

**ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL****CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL**

UNRESTRICTED

E/CN.6/SR.35
20 January 1948

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SECOND SESSION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING

Lake Success, New York

Thursday, 15 January 1948, at 10.00 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. Marie Helene LEFAUCHEUX (France)

Rapporteur: Mrs. S. KANDALEFT COSMA (Syria)

Present: Mrs. J. M. Grey Street (Australia)
Mrs. E. I. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet
Socialist Republic)

Miss C. Zung (China)

Mrs. Bodil Begtrup (Denmark)

Mrs. G. Morales de Escheverria (Costa Rica)

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

Miss Maass (UNESCO)

Miss Howell (WHO)

Miss M. Fairchild (ILO)

Observers from Non-Governmental Organizations

Miss Tony Sender (AF of L)

Other Observers

Miss Bernardino (Inter-American Commission
of Women)

/Secretariat

Secretariat: Mr. John P. Humphrey

(Director, Division of
Human Rights)

Miss L. M. Mitchell

(Secretary of Commission)

Mr. George Dumontet

(Assistant Secretary of the
Economic and Social Council)

DISCUSSION ON DRAFT RESOLUTION ON COMMERCIALIZED PROSTITUTION AND VENEREAL DISEASE (document E/CN.6/51)

Miss MITCHELL (Secretary) read out the draft resolution on commercialized prostitution and venereal disease (document E/CN.6/51) submitted by Mrs. Street.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the question raised by the resolution would be more appropriate for discussion in the Social Commission or in WHO. She proposed that Mrs. Street's resolution should figure as an annex to the report of the Commission, and should be addressed specifically to the Social Commission and WHO.

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) supported the suggestion made by the Chairman.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) agreed that her resolution should be attached as an annex to the report but thought that a reference to the subject should be made in the report itself. She suggested that in the last paragraph of her resolution, the Commission should be requested to forward the resolution not only to Member Nations but also to the Social Commission and to WHO.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said she thought that the task of fighting prostitution did fall within the scope of the Commission. She felt strongly that the Commission should support Mrs. Street's resolution and that it should be included in the report.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) did not object to the resolution being forwarded as an annex, but felt it should not be presented in its entirety. She particularly objected to the last paragraph of the draft resolution. Member Nations had already been asked to present their views on the 1937 Convention, and the Social Commission was preparing a report which would be presented at the next General Assembly. It would be unwise to ask the Economic and Social Council to take action over and above what had already been done at the request of the Social Commission.

The CHAIRMAN suggested linking Mrs. Street's proposal with that part of the resolution which concerned the Commission's relations with the Social Commission.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) proposed that the Economic and Social Council should be asked to forward the resolution to the Social

/Commission,

Commission, which would be in line with the close co-operation that the Commission of the Status of Women had with that body.

Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) agreed to the proposal made by Miss Kenyon and suggested that, in the last paragraph of the resolution, the words "Economic and Social Council" should be replaced by "Social Commission and WHO".

The CHAIRMAN declared that the draft resolution presented by Mrs. Street would be submitted to the Social Commission and to WHO. The Rapporteur would decide whether the resolution should be included in the report or was to be forwarded as an annex to that report.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) agreed to the CHAIRMAN's suggestion as long as her resolution was included in its entirety.

The proposal was adopted unanimously.

Mrs. BEGTRUP (Denmark) wondered whether the Economic and Social Council would consider placing the Commission's report on the agenda of its forthcoming session, beginning 2 February, although, according to its rules of procedure, all items for the agenda had to be received six weeks in advance. If the report was not considered by the Council at its next meeting, much of the practical work of the Commission would be wasted. She suggested that the Chairman might address a letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council stressing that point.

Mr. DUMONTET (Assistant Secretary of the Economic and Social Council) replied that the reason why items for the agenda of the Economic and Social Council had to be submitted six weeks in advance, was simply in order that reports might be considered with every possible care. The agenda of the Council was heavily loaded and there were also difficulties of a purely administrative kind to be considered. Without wishing to make any premature judgment, he thought the Chairman of the Commission might address a letter to the President of the Council pointing out the urgency of the matter. He suggested, however, that instead of asking the Council to examine the report as a whole, it might be asked to consider certain specific resolutions adopted by the Commission, which would lose their value unless they were considered at the next session of the Council.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) supported the suggestion made by Mr. Dumontet. In her opinion, the following were the most important resolutions for consideration by the Council:

ILO representation;

Questions arising out of consideration of the report of the Commission on Human Rights;

/Equal pay

Equal pay for equal work;

The question of calling a conference in 1949.

Mrs. BEGTRUP (Denmark) and Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stressed the need for careful consideration in deciding which resolutions required the urgent attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) advised concentrating on a few points; the Commission might defeat its own ends if it submitted too many resolutions.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) thought that by asking the Economic and Social Council to deal only with a few questions, the Commission might give the impression that the remainder of its resolutions were unimportant.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mrs. STREET (Australia) suggested that the decision as to the draft resolutions which should be submitted to the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, should be left in abeyance until the members had had an opportunity to study the report of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the question of whether in her letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council, she should insist upon the study of certain items, if the Council was not able to examine the whole report. The Commission could determine at its next meeting which items were to be selected.

The proposal was adopted by ten votes.

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION ON TWO ANNUAL MEETINGS (document E/CN.6/47)

Mrs. STREET (Australia) read out the amended version of her draft resolution concerning the number of annual meetings of the Commission. She stressed the importance of suggesting to the Economic and Social Council that it should amend its rules of procedure in order to allow for two meetings of the Commission annually.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) could not support Mrs. Street's proposal. It would be premature to ask the Economic and Social Council to place the Commission in the category of those commissions which had two meetings annually. The work of the Commission was not yet sufficiently advanced and there was no chance of such a request being granted. Moreover, the first paragraph of the resolution did nothing to strengthen the request; the terms of reference of the Commission were laid down by the Council, and its field of work had been delimited at the last session of the Council.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) was opposed to the resolution, even in its amended form. Owing to budgetary difficulties, the Commission
/could only

could only expect a refusal from the Economic and Social Council. She did not consider the reaffirmation of the importance of the Commission a useful argument; it would be more to the point to wait until next year, when the Commission would be able to produce some tangible proof of the importance of its work.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested that Mrs. Street should include in her resolution some mention of the attitude of the Economic and Social Council towards the Commission's report, as expressed at the last session of the Council. While many members had been very favourable towards it, the attitude of others had displayed a lack of seriousness, and she would like to see a protest embodied in Mrs. Street's resolution.

Although she would like to support the proposal for two meetings of the Commission annually, she did not think such a request would be granted yet.

Mrs. BEGTRUP (Denmark) stated that, as Chairman of the last session of the Commission, she had addressed a letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council on the subject of the attitude of members towards the Commission, and did not think any further action was desirable.

With regard to Mrs. Street's proposal, she did not think it wise to ask at that juncture for a change in the rules of the Council. Under Rule 1 the Council could always decide that the Commission should meet twice annually if it were found necessary.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) withdrew her proposal, since the majority of the members did not think the time had come to press the matter.

ORGANIZATION OF NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) drew attention to the difficulties all members had experienced at the beginning of the current session when documents had been slow in reaching them. She proposed a resolution calling the attention of the Economic and Social Council to those difficulties and suggesting a revision of the rules of procedure to allow some kind of time-limit for the submission of items for the agenda of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN thought such an alteration of the rules of procedure would be admirable, but considered it advisable to postpone the resolution until the next session of the Commission. She would, however, appeal to members to submit items for the agenda of the next session as early as possible.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) withdrew her resolution on that understanding.

REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Mrs. STREET (Australia) recalled that when the report of the Sub-Committee on Questionnaires had been discussed, she had asked that a report should be

/submitted

submitted annually to the General Assembly, setting out any achievements of the Commission in spheres other than political. No decision had been taken upon her proposal.

Upon the CHAIRMAN stating that a representative of the Secretariat had said that such a step would not be possible at the present stage of the organization, and Mrs. BEGTRUP (Denmark) suggesting that a chart with regard to economic progress could be prepared at a future session, Mrs. STREET withdrew her proposal.

STATEMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF WHO AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The CHAIRMAN invited representative of WHO and of various non-governmental organizations to address the Commission.

Mrs. F. LECLERCQ (International Federation of Democratic Women), after sketching the aims of her organization and speaking of its recent activities, expressed the hope of close co-operation with the Commission and the Economic and Social Council. In that connection, she would like to see the International Federation of Democratic Women included in category A of non-governmental organizations.

Miss ROBB (International Federation of University Women) stated that her organization had followed with special interest the deliberations of the Commission with regard to the education of women.

She hoped that the Secretariat would be able to circulate the agenda of the next session of the Commission in time for the various consultative organizations to have access to it.

Miss HOWELL (World Health Organization) spoke of the health programme of the League of Nations which had now become the responsibility of WHO. Quoting from the Constitution of WHO, she showed that organization's concept of health to be not merely absence of disease but a condition which would permit the fullest realization of every individual's and every nation's social potentialities. The health of all peoples was fundamental to the attainment of peace and security.

Although WHO could not become a permanent international specialized agency until its Constitution had been ratified by twenty-six members of the United Nations, the Interim Commission had already broached the task of making a living reality of the principles contained in the Constitution, and had started work in co-operation with United Nations organs and specialized agencies. Various women's organizations had asked to establish relations with WHO. WHO was fully conscious of the problems which confronted women, and the Commission on the Status of Women could call upon it for any services within its competence.

/Miss C. SCHAEFFER

Miss C. SCHAEFER (International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues) informed the Commission that her organization had elaborated a very comprehensive programme concerning the status of women. Special attention would be paid to the programme of work of the Commission at the meeting of the Union to be held in Switzerland during the present month.

She emphasized that the co-operation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Commission would be facilitated if they could receive the agenda of the Commission as early as possible before the next session.

Mrs. BOUDREAU (Associated Countrywomen of the World), speaking of the close co-operation of the Associated Countrywomen with the United Nations, WHO, and FAO, drew attention to the memorandum on post-war reconstruction issued by her organization, which had been referred to in many committees of those bodies.

Her organization stressed the value of the individual, and considered that failure to recognize that principle was the source of all the evils with which the modern world was beset.

Mr. Max BEER (International League for the Rights of Man) emphasized the League's interest in the work of the Commission, since human rights applied to both men and women. He congratulated the Commission on its efforts to amend the draft declaration of human rights which had been prepared by the Commission on Human Rights.

The League had submitted a memorandum to the Commission on Human Rights, suggesting that a distinction should be drawn in any future bill of rights between the rights essential for the maintenance of peace and those rights which were necessary for the welfare of human beings but the violation of which would not constitute a threat to peace. The rights in the former category should be included as part of the system of security established by the Charter, and those in the latter category should be included in international conventions under the authority of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

In conclusion, Mr. Beer appealed to the Commission not to close its session without making a declaration to remind public opinion of the immutable link between peace, human rights, women's rights and men's rights.

The CHAIRMAN, after thanking the representatives of the non-governmental organizations for their interest, announced that the agenda of the second session of the Commission on the Status of Women was now exhausted.

After a short discussion, it was decided that the Commission would meet on the following afternoon to consider the Rapporteur's report.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.