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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Sixth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SECOND MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 24 March, 1952, at 3 p.m.

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Present:Chairman:

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France)

Member

Mrs. LUTZ	Brazil
Mrs. NYEIN	Burma
Mrs. NOVIKOVA	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
Mrs. FIGUEROA	Chile
Miss TSENG	China
Miss MANAS	Cuba
Mrs. de l'OFFICIAL	Dominican Republic
Mrs. FIROUZ	Iran
Mrs. TABET	Lebanon
Miss PELETIER	Netherlands
Mrs. ROSS	New Zealand
Begum Fida HASSAN	Pakistan
Miss KALINOWSKA	Poland
Mrs. POPOVA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Mr. BEITH (Alternate)	United Kingdom
Mrs. GOLDMAN	United States of America

Representatives of specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation	Miss FAIRCHILD
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Miss DAS

Representatives of non-governmental organizations:Category A

World Federation of Trade Unions	Mrs. CHIOSTERGI Mr. FISCHER
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Category B

Conférence Internationale des Charités
Catholiques (replacing Caritas
Internationalis)

Mrs. NIQUILLE

International Association of Penal Law)
International Bureau for the)
Unification of Penal Law)

Mrs. ROMNICIANG

International Council of Women

Miss van EEGHEN

International Federation of Business
and Professional Women

Mrs. HYMER
Miss TOMLINSON

International Union of Catholic
Women's Leagues

Mrs. WEBER

Liaison Committee of Women's
International Organizations

Mrs. HYMER

Pax Romana

Miss ARCHINARD

World Assembly of Youth

Mrs. SEIERSEN

World Union for Progressive Judaism

Lady NATHAN of CHURT

World's Young Women's Christian
Association

Miss ARNOLD
Miss ROYCE

Register

Associated Country Women of the World

Miss KLEYN
Miss RUSSELL

Secretariat

Mrs. Tenison-Woods

Representative of the
Secretary-General

Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaver

Secretary to the Commission

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 2 of the provisional agenda) (E/CN.6/176, E/CN.6/176/Add.1) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN wished to make a few comments on the Soviet Union representative's proposal that a new item should be added to the agenda, relating to the consideration of measures to improve the Commission's work.

She was well aware that the Charter of the United Nations affirmed the equal rights of men and women and that the Economic and Social Council had instructed the Commission to study cases of discrimination against women and to seek means of abolishing them. She agreed with the Soviet Union representative that in that respect the situation was not yet satisfactory in a number of countries, including certain States Members of the United Nations.

Speaking as representative of France, she said that in her opinion certain observations made by the Soviet Union representative about France were unfounded, but she did not wish to enter into any argument on that matter.

On the other hand, she could not accept the Soviet Union representative's criticism of the Commission, to the effect that it had adopted no constructive resolutions and had so far done nothing to promote equal rights for men and women. She considered that since its establishment the Commission had done useful work, and that it had been directly associated with the progress achieved in various countries in connexion with the status of women. She pointed out, in passing, that the general situation was such that it would have been difficult to reach, during the six years of the Commission's existence, the goals laid down by the Charter.

It was true that the General Assembly had declared that the Commission on the Status of Women had not completed its task; however, she did not regard that as a censure, but rather as an encouragement to the Commission to continue its work.

The Soviet Union representative proposed that the Commission should adopt precise and vigorous resolutions on the promotion of women's rights in the political, economic, social and educational fields. But those were most certainly matters with which the Commission had concerned itself ever since it had been set up, for its very terms of reference instructed it "to prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields".

She therefore considered that if the Commission wished to implement its terms of reference it must keep to the study of those questions and not, as proposed by the Soviet Union representative, examine more general problems such as the maintenance of peace, which concerned the rights of men as much as those of women, and were not directly connected with the question of equal rights for both sexes.

She also thought that the additional item mentioned in document E/CN.6/176/Add.1, namely, "Review of programmes and establishment of priorities", met the Soviet Union representative's desire to make the Commission's work more effective, though, unlike the Soviet Union proposal, it was not marred by a pejorative tone, which the enemies of the Commission would not fail to seize upon. In her opinion, to adopt a formula of the kind proposed by the Soviet Union representative would be to go against the support given to the Commission by forty Members of the General Assembly, one of which had been the Soviet Union itself.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America) expressed surprise at the Soviet Union representative's attack on the quality and extent of the Commission's past work. The fact that the Soviet Union did not take part in the work of the specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organization, might have been responsible for that attack, since it would lead to ignorance of the valuable work being carried out by those agencies as a result of recommendations made by the Commission on the Status of Women. The charges that no progress had been made were the more astonishing in view of the Soviet Union delegation's criticism of the Commission the previous year, when the latter had refused to adopt the notorious "Peace resolution" of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). The maintenance of peace was not a responsibility of a functional commission of the United Nations, as was well known. The allegations concerning atrocities and bacteriological warfare, made against the United Nations Forces in Korea, only pointed to an uncontrollable outbreak of disease in the area under Communist rule in Northern Korea. The allegations were all the more indefensible since an offer of impartial investigation had been rejected by the authorities in Northern Korea. The flood of refugees from communist northern Korea into United Nations territory was clear evidence of the falsity of those allegations and a tribute to the administration in the United Nations zone. It would be more constructive if the Soviet Union authorities were to direct their influence towards persuading the communists in northern Korea to agree to the impartial investigations proposed.

Beyond pointing out that in her country women participated fully in elections, both as voters and as candidates, she declined to reply to the statements made by the Soviet Union representative concerning the United States of America, and proposed that the Commission proceed with the adoption of its agenda.

Mrs. KALINOWSKA (Poland) expressed her regret that the Soviet Union representative should have been subjected to such lamentable interruptions at the preceding meeting. The Chairman had suggested that that representative's proposal was derogatory to the Commission. On the contrary, constructive criticism could only improve its work, and if the proposed additional item led to constructive action, the Commission need fear no adverse interpretation. It was more solid than many of those on the provisional agenda, the meagre content of which was disguised by a covering of technical phraseology. The General Assembly had tacitly asked the Commission to improve its work. The latter should therefore first establish where discrimination affected the greatest number of women. For example, illiteracy in the under-developed countries and among working women in capitalist countries was of far greater importance than discrimination against professional women. Discrimination against women in securing work resulted in a deterioration in working conditions for men as well. The armaments race and the maintenance of peace were of immediate concern to women, as was shown by resolutions adopted by women's organizations throughout the world. The Commission should resist the tendency to evade discussions on those cardinal points by laying down a procedural smoke screen, and that could best be done by adopting the Soviet Union proposal that the new item be added to the agenda.

Referring to one of the remarks made by the United States representative, she pointed out that the Polish delegation had made no mean contribution to the work of the International Labour Organisation, having introduced at one of its annual labour conferences a proposal on equal pay for equal work. Its constructive efforts had unfortunately been frustrated, and a weak convention had been the sole outcome. Her delegation had also criticized the draft convention on political rights of women, but she would revert to that subject later.

The Polish delegation would never be ashamed to make propaganda for peace by word and by deed, and she could point to the rebuilding of Warsaw and the improvement in the conditions of women in Poland as an example of what could be done in six years.

Begum Fida HASSAN (Pakistan) reminded representatives that all members desired to remove discrimination against women wherever it was found, and that there would be no advantage in debating the degree of discrimination existing in one or another country.

In reply to the statements made by the Soviet Union representative, she declared that the correct facts were that in Pakistan there was universal franchise and equal opportunity for men and women in voting and candidature for all elections to all public bodies. The problem was not to remove discrimination, but rather to educate women to make full use of the rights they already enjoyed. As to the allegations that girls were sold and women treated as chattels, those applied to conditions as they had been centuries earlier, and there could be no point in discussing them when they no longer existed.

Mrs. NOVIKOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) also expressed surprise at the way in which the Soviet Union representative had been interrupted at the preceding meeting.

The item that that representative proposed should be added to the agenda was a valuable one. She (Mrs. Popova) had shown how the task laid upon the Commission by the Economic and Social Council had been inadequately discharged, and how it was time for the Commission to improve its methods. As it was, Member countries simply ignored the weak recommendations made by the Commission. And still, women in the United States of America, in France and in the United Kingdom were deprived of their constitutional electoral rights, while the Commission did nothing to remedy the situation. The economic rights of women had been under discussion for years, yet women were still suffering from shameful discrimination against them, and official statistics showed that the average weekly wage of women in the United States of America was 30-35 per cent lower than the average weekly wage of men. The Ministry of Labour figures for 1951 showed a similar inequality in the United Kingdom, and a similar state of affairs obtained in France, Australia and Austria. Yet at its fourth and fifth sessions the Commission had done nothing to improve matters in that respect. The International Labour Organisation had jeopardized attempts to achieve the United Nations' objective of equal pay for equal work by inexcusable procrastination, and had finally produced a convention which actually gave legal sanction to existing practices.

Little had been done to make it possible for women to enter the professions, and the figures for graduates from Canadian universities showed an overwhelming percentage of men.

Turning to social rights, she declared that maternity and child care was largely out of the reach of the mass of the people. In several countries there was a token system which was quite inadequate. In the United Kingdom, a high proportion of women's wages, in certain cases as much as 5 shillings a week, had to be paid out as social security contributions. However, the Commission had passed over the fact that in a great many countries women were deprived of rights in the social and public health fields, and had not examined these problems at all, although they fell within its competence.

There could be no matter of greater concern to women than the fight for peace, and it stood to the discredit of the Commission that it had refused to discuss a motion on that subject put forward by WIDF, and sponsored by the representatives of Poland and the Soviet Union, at the fifth session. The hysterical preparations for war now being made in the United States of America and in the other countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were worrying millions of women, who demanded that the United Nations avert that new threat and lift the heavy burden from the already sadly oppressed workers and women.

In conclusion, she repeated that the Commission's work had yielded no constructive results during the previous six years, and that the time had come to consider measures to remedy its shortcomings and to improve its future work. She urged the addition to the agenda of the item proposed by the Soviet Union representative, if necessary in place of the additional item entitled "Review of programme and establishment of priorities" mentioned in document E/CN.6/176/Add.1.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the Soviet Union proposal that a further item relating to the consideration of measures to improve the work of the Commission be added to the agenda.

The Soviet Union proposal was rejected by 10 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Commission should next take a decision on the proposal submitted by the United States representative at the preceding meeting.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America) explained that the item that she proposed should be added to the agenda, namely: "Economic opportunities for women", would be sub-divided into the following four topics:

- (a) Equal pay for equal work;
- (b) Part-time work for women;
- (c) The problem of older women workers; and
- (d) Discriminatory practices against women in the learned professions.

She proposed that the list be left open for the subsequent addition of other topics.

Mrs. FIGUEROA (Chile) welcomed the United States proposal, but thought that if only a few of the questions arising under the heading "Economic opportunities for women" were listed, that might result in the Commission being limited to discussion of those points alone. She therefore proposed that item 8 of the provisional agenda be left unchanged, and that a separate item be added, entitled: "Economic Opportunities for Women", but not further sub-divided.

Mrs. de l'OFFICIAL (Dominican Republic) expressed the satisfaction she felt at taking part for the first time in a Commission, the work of which she had followed with great interest.

She supported the Chilean representative's proposal.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America) agreed that item 8 should stand, and that "Economic opportunities for women" should form an additional item of the agenda, but without sub-headings, so as to avoid the possibility of a restrictive interpretation being placed on it.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Commission might agree that item 8 of the provisional agenda be retained in its present form; it was a logical extension of the work so far done by the Commission.

All that needed to be done, therefore, to give effect to the United States proposal was to include in the agenda a new item entitled "Economic opportunities for women", it being understood that the problems explicitly referred to by the United States representative, together with any other related matters, could be discussed under that item.

It was so agreed.

The provisional agenda (E/CN.6/176 and Add.1), as amended, was adopted.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The CHAIRMAN thought that it would be advisable, as at previous sessions, to set up a committee on resolutions and a committee on communications. The former would be responsible for drafting and, if necessary, co-ordinating the resolutions submitted to the Commission, and might consist of the representatives of Chile, Lebanon, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The second committee would examine communications received by the Commission, and might consist of the representatives of Brazil, Iran, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Poland.

The committees would, of course, only do preliminary work, to enable the Commission to reach its final decisions more quickly.

The Chairman's proposals were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN wished to consult the Commission on a point which she considered particularly important, namely: the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in the Commission's work. She thought it would be advisable to adhere to the procedure followed at previous sessions. In her opinion, it was an advantage for the Commission to allow representatives of non-governmental organizations to speak during the discussions of questions in which they were particularly interested, rather than to allow them to express their views at a single meeting only. The Commission could thus derive more benefit from the great experience acquired by certain non-governmental organizations, whose help was all the more valuable because the Secretariat frequently called upon them for direct assistance in dealing with questions within their competence.

The Chairman's suggestion was adopted.

3. POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN (item 3 of the agenda):

- (a) Consideration of the memorandum prepared annually by the Secretary-General on the advancement of the political rights of women (A/1911, E/CN.6/184 and Add.1 and 2)

The CHAIRMAN, opening the discussion on item 3 of the agenda, pointed out that, as in previous years, the Secretary-General had prepared a memorandum on constitutions, electoral laws and other legal instruments relating to the franchise of women and their eligibility to public office and functions (A/1911).

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) wished to have an assurance that item 3(a) of the agenda was to be discussed first.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if the Commission had no objection, the Secretary to the Commission would deal first with the questions covered by sub-items (a) and (b) of item 3 of the agenda, since they were closely connected, leaving sub-item (c), which related to a different matter, to be dealt with later.

Mrs. GRINBERG-VINAVER, Secretary to the Commission, drew attention to the fact that, contrary to his previous practice, the Secretary-General had indicated, in his memorandum (A/1911), only the new steps taken to grant political rights to women. That was why the main body of the document contained only the new Constitutions adopted in El Salvador and Haiti.

The memorandum also contained tables showing:

Countries where women might vote in all elections on an equal basis with men;

Countries where women might vote in all elections subject to certain qualifications not imposed on men;

Countries where women might vote in local elections only;

Countries where women had no political rights; and

Countries in which action had been taken since 1945 (the year of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations) extending full or limited political rights to women.

The document did not, she thought, call for any special comment, as few changes had occurred in the field of women's political rights since the fifth session. The report did, however, show that progress was being made from year to year.

The principle of the draft convention on political rights of women adopted by the Commission at its fifth session had been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, which had requested the Secretary-General to circulate the text of the draft convention to the governments of Member States for their comments and suggestions. The latter had been brought together in documents E/CN.6/184 and Add.1 and 2 thereto, which were before the Commission.

Twenty States had so far submitted their observations. Some were in favour of the draft convention as drawn up by the Commission, some had suggested modifications, and others opposed the draft.

The Commission might accordingly either adopt the draft as it stood, adopt a different text, or recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it entrust

the preparation of the draft convention to the Secretary-General or to a body specially convened for the purpose.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America) said that the memorandum prepared annually by the Secretary-General on the advancement of the political rights of women was proving more and more useful throughout the world. She noted with interest that the background material supplied to experts appointed to technical assistance missions included matter relating to the political rights of women in the country or countries to which they were going. She believed that the right to vote was essential to true freedom, and also that, when women won that right, they would often challenge certain improper electoral practices which were current in various countries.

Another valuable document which should be put into the hands of new women voters was the pamphlet published by the United Nations entitled Political Rights of Women - 56 Years of Progress. Interested countries should see that that pamphlet, of which over 16,000 copies had already been distributed, was made available to all women voters.

She suggested that the annual memorandum under discussion should in future show, against the name of each country listed, the date on which women had first been granted the right to vote there. It should also show the date on which all the women of that country had obtained full voting rights. She also asked the Lebanese representative for an account of events in that country, where, she understood, women had refused as a "half loaf" the limited political right to vote in local elections only, and had demanded full voting rights instead.

She further suggested that where the information to be included in the memorandum about certain countries was not available from the governments concerned, it should be obtained by other means.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to the United States representative's proposal that the date on which political rights had first been granted to women in the various countries should be included in the annual memoranda prepared by the Secretary-General, observed that if the Commission approved the proposal, there was no need to adopt a formal resolution on the subject. The Commission need only make a recommendation to that effect in its report, and the Secretariat would act upon it.

It was so agreed.

Mrs. TABET (Lebanon) explained, for the information of the United States representative, that the question of granting women the right to vote in municipal elections had in fact been raised in Lebanon; but only general conversations had taken place; no definite offer had been made by the Government. The question had later been dropped, since the women of Lebanon wished to obtain all political rights simultaneously. But the Lebanese Parliament was at the moment examining a proposal concerning the grant of full political rights to women, and she was awaiting a telegram at any moment informing her of the decision taken, which she expected to be in the affirmative, since about half of the members of Parliament were in favour of the proposal.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) regretted that the memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/1911) did not sufficiently illuminate the struggle for political rights which women were waging in many countries of the world. In fact, the impression created by the memorandum was in many respects totally misleading: for example, it stated that there were 56 countries in which women might vote in all elections on an equal basis with men. In that list of 56 countries, States with widely varying political and social conditions were juxtaposed, implying that there were no differences between the respective conditions prevailing in them. It was thus implied that the situation in, say, Albania resembled that in Canada, or that conditions in the United States of America were akin to those prevailing in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. That was, of course, sheer formalism, and the proper distinctions should be drawn. It was well known that, whereas in the Soviet Union women enjoyed full political rights, in the United States of America and Canada, as in a large number of other countries, legislation existed that was prejudicial to the electoral and political rights of women. Although the Federal law of the United States of America had enfranchised women as long ago as 1920, in practice State and local legislation often completely nullified the provisions of the original act. Women could only be elected to political office in the United States of America if they were able to pass a literacy test, and, in numerous cases, to pay a poll tax. A number of American observers, including Mrs. Armstrong, to whom she had referred at the preceding meeting, had pointed out that the moral and physical strength of the United States of America would be enhanced by the abolition of

sex discrimination. Early in 1950, Senator Chase Smith, of Maine, had said that it was time to cease treating women as inferior beings.

In the Union of South Africa voting rights for women were strictly confined to white women, and in a number of other States, including the United Kingdom, many Latin American States, Greece, and Portugal, women were subjected to discrimination in respect of voting rights on various flimsy pretexts. It was highly regrettable that a United Nations document such as the memorandum under discussion should fail to give a complete account of the state of affairs prevailing in those areas.

The memorandum was also silent on the condition of women in colonies and the Trust Territories. It was, however, abundantly clear from the official publications of the Administering Authorities themselves that gross injustices prevailed in such areas in the matter of the political and voting rights of women.

Just as the memorandum ignored the sorry plight of women in the capitalist world, it likewise passed over in silence the ascendant position of women in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. 280 women representatives sat in the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union and over 2,209 in the supreme soviets of the constituent republics; and there were more than 500,000 women representatives in local soviets throughout the country. The care which the Government of the Soviet Union lavished on mothers and children was renowned throughout the world. 35,000 women held the title of "Mother Hero", and some 3,500,000 had been awarded the Order of Maternal Glory. In 1951 alone, the State had allocated 6,000 million roubles for mothers with large families and unmarried mothers. Thousands of millions of roubles were being spent annually on recreation facilities for children.

More than 1,000,000 women were receiving higher or specialized education, as a result of which the number of women active in industry, agriculture, transport, science and the arts was becoming extremely large.

She was submitting a draft resolution, for adoption by the Commission, designed to ensure that in future there would be no such omissions from the Secretary-General's memorandum.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/1911) merely brought up to date document A/1342, and had been drawn up on the

lines laid down by the General Assembly. The information submitted by the Government of the Soviet Union had been faithfully reproduced in document A/1342, which was the basic text.

While it was undoubtedly to be regretted that document A/1911, which merely reproduced the latest material submitted by governments, should contain so little information, it must be pointed out that the responsibility for that unhappy state of affairs lay not with the Secretary-General, but with governments themselves.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America), referring to the Soviet Union representative's remarks, pointed out that since education was compulsory in the United States of America, women were in almost every case able to pass literacy tests, in States where literacy constituted a qualification for voting. Furthermore, the test applied equally to men and women, so that it could not in any case be construed as an example of discrimination against women. Neither could the poll tax, which, in the few States where it still existed, affected men and women to an equal degree. With regard to the Soviet Union itself, it was curious to note that, although women enjoyed full equality with men before the law, women nevertheless accounted for only some 20 per cent of the membership of the Communist Party. As to women in legislative bodies in the United States of America, she would agree that the number of women in Congress was not large, but would at the same time point out that many American women preferred to work in local legislative bodies rather than in the central organs, in order to remain near their families. In 1951, there had been 237 women in State legislatures, and only eight States had been entirely without women representatives. Five Federal Court judges were women, and, indeed, the United States judicial system as a whole had many women among its officials.

Miss KALINOWSKA (Poland) agreed with the Soviet Union representative that the memorandum by the Secretary-General was meagre and formalistic.

Referring to the United States representative's remarks, she thought that it was strange that that representative should apparently have adduced the equal measure of discrimination exerted by the poll tax as a justification for the latter's existence. There were, in any case, numerous examples of racial discrimination apart from the poll tax itself. There had been the celebrated case of the coloured professor of law who had been declared to have failed the literacy test. The Fascist activities of the Klu Klux Klan were, moreover, familiar to everyone.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America) pointed out that she had in no way attempted to justify the existence of the poll tax, but had merely corrected Soviet Union representative's statement that the poll tax constituted an example of sex discrimination. She also wished to state that the Klu Klux Klan had been outlawed.

She felt that women's rights would be promoted more rapidly if the representatives of countries such as the Soviet Union and Poland would occasionally admit the existence of defects and shortcomings in their own countries; a joint effort could then be made by all to eliminate faults and injustices everywhere.

During her lifetime she herself had seen great progress towards the elimination of racial discrimination in her own country. Popular feeling among young America was now so advanced that recently, at the University of Illinois, a coloured girl had been elected Queen of the Homecoming Festival, a social honour of considerable importance.

The CHAIRMAN did not consider it possible to introduce into a resolution submitted for adoption by the Commission any reference to documents A/1911 and A/1342, since the Commission had no authority to amend a text adopted by the General Assembly. She therefore suggested that the Soviet Union draft resolution might be amended to read:

"THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

INSTRUCTS the United Nations Secretariat to prepare for the Commission's next session a report containing the basic data received from government concerning the participation of women in the political and public life of the country (number of women in elective State bodies, local government bodies etc.)".

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) accepted the text proposed by the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN put that text to the vote.

The Soviet Union draft resolution was adopted by 15 votes to 1.

- (b) Report on the action taken on the draft convention on political rights of women adopted by the Commission at its fifth session (E/CN.6/184 and Add.1 and 2, E/CN.6/NGO/4).

The CHAIRMAN opened the discussion on item 3(e) of the agenda.

Mrs. GOLDMAN (United States of America) felt that the importance of the draft convention on political rights of women could scarcely be over-emphasized. The United States delegation had been one of its sponsors at the fifth session,

and had advocated that the draft text of the convention be circulated to governments for their comments. On the basis of the numerous and valuable observations which had been received it would be possible to attain the desired end, namely: the elaboration of a text capable of commanding universal support.

It was comparatively easy to frame principles for which general recognition would be forthcoming, but it was a task of considerably greater difficulty to get those principles embodied in laws on the statute books of the various States. Perhaps it was hardest of all to translate those laws into practice. One step in the right direction was intensive publicity and agitation, aimed at arousing public opinion at the "grass roots". That much good work had been done in that respect was indicated by the favourable comments which had been received from a number of States; for example, Bolivia and Haiti, both of which were now in process of modifying their electoral laws, had stated that they desired to adhere to the convention.

Miss LUTZ (Brazil) considered that, notwithstanding the great interest attaching to the large volume of information which had already been forthcoming on the status of women in a number of countries, it would be preferable for the Commission, in view of the limited time at its disposal, to concentrate on its immediate task, which was to provide governments with the facts of the situation in a clear and precise form, and also to stimulate progress by proceeding as rapidly as possible with the drafting of the convention at present under consideration.

Miss TSENG (China) recalled that Chinese women had been officially enfranchised in 1911, and had effectively enjoyed voting rights since 1947. The Chinese legislative body now comprised a proportion of women which compared favourably with that in most other countries.

It was particularly important to remember that it was not sufficient to secure for women, or even for men, the mere right to vote; it was also necessary to ensure that enfranchised persons were at liberty to vote for candidates of their own free choice.

Miss BANERJI (World Federation of United Nations Associations), speaking of the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that the sixth Conference of the World

Federation of United Nations Associations, held at Stockholm in September 1951, had been attended by representatives from thirty-two countries. In the Social Committee of the Conference particular attention had been given to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, and a resolution had been passed approving the Commission's activity in the political, economic, educational and social fields. That resolution had in turn been unanimously adopted by the Conference and had been circulated to States Members of the United Nations as document E/CN.6/NGO.4. She wished to draw particular attention to paragraph 3 of the resolution, welcoming the draft convention on political rights of women approved at the fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.