COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Monday, 17 February 1947, at 2:30 p.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mrs. Begtrup (Denmark)

Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Street (Australia)

Rapporteur: Mrs. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Members:

Mrs. New (China)
Mrs. de Echeverria (Costa Rica)
Mrs. Lefauchox (France)
Miss Basterrechea (Guatemala)
Mrs. Hamid Ali (India)
Mrs. de Castillo Ledon (Mexico)
Mrs. Cosma (Syria)
Miss Sutherland (United Kingdom)
Miss Kenyon (United States of America)
Mrs. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mrs. Urdaneta (Venezuela)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. Rowe (ILO)
Miss Maass (UNESCO)

Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss Sender (AF of L)
Miss Spiegel (WFTU)

Secretariat:

Mr. Humphrey
Mr. Lawson
Miss Bowerman (Secretary of the Commission)

The CHAIRMAN informed the Commission that, at the request of several representatives, the Chief of the Information Section of the Secretariat had been called upon to explain what steps were being taken to inform the world of the United Nations' activities regarding the status of women.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the report consisted of two parts: I. Communications already received and, II. Future communications. The former fall into two categories: A. Communications which expressed interest, gave information or suggestions and offered co-operation, and B: Communications of protest and requests for action.

She particularly wished to draw the Commission's attention to the fact that the points raised in Section 4 of the report did not come under the various items of the Agenda, but were mere recommendations which might be given consideration in the course of the development of the Commission's programme during the next session.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) pointed out that by stating that consideration would be given to all the suggestions received, the Commission might lead the various organizations and individuals who had put them forward to believe that the Commission was in a position to take practical measures or conduct investigations, whereas it had no judicial capacity at all.

The CHAIRMAN replied that it had been considered useful to obtain as much information and as many suggestions as possible from non-governmental groups. Those suggestions could not always be put into practice. Sometimes, however, they might become the object of recommendations to the Economic and Social Council.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) likewise stated that the proposals put forward in the report had merely an informational value. The significant points contained in various communications extending over a considerable period of time had been compiled for the Commission's consideration. Some points mentioned therein had already been dealt with by the General Assembly.

The Sub-Committee was far from recommending that all those suggestions should be adopted; careful screening would undoubtedly be necessary, and the
adoption of the reports as a whole did not mean the adoption of every single recommendation.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) felt that the communications received from outside organizations were very valuable. They should be duly acknowledged and their authors informed that the Commission was giving consideration to the various suggestions.

The CHAIRMAN said that all communications were acknowledged by the Secretariat in the proper terms.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether a communication had been received from the International Democratic Federation of Women, and if it had been received, why there was no mention of it in the report.

Mrs. NEW (China) and Miss KENYON (United States of America) pointed out that no such communication had been found among the letters received down to the very moment of the meeting of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the letter from the Democratic Federation of Women had been forwarded to the Economic and Social Council, because that organization had asked for consultative status, and it was for the Council to decide under what category certain organizations should come, whereas the letter from the Inter-American Commission of Women which was a governmental organization, and its letter had been diverted to the Status of Women Commission.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) confirmed that a letter was addressed by the Democratic Federation of Women to the Economic and Social Council in October 1945. But a second letter was sent in January 1947 to the Chairman of the present Commission. She strongly insisted that the fact should be mentioned in the Sub-Committee's report. It was only natural to put the Democratic Federation of Women on an equal footing with the Inter-American Commission of Women. She suggested that a member of the Democratic Federation should be invited to give oral explanations before the Commission.
Commission on the activities of the organization.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) protested against the inclusion in the report of a reference to a letter which was not addressed to the Commission.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) recalled that the report of the Sub-Committee on Non-Governmental Agencies listed among the sixteen feminine organizations, the International Federation of Women as one that had received and sent communications.

Mr. LINCOLN (Secretariat) cleared up the point by explaining that all communications were distributed by the Secretary-General's Office to the proper point for action. The particular letter in question from the Democratic Federation, had been forwarded to the Economic and Social Council and not referred to the Commission on the Status of Women.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether it was right that such organizations should be sent to the Communications Committee and not to the Commission on the Status of Women.

Mr. LINCOLN (Secretariat) explained that the letter from the Democratic Federation of Women was sent by the Secretary-General to the Committee which considered requests of Non-Governmental Organizations for consultative status; that Committee was a Committee of the Economic and Social Council. It was only logical to send requests for consultative capacity to the competent Committee.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the Commission should hear a statement by a member of the Democratic Federation of Women the following day.

The CHAIRMAN stated that a vote had to be taken on the matter.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) announced that she would make a statement on the Inter-American Commission of Women, which represented twenty-one American countries, but wished that the letter from that Organization should in the meantime be distributed to the members of the Commission.

/Mrs. URALOVA
Mrs. URILOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), though desirous of seeing the letter in question, thought that the Commission was going beyond its agenda. The Commission was not supposed to deal with all these communications one by one. A special sub-committee had been set up for that purpose.

The CHAIRMAN answered that any member had the right to ask for additional clarification on any point of the report.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested that the discussion on the request of the Inter-American Commission of Women should come under Item 13 of the Agenda, entitled "Other Questions".

The CHAIRMAN agreed and asked the Commission to vote on the desirability of circulating the letter from the Inter-American Commission of Women.

DECISION: The Commission decided that the letter in question should be circulated by twelve votes in favour and none against.

The CHAIRMAN then invited the Commission to vote point by point on Section II of the Report (document E/CHN.6/39), entitled "Future Communications".

Paragraph (a) was adopted by twelve votes in favour and none against.
Paragraph (b) was adopted by twelve votes in favour and none against.
Paragraph (c) was adopted by thirteen votes in favour and none against.
Paragraph (d) was adopted by thirteen votes in favour and none against.

The CHAIRMAN called upon the Commission to vote on the report as a whole, on the understanding that the question raised by the Inter-American Commission of Women should be discussed under Item 13 of the Agenda, entitled "Other Questions".

DECISION: The Report of the Sub-Committee on Communications was adopted by twelve votes in favour and none against, with the above reservation.

In reply to the Chairman, Miss KIMNYC (United States of America) stated that the drafting committee of four had terminated its deliberations regarding the United Kingdom Resolution on education and political rights of women, but that the documents relating to it would only be available the following day.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that two more points remained on the Agenda: 1)
the programme of future work and, II) Co-ordination with other commissions.

She called upon the members to acquaint themselves with the necessary documents and particularly of the Reports of the Social Commission and the Reports of the Commission of Human Rights.

The Meeting rose at 4:10 p.m.