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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Wednesday, 12 February 1947, at 2:30 p.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mrs. B. Begtrup (Denmark)
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. J. Street (Australia)
Rapporteur: Mrs. E. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
Members: Mrs. W. S. New (China)
Mrs. G. de Echeverria (Costa Rica)
Mrs. S. Ramirez (Guatemala)
Begum Hamid Ali (India)
Mrs. E. Aguirre (Mexico)
Mrs. A. Cosma (Syria)
Mrs. N. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Miss M. Sutherland (United Kingdom)
Miss D. Kenyon (United States of America)

Representative of Specialized Agency:

Mrs. E. Rowe (ILO)

Secretariat: Mr. J. P. Humphrey

Secretary of the Commission:

Miss E. Bowerman

Consideration of Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda: Relations with
Non-Governmental Organizations and Arrangements for Hearing their Views
(continuation)

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that in view
of the fact that the Economic and Social Council had already set up a
Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental
Organizations, all requests from women's organizations for consultative

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status should be referred to that Committee, and whatever decisions the Committee might take should be discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women at its next session.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) supported the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' proposal on the understanding that it would not affect any action that might be taken on the resolution which she had proposed earlier (document E/CN.6/13).

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) explained that since her proposal referred to all requests from women's organizations for consultative status, it included the organizations mentioned in the Australian proposal.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) moved that the Australian proposal should be considered separately.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that the Byelorussian and Australian resolutions belonged in the same category, and should therefore be treated in the same way.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) suggested that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' proposal should be amended so as to refer only to requests from specific women's organizations and not to the principle of recognition of co-ordinating agencies, which was the substance of the Australian resolution.

Mrs. NEW (China), supporting the United Kingdom amendment, stressed the difference between the Australian resolution and all proposals concerning particular organizations.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) favoured the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' motion insofar as it related to international organizations, but she wondered how far the competence of the Council NGO Committee extended in the field of national organizations.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) thought that the Council NGO Committee could deal only with specific applications for consultative status and not with
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her resolution which involved a new principle.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) referred to Article 71 of the Charter, which authorized arrangements for consultation with both national and international non-governmental organizations concerned with matters within the competence of the Economic and Social Council. She felt therefore that the Australian proposal concerning national organizations could properly be sent to the Council NGO Committee.

The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the United Kingdom amendment to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' proposal, which, in itself, constituted an amendment to the Byelorussian resolution.

The Commission decided by a vote of 8 to 2 to accept the United Kingdom amendment.

The Commission then voted to adopt the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' amendment, as amended by the member from the United Kingdom.

The CHAIRMAN turned to consideration of the Australian proposal.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) stressed the importance of the point raised by the Australian resolution concerning the need for effective means of implementing the decisions of the Commission.

Since the policy of the Council NGO Committee was that consultative status should be granted to national organizations only when they were highly specialized and covered a field in which no international organization was working, she doubted that the Economic and Social Council would adopt the idea contained in the Australian resolution. She hoped, however, that if the Council could not agree to grant consultative status to a co-ordinating agency representing national non-governmental organizations, it would at least recognize such an agency as an "accredited organization" eligible to receive information on matters relating to the work of the Commission and prepared to make effective efforts for carrying out the programmes approved by the various organs of the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN realized the need for co-ordinating national women's

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organizations and recalled that the report of the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women had suggested that it might be desirable to have in each country a body similar to the Commission on the Status of Women. If the present Commission favoured the establishment of co-ordinating agencies in each country, such action might preclude the possibility of carrying out the suggestion made by the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women.

Mrs. STREET (Australia), referring to a point raised by the member from the United Kingdom, noted that Article 71 of the Charter provided that consultative status should be granted national organizations after "consultation with the member of the United Nations concerned". She presumed that a co-ordinating agency such as she had in mind would receive the endorsement of the government of the country concerned.

In reply to a question by Miss KENYON (United States of America), Mrs. Street described an organization already established in Australia which served as a form of co-ordinating agency for all groups dealing with the status of women. It in no way controlled its affiliated organizations but acted merely as a centre for information and advice, and was particularly useful in enlisting the aid of all women's organizations in any specific project undertaken by one of them.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought that certain aspects of the Australian proposal merited careful consideration by the Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations. Women's organizations might, however, be set up on other bases as well; the Inter-American Commission of Women, for example, was regional. The recommendation should be adaptable to varying conditions throughout the world. Furthermore, the United Nations could only recognize national organizations, but could not interfere in their set-up.

The CHAIRMAN did not believe that the Economic and Social Council would refuse to recognize a body endorsed by its Government, a Member of the United Nations.

/In reply

In reply to a statement by Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) the Chairman explained that there must have been some misunderstanding; the Australian proposal did not refer to any organizations in particular, but was a proposal of principle.

Mrs. NEW (China) stated that the Chairman's interpretation corresponded with her own understanding of the proposal.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) explained that her proposal was to set up machinery to implement, in various member countries, decisions of United Nations bodies concerned with the problem of women by developing public opinion and interest in the activities of the United Nations. Thus, a co-ordinating agency would be set up in every country for national organizations dealing with the status of women.

There were at present many national organizations with local branches; the problems of the latter, however, did not always receive sufficient hearing. Her proposal aimed at enabling the branches to bring pressure through the co-ordinating agency, upon their local and national Government on matters concerning women.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) thereupon proposed that the Australian proposal should be amended so that the Commission on the Status of Women would recommend that the Council should invite Member Governments to set up organizations dealing with the problems of women. Only after such organizations had been set up, could the Council recognize them and give them certain status.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the Byelorussian proposal.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) suggested that a drafting committee should be set up to reconcile the Byelorussian and Australian proposals.

DECISION: The Commission decided to set up a drafting committee, consisting of the Chairman, the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the representative of Australia.

The meeting rose at 4:20 p.m.
