

## COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Thursday, 20 February 1947, at 2:30 p.m.

## Present:

Chairman: Mrs. Begtrup (Denmark)

Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Street (Australia)

Rapporteur: Mrs. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Members:

Mrs. New	(China)
Mrs. de Echeverria	(Costa Rica)
Mrs. Lefauchaux	(France)
Miss Basterrechea	(Guatemala)
Mrs. Hamid Ali	(India)
Mrs. de Castillo Ledon	(Mexico)
Mrs. Cosma	(Syria)
Mrs. Popova	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Miss Sutherland	(United Kingdom)
Miss Kenyon	(United States of America)
Mrs. Urdaneta	(Venezuela)

## Representative of Specialized Agency:

Mrs. Rowe (ILO)

## Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss Sender (AF of L)  
Miss L. Spiegel (WFTU)

## Secretariat:

Mrs. Lawson

Miss Bowerman

(Secretary of the Commission)

The CHAIRMAN welcomed Mr. Jerzy Szapiro, Chief of the External Services Section of the Department of Public Information, who had come to give the Commission some details concerning the dissemination of United Nations information throughout the world.

Mr. SZAPIRO (Secretariat) stated that he was asked to make apologies on behalf of the Director of the Department of Public Information, who could not attend owing to illness.

/He proceeded

He proceeded to explain that he could not speak on the subject of sending information to member governments, as not the concern of the Department, the function of which was to keep the general public informed as to the activities of United Nations and the specialized agencies.

For that work, the Department was organized to utilize all the modern media of information. Press releases were ready within an hour of the close of meetings, and were sent by cable and by means of the various press agencies to the different countries. Radio talks on the United Nations were broadcast daily in four languages, and the manuscripts of the talks sent to Europe for wider distribution. Among other publications, a Weekly Bulletin giving detailed information about the activities of United Nations was issued and widely distributed, and the Publications Division was working on various popular brochures explaining the work of the different Commissions. The Department also maintained close contact with the various non-governmental organizations which were interested in the activities of United Nations.

The Department was also organizing a network of Information Centres which was growing larger every month. Such centres were already established in London, Washington, Copenhagen, Geneva, Paris and New Delhi, and centres in Rio de Janeiro, Mexico, Cairo, Moscow and the Far East were envisaged for 1947. There would eventually be a representative of the Department in every Member Nations.

The Visual Information Section had already produced many interesting posters in five languages, and would publish many more if resources permitted. A film strip had been produced which constituted in effect an illustrated popular lecture on the work of United Nations. The aim of the Department, in fact, was to present information in the most attractive way possible, to bring to the general public some picture of the day to day work of United Nations.

/The Department

The Department worked in close co-operation with the Division of Human Rights and had given wide publicity to the resolution of the General Assembly establishing the Commission on the Status of Women. In fact, a resume of the work of the General Assembly which included that resolution had been translated into Arabic and had been circulated in many countries of the Middle East.

In conclusion, Mr. Szapiro appealed to the members of the Commission to bring the various Information Centres to the notice of the women's organizations, so that they would be able to obtain full information concerning the work of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Szapiro for his interesting statement, and added her conviction that the success of the work of the Commission depended upon the arousing of public interest in the questions before it.

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) asked Mr. Szapiro for further details with regard to the document concerning the Commission on Status of Women which had been translated into Arabic.

Mr. SZAPIRO explained that there was as yet no information Centre in Syria and the Department could not be responsible therefore for publication in the Press. A member of the Department was on the way to Syria and Egypt to establish channels for the regular supply of material.

Upon being asked by the Chairman when the Draft Report would be ready, Mrs. URALOVA (Rapporteur) answered that as she understood that the Secretariat required a full day for translations, the Report would not be available for discussion by the Commission until next Tuesday morning.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) regretted that she would not be able to take part in discussion of the Draft Report, as she had to leave for France on Tuesday morning. She suggested, however, that if the English version were ready on Saturday, she could arrange with the French Embassy for it to be translated by Monday.

It was agreed, therefore, that the Commission should meet at 11 a.m. on Monday to discuss the Rapporteur's report.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN proposed an amendment to the joint addition made by the representatives from Byelorussia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Preamble, to substitute the words "elimination of the fascist ideology" for "elimination of the remnants of Fascism, the uprooting of the fascist ideology...", and Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) supported the amendment.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) proposed the substitution in the same paragraph of the word "world" for "allies", since several Members of United Nations had not been allies.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) could not accept the amendment proposed by the representative from Denmark. The phraseology that she had chosen in collaboration with the representative from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was the exact phraseology used in both the First and Second Session of the General Assembly.

Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) said that she would support that phraseology now that she knew it was that used in the General Assembly.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the amendment of the representative from Denmark, since she considered it made for clarity and brevity.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) stressed that every woman who understood the problems before them would be in agreement as to the elimination of Fascist ideology, and since the Commission only had to lay down as a principle that it was opposed to Fascism, she favoured the wording proposed by the representative from Denmark as being more simple and less redundant.

Upon the request of Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) a roll-call on the paragraph as amended by the representative from Denmark was taken.

For:

Australia  
China  
Costa Rica  
Guatemala  
Denmark  
India  
Mexico  
Syria  
United Kingdom  
United States of America

Against:

France  
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics  
Venezuela

DECISION: The amendment of the representative from Denmark was adopted by 10 votes to 4.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said that she assumed her proposal of the word "world" in place of "allies" had been accepted in the above, and that was agreed.

She now proposed that the joint addition of the representatives of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the next paragraph, "irrespective of their nationality and race" should be re-worded in the language of the Charter, and should read "irrespective of race, language or religion".

That proposal being accepted by the authors of the addition, a vote was taken upon the whole paragraph as amended.

DECISION: The paragraph as amended was adopted unanimously.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) proposed that the same phrase "irrespective of their nationality and race" in the next paragraph I, Policy, should be amended as above.

She proceeded to suggest that in the following Points A, B, C, and D, dealing with equal political, civil, social and economical, and educational rights for women, the Commission should confine itself to a general statement regarding its aims in those four fields. As it stood, the subject was not nearly exhausted by the headings given. The Preamble had already been agreed upon; she proposed to follow it with a general statement regarding the fourfold aims of the Commission, concluding with the two closing paragraphs on Page 5. Thus the field would be completely covered, without the danger of important omissions.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) objected strongly to the proposal, which was moreover not altogether clear to her. The Commission had decided upon a certain form of procedure, to examine and vote upon additions and subtractions point by point, and the suggestion of a general statement would only waste the valuable and limited time of the Commission.

/Mrs. HAMID ALI (India)

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) agreed with Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) that the Commission should follow the approved procedure and continue discussion point by point. She pointed out that it was indeed India which had proposed the addition of the word "adult" in Section I A (1).

Miss KENYON (United States of America) asserted that she intended no change in procedure. She was merely suggesting that certain phraseology should be substituted for the existing terms.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) supported Miss Kenyon's suggestion that policy should be stated in the form of general principles under four headings (Section I). By entering into detail, members would be discussing the programme rather than the aims of the Commission.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) stated that the Commission should follow the agreed procedure of voting on the additions in the order presented by the Secretariat.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) had hoped that her suggestion would save time, but, as the suggestion did not appear acceptable, she would have to move many amendments in the course of the discussion.

She pointed out that the proposed addendum "Irrespective of their nationality and race" was already covered by the Preamble.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) objected that the addendum made for greater clarity.

The CHAIRMAN put the addendum to the vote.

DECISION: The addendum proposed by the members from India and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was adopted by 10 votes to 1 with 3 abstentions.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt that the two recommendations included in the addendum proposed by the member from India at the end of Section I, A should come more appropriately under the heading of programme.

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) agreed with Miss Kenyon.

/Miss KENYON (United States of America)

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said that Section I, B was an illustration of her previous observation. Many aspects of civil rights were not covered by the existing text. The questionnaire included many subjects omitted in the present text, for example, in addition to laws concerning entry into marriage, there were many others concerning marital status and inheritance. Again there were many other aspects of property relations which were omitted.

Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) suggested that Miss Kenyon might elaborate the existing list and make it as complete as possible.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) agreed that an impression of superficiality must be avoided. She could help Miss Kenyon in her compilation by giving her a document containing numerous details concerning the duties of parents, illegitimacy, domiciles, etc.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a general statement might be made covering the items of the questionnaire.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) remarked that it was difficult to make an adequate statement which would be sufficiently brief. It would be simpler to make a general statement of principle and amplify the principle at a later meeting.

The paragraph on codification, suggested as an addendum by the member from India, came into the category of programme rather than of aims. At the present juncture that paragraph might be summarized as "full civil rights for women".

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, as the Commission was not at present attempting to evolve an exhaustive programme, the basic facts as given would suffice.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested a compromise heading: "Full equality and all civil rights, including, among others, marriage, guardianship, nationality, legal capacity and domiciles".

She informed the member from India that inheritance was covered by legal capacity.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that in each country there was a certain number of national groups. There were over one hundred in the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) further explained that the phrase envisaged citizens of a country irrespective of nationality.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the question of terminology would be left to the Secretariat in consultation with Mrs. Popova and Mrs. Uralova.

The meeting rose at 5:05 p.m.