

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.6/SR.13
13 April 1953

ORIGINAL: E

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Seventh Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 26 March 1953, at 3.25 p.m.

CONTENTS

Statement by the representative of Ecuador

Educational opportunities for women (E/CN.6/210, E/CN.6/211,
E/CN.6/214, E/CN.6/215, E/CN.6/221, E/CN.6/223; E/CN.6/L.101,
E/CN.6/L.108, E/CN.6/L.109) (continued)

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Miss BERNARDINO	Dominican Republic
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Begum ANWAR AHMED	Pakistan

PRESENT:

Members:

Daw OHN	Burma
Mrs. NOVIKOVA	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
Miss MISTRAL	Chile
Miss TSENG	China
Miss MAÑAS	Cuba
Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX	France
Mrs. GUERY	Haiti
Mrs. TABET	Lebanon
Mrs. PELETIER	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:

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

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mrs. FAIRCHILD	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Mr. ARNALDO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

PRESENT: (cont'd)

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:

Category A:

Miss SENDER	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
Miss KAHN	World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)
Mrs FOX	World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

Category B and Register:

Mrs. VERGARA	Catholic International Union for Social Service
Mrs. MAHON) Mrs. WOODSMALL)	International Alliance of Women
Mrs. LONGARZO	International Conference of Catholic Charities
Mrs. CARTER	International Council of Women
Mrs. HYMER	International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Miss LAGEMANN	International Federation of Friends of Young Women
Miss ROBB	International Federation of University Women
Miss LA LONDE) Miss SMITH)	International Federation of Women Lawyers
Mrs. WISNER) Mrs. WOLLE-EGENOFF)	International League for the Rights of Man
Mrs. EVANS	Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations
Mrs. McGIVERN	Pax Romana
Mrs. WALSER	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Miss ZIZZAMIA) Miss WEBER)	World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations
Mrs. ANDERSON) Miss FORSYTH)	World's Young Women's Christian Association
<u>Secretariat:</u> Mrs. TENISON-WOODS	Chief of the Status of Women Section
Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER	Secretary of the Commission

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ECUADOR

The CHAIRMAN announced that the representative of Ecuador, who was present as an observer, wished to address the Commission. Ecuador, incidentally, had been the first Latin American country to grant its women the vote, in 1929.

Mrs. de CASTILLO (Ecuador) said that her country's interest in the Commission's work had led her to attend all the meetings, first as a representative of the International League for the Rights of Man and now as an observer from Ecuador. She wished the Commission every success in its work and hoped that the spirit of equality and wisdom would prevail in its deliberations.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN (E/CN.6/210, E/CN.6/211, E/CN.6/214, E/CN.6/215, E/CN.6/221, E/CN.6/223; E/CN.6/L.101, E/CN.6/L.108, E/CN.6/L.109)
(continued)

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) read the draft resolution on educational opportunities for women (E/CN.6/L.109) submitted jointly by the Haitian and United States delegations.

Mrs. GUERY (Haiti), commenting on some aspects of the ILO representative's statement at the preceding meeting, said that many women in her country had been employed either directly in agriculture or in industries with an agricultural basis, such as the cotton and timber industries, and had in some cases undertaken administrative and executive functions. The current trend of women from the country to urban centres, however, was disrupting the pattern of country women's life. Increasing numbers of small enterprises were being liquidated, and the women who had operated them were entering large urban industrial undertakings. A large percentage of women workers in

the towns were former country women, who were often employed as servants in hotels and private houses.

That trend showed an aspiration to higher achievement, since the women concerned obviously wished to improve their own position and that of their children; nevertheless, it was resulting in the gradual disappearance of the traditional ideals of rural life, deeply rooted in religion, which had formerly characterized women's labour in Haiti. It was essential to combine the movement from the country to the towns with greater achievement and not to allow basic values to disintegrate.

Since she had become concerned with educational matters, she had had to deal with many groups of women who wished to exercise professions but were prevented by economic considerations from obtaining the necessary training. Those difficulties applied also to women seeking a simple college education. She hoped that the ILO and UNESCO would pay special attention to that obstacle to the wider education of women.

Miss MISTRAL (Chile) agreed with the Haitian representative that the economic factor represented the most serious obstacle to education in many countries. The most intelligent students were frequently prevented from completing courses by lack of material resources. Democracies needed to make full use of the intelligence of their citizens and action must be taken urgently to eliminate the economic obstacle to such full utilization.

Miss KAHN (World Federation of Trade Unions) stated that her organization's primary concern was the implementation of the right of every person, without any distinction whatsoever, to obtain a full education. It was equally committed to fighting for the right of women to equal educational opportunities with men. The reports of United Nations organs, the ILO and UNESCO showed that the progress being made was still too slow. The UNESCO report (E/CN.6/273) in particular gave a tragic picture of the discrimination

practised against girls and women in educational matters. She regretted, however, that the Secretariat's reports on the status of women in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories did not give an adequate indication of the double discrimination against indigenous girls and women in those territories.

A structure of vocational education could be built only on a foundation of sound general education and discrimination on the basis of segregated and inferior schooling such as existed in Southern states of the United States relegated the victims of such discrimination to a low status in labour. The vocational education of women was a key aspect of the economic and political development of under-developed countries and was a necessary step in the improvement of social conditions throughout the world.

The limitation of educational opportunities for women particularly in highly developed capitalist countries was but a part of the general discrimination against women reflected in unequal pay and unfair working conditions. Women were employed in inferior positions because they were denied an opportunity of receiving training. That was the inevitable result of a social structure in which women's labour was regarded as cheap surplus labour and in which a limited number of occupations were usually open to women, such as nursing, teaching, subordinate clerical work and service occupations, or work in the textile and clothing industries and domestic and other service. The trade unions had struggled for decades against that system, which pitted the cheap labour of women against that of men in an effort to undermine all wage structures. The interaction of employers on governments served to perpetuate a situation in which governments did not make available to women the training to enable them to compete for jobs on an equal basis with men.

The WFTU shared the French representative's concern about clauses in recommendation 34 of the UNESCO - IBE Conference which referred to women's traditional work and special skills. The Commission should avoid such formulation, since the problem of discrimination against women in education was economic, and not psychological. That fact was illustrated by a report

received by WFTU from its French affiliate, which stated that a high percentage of the women workers in the Paris region were employed in such industries as metallurgy, the chemical industry, woodworking, plastic manufacture and toy making, which were not normally regarded as occupations for women. Nevertheless, the report described a serious lack of facilities for training women to occupy skilled posts in the metal and other industries and stated that there was a shortage of free public schools for training typists and stenographers.

Many women had entered industry during the Second World War but had been discharged at the end of the war and replaced by all-round skilled male workers, with whom they could not compete because they had been trained on an emergency basis only. The displacement had created difficult economic situations for women who were obliged to go on working. In the United States, a member of the Congress had stated on 24 March, that there were three million women heads of families whose average wage was less than one-third of what the Government regarded as necessary for a minimum level of health and decency.

Her organization regretted that the ILO report of the problem was not yet available. The ILO representative's remarks on the relation between vocational training and equal pay and her reference to the suggestions of the textile industry committee on the training of women for highly skilled and supervisory jobs were most interesting. The ILO had drawn some pertinent conclusions in reports to its specialized bodies; it recognized that the reason for the increasing employment of women in certain salaried occupations was the fact that they were often paid less than men and it acknowledged the general inadequacy of training opportunities to be the chief barrier to women's advancement in sales work.

The WFTU had consistently fought for the uniform application to men and women of all legislation, regulations and practices relating to education, vocational training, apprenticeship and training allowances. Its views on the matter were shared by most other labour organizations.

The Commission should make specific recommendations to the Economic and Social Council to facilitate a campaign for the extension of educational

opportunities for women. She restated four basic premises for such recommendations: most women worked because they were forced to by economic insecurity and a deficient wage structure; the right of all women to work carried with it their right to appropriate training on an equal basis with men; the problem of women's education was part of the practice of economic discrimination against women and their exploitation as cheap labour; governments fostered that state of affairs by denying women equal educational opportunities without any discrimination.

WFTU hoped that the Commission would provide leadership for extending the vocational and general education of women by a forceful and practical statement, in which it would stress the urgency of the problem and the need for constant consultation with trade union and women's organizations.

Miss la LONDE (International Federation of Women Lawyers) said that in 1952 members of her organization had attended meetings with women lawyers at Tokyo and Bangkok. The meeting at Tokyo, held under the auspices of the Supreme Court of Japan, had dealt with divorce. The Japanese women had been particularly concerned with divorce by consent, which under existing Japanese law was obtained by registration rather than court action. As a result, Japanese women, particularly those with little education, frequently agreed to a divorce without grasping the significance of their action. Following the meeting her organization had been informed that steps were being taken to remedy the situation.

At the Bangkok meeting the subject of discussion had been the legal status of women. Communications received since from Thai women indicated that, inspired by those meetings, Thai women had taken action to bring the problem of their status to the Government's attention and that the Government had consequently decided to grant them equal political and legal rights with men.

Mrs. CARTER (International Council of Women) associated herself with the statement made by the representative of the International Federation of

University Women at the 137th meeting (E/CN.6/SR.137). Her organization appreciated the work done by UNESCO to increase educational opportunities for women and hoped that it would continue that work, particularly in the under-developed areas, where the problem of illiteracy was very serious. If women were to take their proper place in society, they must have access to all types of education and governments should be urged to make that possible.

Another problem was that of adequate teaching staffs. Unfavourable teaching conditions, low salaries and various discriminatory measures against women teachers - in some countries women teachers were not allowed to continue their profession if they married - had brought about a great shortage of teachers, which seriously impaired education. She hoped that the Commission would adopt a resolution urging governments to improve those conditions.

Miss ZIZZAMI (World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations) said that although her organization believed that women should have access to the same educational opportunities as men, it felt that an effort should also be made to develop those potentialities which were peculiarly feminine. While care must be taken not to exaggerate in a discriminatory sense the physiological and psychological differences between the sexes, it would be unrealistic not to recognize that such differences existed. In that connexion, she quoted a passage from the opening address of the Director-General of UNESCO to the XVth Conference on Public Education, in which he had expressed the same view.

The expression "education of equal value" was therefore preferable to "identity of education", which might be used to justify a restricted programme, particularly where the available funds were limited, as was frequently the case in under-developed areas.

In conclusion, she said that her organization would welcome a recommendation, which would ensure to all individuals, men and women, the freedom to pursue those studies which were most suited to their individual talents and interests.

Mrs. HYMER (International Federation of Business and Professional Women) stated that equal access to education, particularly professional and vocational education, was of special importance to her organization, which had warmly supported the excellent UNESCO and ILO studies on the subject. Unless women could secure the same training as men they could not take an equal place in the business and professional world.

Her organization had considered it a privilege to participate, at UNESCO's invitation, in the working party which had prepared topics for discussion by the XVth International Conference on Public Education and many of whose recommendations had later been adopted by the Conference. It had been encouraging to note that twenty-six of the fifty-two delegations attending the Conference had included women and that a woman had been elected Chairman.

At a meeting held the previous summer, her organization had affirmed that it was particularly concerned with discrimination against women in technical and medical education. The organization not only desired equal educational opportunities for women in those fields but deemed it necessary to educate the parents in the desirability of permitting girls to study the same subject as boys and thus prepare themselves for occupations and professions in which at present few women were engaged.

A national Federation which was a member of her organization had proposed that a study should be made to determine to what extent the incorrect assumption that women's intellectual contribution to society was different from men's was a factor in preventing women from enjoying full educational opportunities and to explore the possibility of setting up community projects offering adult vocational training to women.

The gift-coupon plan sponsored by UNESCO had been recommended by her organization and supported by a number of member Federations, including the United States branch, which had chosen the Women's University in the Philippines as its beneficiary. The Canadian branch had supplemented the work of secondary schools and universities in offering vocational guidance and

placement services. Member Federations had also been offering scholarships, fellowships and local educational grants and loans to women students.

Her organization had published a complete report on the XVth International Conference on Public Education as a basis for continuing work in that important field and it hoped that the Commission would recommend that UNESCO and the ILO should continue to co-operate in that work.

Miss MISTRAL (Chile) stressed the injustice of the unequal wages paid to male and female workers, particularly domestic servants, for the same work. While underpaid men workers usually fought for higher wages, women workers suffered the iniquity of their position in silence. It was a serious problem, which was often overlooked, and she hoped that the Commission would take action to help those victims of social and economic injustice.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to discuss the three draft resolutions on the item (E/CN.6/L.101, E/CN.6/L.108 and E/CN.6/L.109).

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) said that the purpose of her draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.101) was to determine whether governments awarded the same number of scholarships and study grants to men and women. The inquiry did not affect the scholarships awarded by private institutions which the Commission was not qualified to approach.

Mrs. WARDE (United Kingdom) said that, to avoid any misunderstanding, the words "scholarships and" should be inserted before the word "fellowships" in the French draft resolution.

Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER (Secretary of the Commission) said that, since the draft resolution submitted by Haiti and the United States (E/CN.6/L.109) called for action by governments, it should be put in the form of an Economic and Social Council resolution.

In reply to a question by Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mrs. LEFACHEUX (France) said that the French draft resolution (E/CN.6/L.101) did not concern the size of the respective scholarships and fellowships but only their numbers. It was only when governments had complied with the request in the resolution that the Commission would know whether or not more scholarships were given to men than to women.

Mrs. WARDE (United Kingdom) thought that figures for only one year would not give a fair picture of the situation, since in any one year boys and girls might apply for scholarships in very unequal numbers.

Miss MANAS (Cuba), speaking on the draft resolution submitted jointly by the Cuban and French delegations (E/CN.6/L.108), said that the text was extremely simple and should be generally acceptable. It asked that school curricula, with one minor exception, should be the same for pupils of both sexes, in order to afford both sexes equal access to education.

Miss PELETIER (Netherlands) agreed that the text was short and clear; unfortunately, however, she would be unable to vote for it as it stood. She hoped that the sponsors would change the wording so as to avoid giving the impression that the Commission subscribed to the outworn idea that the personality of boys and girls should be cast in the same mould. Modern educators recognized the difference between the sexes while agreeing that both should be given every opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest extent, an attitude which had been reaffirmed by the XVth International Conference on Public Education.

Mrs. SANCHEZ de URDANETA (Venezuela) agreed with that view. In her country, there were many secondary schools for girls, teaching them to become nurses, social workers etc., and special trade and industrial schools for boys.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) replied that the joint draft resolution did not touch on the question of co-educational schools, but simply advocated that the same curricula should be open to both sexes.

In reply to the Netherlands representative, she said that the Commission owed it to itself to take a firm stand against the deplorable attitude of the XVth International Conference on Public Education. As she had pointed out at an earlier meeting, it was shocking that in the year 1952 an international conference of public educators should consider that boys and girls had different scholastic aptitudes, an expression of opinion which would leave the door wide open to reactionary measures. The Commission must take action to counteract that view, for it was plain that no one else would do so. She therefore hoped that members would be allowed time to give serious thought to the joint draft resolution before voting on it.

Miss TSENG (China) was inclined to agree with the Netherlands representative; certainly boys and girls should not be required to follow the same physical training or home-making courses. She therefore proposed the addition, at the end of the joint draft resolution, of the words "physical training and home economics".

Begun ANWAR AHMED (Pakistan) also shared the Netherlands representative's view. While she agreed with the spirit of the joint draft resolution, she did not think that complete identity of curricula was desirable, since at some stage girls should be taught child care and domestic science.

Mrs. HAHN (United States of America) suggested that the point might be met by replacing the phrase "the identity of school curricula for pupils of both sexes" by "that curriculum choices shall be open to all pupils, without distinction as to sex".

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the three draft resolutions under discussion should be referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN further proposed that, since no resolution had been submitted on item 9 (d) - vocational guidance and training - the Commission's desire that both the ILO and the Secretary-General should continue to submit to it their reports on that important subject should be recorded in the Commission's report.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.