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12 February 1947

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN  
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETINGHeld at Lake Success, New York, on Tuesday  
11 February 1947, at 2:30 p.m.

## Present:

Chairman: Mrs. B. Begtrup (Denmark)  
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. J. Street (Australia)  
Rapporteur: Mrs. E. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)  
Members: Mrs. W. S. New (China)  
Miss S. Basterrechez (Guatemala)  
Mrs. Hamid Ali (India)  
Miss M. Sutherland (United Kingdom)  
Miss D. Kenyon (United States of America)  
Mrs. E. A. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

## Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. E. Rowe (International Labour Organization)  
Miss J. Maass (UNESCO)

## Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss L. Spiegel (World Federation of Trade Unions)  
Miss T. Sender (American Federation of Labor)  
Mrs. H. Fuhrmann (International Co-operative Alliance)

Secretariat: Mr. E. Lawson  
Miss E. Bowerman (Secretary of the Commission)

1. Consideration of Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda (Relations with Non-Governmental Organizations and Arrangements for Hearing their Views).

The CHAIRMAN called the Commission's attention to page 4, paragraph 8, of the document entitled "Memorandum on Relations with Non-Governmental Organizations and Arrangements for Hearing their Views" (document E/CN.6/3), which stated that the question of relations with non-governmental organizations was still under consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

/She suggested

She suggested that the Commission should take note of the arrangements for consultation already made by the Council and should welcome the representatives of the World Federation of Trade Unions, the American Federation of Labor, and the International Co-operative Alliance, but that it should postpone further discussion of the question until its next session, by which time the Council would have reached definite decisions on the subject.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the Chairman's suggestion,

Mrs. STREET (Australia), stressing the importance of finding a way to implement all decisions taken by the Commission and the Economic and Social Council that were of particular importance for women, felt that there was a need in each country for a co-ordinating agency of all national organizations, whether they were composed of men or women, that were in any way concerned with the status of women. Such an agency would be a national organization and would in no way duplicate the important work done by international bodies like the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations. Its primary purpose would be to bring to the attention of local and national governments the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council regarding the status of women; it would also be a centre for the collection of all important information in the field.

Mrs. STREET thought that a statement from the Council that it would grant consultative status to such co-ordinating agencies would serve as an impetus to the establishment of agencies in various countries.

She proposed that the Commission should adopt the following recommendation:

"Whereas

Article 71 of the United Nations Charter authorizes the Economic and Social Council to consult with the appropriate non-governmental organizations and

"Whereas

the Commission on the Status of Women believes that the implementation of their decisions would be assisted by the co-operation of local national bodies;

"The Commission on the Status of Women

"Recommends that the Economic and Social Council should give consultative status to a co-ordinating agency representing non-governmental organizations which may be established in each Member State and to which any organization working on problems relating to the status of women would be entitled to belong."

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN suggested that discussion of Mrs. Street's proposal should be postponed until the following meeting, so that the members would have time to consider it thoroughly in writing.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), recalling the important part that women had played in the fight against fascism, felt that women were particularly qualified to aid in the maintenance of that unity among nations which alone could preserve the peace. In that connection, the Women's International Democratic Federation was an outstanding organization composed of National Federations of Women in fifty-six countries, and having 81,000,000 members. Its aims were to end fascism, to promote democracy, to further the rights of women in all countries of the world, to promote measures to protect the health and legal status of children, and to work for educational and cultural advancement.

Mrs. URALOVA proposed that the Commission should recommend to the Economic and Social Council that in view of the importance of the Women's International Democratic Federation and of the fact that its aims were so closely connected with the interests of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Council should grant the organization consultative status in category A, and should invite it to send a consultant to meetings of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN agreed with Mrs. Uralova's suggestion, but she proposed that the recommendation to the Council should include the Liaison Committee on Women's International Organizations, a body whose activities were well-known and were of great importance for women.

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) suggested including also the All-India Women's Conference, an organization which for twenty-five years had worked to raise the status of women.

The CHAIRMAN observed that consultative status in category A was given only to the most important international organizations. She thought that consideration of a national organization might be discussed later in connection with Mrs. Street's proposal.

Mrs. NEW (China) pointed out the great value to the Commission of both national and international non-governmental organizations.

In reply to a question by Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) Mrs. STREET (Australia) explained that her proposal did not touch upon existing organizations. It referred to national bodies only and was quite different from the Byelorussian proposal.

She wondered whether, in view of the numerous applications from women's organizations, the Commission might not have a representative on the Council's Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the Committee was composed of members of the Council and that it would therefore be difficult to ask for representation on it. The Commission could, however, bring related matters to the Council's attention.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) felt that it was not within the Commission's scope to influence the Committee's deliberations; nor could the Commission recommend the admission of any particular organization to consultative status.

According to the Council's decision, organizations eligible for category A were:

- (a) "organizations which have a basic interest in most of the activities of the Council, and are closely linked with the economic or social life of the areas which they represent;"

The Commission on the Status of Women was only concerned with a part of the Council's activities. Consequently, it would be for the Council to decide whether the Women's International Democratic Organization was eligible for consultative status.

The CHAIRMAN said that any proposal could be discussed, regardless of the final decision.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), quoting Article 71

of the Charter, stated that it was within the Commission's competence to discuss such questions and to make recommendations with regard to particular organizations. The Women's International Democratic Federation had served the Allied cause during the war. Why should women, after having participated heroically in the war, refrain from considering questions of peace? The principle of the question should be discussed.

Mrs. STREET (Australia), in drawing the Commission's attention to document E/CN.6/3, paragraph 2, suggested that the Commission might state that, after definite arrangements for consultation had been completed by the Council, the Commission wished to be consulted on the applications of women's organizations.

In reply to Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom), the CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Commission should make recommendations while applications were being considered by the Council.

She suggested that the Commission should first discuss the principle of supporting applications by recommendations to the Council and then consider separately the two Australian proposals and the Byelorussian proposal, together with the Chairman's amendment.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) felt that the Commission had the right to discuss the question of recommending the admission of the Women's International Democratic Federation under category A. She would reserve her opinion with regard to the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations, until further study of that organization.

The CHAIRMAN then turned to consideration of Item 13 on the provisional agenda.

Mr. LAWSON (Secretariat) read document E/CN.6/6 (page 3, paragraph 4) and concluded that co-ordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies would be effected through consultation by the Secretary-General with the heads of the specialized agencies.

The CHAIRMAN observed that once a programme of work had been determined, the Commission could request that specialized agencies help carry out that programme.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) stressed the importance of receiving information on the activities of specialized agencies in the field of the Commission's competence. She favoured closest relationship with specialized agencies. It was important, for instance, that the Commission should know what the International Labour Organization had been doing in related fields. The Commission could not make practical suggestions to the specialized agencies, however, until it had reached a decision on other items on the agenda.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), recalling that the Economic and Social Council had decided that relationships with specialized agencies would be based on agreements to be made, and felt that the Commission had to accept the Council's decision on the matter.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the question as to how the Commission could best avail itself of the services of the specialized agencies would be decided later.

It was agreed that the Commission should take note of the agreements made between the United Nations and the specialized agencies and the facilities provided in them for consultation and co-operation between these agencies and the Commissions of the United Nations.

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