

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SECOND SESSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWELFTH MEETING

Lake Success, New York

Monday, 12 January 1948 at 11.00 a.m.

Tuesday 13

Chairman:	Mrs. Marie Helene LEFAUCHEUX	(France)
Rapporteur:	Mrs. A. KANDALEFT COSMA	(Syria)
Present:	Mrs. J. M. Grey Street	(Australia)
	Mrs. E. I. Uralova	(Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
	Miss C. Zung	(China)
	Mrs. G. Morales de Escheverria	(Costa Rica)
	Mrs. Bodil Begtrup	(Denmark)
	Begum Hamid Ali	(India)
	Mrs. de Castillo Ledon	(Mexico)
	Mrs. Mihri Pektas	(Turkey)
	Mrs. E. A. Popova	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
	Miss M. Sutherland	(United Kingdom)
	Miss D. Kenyon	(United States of America)
	Mrs. Isabel de Urdaneta	(Venezuela)

Representatives from Specialized Agencies

Dr. M. Fairchild	(ILO)
Miss J. Maass	(UNESCO)

Observers from Non-Governmental Organizations

Miss T. Sender	(American Federation of Labor)
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/Other Observers

Other Observers

Miss M. Bernardino (Inter-American Commission
of Women)

Miss S. Anthony (Women's International
Democratic Federation)

Secretariat

Mr. John P. Humphrey

Miss L. M. Mitchell

ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN: ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN called attention to the draft resolution on the International Labour Organization (document E/CN.6/63), the last resolution on the subject of economic rights of women with which the Commission had to deal.

Miss KENYON (United States) proposed that paragraph VI of the resolution should be treated separately and should be taken up later under item 15 of the agenda. She further proposed that the remainder of the resolution should appear as an annex to the Commission's report to the Council, which should include an appropriate reference to it.

The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the first part of Miss Kenyon's proposal, regarding the separation of paragraph VI from the rest of the draft resolution.

DECISION: The Commission adopted Miss Kenyon's proposal by seven votes.

The CHAIRMAN asked for discussion on the second part of Miss Kenyon's proposal.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) thought that the wording of the resolution was too vague. If the resolution was to be of any assistance to the International Labour Organization, and if the Commission hoped to be able to check up later on the way in which it had been carried out, it would be necessary to speak in concrete terms.

Paragraph II, sub-paragraph 1, for example, should contain a reference to the importance of the health measures taken for industrial workers by the World Health Organization. Sub-paragraph 2 should mention a working day of seven or eight hours rather than "reasonable working hours". Sub-paragraph 3 should state definitely what pay a woman should receive during maternity leave, that a woman's job should be guaranteed for her after her maternity leave, and the extent to which the State and the employer should participate in welfare organizations. Mrs. Uralova objected to paragraph III in its present text as it seemed to subordinate the interests of trade unions to those of employers. She felt that the wording of paragraph IV would not necessarily lead to active
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measures along the lines suggested. She thought that the questions raised in that paragraph should also be referred to the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Mrs. URALOVA reminded the Commission that not all Member States of the United Nations were members of the International Labour Organization and that therefore the International Labour Organization's work would be limited to some degree.

The CHAIRMAN agreed that the draft resolution was not very strongly worded and that it contained many repetitions of ideas already expressed by the Commission in other resolutions. She pointed out, however, that it was for that very reason that it had been suggested that it should take the form of an annex to the Commission's report.

Begum HAMID ALI (India) proposed two amendments suggested by Mrs. Uralova. In paragraph II, sub-paragraph 2, the words "reasonable hours of work" should be changed so that an eight-hour working day would be specified, and in sub-paragraph 3 it should be stated that mothers had a right to return to their work after maternity leave.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) emphasized that the text had been carefully drawn up in order to satisfy many different views, and she thought it should be adopted without further changes.

Most of the points raised by Mrs. Uralova had been covered in other resolutions of the Commission, but in the draft resolution directed to the International Labour Organization, an organization that dealt with countries in various stages of social development, it would be best not to be too specific about such matters as hours of work.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) agreed with the ideas expressed by Mrs. Street and pointed out further that in some countries and in certain types of work, the working day was less than eight hours. It was not for the Commission to determine the length of a reasonable day.

Miss FAIRCHILD (International Labour Organization) thought that the International Labour Organization would welcome a general statement of principles from the Commission. The ILO had already adopted a number of detailed conventions on the questions under discussion and its convention on hours of work went beyond the concept of an eight-hour day. She suggested that the Commission might adopt the words "reasonable but declining hours as practicable".

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) supported the views expressed by Miss Fairchild and added that to make the resolution more specific might limit its effectiveness.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) felt that it was necessary to take practical steps to implement the basic principles unanimously adopted by the Commission.

/Miss KENYON

Miss KENYON (United States of America) considered that the draft resolution was in fact a step of that nature.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) explained why she would abstain when the vote was taken. Firstly, to include the draft resolution as an annex would be to relegate it to a position of secondary importance; and secondly, the draft resolution in its present form was too vague to be of any great value. Moreover, problems such as full economic equality for women could best be handled by Governments or profession organizations.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) stated that she would abstain on paragraph V of the draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN would also abstain on that paragraph. She did not object to the paragraph as representative of France, because the principle of equal pay for equal work had been adopted by France in both its metropolitan and non-metropolitan territories; but she did feel that the International Labour Organization had taken a correct position regarding the sovereignty of a Power in respect to its non-metropolitan territories.

DECISION: The Commission agreed by ten votes in favour and none against that the draft resolution on the International Labour Organization should be an annex to its report.

The CHAIRMAN announced that she had received telegrams from the World Federation of Trade Unions expressing its interest in what the Commission was doing and stating its views on problems involving economic rights of women. She would like to send a message of appreciation to the World Federation of Trade Unions if the Commission wished to empower her to do so.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) suggested that the telegrams should be incorporated into the Commission's report as a statement from the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The CHAIRMAN felt that it might be sufficient to state that the World Federation of Trade Unions joined with the Commission in recognizing the importance of calling to the attention of the Economic and Social Council the questions concerning economic rights of women.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN: ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution on education which had been proposed by Mrs. Morales De Escheverria and adopted by the Committee on Resolutions (document E/CN.6/64).

The resolution was adopted by twelve votes.

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution on the /education

education of adult women, which had been adopted by the Committee on Resolutions. (Document E/CN.6/65).

The resolution was adopted by eleven votes.

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution on the Teachers' Charter, proposed by Miss Kenyon (United States) (document E/CN.6/37) which had been adopted by the Committee on Resolutions.

The resolution was adopted by twelve votes.

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary of the Commission) read a draft resolution submitted by Mrs. Uralova on educational opportunities for women (document E/CN.6/36).

Begum HAMID ALI (India) supported Mrs. Uralova's proposal subject to the word "native" in the last paragraph being changed to "indigenous".

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) accepted Begum Hamid Ali's amendment to her draft.

The CHAIRMAN asked the Commission to consider Mrs. Uralova's draft resolution as amended by Begum Hamid Ali. It had been proposed that the first two paragraphs should be deleted. She proposed the deletion of the first paragraph only.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) and Mrs. LEDON (Mexico) agreed to the adoption of the last three paragraphs.

Begum HAMID ALI (India) thought the only reason for omitting the first paragraph of Mrs. Uralova's resolution was the reference made therein to non-self-governing territories; but unless the members of the Commission believed that there was no difference in the conditions in self-governing territories and in non-self-governing territories, it would not be honest to omit the paragraph. There were territories where the conditions in women's education were absolutely deplorable.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) could not agree to the adoption of the first paragraph. She did not consider that the Commission possessed enough information on the conditions of women in non-self-governing territories to justify it in singling them out in such strong terms.

Mrs. DE URDANETA (Venezuela) proposed the omission of the words "particularly in non-self-governing territories". She thought all the members of the Commission would agree that women in non-self-governing territories were for the most part backward, but also that there was no country in which the education of women was entirely satisfactory. It would therefore be unjust to single out non-self-governing territories.

The CHAIRMAN, replying to Begum Hamid Ali, observed that the situation was equally bad in many self-governing territories as in non-self-governing territories.

/She agreed with

She agreed with Mrs. De Urdaneta; her objection to the first paragraph lay precisely in the words the Venezuelan representative had proposed to omit, which implied that insufficient attention was being paid to the education of women in non-self-governing territories. An immense effort was being made by the French Government - and also, she believed, by the United Kingdom Government - to raise the level of women's education in non-self-governing territories. For this reason she would be unable to vote for the resolution as it stood.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) maintained that the paragraph as it stood represented the facts. It would be wrong for the Commission to delete the whole paragraph, which was serious and pertinent, merely because certain representatives did not like two or three words in it.

Mrs. LEDON (Mexico) suggested deleting the word "certain" in the fifth line and the words "particularly in non-self-governing territories" in the fifth and sixth lines, and ending the sentence with the words "serious attention is not being paid to the education of women".

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported Mrs. Ledon's proposal.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) endorsed what the Chairman had said regarding the paragraph in question. The paragraph as it stood was not in accordance with the facts. The United Kingdom Government was making great efforts to develop women's education in countries under its jurisdiction, and to overcome old-established prejudices in those countries which militated against progress in this direction. Women's organizations in the territories in question would resent the statement contained in paragraph 1.

Begum HAMID ALI (India) pointed out that about six other Powers besides France and the United Kingdom had jurisdiction over non-self-governing territories. Her previous remarks had not been directed at either Britain or France. She paid a tribute to the British administration of India. She would agree to the deletion of the word "particularly", but pressed for the retention of the reference to non-self-governing territories.

Miss ZUNG (China) suggested replacing the words "particularly in non-self-governing territories" by "including some non-self-governing territories".

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) (Rapporteur) suggested altering the last part of the sentence to read: "...while in some non-self-governing territories serious attention is not being paid to the education of women".

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) could not agree; the proposed wording called attention to non-self-governing territories, but there were sovereign States where the situation was equally bad.

/Begum HAMID ALI

Begum HAMID ALI (India) proposed to delete the word "particularly" and to say "in self-governing territories and in non-self-governing territories".

The CHAIRMAN would agree to the first paragraph subject to the deletion of the reference to non-self-governing territories.

Mrs. STREET (Australia), seconded by Mrs. COSMA (Syria) (Rapporteur) moved that the debate should be closed and a vote taken.

Paragraph 1 of the draft resolution as amended by Mrs. Ledon was adopted by four votes to three.

The whole resolution as amended was adopted by eleven votes.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.
