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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Tenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 12 March 1956, at 3 p.m.

CONTENTS:

Adoption of the agenda (item 2 of the provisional agenda)
(E/CN.6/272 and Corr.1, and E/CN.6/272/Add.1 and 2)
(continued)

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Present:

Chairman:

Mrs. RÖSSEL (Sweden)

Members:

Mrs. CORREA MORALES de APARICIO	Argentina
Miss GIBSON	Australia
Mrs. CISELET	Belgium
Mrs. NOVIKOVA	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
Mrs. CHU	China
Miss MAÑAS	Cuba
Miss BERNARDINO	Dominican Republic
Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX	France
Miss ROUSAD	Indonesia
Mrs. BEN-ZVI	Israel
Begum ANWAR AHMED	Pakistan
Mrs. DEMBINSKA	Poland
Mr. GIRON	Sweden
Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Mr. WARDROP	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Mrs. HAHN	United States of America
Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA	Venezuela
Mrs. MITROVIĆ	Yugoslavia

Observers for Governments of States Members of the United Nations:

Mr. SARAIVA GUERREIRO	Brazil
Mr. DASKALOV)	
Mr. STOYANOV)	Bulgaria
Miss LUNSINGH-MEIJER	Netherlands

Representatives of specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation	Mrs. FIGUEROA
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Miss SALAS

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category A

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions	Mrs.
International Federation of Christian Trade Unions	Miss NAGELS
World Federation of Trade Unions	Mr.
World Federation of United Nations Associations	Mr.

Category B

Catholic International Union for Social Service	Miss HERTOEGHE
International Council of Women	Mrs.
International Federation "Amies de la Jeune Fille"	Mrs.
International Federation of Business and Professional Women	Mrs. Miss
International Federation of University Women	Mrs. Miss
International League for the Rights of Man	Mrs.
Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations	Miss van EEGHEN Mrs. HYMER
Pax Romana	Mrs.
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Mrs. BAER
World Federation of Catholic Young Women and Girls	Miss Miss
World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations	Miss de Miss de
Young Christian Workers	Miss PEZZULLO

Register:

Open Door International	Mrs. BAER
World Federation of Democratic Youth	Mrs. MOIKOVA

Secretariat:

Mrs. Tenison-Woods

Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaver

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 2 of the provisional agenda) (E/CN.6/272 and Corr.1, and E/CN.6/272/Add.1 and 2) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the agenda could not be adopted until agreement had been reached on the new sub-item proposed at the previous meeting by the United States representative. An informal discussion between representatives had already been held and she hoped the title selected would meet with the Commission's approval.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) said that the title worked out for a new sub-item to be inserted under item 6 of the agenda - Economic opportunities for women - read as follows: "A study of the position of working women with family responsibilities".

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that any examination of the position of working women with family responsibilities should include the problem of their protection. Couched as it was in such general terms, the suggested title did not indicate exactly how the Commission proposed to treat the subject. The formulation had been improved, but was not yet wholly satisfactory.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) agreed that the matter was one of great interest. It might be advisable for the United States representative to put her suggestion in writing and give some explanation of its purpose. There was no point in hastening a decision and it might be better to defer it until the next meeting. No clear decision could be reached unless the Commission knew exactly what it wished to do.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that some further attempts might be made to clear up the question by discussion.

Begum ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan) said that the item should be included in the agenda because of the dual role of modern women as mothers and working women. Attention had been drawn in many countries to the psychological effects of that dual role. She agreed with the Byelorussian and the Soviet Union representatives that the item as it stood would have to be more closely defined, but that could be done when the substance came to be discussed.

Mrs. MITROVIĆ (Yugoslavia) suggested that the item might be broadened in scope so as to include working mothers with family responsibilities.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the item might be entitled: "The position of working mothers and other working women with family responsibilities".

Mrs. CISELET (Belgium) supported the Chairman's suggestion, which was an admirable one, since it would give adequate definition to the question covered by the proposed new agenda item. It would be unwise, she felt, to define it more closely until the Commission had decided on its course of action.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out that in adopting the new agenda item, the Commission must take care not to give the impression that it favoured one school of thought now in evidence which fostered the belief that, where women were concerned, the concepts of professional duty and family responsibilities were incompatible.

The Commission must be alive to a current of opinion which was becoming general, and must keep a careful watch to see that certain of its achievements, won after long years of struggle, were not challenged afresh.

Mrs. CHU (China) said that the subject was an important one, as the family was the basis of a democratic society and a working mother had a dual responsibility. It should therefore be added to the agenda.

Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) agreed with the French representative that it was obviously not the Commission's intention to reopen the debate on whether women should or should not be allowed to work. Any title that was adopted for the item should give the impression that there was no question of women's right to work. The United States representative had stated that women must work as they were often the sole person in a family able to earn its livelihood. What the Commission should try to do was to improve the situation of working women, and accordingly the words "and means for its improvement" (i.e. the improvement of the position) might well be added to the title suggested by the Chairman, which would thus read: "The position of working mothers and other working women with family responsibilities, and means for its improvement".

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out that working mothers were necessarily included among working women with family responsibilities, and she wondered whether it was really necessary to labour the point.

Begum ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan) observed that she had not meant to give the impression that she believed that women should not work. On the contrary, they must be able to work, but ways should be found to make their working life less of a burden.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) was afraid she too had been misunderstood. She had not maintained that all women must work, only that they must be able to work if they had to support themselves or others.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said the Yugoslav and Polish representatives had greatly improved the original suggestion. The subject was of such importance, however, that the decision should not be taken before the next meeting.

Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) proposed as a compromise formula the wording: "A study of the problems and special measures relating to working women with family responsibilities".

The CHAIRMAN, adjourning the meeting, urged the members of the Commission to discuss the title of the suggested new item among themselves in order to enable agreement to be reached quickly at the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Tenth session

DAILY AGENDA

Tuesday, 13 March 1956, 10.30 a.m.

2. Adoption of the agenda
(E/CN.6/272 and Addenda 1 and 2)
3. Political Rights of Women.
(Constitutions, Electoral Laws, and Other Legal Instruments relating to Political Rights of Women, Memorandum by the Secretary-General, A/2952; Report by the Secretary-General on Activities directed toward the Recognition and Exercise of Political Rights of women, E/CN.6/275; Reports by the Secretary-General on Information Concerning the Status of Women in Trust Territories (E/CN.6/273) and in Non-Self-Governing Territories (E/CN.6/279).