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on Friday, 16 March 1956, at 10.45 a.m.

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Mrs. HAHN	United States of America
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Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaver	Secretary to the Commission

ACCESS OF WOMEN TO EDUCATION (item 4 of the agenda) (resumed from the previous meeting):

(b) Note transmitting the draft report of the Special Rapporteur on discrimination in the field of education, prepared for the eighth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.6/277, E/CN.4/Sub.2/L.92 and Addenda thereto, E/CN.6/L.191 and E/CN.6/L.192)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to continue its discussion of item 4(b) of the agenda.

Mr. GIRON (Sweden) recalled that the Commission had been invited to comment on the appropriate paragraphs of the draft report on discrimination in the field of education (E/CN.4/Sub.2/L.92). That report had only recently been received and he had not been able to study it as fully as he would have wished, but the subject was undoubtedly one of great concern to the Commission. The abolition in education of discrimination based on sex was closely linked to the achievement of political and economic rights for women. On the subject under discussion the report was brief and by no means complete, but the Special Rapporteur had rightly stated that a full study was the prerogative of the Commission on the Status of Women. All members of the Commission should endeavour to respond to that implicit request by indicating their views on the action required to continue the struggle against discrimination in education.

His delegation was of opinion that the problem could be considered under three heads: free and compulsory education for girls at the primary level, both in its legislative and in its practical aspects; the preparation of suitable curricula, particularly at the secondary level, to avoid undue emphasis on so-called "women's subjects"; and the access of women to professional and technical education.

In some countries, education was compulsory for boys alone, whereas it should be compulsory and free for both sexes. The increasing extent to which women were being employed outside the home made it essential that girls should receive a training that would enable them in later years to take employment in industry and elsewhere; on the other hand, boys should be trained in household work, of which they would have to take their due share in after life.

More facts and figures were needed to enable the Commission to assess the tasks before it, and it was to be hoped that that information would be provided.

Begum ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan) stated that in Pakistan, as indicated in the report by the Special Rapporteur, there was no statutory discrimination in education on grounds of sex. As in most underdeveloped countries with large populations, free primary education was not yet available for all children. It would be observed from the report that more schools were being opened in Pakistan for boys than for girls. This was not, however, a deliberate act of discrimination. Each year it was necessary to refuse education to many children, both boys and girls, and the number of new schools built for each sex was related to the numbers refused admission in the previous year; the number of boys who applied for and were refused schooling exceeded the number of girls, and for that reason more boys' schools were being built. It would be very useful to ascertain why fewer girls came forward, and her delegation's draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.192) was intended to help the Commission to get an answer to that question.

Mrs. MITROVIĆ (Yugoslavia) expressed her appreciation of the serious beginning which the Special Rapporteur appeared to have made on the study of discrimination, and added the hope that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities would pursue its studies.

At its eighth session, the Commission had received a report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) dealing mainly with illiteracy (E/CN.6/250), and at the ninth session a report on secondary education for women (E/CN.6/266); those reports were to have been followed by one on higher education for women, and it was most unfortunate that it should not have been forthcoming. Only a study of all three reports together could enable members to see the problem as a whole and to make suitable recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, to the general Assembly and to governments.

Mrs. BEN-ZVI (Israel) felt that the item under discussion was the key to most of the Commission's problems, and to that of improving human and international understanding.

Mass immigration had brought into Israel very large numbers of illiterates, including many women and girls. Under a law passed in 1948, the Knesset had introduced free compulsory primary education for both boys and girls up to the age of fourteen, coupled with evening classes and other forms of further education for children aged from fourteen to eighteen. In the school year 1953-54, girls had accounted for 113,632 of the country's 242,852 primary school pupils and for 8,003 of the 15,327 pupils in secondary schools, although it had unfortunately been impossible as yet to provide free secondary education for all. Great emphasis was being placed on the training of women teachers, and out of 3,312 teachers under training in 1953-54 all but 187 had been women.

Mrs. CORREA MORALES de APARICIO (Argentina) wished to amplify the excellent material already at the Commission's disposal with a general survey of women's education in Argentina, where there was virtually no educational discrimination on the ground of sex.

The first training college for women teachers had been opened in the Argentine some eighty years ago. Since that time women had been admitted to the various branches of education one after the other, as they had increased their efforts to improve their learning. This progress, of course, had not been achieved without difficulty and struggle; nor had women always from the start been ready to use their opportunities.

For the past thirty years women in Argentina had been admitted on the same footing as men to the various grades of education: primary, secondary, university, specialist, technical and vocational. Some differences, however, could still be observed, due either to the influence of tradition or to the choice by men and by women of different occupations. Two or three examples could be quoted of actual "static discrimination" to use Mr. Ammoun's words - arising rather from particular traditions or economic factors than from an actual policy of discrimination.

Primary, secondary and university education were organized on the vertical or integrated system mentioned in Mr. Ammoun's report. Education was free at all levels. Primary education was compulsory for children of both sexes, and at the infant stage it was mixed. Unfortunately the country was so large and the rural population so widely scattered that the spread of education was

hindered. Nevertheless there were schools all over the country where the teachers were almost always valiant women who carried out their task in the remotest parts, far from civilization.

Secondary education, which prepared children for matriculation and equivalent diplomas, was given in numerous institutions in the Federal Capital and the provinces. There were also a number of private institutions in the country at which fees were charged. Almost as many girls as boys followed courses of secondary education. The curriculum was the same for boys and for girls except for the practical subjects, which were adapted to meet the special needs of each sex.

At the present time women entered all careers but expressed a preference for certain studies: the humanities, medicine, pharmacy, law and the social sciences. Fewer women studied mathematics, physics and natural science. Nonetheless, women were to be found in all the walks of life for which the various branches of the university provided a training.

Training courses in agriculture were open to men and women, but there was only one school for women and one mixed school, as against ten for men. That situation had economic causes, for the schools were residential and the expense of establishing them was only warranted when the number of students was large. That could be regarded as a case of "static discrimination" and "active discrimination", for the curricula of the courses and the diplomas awarded at their conclusion were not the same for men and for women.

In Argentina there were virtually no minority problems, but there were certain "separate groups", as Mr. Ammoun called them. Those groups had, or could have, their own educational institutions; but in such subjects as history, geography and Spanish they had to receive an education conforming to the official curriculum or else take the State schools course concurrently with that of their own institutions.

In Argentina men and women were almost invariably entitled to the same education. Women students shared with their male colleagues the responsibility of organizing student life, and took part in the activities of faculty or secondary-school clubs. Not so long ago students of both sexes had united to defend their institutions and what they considered to be their rights. Now that national reconstruction was the order of the day, women students were backing up the efforts of their professors and their teachers.

When she dealt with the status of women in the economic life of the country, she would give further information on women's professional activities.

The work which the Commission had undertaken, and the documents which had been assembled at its request, already formed an important body of basic information. The procedure adopted by the Commission - a simultaneous study of the social, economic and political aspects of each question - was the only one which would allow it to deal with women's problems as a whole.

Quoting the sublime phrase of St. Francis of Assisi, "The road is long but love is strong", she wished women every success in their educational efforts.

Mrs. CISELET (Belgium) said that the position in Belgium was highly satisfactory. There was no illiteracy, apart from a few abnormal cases. Primary and secondary educational facilities had been open to girls for the last one hundred years, women had had access to higher and university education for the last seventy-five years. There were two educational systems in the country: the official State system at all levels of education, and an independent educational system which was organized privately, in particular by the Catholic Church, but was subsidized and supervised by the State. The independent educational system also existed at all levels, and was open to girls and boys on equal terms. Some secondary schools were co-educational. Though there were a few vocational training schools to which boys only were admitted, the authorities were taking steps to abolish that relatively minor degree of discrimination.

She reserved the right to state her attitude towards the two draft resolutions at a later stage. She would like first to ask the UNESCO representative for a few details about the pilot project referred to in the operative part of the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Pakistan.

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that she must once again draw the attention of the Commission to the great amount of work which still remained to be done in the field under discussion. The elimination of discrimination against women in education was of the utmost importance; if it could be achieved, the denial of women's social, political and economic rights would be rendered impossible.

As a representative of one of the non-governmental organizations had remarked at a previous meeting, there was still an ocean of illiteracy in the world. In the countries of South East Asia, for instance, some seventy per cent of all women were still illiterate, and in Africa the proportion was yet higher. From the information given on pages 41 to 43 of the draft report, it was clear that certain countries had based their policy on fear of losing their privileged position, and had denied particular population groups access to all education, or to education above the primary level. In the Union of South Africa, the law placed drastic restrictions on the educational rights of the Bantu tribes. Wide publicity had been given in the international press to the case of Miss Lucy, a student in the United States of America, who had been refused admission to the University of Alabama merely because her skin was black.

In some countries women's education was limited to the acquisition of domestic skills, an education which in no wise enabled them to play their proper role in the political or economic life of the country. In many countries the budgets of the armed forces had been increased and educational budgets cut; in consequence, there was a lack of schools, classes were too big, teachers were underpaid and discrimination in respect of salaries was often practised against women teachers.

In the Soviet Union, some noteworthy new features had been introduced into the educational system; that had taken place during the last few months, and it had therefore been impossible for the Special Rapporteur to mention them in his draft report.

All children now enjoyed a period of seven years of compulsory general education, which was extended to ten years in the larger towns. During the period 1956-1960, the ten-year period would be extended to the whole country, so that boys and girls would undergo full time education until the age of seventeen. The existing shortcomings in secondary schools would have to be overcome, and particular attention was being devoted to the inculcation of practical skills. In the years 1951-1955, higher technical education had been provided for 1,120,000 pupils.

In 1955, women students had comprised more than half of all students receiving higher education, as compared with one third in 1938. At the beginning of the current year, the small fees previously charged for the three higher classes in secondary schools and for specialized higher education had been abolished, and education was now entirely free.

No single Republic in the Soviet Union was without its own university. In the republic of Azerbaijan, where in 1913 about ninety per cent of the population had been illiterate, there were now fourteen institutions of higher education and seventy-nine technical schools in which 64,000 students were receiving education; the number of pupils in schools was greater than in Iran, Iraq and Turkey taken together, although the population of the latter countries was higher. There could be no clearer rebuttal of the statement made by the United Kingdom representative alleging "colonialism" in the Soviet Union.¹⁾

1) See E/CN.6/SR.208, page 9.

The position of women in the professional life of the Soviet Union was striking; they constituted one third of all engineers, over forty per cent of all agricultural engineers, seventy-six per cent of the medical profession and seventy per cent of the teachers.

She would conclude by expressing her support for the request made by the Yugoslav representative, and by emphasizing the importance of the ideas on education expounded by the Swedish representative. Her delegation was prepared to co-operate closely in the Commission's endeavours to bring all types of education within the reach of all the girls and women of the world.

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba) said that unfortunately she had not had time to study the Special Rapporteur's report in its entirety, but had had to confine herself to chapter I, section II (Discrimination based on sex). She considered the report to be of the utmost importance; it was essential that women should enjoy equal rights with men in respect of education at the primary, secondary and higher levels. Women must be trained in the same way as men to play their part in the political, economic and social life of their countries.

A summary of the data concerning Cuba was to be found in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/L.92/Add.18, which had been circulated to members of the Commission, but she felt it might be useful to add a few further particulars. The budget of the Cuban Ministry of Education could not be smaller than that of the other ministries. At present, the head of the Ministry was the mother of a family, with a university education, and she was doing her utmost to improve education throughout the country. A seminar had been organized recently at her instance, and a mere glance at the various questions on its agenda was sufficient to indicate the importance of the event. With regard to elementary education, studies had been made of teaching methods, and a comprehensive curriculum had been drawn up. As regards higher education, attention had been given to vocational training, compulsory and optional syllabuses, laboratories, workshops, and radio and visual teaching methods.

For the financial year 1955-56, the Government of Cuba had approved a budget of twenty million dollars for the construction of 243 schools which, in addition to classrooms, would have refectories, sick-bays, gardens and playing fields.

Forty per cent of the schools were already being built, and the Government hoped to complete the construction programme by the end of the current year. It was particularly appreciative of the help given by UNESCO in the campaign against illiteracy.

It was encouraging to find that the pupils enrolled for the school year 1953-54 in rural schools included not merely children of school age, but even adults of thirty years of age. The number of males was 48,007 and that of females 27,192. In the technical schools, the number of men teachers during that school year had been 214, and that of women teachers 266. In the industrial technical schools, men teachers numbered 152, and women fifty-one. In the agricultural schools, the teaching staff consisted of thirty men and four women, and in the schools of arts and crafts, there were 243 men and fifty-two women teachers. The numbers of pupils enrolled during the same year were: in the technical schools, 1,076 men and 1,322 women students; in the industrial technical schools, 494 boys and 211 girls; and in the agricultural schools, 360 boys and thirty-nine girls. In that same year there had been 553 men and seventy-five women on the teaching staff of the universities. 10,983 boys and 8,343 girls had matriculated. It was interesting to note that women students in the faculty of physics and chemistry numbered eighty-two as against only twenty-one men. In veterinary science, there had been 202 men and twenty-two women students; in applied mathematics, two men and seven women; in applied chemistry, four men and six women; and in natural sciences, two men and six women.

Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) said that as the Special Rapporteur's report had only just been circulated, she would be able to comment on it only at the next meeting. For the time being, therefore, she would confine her remarks to general problems of women's access to education.

In Poland, education was compulsory between seven and fourteen years of age. Her Government had lately been concerned at the number of children who left school earlier, and was considering ways and means of arresting that tendency. As part of its campaign it had promulgated a decree that children who had not completed seven years of schooling must attend classes until they

were sixteen years of age. It was also increasing the number of special courses and night schools, both in rural and in urban areas. Special schools for backward and crippled children were being planned.

Although it was generally felt desirable to increase the period of compulsory education by one year, that was at the moment impossible because of the considerable natural increase in the population during the post-war years and the consequently larger number of children of school age. During the coming five years, 20,000 new class-rooms would be required which represented a vast building programme and heavy investment.

Generally speaking, about seventy per cent of the children completing their compulsory education went on to secondary and technical schools. Thus, considerable progress had been made, but it still remained to ensure that every child without exception had at least seven years of schooling.

Girls enjoyed the same opportunities as boys, but, of course, the number attending the various technical schools was largely determined by natural inclination in the direction of certain trades and professions. Nevertheless, some change was taking place, and girls were beginning to attend schools for training in branches of industry which in the past had been the almost exclusive preserves of men.

Proof of the new advance being made by women was the fact that they now accounted for forty-five per cent of the students in higher educational establishments.

Primary schools in Poland were free and, in addition, various types of scholarship were granted to cover fees only or some living expenses as well. In some cases, scholarships were awarded purely on merit, regardless of the parents' resources. Most students were either kept by their parents or supported themselves on Government grants, and only a very small proportion were forced to take jobs while studying. In addition, they could have meals at a very modest cost and, now that some of the war damage had been made good by an intensive building programme, thirty-six per cent were housed in special hostels. Again, girls benefited from exactly the same advantages as men, and it was significant that thirty-four out of every 20,000 women were now receiving higher education. It was also interesting to note that whereas before the war only nine students out of every hundred had completed their courses, the figure had risen to sixty-two.

Wide use was being made of night classes and supplementary courses provided by the State free of charge, particularly by teachers, many of whom were women.

Miss SALAS (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), replying to the Belgian representative, said that she considered the Pakistani draft resolution to be of great interest. A pilot project set up in a small town could be most valuable in determining the relative efficacy of measures taken in different countries to overcome economic and social obstacles which stood in the way of women's education.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) considered that the Commission should concern itself with discriminatory practices against women, and should not attempt to discuss discrimination on other grounds, since that was adequately dealt with by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and by the Commission on Human Rights. However, as the Soviet Union representative had referred to racial discrimination in the United States of America, she was bound to reply.

Her country had made, and was continuing to make, progress in eliminating discriminatory practices against negroes and, as stated in paragraph 124 of his report, the Special Rapporteur had selected the United States of America as an example of a country in which "the general trend and development of legislation and practices as regards discrimination in education is towards the elimination of discriminatory practices based on race or colour". He had gone on to explain that in thirty-one of the forty-eight States of the United States, comprising about two thirds of the entire population, all children attended the same elementary and secondary public schools. In the remaining States and the District of Columbia there had been separate schools for white and negro children up to the time of the Supreme Court's decision on 17 May 1954 that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. It should be noted that even before that date there had been a considerable move away from segregation in the southern States.

The problem was not that of making education available to negroes, but of providing them with exactly the same facilities as the whites. It was notable that according to figures published in the Journal of Negro Education, in 1951 6,000 out of every million negroes in the United States had enrolled in colleges which represented a higher level of university education than that which existed in almost any country for the population as a whole.

Giving some other figures concerning education in her country, which was compulsory both in law and in practice, she said that 33,669,000 boys and girls had been enrolled in the public and private elementary and secondary schools in 1954. Thus, more than 99 per cent of both white and negro children between seven and thirteen years of age had been enrolled, both in urban and in rural areas. Though great progress was being made both in meeting educational requirements and in eliminating discriminatory practices, there was still an urgent need to improve conditions and overcome problems as they arose.

Unquestionably, the Supreme Court's decision on segregation would, in time, be fully complied with, so that equality, as proclaimed in the Constitution, would be brought about, but the system of government was a decentralized one and education was in the hands of local authorities. Full educational integration of whites and negroes would therefore take time. It was the practice in her country to deal with such matters openly, both in the Press and in the public statements of leading members of the government. In that way her people would move forward together, inspired by the ideals of equality and freedom on which her country was founded and they would not be discouraged by momentary difficulties.

She regretted the unfair reference made to the position in the United States of America by the representative of the Soviet Union, where grave breaches of human rights and freedoms occurred. That country was scarcely in a position to criticise another.

Mrs. CISELET (Belgium) thanked the representative of UNESCO for replying to her question.

Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) ventured, as one of the oldest members of the Commission, to appeal to her colleagues to confine their remarks to matters on the agenda. It would be regrettable if the Commission were to be transformed into an international court for the hearing of isolated cases which were solely within the domestic jurisdiction of States. She therefore hoped that discussion would in future be confined to questions concerning the status of women throughout the world, which alone were covered by the Commission's terms of reference.

Miss GIBSON (Australia) said that in Australia the State Governments were responsible for education, and there were only minor differences in the individual systems, boys and girls having access to schools on terms of equality. Both primary and secondary education was free and compulsory, and the school leaving age was the same for the two sexes. There was a tendency for both boys and girls to continue their schooling beyond that age. Private and free-charging schools, many of which were denominational, also existed. So far as she knew, the latter accepted children of other denominations, both for primary and secondary schooling.

State schools were often co-educational, but there were also separate schools for boys and girls, so that parents had some choice in the matter.

The problem of providing schools in rural areas was considerable, owing to the size of the country, and the State Governments had accordingly instituted correspondence schools and courses providing both primary and secondary education for boys and girls; both sexes benefited in some instances from equipment allowances, as well as free transport. Recently a beginning had been made in broadcasting lessons, which provided more of a schoolroom atmosphere for children in outlying districts who were too far away to attend school.

Owing to a rapid increase in the population during the past five years, there had been a considerable shortage both of building and staff, particularly for primary education. The effect of those shortages was now beginning to be felt in secondary schools, but the State Governments were doing everything possible to meet the growing needs and to increase the number of teachers, so that where possible the size of classes could be reduced.

Fees usually had to be paid in higher educational establishments, but many students received scholarships which were awarded without any discrimination as to sex, and covered not only the fees but some living expenses as well.

Women were in the minority in universities, but not because of any discrimination, and their number was increasing in most faculties. She hoped that some day Australia would be able to match the progress reported by the Cuban representative in the number of women university professors.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) regretted that the Commission had no new information that year. The report by the Special Rapporteur on discrimination in education was of course very interesting, but the author himself considered it incomplete. She had announced her intention of submitting a draft resolution on the subject under consideration; however, since her proposal was not strictly confined to education, she would prefer to submit it when the Commission's future programme of work came up for discussion. She supported the draft resolution in document E/CN.6/L.191; but before she could state her views on the one submitted by Pakistan (E/CN.6/L.192) she would like to have some explanations from its author.

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) after pointing out the unfounded nature of statements about breaches of human rights and freedoms in the Soviet Union, explained that she had mentioned a case of discrimination in the United States of America, which had been fully reported in that country's Press, not because she wished to deny the progress achieved there, but because she believed the Commission should examine the problem of discrimination against women in education in its broadest aspects; with a wider understanding of the problem the Commission could then devise measures to assure women full and unfettered access to education. Clearly Mrs. Hahn herself considered that particular case of segregation to have been inadmissible.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.