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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Seventh Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 24 March 1953, at 4.45 p.m.

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political rights of women adopted by the Commission at its
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PRESENT:

Chairman:

Miss BERNARDINO

Dominican Republic

Rapporteur:

Begum ANWAR AHMED

Pakistan

PRESENT: (continued)Members:

Daw OHN	Burma
Mrs. NOVIKOVA	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
Miss MISTRAL	Chile
Miss TSENG	China
Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX	France
Mrs. GUERY	Haiti
Mrs. TABET	Lebanon
Miss PELEPIER	Netherlands
Miss YOUNG	New Zealand
Mrs. WASILKOWSKA	Poland
Mrs. POPOVA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Mrs. WARDE	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Mrs. HAHN	United States of America
Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA	Venezuela

Also present:

Miss FUJITA	Japan
Mrs. de CALVO	Inter-American Commission of Women

Representative of a specialized agency:

Mrs. FAIRCHILD	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
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Representatives of non-governmental organizations:Category A:

Miss SENDER)	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
Mr. WAGNER)	
Mr. THORMANN	International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU)
Miss KAHN	World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)
Mrs. FOX	World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

PRESENT: (continued)Representatives of non-governmental organizationsCategory B and Register:

Mrs. ROBERTS	Associated Country Women of the World
Miss WOODSMALL Mrs. MAHON	International Alliance of Women
Mrs. CARTER Miss FREEMAN	International Council of Women
Mrs. HYMER	International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Miss LAGEMANN	International Federation of Friends of Young Women
Miss MCGILLICUDDY Miss ROBB	International Federation of University Women
Miss LA LONDE Miss SMITH	International Federation of Women Lawyers
Mrs. WOLLE-EGENOFF Miss de CASTILLO	International League for the Rights of Man
Miss BENDER	International Cooperative Women's Guild
Mrs. EVANS	Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations
Mrs. MCGIVERN	Pax Romana
Miss GRABINSKA Miss de SPUR	St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance
Mrs. WALSER Mrs. MALIN	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Miss SCHAEFER Miss ZIZZAMIA	World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations
Miss ESTELLE	World's Women's Christian Temperance Union
Miss ANDERSON Miss PALMER	World's Young Women's Christian Association
Mrs. GRADY	Young Christian Workers
Mrs. TENISON-WOODS	Chief of the Status of Women Section
Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER	Secretary of the Commission

Secretariat:

REPRESENTATION OF THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, stated that she had shared the hope of the USSR representative and the Chairman that a final answer from the United States Government to the Secretary-General's communication concerning the admission into the United States of the representative of the Women's International Democratic Federation would be forthcoming that day. Unfortunately, no answer had yet been received. Every effort was being made, however, to expedite matters and she would inform the Commission as soon as there was a reply.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) reviewed the history and activities of the Women's International Democratic Federation, which, founded in 1945, now counted among its members 135,000,000 women in sixty-five countries in all parts of the world. It had enjoyed consultative status in category B since 1947. It was guided by the principles of the Charter, in particular the recognition of the dignity and worth of the human person and of the equal rights of men and women, and had from the outset associated itself with, and supported, all efforts to raise the status of women everywhere. Through documentation submitted regularly by the WIDF, the Commission was aware that the WIDF had adopted a broad programme of protection of women's rights and had on numerous occasions approached governments on matters concerning mother and child welfare, higher standards of living for families, better housing, elimination of various forms of discrimination against women etc. In 1949 the WIDF had submitted to the United Nations factual material, based on its own research, on the disregard and suppression of women's rights in Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories and in 1952 it had presented to the Ad Hoc Committee on Slavery a memorandum on servitude and slavery of women and children in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The WIDF's programme and activities were entirely in consonance with the work of the Commission. At the Commission's previous session the WIDF representative had spoken on many questions with which both bodies were concerned and had submitted a memorandum on the political, economic and civil inequality of women in both sovereign States and dependent territories, urging the Commission to do everything in its power to remedy that shameful situation. In 1951, the WIDF had

sent a special commission, composed of members from seventeen countries, to North Korea and had submitted to the United Nations a report of its findings, while the following year it had addressed a plea to the United Nations to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities in Korea and thereby to prevent the killing of innocent women and children. At its third Women's World Congress, to be held in Denmark in a few months' time, questions relating to the protection of women's rights and to child welfare would be discussed.

There could be no doubt that an organization whose field of interest coincided with the Commission's own and which was guided by the principles of the Charter should be represented at the current session. The USSR delegation therefore protested strongly against the obvious intention of United States authorities to prevent the WIDF from taking part in the Commission's work, as it was fully entitled to do, and urged the other members of the Commission and the representatives of non-governmental organizations attending the session to take the same attitude. Failure to protest would be a confession of impotence on the Commission's part.

Mrs. WASILKOWSKA (Poland) recalled that the representative of the WIDF had applied for her visa in February, allowing ample time for the completion of the necessary formalities. The failure of the United States Government to act on the application was a serious blow to the Commission's independence and authority. Article 71 of the Charter recognized the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Economic and Social Council and consequently of its commissions. She therefore proposed that the Commission should adopt a resolution expressing its protest against the discrimination manifested by the United States authorities against the WIDF and requesting the Chairman to transmit the protest to those authorities and to insist on the granting of a visa to the WIDF representative. She would submit a draft resolution to that effect to be circulated to the Commission.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) also wished to draw the Commission's attention to some aspects of the activities of the WIDF, in order to dispel the erroneous impression that the Federation was a propaganda organization. Its aims were to unite the women of all countries in an endeavour

to safeguard women's rights, achieve close international co-operation and promote public health, child welfare and the democratic upbringing of young people. Those purposes were the direct concern of many United Nations organs, including the Commission on the Status of Women.

The WIDF expressed the aspirations of millions of women in its unremitting struggle for the protection of the family and of mothers and children. In its efforts to achieve equal rights, it had made some valuable studies of the position of women in various countries; it had collected considerable funds for child victims of the Second World War; in 1949 it had been instrumental in achieving the observance of 1 June as "Children's Day" in over 50 countries; since 1950, it had conducted a widespread and successful campaign for material assistance to women and children in Korea.

In 1952, the WIDF had participated actively in the organization of a conference on child welfare in Vienna, which had been attended by persons of extremely different political views and religious persuasions from sixty-four countries. Many persons who had distinguished themselves in various aspects of work with children had been present. Unanimous appeals had been made to all people of good will to protect women and children, to enable every child to receive an adequate education and to combat juvenile delinquency. The conference had stimulated a mass movement for the protection of children and had resulted in the establishment of national child welfare committees in forty-five countries.

The WIDF had also published a pamphlet in four languages entitled "Children need peace as flowers need the sun". The Federation was fully aware of the inter-dependence of women's rights and child welfare. The happiness of children in the family was conditioned by the equal rights of the father and the mother in all spheres and by the emancipation of the mother.

The Byelorussian delegation therefore supported the USSR and Polish delegations in their protest against the illegal delay in granting the WIDF representative the entry visa to which she was entitled as the representative of a non-governmental organization with category B consultative status. The co-operation of the WIDF in the Commission's work would undoubtedly help to solve many problems and the Commission should make every effort to secure that co-operation at the current session and in the future. The Byelorussian delegation would vote for the Polish draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN expressed her regret that the representative of the WIDF had not yet been able to attend the Commission's meetings and hoped that a satisfactory solution of the problem would be reached soon.

She suggested, as an alternative procedure to voting on the Polish draft resolution, that a statement on the question of the representation of the WIDF should be included in the Commission's report to the Economic and Social Council. If the Polish representative could not accept that suggestion, however, the draft resolution would be circulated.

Mrs. WASILKOWSKA (Poland) thanked the Chairman for her efforts on behalf of the WIDF representative, but considered that the time had come to take decisive action and to adopt a resolution on the matter. The independence and authority of the Commission were at stake and would not be strengthened sufficiently by a mere reference to the question in the report.

POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN (continued): (a) REPORT ON THE ACTION TAKEN ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION ON POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS SIXTH SESSION (E/CN.6/209, E/CN.6/L.98/Rev. 1) (continued)

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, read out the text of the draft resolution on political rights of women (E/CN.6/L.98/Rev.1) as adopted by the Committee.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, as she had made clear in the Committee on Resolutions, she was opposed to the penultimate paragraph of the draft resolution, because it would limit the invitations for signature to be addressed to non-Member States under Articles IV and V of the Convention to countries which were members of specialized agencies or parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. She therefore proposed that the paragraph should be deleted; subject to that amendment, she would support the draft resolution.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) felt that the paragraph objected to by the USSR representative was irrelevant and unnecessary and she supported its deletion. Although not altogether satisfied with the Convention, her Government was prepared to sign it and she would vote for the draft resolution if its penultimate paragraph was deleted.

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER (Secretary of the Commission), replying to a question by Miss MISTRAL (Chile), read out a provision contained in General Assembly resolution 368 (IV) concerning invitations for accession to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The USSR proposal that the penultimate paragraph of the draft resolution should be deleted was rejected by 8 votes to 3, with 4 abstentions.

The draft resolution was adopted by 10 votes to none, with 7 abstentions.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) did not consider it necessary to reply to the mendacious allegations which the representative of the Kuomintang group had made at the preceding meeting concerning the Chinese People's Republic. The time would come when the legitimate representative of that country would occupy her seat in the Commission and would give it a true and authoritative account of the status of Chinese women.

Miss TSENG (China) said that there could be no question of the legitimacy of her Government or of its representatives to the United Nations. The USSR itself had recognized the Government of the Republic of China and had concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with it in 1945 which the USSR had never revoked. As for her statement, she had confined herself to presenting facts which could be confirmed by eye-witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN urged representatives to refrain from discussing political questions which were outside the Commission's competence.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.