

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE NINTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Friday, 14 February 1947, at 3 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)
	Mrs. A. F. de Echeverria	(Costa Rica)
	Mrs. M. Leilaucheyx	(France)
	Miss S. Basterrachea	(Guatemala)
	Mrs. Hamid Ali	(India)
	Mrs. A. Castillo Ledon	(Mexico)
	Mrs. A. Cosma	(Syria)
	Miss M. Sutherland	(United Kingdom)
	Miss D. Kenyon	(United States of America)
	Mrs. E. Popova	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
	Mrs. I. Urdaneta	(Venezuela)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. E. Rowe	(ILO)
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Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss L. Spiegel	(WFTU)
Miss T. Sender	(AFL)
Mrs. H. Fuhrmann	(ICA)

Secretariat:	Mr. E. Lawson
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Miss E. Bowerman	(Secretary of the Commission)
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Consideration of the Draft Resolution Concerning Relations with the Trusteeship Council proposed by the Member from Denmark (document E/CN.6/17):
Continuation.

The CHAIRMAN asked the member from Mexico to present the revised paragraph (b) of the Draft Resolution concerning Relations with the Trusteeship Council.

/Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico)

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) proposed that paragraph (b) should read as follows:

"The Commission requests that the Economic and Social Council, once the Trusteeship Council is established, arrange some means for consultation and collaboration between the Trusteeship Council and the Commission."

The CHAIRMAN put the proposed paragraph (b) to the vote.

DECISION: Paragraph (b), as presented by the member from Mexico, was adopted by a vote of 10 to 0 with 3 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Commission that paragraph (c) had been withdrawn and that paragraph (d) had been amended by a previous decision. He then put the whole resolution to the vote.

DECISION: The Draft Resolution concerning Relations with the Trusteeship Council, as amended, was adopted by a vote of 10 to 0, with 3 abstentions.

Consideration of the Draft Resolution Submitted by the Member from the United Kingdom Concerning the Political Rights of Women (Document E/CH.6/SR.9)

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) stressed the fact that equal educational opportunities for women were the most effective means of making possible the full enjoyment of political rights. The United Kingdom resolution, aimed at speeding up answers to the part of the Secretary-General's questionnaire on Member States that dealt with educational opportunities for women, would provide a practical approach to the problem that would give hope to women everywhere, especially in the less-developed countries.

Mrs. NAMID ALI (India) was in full sympathy with the United Kingdom resolution, but she did not feel that it should be considered at the present time. The Commission should concentrate first on the question of equal political rights.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said that a United States resolution similar to the one made by Miss Sutherland, would be presented at the next meeting. It would state that educational and professional opportunities for women were second only to political rights in importance, and it would suggest collaboration with UNESCO in the field of education.

Mrs. NAM (India)

Mrs. WU (China) called attention to paragraph 3, page 6, of the report prepared by the Division of Human Rights on the Resolution on the Political Rights of Women (document E/CN.6/5), which mentioned the possibility of suggesting to UNESCO that it devote particular attention, in its educational programme, to regions where women had as yet no voice in the affairs of their country. She suggested that the Commission should have a sub-committee to work with UNESCO toward that end.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) agreed that priority should be given first to political rights, and second to education that would enable women to exercise these rights in a responsible way.

Mrs. MALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Mrs. KUMINA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Russian translation of the United Kingdom resolution implied that political rights should not be granted until after educational opportunities had prepared women for them, an idea which was contrary to the Commission's position on women's rights.

Mrs. LAENUELUX (France) stated that the French text was equally confusing.

Mrs. SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) assured the Commission that the intention behind the resolution was solely to stress the importance of educational opportunities. There was no suggestion whatsoever that political rights should wait upon educational opportunities.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) thought that the misunderstanding would be completely dissipated if the first paragraph were deleted.

Mrs. SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) agreed to Mrs. Street's suggestion.

Mrs. BASTERRACHEA (Guatemala) supported the United Kingdom proposal. She stated in her own country had proved that education was necessary in order for women to be able to use the political rights that had been granted to them.

Mrs. de ROSEVERRIA (Costa Rica) stressed the priority of political rights, which had not yet been granted to women of her country.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a drafting committee composed of the members from China, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics should prepare a revised text of the United Kingdom resolution.

Consideration of the Proposal by the Member from Denmark that the Security Council and the General Assembly should be asked to Consider the Political, Civil and Economic Rights of Women when Dealing with Applications for Membership in the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the member from Denmark, asked for discussion of the proposal which she had circulated. She pointed out that the Security Council and the General Assembly would be asked merely to "consider" the political, civil and economic rights of women when dealing with applications for membership in the United Nations. She suggested that the expression "status of women" might be substituted for "political, civil and economic rights of women".

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) thought that "status of woman" was too general; the original wording was preferable.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) felt that the proposal might involve an alteration of the Charter, in that it seemed to lay down new conditions for membership. She pointed out that many countries already members of the United Nations had not granted full political rights to women, and it did not seem advisable to insist that standards for new countries applying for membership should be higher than those for countries already admitted.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) favoured the Danish proposal. She referred to the fact that equal rights for men and women were provided for in the Charter; the Commission should therefore remind the Security Council and the General Assembly that new members should meet the standards agreed to in the Charter.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought that in the consideration of qualifications for new members of the United Nations, all questions of human rights were of equal importance; it would be a mistake to emphasize non-discrimination for reasons of sex more than non-discrimination for any other reason, such as race or religion. She could not favour the Danish proposal.

/Mrs. COSMA (Syria)

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) and Mrs. LEEFUCHEUX (France) agreed with the views expressed by the member from the United States of America.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the member from Denmark, said that in view of the arguments that had been presented she wished to withdraw her resolution.

Discussion of Methods of Obtaining Replies to the Questionnaire Sent Out by the Secretariat on the Legal Status and Treatment of Women

In response to a question by the Chairman, the COMMISSION SECRETARY stated that a number of women's international organizations had been asked if they would assist in procuring answers from Governments. Some had answered in the affirmative, others in the negative, and some felt that questionnaires were unnecessary.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that there were two basic questions:

- (1) the nature of the laws, and
- (2) the application of the laws.

The COMMISSION SECRETARY said one part of the questionnaire had already been sent out; the two remaining parts would be issued soon. In the first part, Governments had been requested to give as complete answers as possible with regard to the laws and their application.

The CHAIRMAN reserved the right to present further suggestions on the subject.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) suggested that the questionnaire should be sent to all organizations that had communicated with the Secretary-General.

The COMMISSION SECRETARY said that the report from the Sub-Committee dealing with communications would reveal that some organizations did not approve the questionnaire.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported Mrs. STREET's suggestion but felt that the distribution of questionnaires should not be limited to organizations that had written to the Secretary-General. Questionnaires should be sent to all national women's organizations. She also pointed to the difficulties of collecting detailed and complicated information.

/The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Commission might request Governments to form co-ordinating committees of all national organizations interested in the status of women; the Commission might also ask all large international organizations to invite their national branches to lend their assistance in the matter.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) thought that Governments might reply promptly if women's organizations were informed that questionnaires had been sent to the former; they would then urge their respective Governments to speed up the replies.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) announced that the suggestion would be included in the resolution which she would submit on Monday.

The CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention to document E/CN.6/5, page 6 containing Secretariat suggestions for the implementation of the resolution of the political rights of women.

Miss KENYON (United States of America), explaining her proposal (document E/CN.6/10) said that it was to place at the disposal of recently enfranchised women the experience in civic matters of other women who had enjoyed the right to vote for some time. The United Nations Secretariat would thus become a clearing house for the collection and distribution of technical information on voting procedure. The document presented by her included, as an illustration, an account of the activities of the League of Women Voters which had been organized to promote women's participation in government in the United States.

The representatives of China, Syria, and Venezuela supported the United States proposal.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) considered that while co-operation among various national women's organizations was desirable, distribution of such information through the United Nations Secretariat might be regarded by some Governments as interference in their domestic matters.

The CHAIRMAN replied that the United States proposal was merely to encourage women to organize societies for education in citizenship.

/In reply

In reply to a question by Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), Miss KENYON (United States of America) explained that the League of Women Voters had only been cited as an example and had no connection with the resolution proper. The League consisted of all women citizens who wished to join it. There might be, in other countries, similar organizations in a position to furnish such information.

In reply to a question by Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) Miss KENYON stated that all women citizens, regardless of race, creed or colour were eligible for membership in the League of Women Voters.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) stressed that official action could only be taken by the respective Governments.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) replied that distribution of information would be on a voluntary basis; interested Governments' organizations or individuals might approach the Secretariat for such information.

She agreed to the deletion of the expression "of a non-partisan character" at the bottom of page 2 (document E/CN.6/10), suggested by the representative of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

DECISION: The Commission approved, by 12 votes to 2, with 1 abstention, the United States proposal.

Consideration of the Byelorussian and Australian Proposals Pertaining to Relations with Non-Governmental Organizations and Arrangements for Hearing their Views. (Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda).

DECISION: The Commission decided to postpone discussion of that question until both proposed texts had been circulated.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) drawing the Commission's attention to document E/CN.6/9, page 4, paragraph 2 dealing with provisions relating to equality for women in recent international peace treaties, emphasized the importance of such provisions. It was for the first time that women's rights were safeguarded in peace treaties. She therefore moved the following resolution:

"The Commission on the Status of Women wishes to express its gratification at the inclusion in the peace treaties with Roumania,

/Italy,

Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland of provisions that require that there shall be no discrimination by the governments of these countries on the grounds of sex in the enjoyment of human rights."

DECISION: The Commission unanimously adopted the resolution presented by the Australian member.

The meeting rose at 5:15 p.m.
