

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWELFTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Tuesday, 18 February 1947, at 11:00 a.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. Hanid Ali	(India)
	Mrs. 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)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. Rowe	(ILO)
Miss Maass	(UNESCO)

Consultant of Non-Governmental Organization:

Miss Spiegel	(WFTU)
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Secretariat:	Mr. Humphrey
	Mr. Lawson

Miss Bowerman	(Secretary of the Commission)
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Consideration of the Draft Resolution Concerning Item 8 of the Agenda (General Assembly Resolution on the Political Rights of Women) Submitted by the Committee Composed of the Members from China, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Proposed Addition Submitted by the Member from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN asked for a report on the work of the Sub-Committee appointed to draft a modification of the United Kingdom Resolution concerning the Political Rights of Women (document E/CN.6/16) and to incorporate into it other similar resolutions that had been presented.

Miss KENYON (United States of America), Chairman of the Sub-Committee, called attention to the draft resolution which the Sub-Committee had had circulated and to the proposed addition submitted by the member from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. She stated that there had been complete agreement in the Sub-Committee on all matters of substance contained in both papers, but that three of the members had felt that the proposed addition concerning economic rights should be a separate resolution, while the fourth member had wished to include it in the original draft resolution.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), referring to the fact that there were no French translations of the resolutions, said that she would ask her Government not to send a member to the Commission's following session unless there was assurance that documents in French, one of the working languages as agreed to in the Charter, would be readily available.

In reply to a point raised by the member from Australia, Miss KENYON (United States of America) explained that there had been no express intention to exclude the first three questions in the questionnaire sent out by the Secretariat to the various Member Governments, but that the Sub-Committee had been set up primarily to combine the ideas on educational rights contained in the resolutions proposed by the members from China, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) stated that she would ask later for a recommendation that the three questions in the paragraph of the questionnaire entitled "General" should be answered by the governments as quickly as possible.

The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the paragraphs of the draft resolution submitted by the members from China, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which reads

/as follows:

as follows:

The Commission takes note of the programme adopted by UNESCO in the field of basic education and RECOMMENDS

- (a) that the Secretary-General consult with UNESCO on plans for developing their programme of basic education without distinction as to sex, race or creed, and that he be invited to report to the next session of the Commission on its progress and any assistance which the Commission may be able to render;
- (b) that it be suggested to UNESCO that in their education programme they devote particular attention to those regions where women have as yet no voice in the political affairs of their country or to those regions where women have been granted the franchise but have not been granted full political rights; and further that they take steps to promote an effective programme of basic education for women and communicate with the Commission periodically on the progress of such a programme.
- (c) that the Secretary-General be asked to request Member States to reply without delay to the questions in Part I, Section D (Education) of the questionnaire on the Legal Status and Treatment of Women in order to provide the Commission with data which will enable early consideration to be given to actions which might be taken to advance the rights of women in the educational field.

DECISION: Paragraph (a) was adopted by a vote of 13 to 0; paragraph (b) and (c) were adopted unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN then asked for consideration of the proposed addition submitted by the member from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which reads as follows:

The Commission considers it necessary to request the Secretary-General to expedite the preparation of a questionnaire on the economic rights of women and circulate it to Member Governments

/with requests

with requests for answers in the shortest possible time.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), reminding the Commission of the general agreement that the answers to the questions concerning political rights of women should be requested from the governments first, felt that since economic rights were basic to the full enjoyment of political rights, the questions concerning economic rights were next in importance, and those dealing with educational rights should rank third. No report on the political status of women would be complete without facts showing also their economic and educational status.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested that the Commission should decide first whether the proposed addition should form a part of the resolution just adopted.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) pointed out that the proposed addition dealt with a questionnaire on economic rights of women that was not yet prepared. She agreed fully with the substance of the proposal, but she felt that it should not be included in a resolution that referred to answers to a questionnaire already submitted to Member Governments by the Secretariat.

Mrs. RCWE (ILO) stated that the International Labour Office was bringing up to date data on legislative measures affecting the economic status of women. Questionnaires on the subject had already been sent out to various governments.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) felt that both educational and economic rights were integral parts of political rights. It was therefore appropriate to include reference to both in a single resolution.

Miss MAASS (UNESCO) pointed out that UNESCO did not deal in any way with economic questions, and that the resolution concerning economic rights did not seem to belong with a resolution on co-operation with UNESCO in the educational field.

The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on whether the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposed addition should constitute a separate resolution.

/DECISION:

DECISION: The Commission decided by a vote of 7 to 3 (4 abstentions) that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addition concerning a questionnaire on the economic rights of women should form a separate resolution.

The CHAIRMAN then asked for discussion on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal as a whole.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) pointed out that in some countries, like

Australia, action aimed at economic equality for women was even more important than efforts for equal educational opportunities, since in Australia the latter had already been granted.

She suggested that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposal should be considered later, along with an Australian proposal concerning the rights of women workers and the economic rights of married women, which would be distributed shortly.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked that her resolution should be considered at the present time.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) moved an amendment to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics resolution. After the words "a questionnaire on the economic rights", there should be added "(a) of women workers, professional, commercial and industrial; (b) of married women, the right to earn wages, the right to share in property acquired after marriage and the right to a share of the family income". The resolution would then end, as suggested by the member from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with the words "and circulate it to Member Governments with requests for answers in the shortest possible time."

Mrs. UPALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), supported by the member from China, thought that although the Australian amendment contained valuable suggestions, it dealt with details which would be more appropriately included in the questionnaire.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) observed that if the detailed ideas suggested by the member from Australia were accepted, it would be

necessary to add a clause to ensure against duplication of the work done by ILO in the same field. She proposed therefore that, before the words "and circulate it", the following clause should be inserted: "supplementing it with information about to be received by the ILO so as to avoid duplication".

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) supported the substance of the Australian amendment, but thought that the words "economic rights of women" referred to both married and unmarried women and to all categories of labour. She suggested that after the words "economic rights of women", there should be the following addition: "also the right to work and to receive equal pay, rest, and social insurance benefits equal to those of men."

Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) suggested adding the words "paid by the Government" after the words "social insurance."

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) thought that most of the points raised by the member from Australia were covered by the ILO questionnaire.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) urged that specific reference should be made to the rights of married women to share in family income and in property acquired after marriage. The point was one of great importance to women, and had not been covered in any questionnaire prepared thus far by the Secretariat.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) agreed with the ideas expressed, but she thought it preferable to accept the resolution in its original form without going into any details.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) and Miss KENYON (United States of America) agreed to withdraw the amendments they had proposed, with the understanding that the members of the Commission should make suggestions regarding the questionnaire to the Secretariat, and that the Secretariat should be guided by the remarks made during the present discussion.

Mrs. ROWE (ILO) said that all of the details mentioned were included in the ILO questionnaire except the point concerning married women, which

/had been

had been paragraph (b) of the Australian amendment.

DECISION: The Commission unanimously adopted the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics resolution in its original form.

Consideration of Item 11 of the Agenda (Co-ordination with other Commissions).

The CHAIRMAN read paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, pages 2 and 3 of the document entitled "Co-ordination with other Commissions" (document E/CN.6/7), which suggested various means of informal co-ordination with other Commissions.

She thought that the Commission should decide on what points it had common interest with other Commissions, and she suggested a discussion of the co-ordination of work with the Human Rights Commission.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) said that a resolution, which would be distributed soon, dealt with the questions of protection of minorities and the struggle against discrimination, both of which concerned the Human Rights Commission.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) spoke of the particular interest of women in an International Bill of Rights, and proposed that the following communication should be sent to the Human Rights Commission:

"The Commission on the Status of Women notes that the Commission on Human Rights has appointed a Sub-Committee to draft an International Bill of Rights and requests (a) that the Commission on the Status of Women be represented on this Sub-Committee, and (b) that the draft of the International Bill of Rights be submitted for consideration to the Commission on the Status of Women."

Mrs. NEW (China) said that she had prepared a paper containing the same idea.

Mr. HUMPHREY (Secretariat) explained that the Commission on Human Rights had asked its Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur to prepare a preliminary draft of an International Bill of Rights which could be used as a basis for discussion at its next session. He thought it might be more appropriate for the Commission on the Status of Women to ask that a representative be

/allowed

allowed to participate in the meetings of the Human Rights Commission when the draft was under discussion.

Mr. HUMPHREY also pointed out the problem of timing, for if the Commission on Human Rights did not meet until after the next session of the present Commission, there might not be time for the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the International Bill of Rights before it was sent to the Economic and Social Council.

In reply to a question by the CHAIRMAN, he stated that he did not know whether it would be possible for the Commission on the Status of Women to get a copy of the preliminary draft before it was submitted to the Commission on Human Rights.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the Commission on the Status of Women should appoint a committee composed of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur to prepare a draft of points which the Commission wished the International Bill of Rights to contain.

Mr. HUMPHREY (Secretariat) thought that the Commission might make recommendations to the Commission on Human Rights on questions involving the status of women.

Miss SWITZERLAND (United Kingdom) felt that the Commission had no right to ask to be represented on a small committee appointed by another Commission. She could not agree either that the Commission should appoint a committee to draw up a special draft of women's rights, for there was no reason to think that the Commission on Human Rights would fail to realize that women's rights were a part of human rights.

She agreed with Mr. Humphrey's suggestion that the Commission should ask to send a representative to the Human Rights Commission to participate in the discussion on the International Bill of Rights.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the member from the United Kingdom, and thought that the Chairman should represent the Commission at the meetings of the Human Rights Commission.

In view of the explanations given by Mr. Humphrey, Mrs. STREET (Australia) made the following amended proposal: "The Commission on the Status of Women requests the Economic and Social Council to arrange that the Commission be represented by its officers at the meetings of the Human Rights Commission when the draft of the International Bill of Rights is considered."

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) and Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought that the Commission should not ask to be represented by more than one member.

The CHAIRMAN, Mrs. STREET (Australia), and Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the responsibility was too great for one person, for there would be need for consultation on the important questions that would arise.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) made a general suggestion about co-operation with other Commissions. After the Commission had decided with which other Commissions it had common interests, the work of co-ordination should be divided up, and each member of the Commission on the Status of Women should be assigned the task of keeping in touch with the work of a particular Commission.

Mrs. NEW (China) said that while the Commission should in no way interfere with the work of the drafting group of the Commission on Human Rights, it should be represented during that group's discussions. She believed that one member would be sufficient for such representation, and suggested that that Member should be the Chairman.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the Member from China.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) maintained her original proposal that the Commission should be represented by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, and the Rapporteur.

The CHAIRMAN moved that the Commission should request the drafting group of the Commission on Human Rights to circulate the draft of the International Bill of Rights among the Members of the present Commission at the same time that it was made available to the Members of the Commission on Human Rights.

/DECISION:

DECISION: The United Kingdom amendment, to the effect that the Commission should be represented by a single Member, was defeated by 10 to 4.

The Australian resolution, requesting the Economic and Social Council to arrange that the Commission should be represented by its officers at the Commission of Human Rights when the draft International Bill of Rights was being considered, was adopted by 9 to 0 (5 abstentions).

The Danish proposal with respect to the circulation of the draft International Bill of Rights among the Members of the Commission was adopted by 13 votes to 0.

Consideration of a Letter from the Women's International Democratic Federation.

The CHAIRMAN read a letter from the Women's International Democratic Federation, expressing the Federation's desire to co-operate with the Commission, and requesting permission for the Vice-President of the Federation to address the Commission at the afternoon meeting.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mrs. LEEFAUCHEUX (France) and Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) were in favour of permitting the representative of the Federation to address the Commission briefly.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) said that the Federation's request should, like other similar communications, be directed to the Sub-Committee on Communications. The Commission had decided that all requests for consultative status should be referred to the NGO Committee of the Economic and Social Council.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Commission might listen to a brief statement by the representative of the Federation, on the understanding that there would be no subsequent discussion of the matter.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that the statement of the Federation to which no time limit was necessary, should be not only heard but discussed. She stated that the Secretariat had failed to call to the attention of the Commission the fact that a number of letters from the

Federation had been received, and to transmit those letters to the Sub-Committee on Communications. She considered it an error on the part of the Secretariat which called for appropriate action by the Secretary-General.

Mr. HUMPHREY (Division of Human Rights) explained that he had mentioned to the Commission the fact that there might be such letters. Since the letters dealt with requests for consultative status, they had been directed to another department of the Secretariat. If the Commission wished, those letters could be produced. He pointed out that a list of 17 international organizations, including the Women's International Democratic Federation, had been brought to the attention of the Commission (page 3, document E/CN.6/3), as having applied for the right of consultation on questions concerning the status of women.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said that, in view of the Commission's recent decision to refer all applications concerning consultative status to the NGO Committee of the Economic and Social Council, the letter from the Federation should have been referred to that Committee. Should the Commission decide to hear the representative of the Federation, it should provide a similar opportunity for all other international women's organizations which had applied for consultative status. She suggested that the Commission might set aside a day on which it could listen to the representatives of those organizations.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the representative of the Federation could be heard at once, since material was available with respect to that organization. The Commission might listen to representatives of other organizations when sufficient material had accumulated.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) agreed with Mrs. Uralova. Referring to Mrs. Popova's criticism of the Secretariat, she pointed out that the letters from the Federation had undoubtedly been addressed to the NGO Committee of the Economic and Social Council, as had happened in the case of another

/organization

organization in which she was interested:

Replying to a question by Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France), Miss KENYON (United States of America) pointed out that a number of other international women's organizations had sent letters asking for consultative status and offering co-operation with the Commission. She felt that the Commission should adhere to its original decision to refer all requests for consultative status to the NGO Committee of the Economic and Social Council. If the Commission decided to hear the representative of one organization, it should hear the representatives of all other organizations in a similar situation.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) regretted that she had been absent when the decision with respect to the NGO Committee had been taken; she would have voted against it. She believed that the Commission should permit the representative of the Federation to speak for a limited time, and that the same permission should be extended to any other international women's organization which asked for it.

After a brief discussion, the United Kingdom amendment, to the effect that the letter from the Women's International Democratic Federation should be referred to the Sub-Committee on Communications, was put to the vote.

DECISION: The United Kingdom amendment was defeated by 7 votes to 3 (4 abstentions).

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) proposed the following amendment: "the representatives of all international women's organizations could be heard by the Commission, at their request".

Miss KENYON (United States of America) proposed that a special day should be set aside for the hearing, so that the Commission's work might not be disrupted, and that the fact that such a hearing had been decided upon should be made public.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) accepted the United States amendment to her own amendment.

/Mrs. URALOVA

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed an amendment to the effect that the Commission should decide on each application separately, when sufficient material was available. She was supported by Mrs. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

DECISION: The Mexican proposal, as amended by the Member from the United States of America, was adopted by 8 votes to 4 (2 abstentions).

The Byelorussian amendment was lost automatically.

Replying to Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), who said that it would not be possible for representatives of many of the international women's organizations, who were at present abroad, to appear before the Commission, Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out that only representatives who were able and willing to appear would be heard by the Commission.

The Commission then proceeded to discuss the day on which representatives of international women's organizations could most conveniently be heard by the Commission. 19 February and 20 February were suggested.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the date of 19 February.

DECISION: The votes were evenly divided, by 4 votes to 4.

The CHAIRMAN quoted Rule 40 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, according to which, whenever the vote was evenly divided on a matter other than an election, the Commission voted on the matter again at its next meeting. Should the votes still be divided evenly, the motion would be considered lost.

The meeting rose at 2:45 p.m.
