

MASTER FILE

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Beirut, Lebanon, on Monday, 21 March 1949, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mrs. Marie Helene LEFAUCHEUX	(France)
	Mrs. Elsie Frances Byth	(Australia)
	Miss Cecelia Sieu-Ling Zung	(China)
	Mrs. Bodil Begtrup	(Denmark)
	Mrs. Lina P. Tsaldaris	(Greece)
	Mme. Fortuna Andre Guery	(Haiti)
	Mrs. Lakshmi Nandan Menon	(India)
	Mrs. Amalia C. de Castillo Ledon	(Mexico)
	Mrs. Adila Beyhoun El-Jazaeri	(Syria)
	Mrs. Mihri Pektas	(Turkey)
	Miss Mary Sutherland	(United Kingdom)
	Miss Dorothy Kenyon	(United States)
	Mrs. Isabel de Urdaneta	(Venezuela)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. Fairchild-Woodbury	(ILO)
Miss Chaton	(UNESCO)

Representative of Inter-Governmental Organization:

Miss Minerva Bernadino	(Inter-American Commission of Women)
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Consultant from Non-Governmental Organizations in Category A:

Madame Marie Couette	(WFTU)
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Secretariat: Mrs. Amanda Labarca	(Chief of the Section on the Status of Women)
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Mr. Edward Lawson	(Secretary)
Mrs. Claude Day	

## 1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), Chairman, declared the session open, and called upon His Excellency Monsieur Hamid Frangie to address the meeting.

H.E. Monsieur FRANGIE, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, expressed the pleasure of his Government in extending hospitality, not only to the Commission on the Status of Women, but to all other international organizations whose aim was to bring a larger measure of peace and justice to mankind. His Government was desirous of collaborating as far as possible towards the achievement of the aims of such organizations. As a result of the teachings of the Christian and Mohammedan religions, women in Lebanon had already acquired many of their fundamental rights, such as free access to schools, universities and the liberal professions; and were given every opportunity to affirm their personality and to consolidate their moral and material privileges. The Lebanese people, together with all peace-loving nations, would follow the work of the Commission with the deepest interest, in the firm hope that its efforts would contribute to the building-up of peace and the consolidation of progress.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), expressed the thanks of the Commission to the Lebanese Government for its generous invitation to hold the present session in Beirut, particularly in view of the special studies to be undertaken. The Commission would be called upon to examine general questions of interest to all countries and to Lebanon in particular. She referred to the important part played by the women of Lebanon in the past, stressing that in the Middle East women had certain opportunities in regard to status which would be studied with special interest; in particular, the right to administer their own properties.

Mrs. LABARCA (Chief of the United Nations Section on the Status of Women), thanked the Lebanese Government for its hospitality, and for the privilege of holding the present session in Beirut. She read the following text of a message from Mr. Trygve Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations:

"My compliments to the Commission on the Status of Women, and sincere wishes for the success of this important session in the Middle East.

"The world looks to you for leadership in making a reality of the principle contained in the Charter of the United Nations, that men and women shall have equal rights and opportunities.

"Here at Lake Success we have taken the lead in appointing women to top-ranking positions solely on the basis of merit. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations has recommended to all Member States that they grant women, whether married or unmarried, access on equal terms with men to posts in the public service at all

levels, including diplomatic, consular, legal and judicial office, and to all liberal and other professions; and that they consider women equally with men when appointing their delegations to organs and agencies of the United Nations and to international bodies and conferences.

"Significantly, in three Member States, Argentina, Chile and Venezuela, women won the right to vote in 1947 and 1948.

"Such heartening progress can only be achieved through the enlightenment of the people of nations where women do not possess equal rights and opportunities, and through the removal of their prejudices. This is a tremendous task. The Commission on the Status of Women will need world-wide co-operation and assistance.

"I therefore urgently call upon the world press, radio, film and other information agencies to help in removing such prejudices as have been proved to exist in respect to equality between men and women. I will gladly assist all such information agencies in these efforts to the fullest possible extent, and have directed that the Secretariat of the United Nations prepare suitable information material of all kinds for this purpose.

"May your constructive efforts to better the status of women throughout the world continue to merit the fullest international co-operation, and to lead to positive, tangible achievement in this field."

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

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