of the Byelorussian draft resolution. Although, like the United States representative, she was concerned about the dangers inherent in cottage industries and certain handicrafts, she would vote for the two Pakistan draft resolutions which she felt contained very useful suggestions and were clearly directed at the economically under-developed countries.

In reply to a question by Mrs. GUERY (Haiti), Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) explained that in her country a woman could retire at 55 years of age, but that she was not compelled to do so. If she continued to work after 55 years of age, she received the pension to which she was entitled, in addition to her wage.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) explained that her amendment was not designed to compel women to retire at a lower age than men. She thought that the text of the paragraph, if amended as she proposed, should be consistent with the legislation of countries where women were entitled to retire at an earlier age.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that her draft resolution laid down a general principle. It was essential to grant women equal rights with men in every branch of economic life. She did not think that her text was inconsistent with legislation in other countries, but she would consider the comments of the United States and French representatives.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) said that she would support the Pakistan draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.182). In the United States vocational guidance and employment services had broadened employment opportunities for women. She felt that they would be very useful in the under-developed countries.

Begum ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan) drew the Commission's attention to the changes she had made in her draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.182/Corr.1). The amended text did not perhaps go as far as the original draft, but there was more likelihood that it would be carried out.

Mrs. FOMINA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not think that the change the Pakistan representative had made in her draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.182) was an improvement. It appeared to weaken the text.

Begum ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan) explained that she had made the change because she thought it was somewhat unrealistic to request "equal opportunities" in the operative part, after drawing attention to the "lack" of services in the preamble.

The CHAIRMAN put the Pakistan draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.172) to the vote.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN put the Pakistan draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.182 and Corr.1) to the vote.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN TO THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES (E/CN.6/270)

The CHAIRMAN said that she had had the honour of representing the Commission on the Status of Women at the seventh session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and drew the Commission's attention to the report she had submitted on the subject (E/CN.6/270). She been particularly gratified to note that in his report on discrimination in the matter of political rights, the rapporteur of the Sub-Commission, Mr. Santa Cruz, had made a special reference to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the only international instrument adopted under United Nations auspices which provided for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of sex in the matter of political rights. Several members of the Sub-Commission had spoken in glowing terms of the reports prepared annually by the Secretary-General for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women. Some members had even suggested that the Sub-Commission might well use them as a model for its future studies. The Chairman and other members of the Sub-Commission had paid a tribute to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. She could not emphasize too strongly the importance of the Commission's establishing equally close relations with other United Nations bodies.

Mrs. DALY (Australia) wished on behalf of all the members of the Commission to thank the representative of the Dominican Republic for the able way in which she had represented the interests of the Commission.

Begum Anwar Ahmed took the Chair.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES IN RELATION TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN
(E/CN.6/189/Add.3)

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) was gratified that the General Assembly had by adopting resolution 729 (VIII) enabled the United Nations to offer technical assistance in promoting and safeguarding the rights of women. It was gratifying that the expert chosen to go to Pakistan, the first country to receive such assistance, had been Mrs. Tenison-Woods.

The new form of technical assistance was not the only type which improved the status of women. Technical assistance projects in other fields which improved the health and welfare of all individuals in the country were also of benefit to women. She wished to describe, in that connexion, a few examples that she considered typical.

In the Caribbean area, a project in home economics had been in operation for the past two years under the sponsorship of FAO and the Caribbean Commission. The expert in charge, a Swedish woman, had centred her work on the training of teachers. After a training conference for English-speaking teachers in Puerto Rico, she had visited each trainee in her home island and helped her to organize local training programmes for women in the area. She was now organizing a training course for French-speaking people.

In Iran the Government was sponsoring technical assistance programmes with the co-operation of the United States. Home economics was being included in the curriculum for girls' schools. Adult home-making projects had also been organized. Women of all social levels had welcomed those courses enthusiastically. As they began to feel more useful members of society, women found new cause for self-respect and took more interest in community activities.

(Mrs. Hahn, USA)

She had seen another aspect of technical assistance in Liberia, where fundamental education classes were enthusiastically attended by both men and women. The lessons dealt with such matters as nutrition, child care and problems of local government.

The example set by the United Nations and by Governments had been followed by non-governmental agencies including women's organizations. One of the most hopeful of those projects had been undertaken in the Near East by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs on a grant from the Ford Foundation.

What could the Commission itself do? It should not be content with thanking the Secretary-General for his response to the Pakistan request for assistance. Her delegation had two suggestions to make: The Commission could request the Secretary-General to prepare reports on a dozen or more selected projects which had directly or indirectly helped to improve the status of women (home economics, nutrition, health, education, vocational training, and community development) and on revision of laws concerning women or other matters directly related to their status. She hoped that the reports could be published in the press and in publications of non-governmental organizations. The Secretariat might also prepare a list of materials which would be useful to experts working in technical assistance projects. The list should include materials prepared for the Commission on the Status of Women and other United Nations bodies and also pamphlets and similar material published by the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Her delegation intended to submit a proposal along those lines.

Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA (Venezuela) said that in accordance with agreements concluded between the Venezuelan Government and the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration experts had visited her country to carry out various projects, and eleven fellowships had been granted to Venezuelan students, including two women.

The technical assistance programme submitted by the Venezuelan Government for 1955 was one of the most comprehensive in Latin America and included projects essential to the economic development of the country.

Mrs. FOMINA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that her country had provided four million roubles for technical assistance. The funds had gone to Burma, India, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ceylon and Ecuador.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Pakistan, said that at the Commission's seventh session her delegation had submitted a draft resolution which had been adopted unanimously, requesting the Secretary-General to extend the field of technical assistance. The request had been approved by the General Assembly at its eighth session and Pakistan had been the first country to benefit from the new form of technical assistance. Mrs. Tenison-Woods, the expert chosen by the Secretary-General, had made a six weeks' preliminary survey with a view to the establishment of procedures for increased and effective participation of women in the social and political life of the country. Her report was now in course of preparation. It was hoped that a seminar would be arranged in the autumn. Mrs. Tenison-Woods' visit was already producing results, as 700 women had attended the conference arranged at Karachi in February by the All-Pakistan Women's Association.

She did not intend to submit a resolution on the subject, but she invited Governments to avail themselves of the technical assistance programme and urged the non-governmental organizations to publicize it. She assumed that the Secretary-General would continue to submit reports on the subject to the Commission. She requested that the United States representative's suggestions and her statement should be recorded in the report.

REPRESENTATION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AT SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OF THE SOCIAL COMMISSION (E/CN.6/L.181/Rev.1 and E/CN.6/L.181/Add.1)

Mrs. RÖSSEL (Sweden) said that in accordance with Economic and Social resolution 41 (VI), the Commission on the Status of Women had been represented at the Commission of Human Rights during the debates on the draft covenants. The Commission on Human Rights had now completed the drafting of those covenants,

(Mrs. Rössel, Sweden)

but there might be other items on its agenda which related to the status of women and it might be useful for the Commission to be represented.

Furthermore, at its eighth session, the item concerning the protection of mother and child had been postponed indefinitely, in order to avoid duplication with the work of the Social Commission. The Commission on the Status of Women would accordingly do well to send a representative to the Social Commission during the debate on that question, which was of particular importance to women.

The various functional commissions should not be kept in water-tight compartments; they must, on the contrary, co-operate if effect was to be given to the principles of the Charter and the ideals it set forth were to be realized.

With regard to the financial implications of representation at the sessions of the two commissions she had mentioned, she thought that the costs given in document E/CN.6/181/Add.1 represented a maximum and might be considerably reduced by appointing a representative already at Headquarters. Exchanges of documentation were not enough; there must be an exchange of ideas during meetings. She hoped that her draft resolution, contained in document E/CN.6/L.181/Rev.1, would receive general support.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) and Miss MAÑAS (Cuba) said that they would support the draft resolution proposed by the representative of Sweden.

Mrs. FOMINA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) saw no point in the representation of the Commission on the Status of Women at the sessions of the Commission on Human Rights and the Social Commission. If such representation was designed to defend the point of view of the Commission on the Status of Women, the persons appointed would have to represent the views of eighteen countries; but different countries did not necessarily hold the same views. There was no need for the Commission to be represented at the session of the Social Commission when that Commission considered the question of the protection of mother and child; it would be enough to have recourse to the documents prepared by the Social Commission on that question. The same might be done with regard to the Commission on Human Rights. That Commission had not, so far

(Mrs. Fomina, USSR)

as she knew, invited the Commission on the Status of Women to send a representative to attend its sessions.

She would therefore be unable to support the Swedish draft resolution.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out that there was no question of the representatives appointed having to take up a position on behalf of the Commission on a subject which had not already been debated and decided by vote. The representatives would have clearly defined terms of reference. If the Commission had not been represented at the sessions of the Commission on Human Rights, the question of the inclusion of article 16 of the Universal Declaration in the draft covenant on political rights might never have been raised.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) said that at first sight the second paragraph of the operative part of the Swedish draft resolution appeared more justified than the first, but she wished to have more time to reflect on the general question of representation of one commission at the sessions of another. She would accordingly abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

Mrs. SAYERS (United Kingdom) said that she would abstain from voting on the Swedish draft resolution as she saw no need for the Commission on the Status of Women to be represented either at the sessions of the Social Commission or those of the Commission on Human Rights. She was convinced that the Economic and Social Council would be capable of co-ordinating the activities of its various functional commissions.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) saw no reason for the Commission to be represented at the sessions of the Commission on Human Rights or the Social Commission. If those Commissions were likely to discuss questions directly relating to the status of women, they would certainly not be in ignorance of the Commission's point of view, as its documents would be submitted to them. In any case the Economic and Social Council was there to act as a court of appeal. The Council would examine the report of the Commission on the Status of Women and those of the other two Commissions, and accordingly all points of view would be represented on it. Furthermore, the high cost of such representation must not be ignored, as it was a matter of considerable interest to Governments.

She would therefore be unable to support the Swedish draft resolution.

Mrs. TABET (Lebanon) enquired whether there were in fact any questions of direct concern to the Commission on the Status of Women on the agenda of the Social Commission and the Commission on Human Rights.

Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER (Secretary of the Commission) read out the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Social Commission.

Mrs. ROSSEL (Sweden) wanted to know the exact cost of such representation in previous years. In document E/CN.6/L.181/Add.1, the cost of representation at the session of the Social Commission had been estimated at \$1,175. If a representative already at Headquarters were appointed, there would be no question of transportation and the cost would be much lower.

Mrs. DALY (Australia) wanted to know the real cost of representation. In her view, there were two separate problems to be considered: the question whether it would be better for the Commission to study the documents of the two other Commissions or to have a representative to participate directly in their work, and the financial question. She thought that the first question was much more important than the second.

The CHAIRMAN said that the information requested by the representatives of Sweden and Australia would be given at the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.