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**Chairman: Mr. Juliusz KATZ-SUCHY (Poland).**

**Invitation to non-member States to become parties to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (A/2445, A/C.6/L.297)**

[Item 64]\*

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the Secretary-General's memorandum (A/2445) and to the draft resolution submitted jointly by the delegations of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Greece and the Philippines (A/C.6/L.297).

2. Mrs. TSALDARIS (Greece) said, in introducing the joint draft resolution, that according to article IV of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women the Convention was open for signature on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and also on behalf of any other State to which an invitation had been addressed by the General Assembly. Her own country was one of the twenty-eight Member States which, she understood, had already signed the Convention. She was happy to inform the Committee that Greece, which had granted full political rights to women in 1952, had ratified the Convention on 4 September 1953.

3. Under the joint draft resolution, which was based on operative paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 504 E (XVI), the Secretary-General was requested to dispatch an invitation to sign and ratify or accede to the Convention to each non-member State which was or hereafter became a member of one or more of the specialized agencies or a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. The purpose was to extend the participation of all women in the political, social and economic life of their countries, and so to further respect for the dignity and worth of the human person, irrespective of sex. The invitation would be in direct conformity with Article 2, paragraph 6, of the Charter.

4. Under operative paragraph 3 of the Council's resolution 504 E (XVI) the States Parties to the Convention were requested to report to the Council every two years on the measures taken by them to implement the Convention. In many countries, including her own, certain changes would have to be made in the legislation and in the Civil Code to ensure the full equality of

both sexes before the law. The Greek Government was already preparing to make those changes. In countries in which women did not as yet enjoy political rights, far greater changes would be required. Consequently, it was important for the United Nations to be kept informed of the steps taken to make the principle of equal rights for men and women a living reality.

5. Mr. MENDEZ (Philippines) remarked that both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council had specifically recommended that the General Assembly should invite the non-member States indicated in the joint draft resolution to become parties to the Convention. As twenty-eight Member States had already signed the Convention, it was appropriate to extend the opportunity of doing so to non-member States as well, in conformity with the precedent set by the General Assembly in connexion with the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and by the Economic and Social Council in connexion with the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. He saw no advantage in waiting until the Convention on the Political Rights of Women had entered into force. Furthermore, a vote for the draft resolution in no way committed any State with regard to the Convention.

6. Mr. GARCIA AMADOR (Cuba) said that the statements of the Greek and Philippine representatives had made it unnecessary for him to explain the contents and scope of the draft resolution of which his delegation was a sponsor, beyond pointing out that the draft resolution followed the well-established practice of encouraging as many States as possible to ratify or accede to a convention adopted by the United Nations.

7. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) observed that it was an honour for his delegation to be a co-sponsor of the draft resolution before the Committee. His Government was well known as a champion of women's rights not only in America but throughout the world. There had been perfect equality of the sexes in his country for some time, a situation brought about by a reform of the Constitution and of the Civil Code.

8. The Dominican Republic had not only signed the Convention on the Political Rights of Women but had, he believed, been the first country to ratify it, by legislative action taken on 2 September 1953. His delegation would shortly deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General.

9. The draft resolution had been adequately explained by the preceding speakers and as there could be no argument against it he hoped that it would be adopted unanimously.

10. Mr. HOLMBACK (Sweden) stated that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

11. In his country women already enjoyed full political rights. Sweden had only the day before signed the

\* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Convention which would, in the spring of 1954, be put before the Swedish Parliament for an approval which he was sure would be given. After that action the instrument of ratification would be duly deposited with the Secretary-General.

12. Mr. LAUREL (Argentina) stated that in recent years women in his country had acquired full political rights. Under legislation enacted in 1947 they had been accorded the right to elect and be elected on exactly the same terms as men. Thus Argentine women, who had enjoyed full civil rights for several decades, and had even before then had access to all public offices in the national, provincial and municipal administrations, were enabled to participate fully in the political life of the country. There was now a number of women members in the national Senate and Chamber of Deputies, as well as in the provincial legislatures.

13. Since the women in his country had the full enjoyment of the rights stipulated in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, his Government had taken great pleasure in signing the Convention and hoped that that document would advance the cause of political equality of women in the greatest possible number of Member States and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

14. His delegation had therefore welcomed the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council that the General Assembly should invite non-member States to ratify or accede to the Convention and would vote for the joint draft resolution to that effect.

15. Mr. BARTOS (Yugoslavia) said that ever since November 1939 men and women in Yugoslavia had enjoyed complete equality of rights in all fields. Yugoslavia had signed the Convention on the Political Rights of Women on 31 March 1953, being one of the first States to do so. When explaining his vote on the Convention in the General Assembly, the Yugoslav representative at the time had stated that Yugoslavia would not avail itself of the right to make reservations, and regretted that signatories had been accorded that right by a provision of the Convention. However, the Yugoslav delegation realized that, owing to their particular social customs, some countries were obliged to make reservations, and was confident that it would not be very long before they would feel themselves in a position to withdraw them.

16. The quickest and most certain way of establishing complete legal equality between men and women throughout the world would be to secure the support of as many States as possible for the Convention. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of whatever resolution or amendment to a resolution invited the largest number of non-member States to become parties to it. Preferably the invitation should be sent to all non-member States without exception, but, failing that, it should be sent to all States which were or became members of any of the specialized agencies or which had applied for membership in the United Nations. It could not harm the United Nations to invite all States to accede to a Convention of a purely humanitarian nature.

17. If no proposals of broader scope were submitted, his delegation would vote in favour of the joint draft resolution (A/C.6/L.297).

18. Mr. POVETSEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) observed that the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which had already been signed by twenty-five States, accorded women the same rights

as men to vote and to be elected to all public offices. By undertaking to apply the Convention, States would be advancing the goal of equal political, social and economic rights for women laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. His delegation therefore endorsed the appeal, contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 504 E (XVI), to Member States to become parties to the Convention, and considered that action should be taken on the Council's recommendation, contained in the same resolution, that the General Assembly should invite certain non-member States to sign and ratify or accede to the Convention.

19. Mr. LOUTFI (Egypt) pointed out that, according to its article VI, the Convention could not come into force until the sixth instrument of ratification or accession had been deposited with the Secretary-General. Since no such instrument had yet been deposited the Convention was not in force, and he wondered therefore whether it would be in the interests of the United Nations to invite non-member States to sign at the present stage.

20. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) asked whether the Egyptian representative meant that it was not proper for the Committee to consider the joint draft resolution.

21. Mr. LOUTFI (Egypt) explained that he had merely wished to draw attention to the matter of principle involved.

22. Mr. AMADO (Brazil) said that it had been on the initiative of a Brazilian woman representative at the San Francisco Conference that the Economic and Social Council had set up the Sub-Commission, now the Commission, on the Status of Women. The Commission's work deserved the highest praise.

23. During the past fifty years women had played a steadily increasing part in all fields, and their services in the Second World War had entitled them to a say in the organization of the post-war world. Accordingly, the Charter of the United Nations had, in its Preamble, reaffirmed faith in the equal rights of men and women and, in Article 8, declared that the United Nations should place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.

24. Under the Brazilian Constitution women had the right to vote and were eligible to all public offices, and in practice they took an active part in the political, social and cultural life of the country. There still remained some States in which women did not enjoy equality, but those were steadily becoming fewer and the day was not far off when inequalities would disappear and men and women would share fully rights and duties inside and outside the home.

25. Although, according to current practice, conventions required the deposit of instruments of ratification or accession as well as signatures in order to come into force, he did not see why invitations to become parties to the Convention should not be sent to non-member States when it had only been signed.

26. Mr. TARAZI (Syria) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

27. Women had figured in the public life of Syria since the country became independent. In 1949, they had been accorded the right to vote and they had recently become eligible for public office.

28. Mr. VAN REMOORTEL (Belgium) said that his delegation would also vote in favour of the draft

resolution because it believed that its adoption would encourage both Member and non-Member States to ratify the Convention.

29. Mr. KHOMAN (Thailand) said that in his country women had been accorded full political rights under the Constitution; they played an important part in Thailand's social and political affairs and all public offices were open to them. His delegation would therefore support the draft resolution.

30. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) endorsed the statement made by the Byelorussian representative and expressed his delegation's approval of the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 504 E (XVI). In the Soviet Union women had possessed equal rights with men in all aspects of political life since the time of the October revolution in 1917. Those rights were guaranteed not only constitutionally but by the whole social structure of the country and through the specific measures by which the Government had given effect to them. The Economic and Social Council's first recommendation, that Member States should sign and ratify the Convention, was no less important than the second recommendation, which was reflected in the joint draft resolution, that non-member States should be invited to become parties to the Convention.

31. He would vote in favour of the draft resolution on the assumption that the Committee's endorsement of the Council's first recommendation was implied.

32. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the draft resolution submitted by Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Greece and the Philippines (A/C.6/L.297).

*The draft resolution was adopted by 41 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.*

33. Mr. LOUTFI (Egypt) said that he had voted for the draft resolution; his earlier remarks were not to be interpreted as opposition.

34. Mr. MAURTUA (Peru) saw no objection to inviting non-member States to ratify the Convention even though Member States had not yet deposited their instruments of ratification; in many cases their failure to do so was explained by reasons of convenience and practicability and did not mean that in those countries women were not gradually acquiring full political rights. In Peru, for instance, women had not yet acquired full political rights because certain constitutional amendments were first required. That had not prevented his delegation from voting in favour of the draft resolution.

35. Mr. VALLAT (United Kingdom) explained his delegation's abstention. The United Kingdom Govern-

ment fully accepted the principle contained in the Convention and had earlier agreed to the opening of the Convention for signature. The principle was to a very considerable extent applied in the United Kingdom, but some practical difficulties remained which could not be solved without certain legislative and constitutional changes. Since his Government believed that the obligations deriving from a Convention become operative for a State from the time when that State becomes a party to it, they had not yet been able to become a party to the Convention and they did not therefore feel justified in urging other countries to become parties.

36. Mr. GOMEZ PADILLA (Guatemala) said that he was convinced of the importance of the principles contained in the Convention, which his Government had signed, and was also in agreement with the draft resolution just adopted. However, his delegation considered it incompatible with the principles of the United Nations Charter that non-member States which had been declared to be undemocratic by the General Assembly should be invited to become parties to the Convention; for that reason his delegation had voted for the joint draft resolution on the understanding that the Secretary-General would not invite those States to become parties to the Convention.

#### **Question of the continuation of the functions of the United Nations Tribunal in Libya (A/2459, A/C.6/L.294)**

[Item 55]\*

37. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the explanatory memorandum submitted by the Secretary-General on the subject of the continuation of the functions of the United Nations Tribunal in Libya (A/2459). A draft resolution on the question had been submitted jointly by Argentina and Egypt (A/C.6/L.294).

38. Mr. LAUREL (Argentina) said that the head of his delegation was unavoidably absent and was unable to present the draft resolution to the Committee. He therefore moved the adjournment of the meeting under rule 117 of the rules of procedure.

39. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Argentine representative's motion for the adjournment of the meeting.

*The motion was adopted by 27 votes to 1 with 13 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.