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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Tenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 March 1956, at 2 p.m.

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Present:

Chairman: Mrs. RÖSSEL (Sweden)
Rapporteur: Miss MAÑAS (Cuba)

Members:

Mrs. CORREA MORALES de APARICIO	Argentina
Miss GIBSON	Australia
Mrs. CISELET	Belgium
Mrs. NOVIKOVA	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
Mrs. CHU	China
Miss BERNARDINO	Dominican Republic
Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX	France
Miss ROESAD	Indonesia
Mrs. BEN-ZVI	Israel
Begum ANWAR AHMED	Pakistan
Mrs. DEMBINSKA	Poland
Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Dame Lucile SAYERS	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. STOYANOV	Bulgaria
Mr. STRNAD	Czechoslovakia
Miss LUNSINGH-MEIJER	Netherlands

Representatives of specialized agencies:

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

Representative of an inter-governmental organization:

Inter-American Commission of Women	Miss LUTZ
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Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category A

International Federation of Christian Trade Unions	Miss NAGELS Mrs. SCHMIDT
World Federation of Trade Unions	Mr. DRINKWATER

Category B

Catholic International Union for Social Service	Miss HERTOEGHE Miss de ROMER
International Alliance of Women	Miss CAMPOAMOR
International Council of Women	Mrs. CARTER
International Federation "Amies de la Jeune Fille"	Mrs. van WERVEKE
International Federation of Business and Professional Women	Mrs. FINIDORI Miss TOMLINSON
International Federation of University Women	Mrs. FIECHTER Miss ROBB
International League for the Rights of Man	Mrs. WOLLE-EGENOLF
Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations	Mrs. de CAZOTTE
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Mrs. BAER
World Federation of Catholic Young Women and Girls	Miss HERREN
World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations	Miss de ROMER

Register

Open Door International	Mrs. BAER
Soroptimist International Association	Miss WIND
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts	Mrs. BUGNION-SECRETAN

Secretariat:

Mrs. Tenison-Woods	Representative of the Secretary-General
Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaver	Secretary to the Commission

1. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (item 15 of the agenda) (E/CN.6/L.198 and Add. 1 to 4) (concluded)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to continue its consideration of the draft report on its tenth session to the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.6/L.198 and Add. 1 to 4).

Chapter IV: Access of women to education (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.1)

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba), Rapporteur, pointed out that the titles of the various resolutions in Chapter IV and certain other chapters had been inadvertently omitted. They would be inserted when the three texts were collated.

Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) suggested that in paragraph 6 the concluding words "available to the Special Rapporteur" should be amended to read: "concerning the access of women to education".

The Polish suggestion was adopted.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) proposed that the words: "of the administering authorities" in the seventh line of paragraph 10 be replaced by the words: "used in the schools"; and that the word "regrettable" be inserted before the word "necessity" at the beginning of the tenth line.

The French amendments were adopted.

Chapter IV, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter V: Equal pay for equal work (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.1)

Mrs. CHU (China) requested that her country's name be deleted from the fifth line of paragraph 27, since she could not formally commit her Government to ratification of the International Labour Convention in question until the necessary procedure had been completed in the legislature.

Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) proposed that paragraph 26 should be amended to read:

"26. Members of the Commission expressed their preference for the term 'equal pay for equal work' in the way it had always been used in the documents of the Commission, in order to avoid difficulties connected with the term 'equal value', and because of its great value as a slogan known throughout the world in the struggle to achieve equal pay."

Dame Lucile SAYERS (United Kingdom) thought that it would be better not to use the word "value" twice in the same line, and proposed that the words "its great value as a slogan" be replaced by the words "its great worth as a slogan".

The Polish and United Kingdom amendments were adopted.

Chapter V, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter VI: Report of the representatives of the Commission on the Status of Women to the eleventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, the tenth session of the Social Commission and the eighth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.1)

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) agreed that the Commission on the Status of Women should co-operate with the Commission on Human Rights, but only when such collaboration was necessary; she therefore proposed the deletion of the word "close" before the word "collaboration" in the fourth line of paragraph 39, and of the word "continued" before the word "co-operation" in the eleventh line thereof.

The French amendments were adopted.

Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) proposed that lines 4 et seq. of paragraph 44 should be amended to read:

"The representative of the Dominican Republic felt that, in spite of the fact that discrimination based on sex in the field of education was a question within the competence of the Commission on the Status of Women, nonetheless the Commission should carry out the Sub-Commission's request for comments on the draft report prepared by the Special Rapporteur on the study of discrimination in education by adopting a clear position and appropriate recommendations on the importance of measures for abolishing discrimination on grounds of sex."

The Dominican Republic amendment was adopted.

Chapter VI, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter VII: Economic opportunities for women (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.2)

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) recalled that the representative of the International Labour Organisation had given a very objective account of the positions adopted by various workers' representatives at the first European Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation, which had dealt with the question of the minimum pensionable age. Since, however, the report

did not indicate the nationality of the representatives concerned, she thought it inadvisable to state that it was a French workers' representative who had proposed the amendment to the text prepared by the International Labour Office (ILO). She therefore requested the substitution of the words "One of the workers' delegates" for "The workers' delegate of France" at the beginning of the last sentence of paragraph 10.

Again, she thought that the beginning of the first sentence of paragraph 16 was not very happily worded. The first European Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation had been under no obligation to consult the Commission; hence the latter could express no more than its regret. She therefore proposed that the beginning of that sentence be reworded to read: "Some members of the Commission expressed their regret that no contact had been established between the first European Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation and the Commission before the adoption of the above-mentioned resolution, and..."

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that paragraph 12 should begin as follows:

"Other members felt, however, that part-time work, if followed by wage discrimination and loss of social security benefits and pension rights, could become a source of concealed unemployment and prove a serious impediment to promotion and professional advancement for women."

The French and Soviet Union amendments were adopted.

Mrs. FIGUEROA (International Labour Organisation) wished to place on record her agreement with the amendments to paragraphs 10 and 16. The amendment to paragraph 16, while it might not exactly reflect the proceedings as reported in the summary records, brought them more strictly within the terms of the Agreement between the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation, which imposed no obligation on the International Labour Organisation to consult the Commission before adopting resolutions in regional or international conferences - although, of course, that was not to say that the greatest possible degree of collaboration and exchange of views between such bodies was not desirable.

At the suggestion of Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) and Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France),

it was agreed that the words "in view of its heavy workload" should be deleted from the first line of paragraph 31.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) remarked that the title of sub-item (f) ("working women with family responsibilities") was incomplete. It should be given in full as it appeared on the agenda.

The Byelorussian representative's suggestion was adopted.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America), supported by Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) suggested that the words "by some representatives" be inserted after the word "placed" in the first line of paragraph 34.

The United States suggestion was adopted.

At the suggestion of Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), supported by Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic),

it was agreed that the opening words of paragraph 36, "One member" should be replaced by the words "Certain members".

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic), Mrs. BEN-ZVI (Israel) and Mrs. CISELET (Belgium), all wished the stand they had taken throughout the discussion on the protection of women workers with family responsibilities to be adequately reflected in the report; they therefore proposed the addition to paragraph 32 of a sentence reading:

"Certain representatives, however, felt that problems relating to women's employment and problems arising from their family responsibilities should be distinguished and that family questions were within the competence of the Social Commission."

That amendment was adopted.

Referring to paragraph 46, Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), supported by Mrs. HAHN (United States of America), Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) and Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA (Venezuela), suggested that the statements of representatives of those non-governmental organizations which had been particularly active in the struggle to secure the economic rights of women should be reported in greater detail under the relevant sub-items of Chapter VII.

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba) recalling that she had expressly announced her country's appreciation of the work done by the non-governmental organizations in that field, also supported the proposal.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) suggested that, by naming non-governmental organizations in specific sections of the report, the Commission might be departing from its normal procedure, according to which neither members of the Commission nor representatives of other organizations

were mentioned by name. It might accordingly be better merely to state at the end of each chapter, as was done in paragraph 46, that representatives of certain non-governmental organizations had supported a particular proposal or viewpoint.

Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER, Secretary to the Commission, explained that, although there was no definite rule on the matter, it had been the Commission's practice in the past to mention the appropriate non-governmental organizations by name at the end of each chapter of its reports.

Miss GIBSON (Australia) thought that that practice should be maintained as a modest recognition of the great help which the non-governmental organizations gave to the Commission.

At the suggestion of Miss MAÑAS (Cuba), Rapporteur, supported by Mrs. CORREA MORALES de APARICIO (Argentina) and Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France),

it was agreed to follow the procedure used the previous year, naming the non-governmental organizations concerned at the end of each chapter, and also to include more detailed references to their statements in the relevant sections of the report.

Chapter VII, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter VIII: Nationality of married women (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.3)

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested, in the interests of style, that the third sentence in paragraph 2 be amended to read:

"Certain representatives severely criticized the failure of the Sixth Committee to deal with the formal clauses of the Convention."

It was so agreed.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) proposed that the words "by most representatives" be added to the second sentence of paragraph 2.

The United States proposal was adopted.

Chapter VIII, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter IX: Status of women in private law (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.3)

Mrs. CISELET (Belgium) as one of the two members mentioned in the last sentence of paragraph 9, requested that the word "amendments" therein be replaced by the words "substantial reforms".

It was so agreed.

Chapter IX, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter X: Technical assistance programmes in relation to the status of women
(E/CN.6/L.198/Add.3)

Chapter X was unanimously adopted without discussion.

Chapter XI: Participation of women in the work of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.4)

Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA (Venezuela) considered that the chronology of Chapter XI was not quite accurate, since a number of members had spoken before the representative of the Secretary-General.

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba), Rapporteur, pointed out that the views expressed by members were summarized in paragraphs 4 and 5.

Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic), supporting the point made by the Venezuelan representative, considered that paragraphs 2 and 3 should be made to follow paragraph 5, since the representative of the Secretary-General had spoken in reply to the statements made by members.

In view of the part she had herself played during the discussion, she would request that the words "The representative of the Dominican Republic felt that" be substituted for the words "They felt" at the beginning of the second sentence in paragraph 4, and that the words "The representative of the Dominican Republic also expressed the view" be substituted for the words "The view was expressed" at the beginning of paragraph 5.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) thought it would be better to follow the customary practice of not mentioning delegations by name; if one was named, all would have to be named.

Turning to the Secretary-General's statement that the policy of the United Nations and the specialized agencies as regards the appointment of women to posts merely reflected that of the governments of the States Members of the various organizations, she wondered whether it would not be advisable for the Commission to point out that the international organizations might well give a lead in that respect. She accordingly proposed the insertion at the end of paragraph 2 of a sentence to read somewhat as follows:

"Some representatives suggested that the role of the international organizations might be to initiate rather than imitate progress".

She would leave it to the Rapporteur to devise a suitable wording.

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba), Rapporteur, explained that, following the Commission's usual practice, she had sought to avoid mentioning any particular delegation by name throughout the report.

Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic) pointed out that it was usual to name the initiators of proposals. Although she had not submitted a draft resolution on the participation of women in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, the stand she had taken was tantamount to a formal proposal. That was why she was asking that her delegation be named.

The amendments to paragraphs 4 and 5 submitted by the representative of the Dominican Republic were adopted.

The French representative's amendment to paragraph 2 was adopted in substance, the precise wording being left to the Secretariat.

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba), Rapporteur, suggested that, in order to meet the point raised by the representatives of Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, paragraphs 2 and 3 should be placed after paragraph 5.

It was so agreed.

Chapter XI, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Chapter XII: Report of the Inter-American Commission of Women (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.4)
Chapter XII was unanimously adopted without discussion.

Chapter XIII: Communications concerning the Status of Women (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.4)
Chapter XIII was unanimously adopted without discussion.

Chapter XIV: Action taken on decisions reached at the ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and review of the programme of work and establishment of priorities (E/CN.6/L.198/Add.4)

Mrs. CISELET (Belgium), referring to the second sentence of paragraph 18, said that the text did not bring out the fact that the discrimination in the taxation of married women was by comparison with unmarried women only, and not by comparison with men.

Mrs. BEN-ZVI (Israel) recalled that the objections to existing fiscal legislation had not been merely financial. The view had also been expressed that a married woman's earnings should as a matter of principle be treated independently of her husband's.

It was agreed to insert the words "compared with unmarried women" before the phrase "subject to discriminatory taxation" in the second sentence of paragraph 18.

Chapter XIV, as amended, was unanimously adopted.

Miss MAÑAS (Cuba), Rapporteur, pointed out that a final chapter, dealing with the adoption of the report, would have to be added. That she would do in collaboration with the Secretariat.

The report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its tenth session, to the Economic and Social Council, (E/CN.6/L.198 and Addenda 1 to 4 thereto), as amended and as a whole, was unanimously adopted.

2. CLOSURE OF THE TENTH SESSION

The CHAIRMAN, after noting that all the decisions of the Commission had been taken unanimously, thanked members for rendering that unique achievement possible despite the inexperience of the Chairman. She expressed gratitude to the Rapporteur for the competent way in which she had drafted the report on the work of the session, and to the Secretariat for its excellent collaboration.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) said that the Chairman was to be congratulated on her success in securing unanimity on all items of the agenda. She too wished to thank the Secretariat for its collaboration.

Miss BERNARDINO (Dominican Republic), Dame Lucile SAYERS (United Kingdom), Mrs. HAHN (United States of America), Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Miss GIBSON (Australia), Mrs. MITROVIĆ (Yugoslavia), Mrs. CISELET (Belgium), Mrs. CHU (China), Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland), Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mrs. BEN-ZVI (Israel), Mrs. CORREA MORALES de APARICIO (Argentina) and Miss ROESAD (Indonesia) associated themselves with the tributes paid to the Chairman and to the Secretariat.

The RAPPORTEUR thanked the Chairman and the Secretariat.

The CHAIRMAN declared the tenth session of the Commission on the Status of Women closed.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.