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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Twentieth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 1 March 1967, at 11.45 a.m.

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term programme (E/CN.6/473, 477, 478; E/CN.6/NGO/181, 183; E/CN.6/L.519,  
L.520 (continued))

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mrs. SIPIIA	(Finland)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mrs. JADRESIC	Chile
<u>Members:</u>	Dame Mabel MILLER	Australia
	Miss PROBST	Austria
	Mrs. MARINKEVICH	Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
	Miss WANG	China
	Mrs. UGGELDAHL	Finland
	Miss CHATON	France
	Miss ADDISON	Ghana
	Mrs. CHICAS de GARCIA	Guatemala
	Mrs. SOUMAH	Guinea
	Mrs. de BROMLEY	Honduras
	Mrs. BOKOR	Hungary
	Mrs. NAVHI	Iran
	Mrs. AL-RADI	Iraq
	Miss FUJITA	Japan
	Mrs. KIGONDA	Kenya
	Mrs. STEVENSON	Liberia
	Mrs. AISHAH	Malaysia
	Mr. CHEIKH ABDALLAHI	Mauritania
	Miss LAVALLE URBINA	Mexico
	Miss de VINK	Netherlands
	Mrs. ROBERTSON de OTAYZA	Peru
	Mrs. SAN DIEGO	Philippines
	Mrs. DEMBINSKA	Poland
	Mrs. CHATER	Tunisia
	Mrs. DINCMEN	Turkey
	Mrs. BYENKYA	Uganda
	Mrs. NIKOLAEVA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mrs. HUSSEIN	United Arab Republic
	Mrs. JEGER	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mrs. TILLET	United States of America
	Mrs. ALMOSNY	Venezuela

PRESENT (continued):

Observers for Member States:

Miss FLETCHER	Canada
Mrs. BARRIOS	Dominican Republic
Mr. NICA	Romania

Observers for non-member States:

Mrs. FRANSEN	Federal Republic of Germany
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Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mrs. JOHNSTON	International Labour Organisation
Miss FRIDERICH	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Dr. THOMEN	World Health Organization

Representative of other United Nations bodies:

Mrs. MEDEROS de GONZALEZ	United Nations Children's Fund
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Secretariat: Mrs. BRUCE Chief, Status of Women Section

Mrs. SANTANDER-DOWNING	Secretary of the Commission
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ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS (E/CN.6/476 and Add.1; ST/TAO/HR/28; E/CN.6/NGO/181; E/CN.6/L.521, L.522) (continued)

Miss CHATON (France) introduced draft resolution E/CN.6/L.521 on the seminars arranged under the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

Miss CHATON (France) introduced draft resolution E/CN.6/L.522 on the publicity to be given by non-governmental technical and women's organizations to the terms on which fellowships might be obtained.

Mrs. JEGER (United Kingdom) said that her delegation welcomed the draft resolution, since it attached great importance to the programme of fellowships. The fourth preambular paragraph was somewhat restrictive and she suggested that the words "national administrative and legal positions" should be replaced by the words "public, administrative and legal positions".

Mrs. STEVENSON (Liberia) proposed that the words "in 1965", in the second preambular paragraph, should read "in 1966", as the Secretary-General's report on advisory services in the field of human rights (E/CN.6/476 and Add.1) referred to the 1966 fellowship programme.

Miss CHATON (France) stated that the sponsors of the draft resolution accepted those two amendments.

Mrs. BRUCE (Secretariat) pointed out that candidates for fellowships were nominated by their Governments. She therefore suggested that the words "able to apply" in the fourth preambular paragraph should be replaced by the word "nominated".

Miss CHATON (France) accepted that change on behalf of the sponsors.

Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that her delegation did not support the fellowship programme; it preferred collective forms of advisory services, such as seminars. She would therefore abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted by 26 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: UNIFIED LONG-TERM PROGRAMME (E/CN.6/473, 477, 478; E/CN.6/NGO/181, 183; E/CN.6/L.519, L.520) (continued)

Miss ADDISON (Ghana) said that her delegation had been interested to read in the Secretary-General's note (E/CN.6/477) about the establishment of centres for training competent corps or cadres of women leaders. In a number of developing countries, there was a shortage of such cadres to mobilize women's energies and ensure their full participation in the economic, social and political life of their country. It was always the same handful of women who were active in public affairs. Some younger women were interested in social work, but needed training. Ghana had a centre training female staff for the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development and its activities could be extended to include other women.

In addition to financial support from the Government, such a centre should draw inspiration from an active national commission on the status of women. Pending the formation of a commission, often a difficult task, groups of women could work together in certain areas. For instance, many young people needed guidance to help them to adapt to living conditions in big cities. National groups or commissions could join forces with the Young Women's Christian Association and the Young Men's Christian Association. Men as well as women should be members of the national commissions, since both had a responsibility to meet the needs of their community.

The questionnaire to be prepared by the Secretary-General on the role of women in economic and social development should include questions on the following subjects: women's organizations in the country and their objectives; the percentage of literate women members of such organizations and the educational background of the officers; co-operative activities undertaken by women in the rural and urban areas and the successes achieved.

The impact of the work of WHO, FAO and UNICEF was very strongly felt in Ghana. The FAO regional office for Africa was located at Accra and its home economist was in contact with Ghanaian government officials. Home economics courses in Ghana followed the definition of home economics given in paragraph 8 of document E/CN.6/478. In that connexion, Ghana was being assisted by consultants from Cornell University, part of whose salaries were paid by UNICEF. A symposium on the subject of children would be held shortly in the home economics department of the University of Ghana.

(Miss Addison, Ghana)

Ghana was also receiving assistance from UNICEF in the form of teaching aids and equipment and transportation. WHO was working in co-operation with UNICEF to eradicate disease and had provided assistance in the development of nursing services in Ghana.

It was encouraging to note that, in connexion with the survey of peasant agriculture in Northern Nigeria, FAO would be studying the functions of women in the home and family and in agricultural production. That study would be useful to countries such as Ghana, whose economies were mainly agricultural. Her delegation also welcomed the proposal made at the thirteenth session of the European Commission on Agriculture, which had resulted in the convening by FAO of a meeting on long-term planning in home economics. There was a need to train staff from developing countries; and at the proposed seminar on the development and strengthening of home economics education in developing countries, attention should be given to the need to retrain local personnel.

Mrs. DINCMEN (Turkey) said that the unified long-term programme of United Nations assistance for the advancement of women was a new and effective way of helping to solve the problems confronting women all over the world. It also gave the Commission an opportunity to initiate long-range programmes and evaluate the problems connected with the advancement of women in general.

Her delegation welcomed a questionnaire on the role of women in economic and social development, the preparation of which the Economic and Social Council had requested in its resolution 1133 (XLI), and it would shortly submit suggestions regarding the contents of the questionnaire.

If the long-term programme was to be successful, harmonious co-operation would have to be established between Governments on the one hand and the United Nations and the specialized agencies on the other. Although each Government had to determine its own order of priorities in the light of national conditions, further and more detailed studies by the United Nations might bring to light a common denominator. The Commission and the specialized agencies concerned fulfilled an important function by drawing Government's attention to the urgent problems facing women. The advancement of women should be given due priority, since the economic and social development of a country required their participation. It was therefore disappointing to note that Governments were not making full use in that respect of the assistance available in the United Nations. She hoped that their failure to do so indicated not so much a lack of interest as ignorance on their

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(Mrs. Dincmen, Turkey)

part. Her delegation accordingly welcomed the printing as a sales publication of the Secretary-General's report on resources available to Member States for the advancement of women.

The question of family planning should find a place in programmes aimed at the advancement of women. Population increases generally hampered efforts to achieve economic development and the population explosion in Turkey was posing a very serious and urgent problem. The laws prohibiting birth control had recently been altered. A different policy was now followed and family planning was a subject of great interest.

As part of its efforts to promote the advancement of women, the Turkish Government devoted special attention to the health of women and children. Health centres provided not only medical attention but also instruction in child care and family planning. Medico-social centres, established with the assistance of UNICEF and WHO, provided medical care for mothers and children, supported the local health services and engaged in educational activities.

It had been suggested that a national commission should be formed in Turkey to determine the broad outlines of a long-term national policy for the advancement of women and that existing laws and regulations on women's rights should be reviewed and, where necessary, amended, in the light of the various international agreements and conventions. It had also been suggested that the recommendations made in Economic and Social Council resolution 1133 (XLI) should be considered during the preliminary work of the national commission.

Mrs. NAVHI (Iran) observed that Iran, which was one of the founding Members of the United Nations, had always attached great importance to the promotion of economic and social progress and development. It had made its first contribution to the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance as early as 1950. Over the next fifteen years, it had received 1,882 expert assignments and had been granted 1,327 fellowships. The total value of the aid provided under the various technical co-operation programmes was estimated at more than \$30 million.

Although women had benefitted from different projects under Iran's first three national development plans, there had been no special project for the training of women until the fourth development plan, which was now being implemented. Under that plan, special provision had been made for women's activities and a national rural women's service was to be created with technical

(Mrs. Navhi, Iran)

assistance from the United Nations and the specialized agencies and with financial assistance from UNICEF. A copy of the plan of operation, which was now before the Iranian Government, would be sent to the United Nations Secretariat. It was expected that UNICEF would make 200 grants for the training and living expenses of women from the provinces and rural areas. The women would return to those areas after training. UNICEF would also furnish equipment and transport. Advisers would be provided by the ILO, FAO, UNESCO and WHO.

Of the three forms in which technical assistance was offered to Governments, fellowships were the least satisfactory. Many of the young women and some young men who had received fellowships for study abroad had not returned to Iran, with a consequent loss of human and intellectual resources to the country. On the other hand, it was not easy to find mature persons to study abroad, as they usually had family responsibilities. For those reasons, her Government felt that United Nations assistance could best be used in multi-purpose programmes within the country. In that way, women could be trained in all aspects of community development and given an insight into the problems of women in rural areas. Technical assistance could also be fruitful in setting up properly organized radio programmes specially for women in rural areas. It was impossible to adopt a world-wide programme of technical assistance for the advancement of women without adequate information on the needs of women in different areas and the type of training they required, so that technical assistance should also be provided for research. Lastly, the international organizations should not be the only source of technical assistance, which could also be given under bilateral programmes and by women's associations in advanced countries. By helping the women of the developing countries, such associations would themselves be strengthened and make a greater contribution to their own societies.

Mrs. AISHAH (Malaysia) said that her delegation particularly welcomed the report of the participation of women in community development programmes (E/CN.6/473). Community development involved far-reaching changes in the people's habits of thought and traditional way of life. The first essential was therefore to create the right attitude in the group concerned and the proper motivation for change, and that required a mental revolution. It was easier to train the younger

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(Mrs. Aishah, Malaysia)

people in new ways, but their elders could not be ignored. In Malaysia, it had been decided to use the traditional framework of society to launch the mental revolution that was needed. Where the women had faith in the social or religious leaders, it was through those leaders that the ideas of community development were propagated, but they were also spread through door-to-door canvassing and by educating the women's husbands.

Considerable success had been achieved in teaching Malaysian women to make use of their political rights, but progress with regard to other rights had been less satisfactory. The Government had made great efforts to improve the situation, by launching adult education programmes, from which large numbers of women had benefited. Some private organizations, such as political parties, provided formal instruction to prepare women for leadership. The National Association of Women's Institutes of Malaya, which had branches throughout the country, organized lectures, sewing and knitting classes, and educational tours. The women were thus taught useful skills; and they learnt about the country's economic activities through visits to Government departments and factories.

She welcomed the results of the Manila Seminar, which had aroused considerable enthusiasm among Asian women. Malaysia had not been represented at the seminar but would study the report (ST/TAO/HR/28) with a view to profiting from its conclusions.

Mrs. HUSSEIN (United Arab Republic) thought that the report on the participation of women in community development programmes (E/CN.6/473) was particularly valuable because it showed how women could play a role in development and influence government policy. Referring to paragraphs 17 and 18, she said that she had been able to observe the work of the 1952 survey mission to the Caribbean, which had aroused her own interest in community development.

In the United Arab Republic, the Association for Social Studies had launched a number of self-help projects in a few villages, but it had immediately become apparent that the resources of the rural population were not sufficient to ensure the success of such projects. The solution of aided self-help had therefore been adopted by the Government, which provided technical assistance and financing to encourage rural participation in the projects. Four pilot projects, known as rural

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(Mrs. Hussein, United Arab Republic)

social centres, had first been launched and they had been instrumental in changing the attitude of the local population. There were now several community development programmes, which were recognized as important components of the Government's social and economic development plans. It was not easy to change the people's attitudes, but it could be done. The selection of the right kind of leaders, who, instead of imposing decisions from above, would work with the local community and persuade it to take the necessary decisions, was of primary importance. The organizers of the community development projects in her country had first approached the traditional leaders, who were men, and then the women who received the benefit of community services. They had thus avoided antagonizing the conservative rural circles. The success of the method was due to the work of the urban women's organizations, particularly the Cairo Women's Club, which had been able to arouse the interest of the rural communities and enlist their co-operation. With the increasing participation of women in such activities, a new climate of opinion had been created in the rural areas and progress was being made towards raising the level of living.

Community development in the cities had followed a somewhat different pattern. The women's organizations, originally philanthropic, had now shifted from patronage to co-operation. They had helped to build up mother and child welfare services in the cities, applying the principle of self-help, and had then turned to family planning. It was thanks to the women's organizations that the subject of birth control, which had formerly been taboo, was now openly discussed and was being given top priority in government programmes. Nevertheless, the women's organizations viewed birth control more as a way to help women than as an economic measure.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.