

United Nations
**GENERAL
 ASSEMBLY**

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

**THIRD COMMITTEE, 1067th
 MEETING**

Monday 9 October 1961,
 at 10.55 a.m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 85:</i>	
<i>Draft Convention and draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages (continued)</i>	
<i>General debate (continued)</i>	37

Chairman: Mr. Salvador P. LOPEZ (Philippines).

AGENDA ITEM 85

Draft Convention and draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages (A/4844, A/4820 and Corr.2, paras. 629-633, A/C.3/L.905, A/C.3/L.907-917) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. LENERT (Austria) said that he had submitted his amendment (A/C.3/L.914) in the hope that it would enable his country to vote for the draft Convention (A/4844, annex I). Dispensations were rarely necessary in Austria; yet it might be necessary to grant a dispensation not only in the interests of the intending spouses but also in the interests of an expected child. The need for a dispensation clause depended very much on the minimum age fixed. The higher the age, the greater the need for such a provision. Where the provision was made, it was essential to guarantee against abuse, and that was successfully done in the draft Convention through the requirement that the dispensation should be granted by an authority and that the authority should have serious reasons for such action. There seemed to him no need to specify what those serious reasons should be, but if the Committee insisted, he would suggest a less categorical wording, which could be achieved by introducing the word "specially" before the phrase "in the interest of the intending spouses".
2. Mrs. DELLA GHERARDESCA (Italy) suggested that the Austrian representative's objection might be met if the English version was brought closer to the French, in which case it would read: "... for serious reasons and in the interest of the intending spouses".
3. Mrs. CASSELMAN (Canada) said her delegation was aware of the difficulties which the draft Convention presented for many countries but was equally aware of the need of such an instrument. It was to be hoped that the Convention would help to bring about the social and economic changes which would eventually mean the end of child marriage.
4. Since some of the matters dealt with in the draft Convention fell within the jurisdiction of Canada's provincial governments, the Federal Government could

not take any definite position until the provinces had been consulted. Thus her delegation would have to abstain in the voting but at the same time it wished to stress that Canada heartily endorsed the instrument's objectives. In Canada, the consent to marriage of both parties had always been required. A minimum age for marriage without the consent of the parents or guardians had been set by the provinces, usually at eighteen years, and the registration of marriages had been compulsory for many years.

5. In her delegation's view, the fact that so many nations had met to consider the subject was in itself an indication of an important step forward. It was, she believed, the aim of all representatives to produce a clear, short and effective document which could be widely accepted. There were obviously exceptional circumstances in different countries, and the draft should be broad enough to cover such cases, for it was certainly not the intention of the drafters to inflict a hardship on any group of persons. Age-old customs and traditional ways of life might be difficult to alter; the Committee should therefore endeavour to make the instrument flexible enough to take into account the wide divergence of views which prevailed, without destroying its ability to meet the purposes for which it was intended.

6. Mr. ASIROGLU (Turkey) stated that the principles laid down in the draft Convention and draft Recommendation (A/4844, annex I) were recognized in Turkish positive law. Under the Turkish civil code, prospective spouses declared their intention to marry before the competent authority and the declaration was made public during a period of fifteen days. In making their declaration, the parties submitted their birth certificates, proof of the consent of their parents or guardian, where required, and also the death certificate of a previous spouse or proof of annulment or divorce in the case of earlier marriages. The declaration of the intention to marry was made to the municipality of residence of the prospective husband and published by the municipality of domicile of the parties and by the municipality where they were registered. Publication was refused if the declaration was not in due form, if one of the parties was not competent to contract marriage or if there was a legal impediment to marriage. Any interested party could oppose the marriage during the period of publication of the declaration. The objection was presented in writing to one of the municipalities that had published the declaration.

7. The minimum age of marriage specified in the Turkish civil code was eighteen years for men and seventeen years for women. Nevertheless, in exceptional cases the judge could authorize the marriage of men and women who had attained their fifteenth year. Minors could not marry without the consent of their parents or guardian.

8. Since the first three articles of the draft Convention were in keeping with his country's legislation, he was prepared to support them.
9. As marriage by proxy was not permitted under Turkish law, he could not support the amendment of New Zealand and Spain, even in its revised form (A/C.3/L.916), and would abstain in the vote. He would also abstain on the eight-Power amendment (A/C.3/L.909), since in his country consent had to be expressed by the two parties in person. His delegation would vote for the amendment of the Congo (Leopoldville) (A/C.3/L.908) because it would improve the text of article 1. It would also support that part of the Indian amendment (A/C.3/L.910) which would replace the word "the" by "any" before "authority" in article 1, since the proposed wording was more general and flexible than the original. As the second part of the Indian amendment seemed incomplete, he would suggest that the words "of the parents or" should be inserted after the word "consent". His delegation was not convinced of the need for the Polish amendment to the preamble (A/C.3/L.907) and would abstain in the vote. It could not support the Austrian amendment to delete "in the interest of the intending spouses" in article 2 and, while it would support the first two amendments in the United Kingdom proposal (A/C.3/L.913), it could not vote in favour of the remaining points.
10. Mr. KOUMBOU (Congo, Brazzaville) observed that many speakers, mainly Europeans, had argued that an international minimum age of marriage should be set. His delegation strongly opposed that idea, as it would clash with certain national customs and traditions which had proved themselves over the years. Difficulties would be raised, for instance, in States which permitted their citizens to marry before the age of fifteen. It would be far better to leave States a degree of latitude in the matter.
11. What interested Africans most in the draft Convention was the provision concerning full and free consent, especially as it applied to women. The need to improve the status of the African woman was well known to the Committee, and now that an opportunity had arisen to liberate women from their servitude, further delay would be most unfortunate. A minimum age was laid down in the civil codes of many of the countries represented in the Committee.
12. Nor could he agree with those who asked that the consent of guardians should be obtained. One purpose of the draft Convention was to safeguard prospective spouses from marrying under the pressure of third parties, but if the consent of guardians was required, that would be inviting the very evil the instrument was intended to combat.
13. His delegation held that the draft Convention should be adopted as originally drafted, with the addition of the amendments proposed by New Zealand and Spain and by the Congo (Leopoldville).
14. Mr. ERWIN (Australia) said his delegation would be happy to support a Convention and Recommendation along the lines of the Drafts now before the Committee. In his country, the Marriage Act 1961 laid down a marriageable age of eighteen years for men and sixteen for women. Related legislation passed in 1959 provided that marriages were voidable where either party was not of marriageable age and that marriages were void where the consent of either party could be shown not to be a real consent.
15. His delegation felt that the United Kingdom amendments to article 1 would broaden the text of the draft Convention sufficiently to enable countries recognizing proxy marriages to ratify the instrument. It also felt that it was appropriate to insert the words "the applicable" before "law" at the conclusion of the article. Those amendments in no way weakened the principle stated in article 1. The additional paragraph proposed by the United Kingdom was, however, superfluous to the intention of article 1, which concerned the act of formal marriage, and his delegation would therefore abstain. It would support the United Kingdom amendments to article 2.
16. His delegation would support the amendment of the Congo (Leopoldville), on the understanding that the application for, and receipt of, a marriage licence could be regarded as "due publicity". Regarding the Austrian amendment, he would prefer to retain the phrase "in the interest of the intending spouses", as it provided a valuable safeguard. Although his delegation appreciated the reasoning behind the second part of the Indian amendment, it did not think it relevant in the present Convention. It should be open to States parties to the Convention to include further safeguards in their own marriage legislation if they wished to do so.
17. Mr. FERREIRA ALDUNATE (Uruguay) announced that two amendments (A/C.3/L.911 and A/C.3/L.912) had been withdrawn by their sponsors. The Latin American countries had initially hoped for a convention which would be in keeping with their domestic legislative practices, specially in the matter of proxy marriages. But they had realized in the course of the debate that a provision on proxy marriage might be used as a means for evading the fundamental principle of the draft Convention, the principle of full and free consent. Marriage by proxy had proved to be a useful and successful institution in Latin America. The countries of the area were countries of immigration and often covered vast territories. Marriage by proxy was, however, an institution of an exceptional nature designed to meet exceptional circumstances and should not be sanctioned as a general rule. Accordingly, the Latin American countries had decided to accept a text which, although not strictly conforming to their own legislation, would preserve the fundamental principle the Convention was designed to defend. They would vote for the draft Convention in the closest possible form to that proposed originally.
18. Mr. TOURE (Upper Volta) endorsed the texts prepared by the Commission on the Status of Women. Their adoption would go far towards enhancing the position of women in society. His delegation supported the first three articles as they stood and would urge their approval without modification. If each country insisted on having its own customs and laws reflected in the texts, the result would be something that no delegation could accept. The minimum age of marriage, for instance, could not be the same in all countries of the world, for conditions differed radically from one country to another.
19. Mr. ARANYI (Hungary) said his delegation agreed with the provisions set out in the draft Convention. As many delegations had stated, a convention on marriage would be a step forward in the protection and broadening of women's rights. He wished to note, however, that in his country, where women enjoyed the same rights as men, the adoption of the draft Convention in

its present form would not entail any changes in the domestic legislation.

20. Article 1 stated the important principle of the free will and consent of both parties. Its adoption would be of vital importance for women, especially in the newly emerging countries. His delegation would support that principle as embodied in the draft. The amendment of New Zealand and Spain would represent an undesirable concession and, judging from experience, would give rise to abuse. For those reasons Hungarian law, like that of a number of other countries, did not recognize the institution of marriage by proxy. Nevertheless, some delegations favoured that principle because of their own national practices and his delegation believed that the draft Convention should be worded so as to allow the domestic laws of individual countries to prevail.

21. With regard to article 2, his delegation thought it would be desirable to fix a minimum age. In his country, the minimum age was eighteen years, subject to exceptional cases of dispensation for marriage under that age. His delegation believed that a marriage between persons under the fixed age should be held valid if a competent authority granted a dispensation after the marriage had been entered into, or if the spouses confirmed their approval of the marriage upon the attainment of full age.

22. Article 3 was fully acceptable to his delegation, since its provisions were appropriate and in keeping with Hungarian legislation.

23. With reference to amendments, his delegation supported the Polish proposal, as it believed that most of the problems mentioned during the debate occurred in territories referred to by the Polish delegation. He had no objection to the amendment of the Congo (Leopoldville) but could not support the eight-Power amendment as it conflicted with his country's legislation, which provided that both parties must express their consent in person before the competent authority. With respect to the United Kingdom amendment, his delegation was in favour of the original wording of the third line of article 1 because it considered that wording more explicit than the formula proposed. It had no objection to the insertion of the words "the applicable" before "law" but it could not support the addition of the new paragraph to article 1, since its provisions were in contradiction with Hungarian marriage law.

24. Mrs. DEMBINSKA (Poland) said that in general her delegation supported the draft Convention but she feared that if too many amendments were made to it, it might prove difficult for even its most ardent supporters to vote for it. Article 1, for example, the basic article of the draft Convention, formed an integral whole. It established the principle of the full and free consent of both parties to marriage and then set forth the conditions guaranteeing that principle in practice, namely, the expression of consent by the parties in person, in the presence of the competent authorities and in the presence of witnesses. Without those three conditions the principle could be violated and a weakening of any one of them would upset the balance of the article as a whole. She believed that the article as it stood embodied the clearest possible expression of the general intention and that the present wording was most in keeping with modern life. The United Nations ought not to try to perpetuate obsolete social structures. Certainly, some Governments would have difficulty in subscribing to the proposed Convention but

they should be encouraged rather than dismayed by the fact of its existence. Any compromise in the statement of the principle would inevitably reduce its value.

25. She did not think that it would be appropriate to mention parents and guardians in the context of the present Convention: their rights should be guaranteed in other sections of family legislation; to include them in a convention on consent to marriage would open the door to abuse and the use of pressure, especially on young girls. The question of the marriage of minors would inevitably arise since the marriage age was low compared with the age of legal majority, but the matter was adequately covered by the present drafting of article 2. She approved of the reference to the "competent authority" in that article: it was appropriate in modern conditions that the competent authority should have the final word, taking into account, naturally, the interests of the intending spouses and of their parents. She also approved of the general form of wording used in the first sentence of article 2: her delegation could not agree to the insertion in it of a specific minimum age for marriage. Arguments on grounds of climatological and physiological factors had been advanced in favour of a low marital age in certain countries: those were not, however, she would submit, the determining factors; the educational systems of countries had already to some extent prejudged the issue.

26. Most of the amendments which had been submitted, then, were not acceptable since they threatened the very basis of the Convention. Her delegation had no objection, however, to the amendment proposed by New Zealand and Spain since it made the necessary provision for the exceptional cases which were bound to occur under contemporary conditions. Bearing in mind that the absent party was more likely to be the man and that the competent authority would ensure that there had been no violation of the principle of full and free consent, she thought that there need be no fear that it would open the way to abuse. Nevertheless, marriage in the absence of one of the parties should be by way of exception only; it should not be encouraged. It was appropriate, therefore, that that provision should form the second paragraph of article 1.

27. In order to meet the legitimate criticism which had been expressed with regard to the first part of the Polish amendment she would amend the opening words to read: "Reaffirming that all States, including States which have or assume ...".

28. Mr. PEREZ QUESADA (Argentina) said that the debate on that item had convinced his delegation of the need for the adoption of the draft Convention and the draft Recommendation on Consent to Marriage. With regard to the former, his delegation shared the doubts of many speakers, especially from African countries, about the value of the great number of amendments which had been submitted. He believed that they would make it more difficult to secure its entry into force. The immediate object should be the adoption of the three principles—free consent, a minimum marital age and the registration of all marriages. No international instrument could be perfect, and none could be devised which would satisfy all; each country must therefore be prepared to make some sacrifice.

29. With regard to the draft Recommendation, his delegation supported the text as it had been adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifteenth session. Argentina did not think that either instrument should specify a minimum age of marriage:

the principle having been adopted, the decision as to the exact age to be set as the minimum should be left to the discretion of each country.

30. With respect to the draft final and formal clauses of the Convention (A/4844, annex III), his delegation preferred alternative B of article 4 since that would permit the accession of a greater number of States without specific invitation by the General Assembly, a process likely to give rise to lengthy political discussion. His delegation would incline to the wishes of the majority of the Committee with regard to the conditions for the entry into force of the Convention, the subject of article 6. With regard to article 7, the territorial application clause, his delegation preferred alternative text B since it ensured equal conditions of application for metropolitan States and the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories administered by them. A paragraph should perhaps be added to that article stating that the application of the Convention should extend also to the non-metropolitan territories whose international relations were the responsibility of one or other of the signatories.

31. In article 8, on reservations, also, his delegation preferred alternative B, a text identical with the formula used in the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (General Assembly resolution 1040 (XI)). Although it was to be hoped that the signatories to the Convention would not make any reservations with regard to its three main articles, it was desirable to foresee procedures for formulating reservations. With regard to article 9, again, his delegation would incline to the view of the majority in the Committee.

32. With respect to article 10, he desired to point out that Argentina accepted the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice only when, with respect to a specific dispute, agreement had been reached with the other party concerned to submit the dispute to that Court. He would therefore be in favour of any proposal for the establishment of an optional protocol on compulsory jurisdiction for the settlement of disputes similar to that annexed to the Convention on Diplomatic Relations signed at Vienna on 18 April 1961. With regard to article 11, his delegation considered text B preferable.

33. Mr. BOUQUIN (France) said that his delegation's silence in the debate on that item so far should not be taken to indicate a lack of interest in the proposed Convention; its very real interest had been amply demonstrated during the long and laborious work of drafting which had been done in the Commission on the Status of Women. The text before the Committee was, in fact, in his delegation's view, a well-drafted document, the fruit of considerable effort and reflection. There ought not therefore to be much room for amendment, and he hoped that many of those who had submitted draft amendments would, on consideration, see the wisdom of withdrawing them. Article 3, on registration, had won all but unanimous acceptance and Burma, the only exception, had admitted a gap in its own provisions in that respect and one which would shortly be filled.

34. With regard to article 2, his delegation had originally favoured the specification of a minimum age in the Convention but, recognizing the diversity of needs and conditions of different countries, had later recommended that the Convention should merely require national legislations themselves to specify a minimum age. Since the natural tendency was to raise the minimum age of marriage, it was

inevitable that dispensations would increasingly be necessary. It was good, therefore, that the Indian delegation had withdrawn its proposal (A/C.3/L.905) regarding that article. With regard to the Austrian amendment, the representative of Italy had rightly pointed to a difference between the English and French texts of the article in that connexion. There remained the United Kingdom amendments to that article. The first of them would undoubtedly weaken the text and the formula suggested would be more appropriate to a recommendation than to a convention. The second amendment should perhaps be confined to the English text, as was the case already with the third.

35. Turning to article 1, he recalled that some speakers had complained that "consent" was not defined in the present text. He believed that the words "full and free" constituted an entirely adequate definition. With regard to the Congo (Leopoldville) amendment, he understood that delegation's concern but wondered whether it was appropriate to speak of "due publicity" in connexion with consent; publicity would in any case tend to follow rather than precede the expression of consent. In the matter of consent, it was important not to confuse the consent of the intending spouses with the consent of parents or guardians which was more in the nature of an authorization. It was the former which formed the subject of article 1 and the second part of the Indian amendment to that article would therefore seem unnecessary. The question of marriage by proxy also gave rise to ambiguity. Marriage in the absence of one partner was perfectly admissible in exceptional cases. On the other hand, marriage through an intermediary, which could well mean marriage without consent, was entirely unacceptable to his delegation, and it could in no way support the eight-Power proposal for an amendment in that sense.

36. The other amendments to article 1 did not, he thought, improve the text, which in its present form gave his delegation full satisfaction. In particular he did not see the merit of the second United Kingdom amendment to that article, for the insertion of "the applicable" before the word "law". The amended wording had no sense in the French text and he would prefer to retain the present general formula. He noted, incidentally, that in the French draft the relevant phrase applied to the entire text of the article whereas in the English draft it applied to "witnesses" only; that raised the whole question whether the English or the French text of the draft Convention should prevail. In general he would commend simplicity in the wording of the article and would refer to the brevity of Article 146 of the French Civil Code, which simply stated that there was no marriage where there was no consent.

37. Mr. BAKHNEV (Bulgaria) said that the text of the substantive articles, as drafted, was fully acceptable to his delegation, while none of the amendments submitted was compatible with Bulgarian legislation. The basic principle underlying the Convention, namely, the free and full consent of both parties to a marriage, was accepted by all members of the Committee, and yet it was precisely that principle which had given rise to major differences of opinion. The various provisions of articles 1 and 2 were not mere technicalities, but constituted guarantees that consent would in fact be full and free; such safeguards were recognized in most national legislations and were absolutely necessary in an international convention, particularly where the

preamble referred to the abolition of certain customs, ancient laws and practices.

38. The safeguard relating to a minimum age of marriage was essential, since only persons of mental and sexual maturity could give truly free consent. He would have preferred the minimum age to be specified in the Convention but the mere fact that a minimum age must be determined by national legislations provided a safeguard. Under Bulgarian law, the minimum age was eighteen years, at which age rights of citizenship were also acquired and a person was considered to have become an adult. Marriages between minors were authorized in exceptional cases by the courts, which heard the views of parents and guardians; but those views were in no circumstances regarded as the overriding considerations, and he could not support the Indian amendment which would give the guardian final control. He wondered, in passing, why the Indian amendment did not mention parents. It must be borne in mind that in many countries where, unlike Bulgaria, the minimum age of marriage was lower than the age of full citizenship, there would be a large number of such cases.

39. A further safeguard of full and free consent was the requirement that such consent should be expressed in person in the presence of the competent authority and of witnesses. Bulgarian law provided no exceptions to that requirement, and many legal systems recognized the importance of a statement being made in person as a guarantee of its truth.

40. It was true that in many parts of the world women were still in a position of inequality, but emancipation from imperialist domination had brought about improvements, and the remaining inequalities might soon disappear. He would therefore urge the sponsors of the eight-Power and the U. K. amendments to article 1 to try to reach agreement on the basis of the original text or one of the variants suggested by the Chairman (A/C.3/L.915) and by New Zealand and Spain. He associated himself with the French representative in requesting other delegations to withdraw the amendments they had submitted. The Austrian representative had said that his amendment was designed to protect the interest of the unborn child, but experience in Bulgaria showed that the courts made no distinction between the interest of the parents and that of the child; both would be covered by the original text.

41. His delegation was convinced that agreement could be reached on the text of article 1, to which various United Nations organs had devoted much time and which could play a positive role in liberating women from a subservient status.

42. Mr. SILVA (Portugal) said that the draft Convention was substantially in accordance with the legislation which had been in force in Portugal for many years, and his delegation would have no hesitation in voting for its adoption. He agreed with the New Zealand and Spanish amendment, and felt that the determination of the minimum age of marriage under article 2 should be left to domestic legislations.

43. Mrs. TILLET (United States of America) associated herself with those representatives who preferred the text of the draft Convention as originally formulated. She recognized that it might be necessary to accept some amendments but hoped that the original text would pass without any substantial modifications.

44. Mr. KASLIWAL (India) supported the eight-Power amendment to article 1.

45. If the United Kingdom amendment to delete "the authority competent to solemnize the marriage" and to substitute "a competent authority" was accepted by the Committee, he would withdraw his own amendment to replace the words "the authority" by the words "any authority"; however, if the United Kingdom amendment was not acceptable to the Committee, he would press his own. The suggestion made by the Chairman improved the text but did not replace the word "the" by "any".

46. He was entirely opposed to the United Kingdom amendment proposing the insertion of the words "the applicable" before the word "law". There had been interminable debates concerning the word "applicable" in connexion with the draft International Covenants on Human Rights,^{1/} and his delegation did not accept the notion of *lex loci* in connexion with international instruments.

47. He was opposed to the third United Kingdom amendment to article 1, which was far removed from the spirit and language of the draft Convention.

48. A number of speakers had opposed his own amendment to add a new paragraph to article 1 and the Australian representative had used the strange argument that it was irrelevant. One of the objectives in the preamble was the elimination of child marriages and of the betrothal of young girls before the age of puberty, and he failed to see how those ends would be achieved by adopting such an innocuous convention. If a minimum age of marriage had been specified in the Convention, his amendment would certainly have been out of place; otherwise it was both valid and relevant. It was true, as the Argentine representative had said, that the minimum age could be determined by national legislations but, if so much was to be left to those legislations, it could be asked what was the use of the Convention. The Committee must not overlook the needs of the newly independent countries, which had no national legislation on such matters. The Polish representative had referred to moral pressures by guardians, but the latter had no reason to oppose a good marriage and it was their duty to oppose an undesirable marriage. The representatives of Turkey and Bulgaria had said that his amendment should refer to parents as well as guardians, but the word "guardians" included parents; if there was any difficulty on that point, an explanation could be included in the text.

49. He saw no reason for the United Kingdom proposals to amend article 2 by substituting the words "for marriage" in place of the words "of marriage" and inserting the word "such" in the phrase "no marriage".

50. Mr. CHAU SENG (Cambodia) felt that, in view of the climatic differences and varying customs of the countries represented in the Committee, a recommendation, which all Member States would be able to apply, would be better than a convention. Under the Cambodian Civil Code of 1912, all marriages must be registered and the minimum age was established at fifteen for girls and eighteen for men; his delegation, therefore, had no objection to the principles embodied in the draft.

51. He could accept the Indian amendment to article 1 concerning the consent of the guardian; the rights of women were not incompatible with the responsibilities of parents, who wished their children to be happy.

^{1/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eighteenth Session, Supplement No. 7 (E/2573), annex I.

Under the Cambodian Civil Code, both parties to a marriage must give their consent in person and, in the case of minors under twenty-one, the parent or guardian must also give his consent.

52. The point raised by some representatives who had mentioned the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of defining full and free consent, was an academic one; the term implied a full and free awareness of responsibility for one's actions; it was not a question of age, nor was it a matter which could be verified by the competent authorities.

53. To allow proxy marriages would be a violation of the principle of full and free consent in person. Marriage was a solemn act which might call for some sacrifice and provision for proxy marriages was not desirable in the interest of the intending spouses themselves, especially the girl.

54. Mr. WAN MUSTAPHA (Federation of Malaya) recognized that the amendment submitted by the representative of the Congo (Leopoldville) was due to a concern for the protection of women but he felt that the words "full and free consent" provided sufficient protection. If it were not full and free, there was no consent, and the marriage would not be valid under

the Convention. There were many reasons, especially in civilized societies, why parties to a marriage might not desire too great publicity and any amendment which made the provisions of the Convention too rigid would render a disservice to the status of women by making it impossible for men to comply.

55. He supported the Indian amendment to include a reference to the consent of the guardian in the case of minors, which was in conformity with the laws of the Federation of Malaya and other Moslem countries.

56. In his statement (1064th meeting), he had stressed the importance of considering the interest of the intending spouses where article 2 was concerned. Some delegations were in favour of raising the minimum age of marriage but, although he did not support early marriages, there should be provision for exceptional cases in the interest of women.

57. He would support all the amendments submitted by the United Kingdom, provided that they did not conflict with the amendments and recommendations of his own delegation.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.