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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Tenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 March 1956, at 10.30 a.m.

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Present:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mrs. ROSSEL (Sweden)
later	Begum ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan), First Vice-Chairman

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 ROESAD	Indonesia
Mrs. BEN-ZVI	Israel
Begum ANWAR AHMED	Pakistan
Begum ANWARA KHATOON	
Mrs. DEMBINSKA	Poland
Mr. GIRON	Sweden
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. SARANA GUERREIRO	Brazil
Mr. DASKALOV	Bulgaria
Mr. PAVLIK	Czechoslovakia
Miss CORCOS	Italy
Miss LUNSINGH-MEIJER	Netherlands

Representatives of specialized agencies:

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

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 Confederation of Free Trade Unions	Mrs. EKENDAHL
International Federation of Christian Trade Unions	Mrs. SCHMIDT
World Federation of Trade Unions	Mr. DRINKWATER Mrs. NOCE
World Federation of United Nations Associations	Mrs. KRETSCHMER Mrs. TROUPIN

Category B

Catholic International Union for Social Service	Miss BOSMANS Miss HERTOEGHE Miss de ROMER
International Alliance of Women	Miss CAMPOAMOR Miss GINSBERG
International Council of Women	Mrs. CARTER Miss van EEGHEN
International Federation "Amies de la Jeune Fille"	Mrs. WOOD
International Federation of Business and Professional Women	Mrs. FINIDORI Miss TOMLINSON
International Federation of University Women	Mrs. FIECHTER Miss ROBB
International Federation of Women Lawyers	Lady CHATTERJEE Miss MANFREDINI
International League for the Rights of Man	Mrs. WOLLE-EGENOLF
Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations	Mrs. de CAZOTTE Miss van EEGHEN Mrs. HYMER
Pan-Pacific Women's Association	Mrs. HYMER

Representatives of non-governmental organizations (continued)Category B (continued)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	Mrs. BAER
World Federation of Catholic Young Women and Girls	Miss FARQUET Miss HERREN
World Movement of Mothers	Miss DHELLEMES
World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations	Miss ARNOULD Dr. GRABER-DUVERNAY Miss de ROMER Miss THUAN
World Women's Christian Temperance Union	Mrs. CHAIX-CONSTANTIN
World Young Women's Christian Association	Miss ARNOLD
Young Christian Workers	Miss PEZZULLO
<u>Register</u>	
Open Door International	Mrs. BAER
Soroptimist International Association	Miss WIND
St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance	Miss CHALLONER Mrs. KINSELLA Mrs. LEROY-BOY

Secretariat:

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

1. EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK (item 5 of the agenda) (E/CN.6/L.197, E/CN.6/L.197/Amend. 1 and 2) (resumed from the preceding meeting.)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to consider the draft resolution on equal pay for equal work submitted jointly by the delegations of Cuba, Sweden and the United States of America (E/CN.6/L.197)

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) remarked that, although she welcomed the joint draft resolution, she felt that the possibility of taking legislative action to secure equal pay for equal work should be mentioned in it. It should also invite the Secretary-General to issue a booklet on equal pay for equal work, along the lines suggested by the representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

Mrs. MITROVIC (Yugoslavia) thought that legislative measures might be mentioned in the fourth paragraph of the preamble.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) also objected to the fourth paragraph of the preamble as it stood, because, whatever the value and importance of collective bargaining, she considered legislative measures essential to the achievement of equal pay for equal work.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Commission had already urged governments to take legislative measures for the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work, in its resolution C subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 20th session¹⁾.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) observed that reference to legislative measures had been purposely avoided in the draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.197), in order to avoid duplication with resolution C mentioned by the Chairman and to emphasize a new aspect of the problem.

Mrs. SPIRIDINOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the words "among the various" in the first line of the fourth paragraph of the preamble be replaced by the words "among legislative and other". She further proposed that a new paragraph be inserted after the second operative paragraph, to read as follows:

"Invites the Secretary-General to take measures to increase propaganda for the principle of equal pay for equal work, and for that purpose, in particular, to issue a special booklet on the subject."

The third operative paragraph would consequentially become the fourth.

1) See: E/2727, page 19

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), responding to a suggestion by Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), agreed that the words "increase propaganda for" in the Soviet Union amendment should be replaced by the words "disseminate information on".

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) thought that, without needlessly repeating itself, the Commission might also well refer to resolution C, mentioned by the Chairman, which dealt with the question at issue and drew attention to International Labour Convention No. 100.¹⁾ Failure to do so might be taken as evidence of lack of interest.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that, if adopted, the second Soviet Union amendment would have financial implications, and drew attention to rule 23 of the Commission's rules of procedure, under which the Secretary-General was required to prepare an estimate of the cost that adoption of the proposal would entail, for the Commission's guidance in considering the proposal.

Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER, Secretary to the Commission, said that the Secretariat would require at least 48 hours to prepare a statement of financial implications.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) asked whether the representative of the International Labour Organisation could give the Commission some information about the measures that Organisation had already taken to promote the ratification and implementation of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951, and about the report prepared by the International Labour Office (ILO) on that matter (E/CN.6/285 and Corr.1).

Mrs. FIGUEROA (International Labour Organisation) said that the International Labour Organisation had planned a series of regional meetings on the utilization of women's work, as part of its technical assistance programme. Those meetings were not seminars, but were technical meetings attended by experts nominated by governments. The first had been held at Lima, in December 1954, where the question of equal remuneration for equal work, and the legislative measures which the application of that principle involved, had been discussed. The agenda for each meeting would obviously vary according to the region in which it was held, but was almost certainly bound to include those two questions.

1) Hereinafter referred to as the "Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951".

Under Articles 19, 22, 23 and 35 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, governments were required to provide annual reports on ratified and unratified Conventions, and such reports were examined by a committee of experts, by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and by the International Labour Conference. A summary of them, including reports on the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951, would be laid before the 39th International Labour Conference in June 1956.

In addition to those reports, the report prepared by the International Labour Office on equal remuneration for men and women gave practically all the information which had recently come to hand on the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951. It could, however, be expected that further information on that Convention would be given by representatives at the forthcoming International Labour Conference.

If the Commission decided to recommend the publication of a special pamphlet on equal remuneration, it could include a section on the technical problems which influenced the application of that principle in all countries.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) supported the Soviet Union amendments. Legislative measures should not be neglected, because they were one of the simplest ways of ensuring the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work. Although the preparation of a pamphlet would entail additional expenditure, she was confident that the Secretary-General would willingly co-operate with the Commission in the matter, as he always had done in the past. Progress towards equal remuneration for women could only be made if a wide measure of publicity was given to restrictive practices in that field. The ILO reports were both comprehensive and interesting, but their circulation was limited to a comparatively small number of experts; whereas a pamphlet on equal remuneration could be widely distributed.

The CHAIRMAN said that an estimate of the cost entailed by the adoption of the Soviet Union proposal would have to be obtained from Headquarters. Moreover, if that amendment were adopted, the joint draft resolution would have to be referred to the Economic and Social Council, which was alone competent to approve the expenditure. She accordingly suggested that further consideration of the joint draft resolution be deferred until Monday, 26 March.

It was so agreed.

not worth equal remuneration with men's work. Moreover, even if the general regulations concerning part-time work also related to specific groups of male workers, women workers would still run the risk of being lumped together with "handicapped" men, such as the aged, the sick and the disabled.

The Open Door International accordingly agreed with certain arguments in the statement of the Belgian affiliate of the International Association for Social Progress (E/CN.6/234, page 6) that general part-time work was likely to prejudice the interests of women who needed full-time employment. The introduction of such a system might be considered as a privilege, and might eventually lead to discrimination against women in respect of employment. It was also likely to raise difficult technical problems in undertakings employing workers of both sexes, where team work was essential. The Open Door International also agreed that it was difficult to make recommendations at the present stage, and that a thorough study was called for. It considered that the problem of part-time work should be solved individually between the parties directly concerned, and not by international or national regulation, even if such regulation applied equally to men and women.

Mrs. SCHMIDT (International Federation of Christian Trade Unions) maintained that by playing an active part in the various sectors of economic life women were able to do more to improve their status as workers and their protection as wives and mothers. She then outlined the attitude of the Federation (IFCTU) towards economic opportunities for women in both the more advanced and the under-developed countries.

Progress must be made by stages, and the first was to give women the position to which they were entitled in economic life, leaving until later the campaign for better working conditions for the various categories of woman worker. Any premature attempt to form a large number of categories of woman worker might create more drawbacks for women seeking employment than inequalities of status between men and women workers, at any rate in collective forms of industrial labour or in trade. Furthermore, professional work implied the notion not only of the need to work, but also of qualifications, and hence of opportunity for professional training. An effort must also be made to ensure that women had access to all branches of the economy and, since they contributed by their efforts to the national income, that they had a share in the administration of public funds.

Part-time employment might be desired by certain categories of woman worker but it must on the whole be regarded with considerable misgivings. Any appreciable reduction in their working hours would lessen the standing of women in professional life. A special status might well be prejudicial to women for whom work was an absolute necessity, and who had to work as hard as men. Some of the demands made by women concerning equality of opportunity with men in economic life were almost impossible to grant because they upset the general conditions of women's employment. IFCTU therefore felt that, while part-time employment might be acceptable in certain occupations, such as teaching, in certain public posts and health services, in all activities in which the relationship between the employer and the employee was, so to speak, personal, and for women beyond a certain age, yet in no other branch of the economy could it be contemplated until the principle of equal pay for equal work had become a practical reality. The ILO report on part-time employment and the employment of older women workers (E/CN.6/284) suggested that some countries had managed to organize part-time work for women; but the question remained whether such measures had not harmed the status of women workers generally.

In the matter of the employment of elderly workers IFCTU observed the same principle: that no such category of worker should be created, but that, if it were, then the age-criteria used should have some basis in reality. From a world-wide point of view, the age at which physical deterioration set in could be said to differ according to climate and race; nationally it varied with the type of work done. Such age categories were created by the working conditions, for example by the intensified rationalization of undertakings. Women workers who were relatively young physically were sometimes considered "old" for their particular job. Hence the problem was no longer one of downgrading, but one of continually upgrading women workers, with due regard to current economic requirements, and of upgrading them in full-time, not part-time, employment.

Industry was tending to make the age of retirement lower than that rightly or wrongly regarded as the age at which a person could no longer do his work properly owing to physical enfeeblement. The problem affected both men and women, and the solution should be the same for both sexes, taking account of the special circumstances in each country. That general stand for unified

action adopted by the IFCTU did not, however, preclude recognition of differences between classes of worker based, not on the idea of need, but on the type of work. It was perfectly intelligible therefore that the International Labour Organisation, which was thoroughly aware of the problems posed by the retirement age in consequence of new industrial developments and the division of labour between women and men in industry, should have thought fit to recommend a different retirement age for men and for women; and there was no reason to regard that difference as discriminatory. It might be thought that equality between workers of different sexes would be secured, not by rigidly identical measures, but by making reasonable distinctions. Those, however, seemed premature today; and so IFCTU favoured the same retirement age for both sexes, fixed nationally according to the economic, climatic and racial circumstances peculiar to each country.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) had been glad to hear the representative of IFCTU express misgivings about part-time employment. Part-time work might have considerable drawbacks for women, both in public posts, where it implied professional stagnation, and in private enterprise, where casual employment would inevitably rule out any possibility of advancement. In her view the best way of lightening household duties for working women was a more satisfactory division of housework between husband and wife and better equipment of the home with all the most up-to-date labour-saving devices.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) said that part-time work and the employment conditions of women workers were to some extent related subjects, since some older women workers preferred part-time work. As a rule, however, such work mostly affected married women with young children, who had to spend part of the day at home. In the United States of America, 20 per cent of the female labour force was normally engaged in part-time work, and 55 per cent of part-time workers were married women with family responsibilities.

The Commission was indebted to the ILO for the valuable information it had provided on part-time work since its preliminary report on that subject in 1952, and it should be noted that part-time work had been placed on the agenda of the International Labour Organisation's meeting of experts on women's employment, due to meet later in 1956. The Secretary-General's reports to previous sessions had also added immeasurably to the Commission's knowledge of the practical

aspects of part-time employment and of its significance in the life of the woman worker. It was clear from those reports that part-time work provided married women who had family responsibilities with an opportunity of augmenting the family income while still allowing them the necessary freedom to discharge their domestic responsibilities. It also gave them a chance of keeping abreast of the outside world and of maintaining their professional skills against the time when they could return to full-time work. The Commission should therefore continue to give its attention to part-time work as a means of increasing employment opportunities for women. In order to facilitate the Commission's work, and also to help governments in promoting increased opportunities for women in part-time work, it would be most helpful if the Secretary-General could prepare for the eleventh session a comprehensive memorandum recapitulating the main features of all previous reports and discussions on the subject. It would also be useful for the Commission to consider a draft resolution on the question of part-time work.

With regard to the employment conditions of older women workers, she would refer to the system of old-age and survivors' insurance established by Federal Law for workers in private industry in her country. That system did not fix a compulsory retiring age, but provided for payment of benefits to retired workers at the age of 65, and to widows, widowers or dependants of deceased workers. The scheme made no distinction between the sexes, but a Bill lowering the minimum pensionable age for women to 60 was before Congress. The issue had proved highly controversial, and the Bill had been defended on the ground that as married women tended to be about five years younger than their husbands they would be able to retire at the same time as them. Many women trade-unionists also supported the measure, because legislation establishing legal rights for women had often led to gains for workers as a whole. For instance, in a large number of States minimum wage laws had originally applied to women alone but had subsequently been extended to men. Moreover, even where no such extension had yet taken place, men had none the less benefited from such laws, because they were seldom paid at a lower rate than women. Opponents of the measure, on the other hand, believed that it was undesirable to reduce the minimum pensionable age, because that would make it increasingly difficult for older workers to get new jobs and might even jeopardize their present employment.

Employment opportunities for older women workers were increasing in the United States of America and the average age of women in the labour force had been 39 in 1955 as against 32 in 1940. More than one third of the women in the labour force were 45 years of age or over, and the number of employed married women between 45 and 64 years of age had increased by 284 per cent over the same period. It was therefore plain that the value of older women workers was becoming increasingly recognized, but the problem nevertheless continued to be serious, since the expectation of life had increased from 48 years in 1900 to 72 years in 1952 and was still rising. A large number of women wished to continue to work until retirement, as men had always done, and others looked for employment when their children grow up. In spite of recent progress in breaking down prejudices against older workers, only one third of all women over 35 were now in the labour force, a proportion which could certainly be increased.

Increasingly intensive efforts were being made both by the Government and by private groups to expand the employment opportunities of older women workers, and eighteen States had set up official agencies to study the problems of the ageing and to advise upon them. The Department of Labor and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare had also established advisory committees to act as clearing houses for information, to provide technical assistance to outside groups and to stimulate programmes for the ageing, both within and outside the Federal Government sphere. The findings of the Women's Bureau study, which she had described at the last session, had been summarized in a publication entitled "Training mature women for employment", and the local training programmes analysed therein had proved very effective in enabling older women to find employment. The "Earning opportunities forum", started six months ago under the auspices of the Department of Labor, consisted in a series of one-day discussions, held in various selected cities throughout the country, organized by women's organizations in co-operation with public employment agencies and local groups. The purpose of the discussions was to bring together employers who had jobs to offer and women who were looking for work.

Economic development and improved health services were likely further to lengthen the expectation of life and to increase the need for additional workers. The employment situation of older women workers was therefore a most important subject, which the Commission should continue to study. A great deal of additional information was still required on the measures which could be taken to

eliminate existing prejudices and to increase the employment opportunities of older women who wanted to work.

Mrs. SPIRIDONOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the problem of part-time work was closely connected with the question of the equality of women with men in all fields. As many speakers had pointed out, the economic possibilities of women in any country reflected the political and economic situation of that country, the material and cultural level reached by its workers and the progress of the efforts made by women workers to improve their position.

In countries of private enterprise, part-time employment was fraught with danger for women. Unless undertaken on the basis of voluntary agreement, it could have many unfortunate results and become a source of concealed unemployment, with resulting loss of social protection for women. She therefore supported those members of the Commission and those representatives of non-governmental organizations who had argued that women should receive the same social protection as men, and that part-time employment should be practised only by special arrangement. On the other hand, women should be encouraged in every way to take full-time work - by the establishment of nursery schools, by the provision of feeding facilities and by educating the men to do their share of the housework to enable women to work outside the home under normal conditions. Such measures would enhance the prestige of women and strengthen family life.

In the Soviet Union, important steps were being taken under the current Five-Year Plan, including the reduction of working-hours to seven per day in all sectors, and to six or even fewer in some cases; the introduction of the five-day week and a shorter working day before holidays and on Saturdays; and an increase by 45 per cent in the number of nursery schools, at which children could be left all day and, if necessary, at night.

She agreed with previous speakers that the term "older women" was unfortunate. Many women lost their jobs long before the statutory retiring age, and it was essential to investigate the position of women under 40 - especially in countries where private employment was the rule - who were at the height of their powers. Much more information was needed on the whole subject before specific measures could be decided upon. Women had more complex responsibilities than men. They worked harder during their active period of life, and the question of retirement

on pension raised difficult problems. As the representative of the International Labour Organisation had said, the right to retirement did not mean enforced retirement, and it would be better to guarantee the right to work in all cases.

Her country's new Five-Year Plan provided for widespread developments in the professional field, and an increase in the labour force. By 1960, there would be 55,000,000 workers as against 47,500,000 at the present time. There would therefore be far greater opportunities for women to take work that was agreeable to them. A series of measures were being introduced to improve earnings in the lower income groups, considerably to increase pensions for all men and women workers, to improve the position of lonely elderly people by providing homes for them in pleasant regions and making better pension arrangements, and to do what was necessary to enable older people to participate in such social and political activities as they were interested in.

The Soviet Union delegation intended to introduce a draft resolution, after further study of the question, with the object of promoting the implementation of the resolution adopted previously on the subject by the Commission, but which had not yet been effectively put into practice.

Mrs. MITROVIĆ (Yugoslavia) wished to clarify her remarks at the previous meeting on the retiring age in Yugoslavia. It was well known to the Commission that there was full equality between the sexes in Yugoslavia. Yugoslav women, however, regarded their lower retiring age - 50, compared with 55 for men - not as a disadvantage, but as a privilege. Indeed, women enjoyed a number of such privileges in her country, not as the weaker vessel, but in virtue of their role as mother of the family. The earlier retiring age gave women a chance of resting before men. That they should be granted such a privilege was natural, since woman's responsibilities were heavier and her life harder, and not always so enjoyable as a man's. In reply to a question which had been put to her by one member of the Commission, whether women became exhausted at an earlier age in Yugoslavia, she would point out that the war and the years that had followed it had been a great drain on the physical reserves of Yugoslav women. Subsequent legislation might eventually raise the retiring age, but she was convinced that in that event the difference between the retiring ages for men and women would be maintained.

Ought Yugoslav legislation to provide for the possibility of women working after retirement if they wished to do so? She could only say that women in Yugoslavia did not at all object to the existing provisions, but welcomed them as favourable treatment. In Yugoslavia, where the national economy was not so highly developed as in some countries, there were not many child-care facilities. On the other hand, conditions of work and automatic increments of salary were the same for men as for women, and the age limit which had been fixed was felt to correspond to the latter's specific requirements.

Dame Lucile SAYERS (United Kingdom) said that her Government had noted with great satisfaction that, at its thirty-eighth session, the International Labour Conference had adopted a resolution stressing the desirability of a detailed study of the problems arising in part-time work and employment of older women, and of means for their solution, and that preparatory work on the question was going on with a view to the discussion of those questions in the International Labour Organisation's Meeting of Experts on Women's Employment which was to meet later in the year. The Commission could not, of course, take cognizance of any conclusions that might emerge from that work until full documentation on the subject was available.

Referring to the reference on page 4 of the report prepared by the ILO for the Commission (E/CN.6/284) to the second report of the United Kingdom National Advisory Committee on the Employment of Older Men and Women, published in December 1955, she agreed that as a result of the publication of that committee's first report, which had contained a series of recommendations for improving the prospects of older workers, a number of changes were being made. There was a noticeable weakening of the practice of fixing upper age limits when filling vacancies, and a greater willingness on the part of employers to consider older candidates, some having even requested that only older workers should be considered. Various measures taken by the United Kingdom Government included the special recruitment of men and women between the ages of 40 and 60. What had been said of the local authorities applied also to the National Health Service. Some private firms, too, had introduced special workshops for their more elderly employees, others had begun to make such concessions as the adjustment of working hours to ease travelling to and from work. The report recognized that occupational pension schemes must be regarded as one of the main obstacles to the employment of older

workers, and stressed the importance of including in pension schemes positive inducements to defer retirement, and provisions preserving pension rights in the event of changes in employment.

The National Advisory Committee had considered the argument that more should be done by direct Government action, but remained convinced that the problem was not one for treatment by legislative action or by obliging employers to employ a specific percentage of older workers. It could best be solved by voluntary action, and by educating public opinion. There was, however, a continuing need for examination of the age structure of manning tables, in the light of the fact that a labour force older than in the past might have to be employed, and for research by industry itself into the question of employment of older workers.

The brief outline given in the report of the work done by the United Kingdom Government and other authorities would suffice to show that her country was aware of the importance of the problem of employment of older women workers and part-time workers.

Speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, Mrs. CARTER (International Council of Women) said that her organization recognized the importance of the problem of part-time work and the widespread demand for such work among women in many countries.

The problem had two aspects. First, the value of part-time work to many women and to any country in so far as it was integrated into the overall economy of the country; and second, the question of defining standards and conditions for part-time work, which were much more complex than those for regular work.

It was essential that the interests of women workers should be well defined. With regard to older women workers, many of the National Councils of Women had made comprehensive studies of the whole problem of care of the older person, including housing, pensions, social insurance and employment. Intensive work had been carried out on the subject in Great Britain, Canada, the Union of South Africa, Belgium and the United States of America. In discussing the employment of women above the age of 50 or thereabouts, it was also necessary to consider the case of women of 35 years of age and upwards, whose position, particularly in the field of clerical employment, was a very difficult one.

Bogum ANWARA KHATOON (Pakistan) said that part-time work posed two essential questions: for whom was it necessary, and why was it necessary?

Part-time work gave greater opportunities of employment to women with domestic responsibilities and to older workers, both men and women, who were physically unfitted for full-time work. The International Alliance of Women, at its three-yearly congress held in 1955, had adopted a resolution recommending that part-time work should become an essential part of the organization of labour. In 1954, the British Trade Union Women's Conference had expressed itself in favour of promoting part-time work for older women workers.

The reasons why part-time work was necessary varied according to the country: in some, it augmented the family income, but in others, especially economically under-developed countries, the additional income was essential for the survival of the family unit. In Pakistan, for example, where families were very large, it was essential that women should be able to earn. Almost 90 per cent of families spent their entire income on food. The problem of increasing per capita income could to some extent be solved by giving an opportunity of part-time work to women, who were in any case bound to do a certain amount of domestic work as well, and could not therefore take full-time jobs. The family, and hence society as a whole, would benefit thereby. Facilities for part-time work would prove equally beneficial to older women. Some concessions had to be made to age and infirmity, yet many old people were forced to continue to work as they had no other livelihood.

The study of part-time work raised two distinct questions. One related to the development of earning opportunities in economically under-developed countries subject to under-employment, the other to the improvement of the working conditions of women in home industries, handicrafts and seasonal agricultural occupations.

The extension of part-time work would surely make possible the transfer of female workers from the arduous tasks they were at present doing in under-developed countries to more suitable and remunerative jobs. In order to promote agricultural production, and to increase village incomes, women should be induced to enter occupations suitable to them, such as farming and handicrafts, poultry-farming, bee-keeping, silk production, dairy farming and similar occupations. Opinion in the economically under-developed countries was strongly in favour of encouraging handicraft and cottage industries, including the improvement of techniques and tools, the development of production and of marketing organisations,

the supply of raw materials and the establishment of co-operative societies. The development of cottage industries could not but increase the income and raise the standard of life of the rural population, giving many opportunities to female workers for part-time employment in the process. In the areas where such industries were developed, women, including married and older women, would be able to look after their homes and do their work in their spare time. Countries like Pakistan which were not economically advanced were particularly interested in promoting cottage industry. Village community aid centres had already been established as a first step in that direction, and her country would welcome any advice or help in the matter.

In Pakistan, there was no discrimination against women, and the ages of entry into employment (between 18 and 25 years) and of retirement (between 55 and 60 years), as well as pension rates, were the same for both sexes. Both men and women employees were entitled to full pension, which was normally half the basic pay at retirement. In that connexion she would mention that in the government service the scale of pay was equal for both sexes. Anyone was eligible for re-employment at any age after retirement, if medically fit.

The above remarks went to show that her country was deeply interested in the whole problem of part-time employment and employment for older women, and any step taken to promote such work would enjoy her delegation's full approval.

Further discussion of item 7 of the agenda was deferred until the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.