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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

THIRD SESSION

MASTER FILE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Beirut, Lebanon,
on Tuesday, 29 March 1949 at 2:30 p.m.

CONTENTS:

1. Equal pay for equal work for men and women workers:
consideration of resolutions.

Present:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mrs. Marie Helene Lefaucheur	France
<u>Members:</u>	Mrs. Elsie Frances Byth	Australia
	Dr. Cecelia Sieu-Ling Zung	China
	Mrs. Bodil Begtrup	Denmark
	Mrs. Lina P. Tsaldaris	Greece
	Mrs. Fortuna Andre Guery	Haiti
	Mrs. Lakshmi Nandan Menon	India
	Mrs. Amalia C. de Castillo Ledon	Mexico
	Mrs. Salma Haffar Kouzbary	Syria
	Mrs. Mihri Pektas	Turkey
	Miss Mary Sutherland	United Kingdom
	Mrs. Elizieveta Popova	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Miss Dorothy Kenyon	United States of America
	Mrs. Isabel de Urdaneta	Venezuela

Representatives from Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. Mildred Fairchild-Woodbury	International Labour Organization
Miss Jeanne H. Chaton	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Representatives from Inter-Governmental Organizations:

Miss Minerva Bernardino	Inter-American Commission of Women
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Consultants from Non-Governmental Organizations:

Madame Marie Couette	World Federation of Trade Unions
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Secretariat:

Mrs. Amanda Labarca

Chief of the
Section on the
Status of Women

Mr. Edward Lawson

Secretary

Mrs. Claude Day

1. PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK FOR MEN AND WOMEN WORKERS
(Document E/CN.6/87: item 9 of the agenda)

Draft resolution submitted by the United States Representative
(E/CN.6/103)

Paragraph 1

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed rejection of the paragraph on the grounds that it consisted only of references to documentation of a non-binding character.

Paragraph 1 of the United States resolution was adopted by 10 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 2

Miss KENYON (United States of America) noted a typographical error in the English text, and moved that the words "a resume of the discussion which took place" be deleted, and replaced by "plans for its discussion."

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) moved rejection of the text, which was contrary to facts. Other reports, besides that of the International Labour Organization, had been presented orally or in writing to the Commission.

Mrs. de URDANETA (Venezuela) proposed the insertion in paragraph 2 of an additional clause: "Having heard the Representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions and desiring to be informed of the work of this organization in the future."

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) felt it would be unfair to list one non-governmental organization to the exclusion of others. Certain members of the Commission had found serious mis-statements about their countries in documentation circulated by the World Federation of Trade Unions, to which it would be inappropriate to refer in paragraph 2.

/Miss KENYON

Miss KENYON (United States of America) stressed that the report of the International Labour Organization had been presented under a particular item of the agenda.

Dr. ZUNG (China) said that the words "presented by its Representative" were redundant and should be deleted.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that the study of equal pay for equal work fell within the competence of the Commission and should not be relegated to any other body. Reference to any organization should be omitted.

The amendment proposed by the Representative of Venezuela was rejected by 8 votes to 3 with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 2 of the United States resolution, with the drafting amendment proposed, was adopted by 8 votes to 1 with 5 abstentions.

Paragraph 3

Miss KENYON (United States of America) proposed that the first paragraph of the resolution submitted by the Representative of China (E/CN.6/104) should be included in the single text to be submitted for approval by the Commission, to replace paragraph 3 of the United States of America proposal.

Paragraph 1 of the Chinese resolution was adopted by 11 votes to none with 2 abstentions.

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 4 of the United States resolution, with the insertion of the word "that" before "the International Labour Organization", was adopted by 11 votes to none with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 5 was deleted.

Paragraph 6 was adopted by 12 votes to none with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 7 was adopted by 12 votes to none with 1 abstention.

The United States resolution, as amended above, was adopted by 12 votes to none with 1 abstention.

Draft resolution submitted by the Chinese Representative
(document E/CN.6/104)

Paragraph 1 was adopted without discussion.

Paragraph 2 was adopted by 11 votes to 1 with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 3

Miss KENYON (United States of America) formally moved that

/paragraph 3,

paragraph 3, including sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) should be linked with the preceding paragraph. It was premature to recommend that the Economic and Social Council ask governments to consider certain aspects of the problem, which were already being studied by the International Labour Organization as part of the problem as a whole.

Dr. ZUNG (China), emphasizing the necessity for some start to be made in regard to certain aspects of the problem, said that paragraph 3 should remain unchanged, and in no circumstances should it appear in the preamble.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) suggested as a compromise solution the following text to replace paragraph 3: "Draws the attention of the International Labour Organization to the following matters which, in the opinion of the Commission on the Status of Women, should be included in its study of the question of equal pay for equal work."; Minor drafting modifications would be necessary in the enumeration of sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d). Such phraseology would encourage and assist the International Labour Organization in giving the fullest consideration to the whole question.

Miss ZUNG (China) agreed with the United Kingdom amendment on the understanding that it should be included in the operative clauses. Criticisms had been levelled at the Commission because nothing concrete had been achieved, and it was for those reasons that she wished for the inclusion of well-defined recommendations.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) entirely agreed with the point of view expressed by Dr. Zung in regard to the need for precise recommendations.

Mrs. MENON (India) wondered whether the Representative of China had fully realized the implications of the United Kingdom amendment, since her original text had requested the Economic and Social Council to make recommendations to the Member States, which implied direct incentive to implement the principle of equal pay. The United Kingdom amendment, on the other hand, directed the whole of the question back to the International Labour Organization for an enquiry, which would take considerable time; in the meantime the Member States would not be obliged to take any action. That was a

regressive step and she preferred the original Chinese text.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) had hoped that, following the request of the Representative of the International Labour Organization for the views of the Commission on the scope of the enquiry, the Commission would assist that body by suggesting a number of precise points for study. The Chinese resolution made no definite suggestions to the International Labour Organization.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the remarks of the Representative of India, and wished to know what was retained of the original Chinese text.

Dr. ZUNG (China) said that the United Kingdom amendment was an improvement on her own proposal. The Commission should not only adopt the principle, but should take action towards its implementation. The International Labour Organization was the body most competent to solve the problems involved.

Mrs. MENON (India) suggested a compromise solution. The opening clause drafted by Miss Sutherland could be inserted as a separate paragraph, with the addition of "and" before paragraph 3 of the Chinese resolution, to include sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d).

A vote by show of hands was taken and it was decided, by 7 votes to 4, with 3 abstentions, to include both the Chinese and the United Kingdom proposals in the final resolution.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt it was useless to recommend these points for study to the International Labour Organization if the Commission was prepared, before that study could be made, to recommend that governments put them into effect.

Mrs. BYTH (Australia), supported by the CHAIRMAN, saw no objection to taking both courses at the same time. Governments were traditionally slow in putting resolutions into effect. It was, therefore, wise to draw their attention to the matter now, so that they would be ready to take action in 1951 when the International Labour Organization had drawn up the convention.

/Miss SUTHERLAND

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) had not voted for the Indian amendment for the same reason as the United States Representative. In the last year or two the Commission had passed resolutions requesting the Economic and Social Council to recommend that States Members take action on questions which the Commission had not studied. The Economic and Social Council had had to shelve those resolutions and she felt the Commission ought not to continue that practice.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the text of the joint Chinese-United Kingdom proposal reading as follows:

"Draws the attention of the International Labour Organization to the following matters which, in the opinion of the Commission, should be included in its study of equal pay for equal work; and
"Requests the Economic and Social Council to recommend to the States Members of the United Nations the":

The text, with minor drafting modifications, was adopted by 12 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.

The Commission proceeded to consider sub-paragraphs (a) - (d) ad seriatim.

Sub-paragraph (a) was adopted by 11 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.

Sub-paragraph (b) was adopted by 11 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

Sub-paragraph (c)

A lengthy exchange of views took place on the proposal of Miss KENYON (United States of America) to amend the text to read as follows: "Abolition of the legal or customary restrictions, if any, relating to the salary of women workers". Several members pointed out the need for careful consideration of the text, in order that favourable restrictions should not be included, namely those covered by the convention on underground work in mines, and so forth.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said the whole discussion on sub-paragraph (c) illustrated her view that it was premature to make recommendations concerning matters which obviously required lengthy study. The question of what was favourable or unfavourable to women was an extremely debatable point, and it was precisely on such points that the help of the International Labour Organization was required. That was the reason why she had suggested limiting sub-paragraph (c) to restrictions on pay, but it might be preferable either to eliminate the whole point or to refer it to the International Labour Organization for study.

/Mrs. POPOVA

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), while in agreement in regard to the request that the Economic and Social Council should recommend all the items to States Members, was opposed to any reference to study by the International Labour Organization.

The following text of sub-paragraph (c) was adopted by 8 votes to none, with 6 abstentions: "The abolition of legal and customary restrictions if any, relating to the remuneration of women workers".

Sub-paragraph (d)

Mrs. PEKTAS (Turkey) was doubtful about the inclusion of the two distinct questions of "burdens of home responsibilities" and "maternity" in the same sub-paragraph.

Mrs. FAIRCHILD-WOODBURY (International Labour Organization) suggested that "lighten the tasks that arise from home responsibilities" might be more appropriate.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt that the wording was too loose for submission to governments. The matter should be referred to the International Labour Organization for study and well-defined recommendations.

Sub-paragraph (d) was adopted by 11 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions, on the understanding that the necessary drafting modifications would be made in the final text.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom), wondered whether it would not be advisable to alter the sequence of the whole of the operative part of the resolution, since it was desirable to refer all the points to the International Labour Organization, whereas some of the members were reluctant to recommend them all to States Members at this stage. Request for a new vote on Indian amendment to Paragraph 3 of Chinese Resolution.

Mrs. BYTH (Australia), enquired whether she could ask for a new vote to be taken on the question of requesting the Economic and Social Council to recommend points (a) - (d) to governments, as she wished to withdraw her vote in favour of that proposal.

The CHAIRMAN said the Commission's Rules of Procedure did not provide for such an eventuality. The Commission must, therefore,

follow the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly which laid down that a decision to reopen a discussion of a subject on which a vote had already been taken must be voted by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

A decision to review the decision taken on the Indian amendment would not necessarily apply to all the sub-paragraphs. If necessary, the Commission could consider in respect of each sub-paragraph whether to stand by the original vote.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was opposed to re-opening the discussion on the Indian amendment.

Mrs. MENON (India) was opposed to reconsideration of the decision taken. Many of the recommendations contained in the sub-paragraphs had already been made to governments and many of the types of discrimination which had been mentioned in the statements made during the general discussion were well-known all over the world. She had no objection to referring the questions to the International Labour Organization, but she was anxious that something practical should be done urgently so that the world would see that the Commission had definite recommendations to make to governments and was not talking on general terms.

The Australian proposal was rejected, 6 votes being recorded in favour and 6 against.

A vote was taken and the Chinese resolution, as amended, was adopted by 7 votes to 4, with 3 abstentions.

It was agreed by 11 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions that Mrs. Pektas (Turkey), Rapporteur, should, in consultation with the Secretariat, be responsible for arranging the final text.

The Commission rose at 6:45 p.m.