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CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES  
ON THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND  
STATELESS PERSONS

Dual distribution

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE DRAFT CONVENTION  
AND DRAFT PROTOCOL

Statement submitted by the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues, a non-governmental organization in consultative relationship with the Economic and Social Council.

The Executive Secretary has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with Rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

Submitted: 7 July 1951.

Received: 9 July 1951.

The International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues considers that the draft Convention and draft Protocol, submitted to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons represents as a whole a marked improvement in the lot of such persons, and therefore expresses the hope that the Conference will not reduce the scope of the above-mentioned drafts in the international instruments submitted to Governments for signature and ratification.

Moreover, the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues earnestly requests the Conference to make good certain important omissions in the existing draft Convention:

## I

Mention is made in the preamble to the draft Convention, of assuring refugees "the widest possible exercise of these fundamental rights and freedoms".

Of these fundamental freedoms, that of practising their religion, of manifesting it by religious worship, instruction and education, has been omitted from the present draft.

It is therefore desirable to introduce an article, or even a special chapter, safeguarding this freedom, in accordance with the spirit in which the Convention is being drawn up.

## II

Another essential right of refugees is their right to maintain their family unity, which is a natural and fundamental element of society. In the life of refugees, this unity is constantly threatened by various measures relating to their admission to countries, to permission for them to work, etc.

It is therefore most desirable that a new article should be inserted in chapter V ("Administrative measures"). This new article might be based on point 13 of the "General Principles concerning the Protection of Migrants" adopted by the Second Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations Interested in Migration (Geneva, 16 - 22 March 1951), which reads as follows:

"Since the family is 'the natural and fundamental unit of society', it shall be protected and migrants shall have the right to preserve its unity. The measures necessary to preserve that unity must be guaranteed. When the head of a family satisfies the necessary conditions for admission to a country, his dependants shall thereby become eligible for admission".