

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL
E/CN.6/SR.669
14 December 1976
ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Resumed twenty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 669th MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 10 December 1976, at 3.05 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. GONZALEZ de CUADROS (Colombia)

CONTENTS

The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1976-1985
(agenda item 4) (continued)

- (c) Review and appraisal of progress made under the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade and in the implementation of the World Plan of Action (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Participants wishing to make corrections should submit them in writing to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva, within one week of receiving the record in their working language.

Corrections to the records of the meetings of the Commission at this resumed session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, 1976-1985
(agenda item 4) (continued)

- (c) REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF PROGRESS MADE UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE AND IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PLAN OF ACTION (E/CONF.66/3 and Add.1-3, E/CONF.66/4; E/CONF.66/L.695 and L.696) (continued)

Draft resolution E/CN.6/L.695

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to draft resolution E/CN.6/L.695 submitted by Colombia, Egypt, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Senegal and Venezuela. She recalled that at the previous meeting the French representative had inquired about the financial implications of the text if it was adopted, and that the Deputy Director of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs had supplied the figures requested. The delegations of the USSR and Sweden had also questioned the desirability of certain parts of the draft. One of the sponsors, Iran, had suggested that, in view of some of the objections made, the text should be considered up to and including paragraph 6 only, and that the last two paragraphs could be examined separately at a later date.
2. Mr. TILLFORS (Sweden) thought that the draft could be adopted by consensus if paragraphs 7 and 8 were separated from the text.
3. Mrs. COCKCROFT (United Kingdom) thanked the representative of Iran for waiving consideration of paragraphs 7 and 8. Her delegation would, however, reserve its right to comment on the remainder of the draft without those two paragraphs.
4. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) thanked the Iranian delegation and, like the representative of Sweden, hoped for a consensus.
5. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France) interpreted the suggestion made by the Iranian representative as meaning that the last two operative paragraphs would be separated from the draft and examined later during the debate on the organization of the 1980 conference.
6. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) said that paragraphs 7 and 8 would be considered later in the course of the discussion; that procedure would, however, raise a problem of timing with respect to the submission of a draft resolution.
7. In view of the proposals made, the CHAIRMAN suggested that draft resolution E/CN.6/L.695 should be considered up to and including paragraph 6. The last two operative paragraphs would be taken up later on.
8. It was so decided.

9. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) regretted that once again the Russian version did not correspond exactly to the original draft. She had noticed errors in Russian documents since the beginning of the session, and if they continued she would make an official statement on the subject. The Secretariat should inquire into the matter and determine the reason for such errors as it was responsible for ensuring that translations were true to the original.
10. Miss ST. CLAIRE (Secretary of the Commission) assured the representative of the USSR that her remarks on the Russian text of documents E/CN.6/L.684, L.690 and L.695 had been transmitted to the Chief of the Russian Translation Section. The changes requested by the same representative in document E/CN.6/L.684 had already been taken into account. She would also refer the matter to the Chief of the Languages Division. She offered her excuses to the representative of the USSR and asked her to mention any other discrepancies she might come across. It was the duty of the Secretariat to make sure that all delegations were supplied with correct texts.
11. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) proposed that the words "to promote co-education and" should be inserted after the words "and the measures necessary" in paragraph 1 (c).
12. The proposal was adopted.
13. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) suggested that the words "as well as family education and family planning" should be added at the end of paragraph 2 (j).
- 13 bis. At the request of Mrs. LORANGER (Canada), Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) explained that the idea of family education was closely connected with that of family planning, and both were mentioned in the section devoted to the objectives of the 1980 conference in document E/CN.6/600. Family planning was concerned with the number of children, while family education had other objectives and dealt with other methods relating to the family.
14. Mrs. BRUCE (Deputy Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that the expression "education for family living" was often used, particularly by FAO.
15. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) agreed to the term proposed by the Deputy Director.
16. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Colombia, said that it was not customary for her Government to use the idea of family planning. She therefore appealed to the representative of Iran and the other sponsors not to introduce that concept and to speak simply of "education for family life"; in that way Colombia would be able to remain a sponsor of the draft resolution.
17. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) said that Colombia's continuing co-sponsorship of draft resolution E/CN.6/L.695 was most desirable. If the concept of family planning created difficulties for her delegation and possibly for others as well, he would agree to its deletion.

18. Mrs. FREDGARD (Sweden) suggested that the words "by the Government" should be used instead of the words "within the Government" in operative paragraph 2 (h).

19. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, if there were no objections, the amendment proposed by the representative of Iran with the corrections he had accepted should be adopted, together with the amendment requested by the representative of Sweden.

20. It was so decided.

21. Mrs. DEVAUD (France), referring to paragraph 2 (d), said it was difficult to set target dates for the elimination of illiteracy. She therefore proposed that the first part of that subparagraph up to the word "illiteracy" should be replaced by the following: "The elaboration of a gradual literacy programme which should lead, within the span of not more than one generation, to the elimination of illiteracy ...".

22. Begum FARIDI (Pakistan), reverting to paragraph 2 (j), said that in her country the term "population planning" was used in preference to "family planning". Referring to paragraph 2 (d), she asked the French representative whether, in the French amendment, the word "functional" could be added before the word "literacy" in order to define it more precisely.

23. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the period of a generation proposed by the French delegation was too long.

24. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) replied that a generation represented the replacement time of individuals, in other words, the time necessary for a newborn child to reach the age of procreation, which was roughly twenty years. That time-span was not too long, because it would take at least twenty years to eliminate illiteracy in the world; indeed, it would be most encouraging if it could be achieved that quickly.

25. Princess PURACHATRA (Thailand) requested the addition of the words "and responsibilities" at the end of paragraph 2 (b).

26. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) said that the sponsors could accept the French amendment. Without immediately excluding that of the Thai representative, they would prefer to keep the text of paragraph 2 (b) as it stood, because they believed that women were aware of their responsibilities. What they wanted was to fight for their rights.

27. Princess PURACHATRA (Thailand), supported by Begum FARIDI (Pakistan), said that in many countries, and particularly the developing countries, women had little awareness of their responsibilities to the community. It would therefore be useful to encourage and counsel them with regard not only to their rights but also their responsibilities. They would thus be in a better position to play the important role devolving upon them.

28. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said she understood the spirit in which the French delegation had proposed its amendment to paragraph 2 (b), but the word "generation" suggested a long period of time. She hoped that the French delegation could suggest an alternative.
29. Miss TYABJI (India) said she was unable to accept the French amendment entailing a programme for the gradual elimination of illiteracy as it was too general and covered too short a period of time. Many countries had not yet succeeded in introducing a way of life that would allow people to become literate in a short space of time. Very often women who went to school became illiterate later on. It was not enough to provide schools; a suitable way of life also had to be created. It would be preferable to keep the original text, which left each country free to determine the date it considered most appropriate for the elimination of illiteracy.
30. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) proposed the following wording: "The elaboration of a gradual functional literacy programme to be completed within a period that each State should try to make as short as possible".
31. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) pointed out that, in the World Plan of Action, the increase of literacy was one of the minimum objectives to be achieved in the first half of the Decade for Women. The Commission could perhaps adopt a similar formula.
32. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representatives of France and the United States should discuss the matter and submit a text acceptable to the co-sponsors.
33. Mrs. THOMPSON-TRENCH (Togo), referring to the Thai representative's amendment, pointed out that the mass media - newspapers, radio and television - usually emphasized the duties of women. The Commission should therefore welcome a text requesting that a little thought be given to their rights. For that reason, it would be better to retain the original text.
34. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) thought that the Togo representative's remarks merited consideration. Women were often unaware even of their rights under the law. The need to inform women of their legal rights should therefore be brought out, and something to that effect might be included in the text.
35. The CHAIRMAN asked the representative of Thailand whether she could withdraw her proposal.
36. Princess PURACHATRA (Thailand) said that, in the interest of the world as a whole and in order to ensure the implementation of the World Plan of Action, women had to assume their responsibilities towards society. They should contribute to the well-being of the entire community. If they were unaware of their responsibilities, it would be impossible to achieve the desired results.

37. Mrs. FREDGARD (Sweden) asked what was meant by the words "appropriate measures" in paragraph 2 (b), and wondered whether they implied that Governments should determine the policy to be followed by the mass media. In Sweden the press was free and the Government could not interfere with it.

38. Miss TYABJI (India) observed that in many countries the Government used the mass media for educational purposes. Perhaps the words "wherever appropriate" could be replaced by the words "wherever possible".

39. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) shared the view of the Indian representative and, as co-sponsor of the draft resolution, thought that the proposed amendment should be adopted.

40. The amendment was adopted.

41. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegations of France and the United States to inform the Commission of the results of their consultations.

42. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) did not think that her delegation and that of the United States were pursuing the same objective. In referring to the World Plan of Action, the United States representative had mentioned a subparagraph concerned with the preparation of plans to combat illiteracy which should be eliminated by the end of the first half of the Decade for Women. The French delegation on the other hand, was thinking in terms of the implementation of those plans. There was no hope that within five years, or even ten, illiteracy among women would have been eradicated in every part of the world.

43. She therefore proposed that a choice should be made between two texts, one concerned with the preparation of plans to combat illiteracy and the other with the implementation of those plans and the elimination of illiteracy. The Commission might wish to choose, for instance, between the following texts: "The specification of a gradual functional literacy programme, which should be drawn up by each State before the end of the first half of the Decade for Women" or "The specification of a gradual functional literacy programme which should, within a period of time that each State would endeavour to make as short as possible, lead to the elimination of illiteracy".

44. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) said that the main objective was progress towards the elimination of illiteracy. The purpose of fixing a five-year target date was above all to be able to verify, from government reports, what progress had been made by the end of that period.

45. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) said that the co-sponsors were prepared to accept the second text proposed by the French delegation for paragraph 2 (d), but had not had time to discuss the first version proposed by the United States.

46. In reply to a question from the CHAIRMAN, Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) said that she had not made an actual proposal but had merely provided information to facilitate the drafting of paragraph 2 (a).

47. The second version of paragraph 2 (d), proposed by the French delegation, was adopted.

48. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran), referring to the Thai amendment to paragraph 2 (b), said that the co-sponsors of the draft resolution preferred the original text, as it reflected the idea they wanted to express more clearly. However, if the Thai delegation pressed its amendment, they would agree to the addition of the words "and responsibilities" at the end of the subparagraph.

49. Mr. VALLARTA (Mexico) was not in favour of using an expression like "legal rights", which referred only to rights that were recognized under domestic legislation. The Commission should go further and encompass rights that were not recognized by law.

50. Miss TYABJI (India) pointed out that the term "rights and responsibilities" was already used in a number of texts. The main purpose of paragraph 2 (b), however, was to promote the rights of women. She therefore appealed to the Thai delegation to withdraw its proposal.

51. Princess PURACHATRA (Thailand) regretted that she could not withdraw her amendment. She had been concerned with social questions in her country for many years and had found that women, like men, were anxious to exercise their rights but less prepared to fulfil their duties and responsibilities. It was necessary to inculcate a sense of responsibility in people to ensure that they would do nothing that might be harmful to the community or the Government. The people should be informed not only of their rights but also of their responsibilities towards society. The addition of the words "and responsibilities" met a specific need and should not cause any difficulty.

52. Mrs. THOMSON-TRENOH (Togo) thought that the first part of paragraph 2 (b) should simply emphasize the rights of women, which many of them did not even know existed. In a spirit of compromise, however, her delegation could agree that women's responsibilities should also be referred to at the end of the subparagraph.

53. Mrs. LISBOA de NECER (Venezuela) agreed with the Mexican representative, and would prefer paragraph 2 (b) left as it was.

54. Mrs. TALLAWY (Egypt) said that the subparagraph in question should be considered in relation to the beginning of paragraph 2, which dealt with the need "to improve the situation of women" in different areas. The point at issue was not to remind women of obligations of which they were well aware, but to enlighten them as to their rights. There was no intention of dissociating rights and duties, but it was pointless to refer to their duties in the context of paragraph 2 (b). However, in a spirit of conciliation, she could agree, like the representative of Togo, that the responsibilities of women could be referred to at the end of the subparagraph.

55. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) also thought that the original text of paragraph 2 (b) was quite satisfactory. Rights and duties were naturally inseparable, but that was not the point of the subparagraph, which aimed at informing women, through the mass media or other means, of rights they knew nothing about. Her delegation nevertheless agreed that the responsibilities of women could be mentioned at the end of the subparagraph.

56. Mrs. HERRAN (Colombia) supported that compromise solution, although she would have preferred the original version of the subparagraph for the reasons already given by other delegations.

57. The CHAIRMAN noted that delegations were in agreement on the addition of the words "and responsibilities" at the end of paragraph 2 (b). If there were no objections, she would take it that the amendment was adopted.

58. It was so decided.

59. Draft resolution E/CN.6/L.695 was adopted as amended

Draft resolution E/CN.6/L.696

60. Mrs. FREDGARD (Sweden), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the co-sponsors, said that the compilation of basic data on the status of women was indispensable for the improvement of their status. That was why, if the draft was adopted, the Statistical Commission would be requested to pay special attention at its 1978 session to the relevant provisions of the World Plan of Action. In many countries, data of special relevance to women either were not available or were not used in analyses. Moreover, they were usually incomplete, in that the contribution of women to development was often disregarded in national statistics; for instance, their economic role in agriculture and food production was more often than not completely overlooked. It was therefore very important - and that was the purpose of the draft resolution - to give high priority to efforts to collect the most comprehensive and satisfactory data in that respect.

61. Miss ST. CLAIRE (Secretary of the Commission) said that the revised text of the draft resolution introduced by the Swedish delegation was not yet ready in all languages.

62. The CHAIRMAN thought that, in the circumstances, consideration of the draft resolution might be deferred to a later meeting.

63. It was so decided.

64. The CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention, for purposes of information, to documents E/CN.6/NGO/267 and Add.1, which had been submitted by non-governmental organizations.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.