



Chairman: Mr. Carlos GIAMBRUNO
(Uruguay).

AGENDA ITEM 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council [chapters XII (section H), XIII, XIV (sections A and C), XV (sections A and D) and XVII to XIX] (continued) (A/8703, A/C.3/L.1964, A/C.3/L.1965, Economic and Social Council resolutions 1676 (LII) and 1681 (LII))

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

and

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

1. Lady ELLES (United Kingdom) said in connexion with the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the General Assembly in Economic and Social Council resolution 1681 (LII) concerning an International Women's Year that her delegation did not consider that observing an international year was the best way of achieving justice and fair treatment for women. In the first place, it seemed from the Council's report (A/8703) that the proposal had not been clearly thought out in particular in the choice of the year 1975. Under Council resolution 1677 (LII) Member States were requested to submit information, in a four-year cycle starting in 1972, on the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Since two of the purposes of the proposed International Women's Year were to take stock of the existing situation and to make plans for future action, it would be more appropriate for it to be observed—if at all—in 1976, the end of the four-year cycle. Secondly, her delegation had frequently expressed the view that such action involved a great deal of time, energy and money which could be better used for continuing serious studies and more realistic proposals. Thirdly, her delegation viewed with some distaste the thought of an international year devoted to half the world's population and felt that to single out women in that way was somewhat ridiculous and also an affront to women's dignity. Accordingly her delegation could not support the draft resolution in question in its present form, but she felt that it could and should be improved and she would be interested in hearing constructive suggestions from other delegations to that end.

2. Regarding the report of the Commission on Human Rights as referred to in chapter XIV, section B, of the Council's report, she said she was aware that during the debate in the Council some delegations had expressed

the view that the Commission had not performed in recent years as well as it might. Her delegation had supported the effort made by a number of members to seek ways to improve the Commission's effectiveness and had supported Council resolution 1694 (LII) on the organization of the Commission's work. One aspect singled out in that resolution was that the Commission had not dealt adequately at its twenty-eighth session with the work of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission had been urged to devote sufficient time at its twenty-ninth session to the consideration of the Sub-Commission's reports on its twenty-fourth¹ and twenty-fifth sessions² and to its studies which had not been acted upon.

3. Obviously there was no conflict between Council resolution 1694 (LII) and the General Assembly's recent request to the Commission on Human Rights to prepare the programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination as a matter of highest priority,³ since the programme was already contained in the Sub-Commission's report on its twenty-fifth session. Delegations might wish to bear the Council resolution in mind in connexion with the assignment of further tasks to the Commission for its twenty-ninth session. The Commission's work had not been made easier in the past by the tendency of the General Assembly—including the Third Committee—to so overburden its agenda that it could not deal effectively with all the items allocated to it. Her delegation hoped that at its twenty-ninth session the Commission would deal thoroughly but expeditiously with all the items on its agenda.

4. On the subject of slavery and slavery-like practices, in view of the importance of the question and the concern expressed at the fifty-third session of the Council, in its resolution 1706 (LIII), and by members of the Third Committee at the current session over illicit trafficking in labour and exploitation of migrant workers, her delegation was disappointed that the Sub-Commission had been unable to take action on Council resolution 1695 (LII), recommending ways in which existing international agreements on slavery might be implemented so as to prevent illicit trafficking. Slavery was not, as some people might think, virtually non-existent. The legacy of chattel slavery and problems related to slavery continued to exist and they were far more widespread than was commonly realized, and government assistance was essential if such practices were to be ended. Forced marriage, bride price, exploi-

¹ E/CN.4/1070 and Corr.1.

² E/CN.4/1101.

³ See General Assembly resolution 2919 (XXVII).

tation of child labour and forced prostitution were forms of slavery of which Governments were not aware or which they were unwilling to admit existed in their territory. That was why in paragraph 12 of Council resolution 1695 (LII) the Sub-Commission was directed to examine the possibility of establishing machinery to give advice on the elimination of slavery and the suppression of traffic in persons, and in paragraph 13 the Secretary-General was requested to prepare a plan of technical co-operation to contribute to the eradication of slavery. She also believed that co-operation between the United Nations and INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization) in that field could be improved and she had noted with interest that as a result of the Council's resolution, the ILO, INTERPOL and the Organization of African Unity were actively investigating illicit traffic and exploitation of labour, which were evidently no new problem.

5. She wished to place on record her delegation's appreciation of the immense tasks of the Council and the wide variety of subjects it had to consider. Her delegation would continue to work in active co-operation with others to seek improvements in the field of human rights.

6. Mrs. GUEYE (Senegal), welcoming the introductory statement made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Social and Humanitarian Matters, at the 1935th meeting, concerning the Commission on the Status of Women, said it was incredible that in the second half of the twentieth century there was still a gap between the status of women and the status of men. There were certainly biological differences between the sexes, but they no longer justified the fact that in the current era of rapid technological development, there were still many parts of the world in which women's status was very much inferior to that of men. That was what women were protesting against so strongly. They wanted to be equal, not identical. It was time that women, who constituted more than half the human race were given their proper place in the present-day world. Her delegation therefore whole-heartedly supported the draft resolution recommended for adoption in Council resolution 1676 (LII) concerning employment of women in senior posts and other professional positions by the secretariats of organizations in the United Nations system.

7. The United Nations, however, was not an abstract body, still less a super-State. Its action was determined by the action and the political will of its Member States, which must encourage the advancement of women at both the national and the international levels. The appointment of a woman as Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations and the fact that she was currently serving as President of the Security Council were steps forward for all African women. At a time when women were playing an increasing part in a dehumanized world, when men were continually destroying one another by violence and hate, that appointment and the appointment of a woman to the post of Assistant Secretary-General were a symbol of hope for a more just and humane society, in which all forms of discrimination, hate and violence would

be eliminated. Accordingly her delegation also whole-heartedly supported the draft resolution recommended in Council resolution 1681 (LII) and suggested that the Commission on the Status of Women should bear in mind the importance of cultural and educational problems when preparing a programme for an international women's year. In many countries women were not all enjoying their full rights, because of ignorance, lack of information and lack of means of communication; many were deprived of their rights by social and cultural traditions. The prejudices which kept women merely as part of the family group, responsible for reproduction and the stability of the home, must be combated without further delay. Women should be regarded increasingly as agents for development in the community and enabled to participate effectively in the economic and social development of the society in which they lived. The problem would be difficult to solve without changes in behaviour. Action during International Women's Year should be designed to ensure that States adopted laws with a view to achieving a social order in which men and women would enjoy the same advantages.

8. In Senegal, the Family Code just adopted by the National Assembly provided a legal framework for women's liberation, development and advancement and represented a considerable advance in the protection of women and children. Its provisions included the abolition of repudiation, raising of the marriage age and limitation of polygamy. Women were playing a growing part in all aspects of public activity, including representation in the National Assembly and other bodies, because her country recognized that the degree of development of society could be judged by women's place in it.

9. Mrs. NIGAM (India) said that Mahatma Gandhi had regarded the advancement of women and their equal participation with men in all aspects of national life as an integral part of the struggle for independence. She welcomed the appointment of a woman to the post of Assistant Secretary-General for Social and Humanitarian Matters, which she hoped would be followed by more such appointments, and she was happy to see a woman serving as President of the Security Council for the first time.

10. It was regrettable that so little progress had been made since the first session of the Commission on the Status of Women in securing equal status for women in society and equal opportunities in social and political life. In developing and highly developed countries alike, women continued to face discrimination in employment, social laws, careers and other opportunities. Whenever and wherever they had been given equal opportunities they had proved equal to men in capacity, achievement, intelligence and industry, so that they could no longer be regarded as inferior.

11. In India women had traditionally enjoyed a place of high respect in the family and in society. A number of prominent women leaders had emerged during the struggle for independence and after independence had

contributed substantially to the task of social and economic regeneration for India. However, even though her country had a woman Prime Minister and 36 women members of Parliament, it still had a long way to go to achieve full equality for women.

12. The problem of emancipating women and giving them their proper status in society was clear cut and, given the necessary will and determination, it should not be difficult to initiate remedial action. Surveys carried out in highly developed countries showed disturbing trends: for example, it was reported that in the United States the earnings of women were less than two thirds of the earnings of the average man; and that more than 60 per cent of the 30 million women currently working were employed in relatively low-paid jobs. She suggested that intensive studies on the status of women should be carried out in developed and developing countries, with a view to urgent organized international action.

13. In her opinion, the real losers through discrimination against women were men. Children would benefit from their mother's sound economic position and her status in society. One reason for the constant increase in juvenile delinquency was the discrimination which had made women insecure, handicapped, backward and frustrated. Those women, in every country, would be the mothers of the future leaders, scientists, industrialists and politicians who would guide the destiny of nations. How could a handicapped mother be expected to inculcate in her children the qualities and human values that made for leadership and statesmanship? The answer was apparent in the blunders that statesmen committed and the resulting misery, suffering and death for men and women. Statesmen and Governments should learn that lesson and work for equal status for women and the elimination of legal, social, professional and political discrimination.

14. She supported the draft resolution recommended in Council resolution 1681 (LII), but suggested that it might be made more effective by the inclusion of new operative paragraphs on the following lines, to be inserted between operative paragraphs 1 and 2:

"Suggests that national governments chalk out time-bound programmes for the removal of discrimination against women in legal, social, professional, economic and political fields;

*"Recommends that early ratification by all Member States of ILO Convention No. 100 of 1951 regarding equal pay should be taken up as soon as possible."*⁴

15. She appealed to all men in high positions, whether political, social or economic, to safeguard their own interests by giving women equal status and removing existing discrimination.

16. Mrs. KRACHT (Chile) said that her country, at all stages of its social and political struggle, had set great store by the work of the Commission on the Status

of Women, in whose work it continued to take part, and also of the Inter-American Commission of Women and other similar bodies. It had never failed to appreciate their contribution with respect to a problem which was of such importance especially to the developing countries, where women had occupied an inferior position because they had been the principal victims of illiteracy, poverty, discrimination and age-old prejudices.

17. Unfortunately, there was no single universally valid formula for promoting equality between men and women and increasing women's contribution to national and international development. The international community must recognize that the existing inequality between men and women was attributable to the particular structure of a society and it was not an intrinsic part of the human condition. The promotion of equality meant the elimination of discrimination against women, who must be given the same opportunities as those available to men in all fields.

18. In the light of the experience it had gained, her country believed that the equality of women could be brought about only by a profound change in the structure of society, a change in which men and women working together would realize their just aspirations. The fulfilment of those aspirations was a priority concern of her Government. At the same time, it was aware that the many factors involved in discrimination against women had not been entirely eradicated. As the wife of President Allende of Chile had said, revolution was not easy—it involved sacrifice, deprivation and set-backs. Her Government fully acknowledged the urgent need to provide women with education and training. It was therefore undertaking special and wide-ranging action to raise the level of education of the adult population. In addition, to enable women to make their full contribution to the country's productive process, the Government was implementing a programme for the provision of nursery schools and kindergartens, attaching the highest priority to the most disadvantaged sectors of Chilean society. Another important part of her Government's programme was to establish full legal capacity, for married women and equal legal status for all children born in or out of wedlock, as well as suitable legislation on divorce which would safeguard the rights of wives and children.

19. At the recent Second Latin American Seminar on Women, held at Santiago de Chile under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and UNESCO, the wife of the Chilean President, who took a special interest in matters pertaining to women, had stated that it was essential to secure complete legal equality and equal opportunities for women. She had gone on to announce that the Government had enacted legislation which placed all Chilean children on an equal footing before the law, for it was impossible to speak of the advancement of women without taking into account the vital role they played as mothers and, therefore, as the corner-stone of the family unit.

20. Her delegation's references to Chile's aims and achievements had been prompted by the fact that the

⁴ Text subsequently circulated as document A/C.3/L.1967.

Committee had before it the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Assembly in Economic and Social Council resolution 1681 (LII), concerning the proclamation of 1975 as International Women's Year. Her country viewed with sympathy any movement to further the rights of women, while at the same time rejecting entirely the arguments of those who wished to foment rivalry between the sexes. In some capitalist societies and in countries under the sway of imperialism, men and women alike had been the victims of exploitation and injustice. They must, acting in unison, struggle to free themselves and fulfil their functions, without any trace of discrimination, in a rapidly advancing society.

21. To achieve the desired objective, it was necessary to promote programmes, studies and seminars on women in rural areas and on the access of women and young people to education and technical and vocational training. In that regard, UNESCO was undertaking an experimental project of great value in Chile. Much could be expected from UNESCO, and in particular from the ILO, for they had accomplished a great deal in that field.

22. Equality for women was important to all countries, but particularly to the developing countries, where women must, more than ever, assume their proper role and responsibilities, especially in the process of rapid political and social change being experienced throughout the world.

23. Miss PRODJOLALITO (Indonesia) said that her delegation had been fortunate enough to participate in the deliberations of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women which had dealt with items that were of great significance for men, women and children. Indeed, the function of the Commission was particularly important, for no other United Nations body dealt with problems such as the role of women in the family, the status of the unmarried mother or the status of women in private law—problems that, as all were aware, had to be resolved.

24. It was gratifying to note the progress made by the Commission and its decision regarding the programme of work and establishment of priorities, whereby its sessions would be devoted alternately to civil and political rights and to social and economic rights. Her delegation wished to commend the work of the Chief of the Section on the Status of Women and to express its gratitude to the representative of Liberia for the able manner in which she had acted as Chairman of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. At that session, the Commission had adopted a number of resolutions on questions of great importance to women, such as those pertaining to the influence of mass communications media on the formation of attitudes which resulted in discrimination against women, and the problems of rural workers of whom the majority were women. In that connexion, one of the Commission's resolutions, subsequently adopted as Economic and Social Council resolution 1678 (LII), requested UNDP, other appropriate United Nations organizations and the regional

organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, to give full consideration to allocating more of their technical assistance funds for the purpose of more effective planning and implementation of rural development programmes for women. However, in her view, an item of no less importance was the family planning programme, not only as a factor in social and economic development but also as one which would enhance the status of women by providing them with the opportunity to develop their own skills and talents.

25. Her full support would go to the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Assembly in Council resolution 1676 (LII) for two reasons. First, as the representative of Liberia had pointed out at the 1943rd meeting, the number of women employed in the lower professional levels of the Secretariat was in inverse proportion to the number employed in senior posts. Secondly, it was only natural that the United Nations should set an example in the elimination of discrimination against women in all walks of life. Therefore, she was particularly pleased to note the appointment of a woman to the post of Assistant Secretary-General for Social and Humanitarian Matters.

26. She endorsed the Indian representative's recommendation calling for early ratification by all States of ILO Convention No. 100 concerning equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, of 1951. Lastly, she said that her delegation would also give its support to the draft resolution recommended in Council resolution 1681 (LII), concerning the proclamation of 1975 as International Women's Year. It was her hope that the programme for the Year would be geared to activities in all fields of interest to women, particularly women in the developing countries, who faced such serious problems as malnutrition, illiteracy, a low standard of living and urbanization. The programme in question required careful formulation if International Women's Year was to be a success and to benefit women all over the world.

27. Miss HOLZER (Austria) said that her delegation had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution on capital punishment (A/C.3/L.1964) because of its firm conviction that the abolition of capital punishment in all countries would be an important step towards the realization of article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stated the principle that everyone had the right to life. Capital punishment had been abolished in Austria, and her Government had taken action at the national and international levels to further the cause of universal abolition. Her delegation had taken an active part in activities leading to the adoption of several resolutions on capital punishment, in particular General Assembly resolution 2857 (XXVI). At the fiftieth session of the Economic and Social Council, which her delegation had attended as an observer, it had submitted a memorandum on capital punishment which had been circulated as an official United Nations document.⁵

28. The question of capital punishment was still not receiving sufficiently detailed consideration in the

⁵ E/L.1378.

United Nations. In many cases the information provided by Governments on the legal procedures and safeguards relating to capital punishment and on those Governments' attitudes to further restriction of its use had been rather limited. However, the excerpts from replies received from Governments⁶ showed considerable improvement in that respect and would provide an adequate basis for the preparation of the Secretary-General's report. That report should enable the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-fourth session to give proper consideration to the current situation with regard to capital punishment.

29. Miss CAO-PINNA (Italy), introducing the draft resolution on capital punishment (A/C.3/L.1964), said that it was of a procedural character and designed to facilitate consideration by the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-fourth session of the current situation and trends of the law, practice and procedures relating to capital punishment. The sponsors believed that the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Council should be prepared on the same lines as the reports provided in 1962 and 1967,⁷ with a view to ensuring comparability of data and a well-organized presentation of all available information.

30. The report should have been ready for consideration by the Council in 1971, but the Secretariat had been unable to prepare it because so few replies had been received from Governments. However, in response to resolution 1656 (LII), requesting the Secretary-General to invite Governments which had not yet replied to do so, 80 replies had been received, and others might arrive in time to be incorporated in the report.

31. The previous reports had not dealt in detail with practices and statutory rules governing the right of a person sentenced to capital punishment to petition for pardon, commutation or reprieve. Therefore, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General in paragraph 6 of resolution 2857 (XXVI) to prepare a separate report on that subject. The second part of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution before the Committee requested the Secretary-General to inform the Council of the progress made in collecting information for that separate report.

32. The sponsors hoped that as the draft resolution was of a procedural nature, the Committee would be

ST/SOA/118.

⁷ *Capital Punishment: Part I—Report, 1960; Part II—Developments, 1961 to 1965* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.67.IV.15).

able to adopt it unanimously. In view of the importance of the topic, it should be considered as a separate item on the agenda of the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

33. Miss GENDRON (Canada), introducing document A/C.3/L.1965 containing amendments to the draft resolution recommended in Economic and Social Council resolution 1676 (LII) on the employment of women in professional positions by the secretariats of organizations in the United Nations system, said that the purpose of the amendments was to incorporate in the draft resolution the latest information available from reports of the Secretary-General.

34. Mrs. NILSSON (Sweden) said that her delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution on International Women's Year, for although it had abstained from voting on it in the Economic and Social Council, it wished to defer to the majority of the Committee, which favoured observing such a Year. However, it remained unconvinced of the usefulness of the exercise: there was a tendency to celebrate too many days, weeks and years for various purposes; furthermore, an international year might not be the best way of improving the status of women and might even give rise to doubts as to the seriousness with which that goal was being pursued. Her Government remained firmly committed to the cause of improving the status of women, a cause which required action and attention every day of every year.

35. The Swedish Government attached great importance to the question of capital punishment, and her delegation was a sponsor of the draft resolution on that subject which was before the Committee. The sponsors had tried to achieve two aims: firstly, to draw attention to the question once again and to stimulate United Nations action; secondly, to avoid any commitment or recommendation regarding the substance of the matter in order to ensure that the resolution was procedural and non-controversial. She wished to stress the point made by the representative of Italy concerning the consideration of capital punishment as a separate agenda item. The Committee could not give proper consideration to the question as long as it figured as only a small part of the very voluminous report of the Economic and Social Council. However, the sponsors had not included that point in the draft resolution, because it might arouse controversy and detract from the unanimous support which they hoped the draft resolution would receive.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.