COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Wednesday 19 February 1947, at 2:30 p.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mrs. Regstrup (Denmark)
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Street (Australia)
Rapporteur: Mrs. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)
Members: Mrs. New (China)
Mrs. de Echeverria (Costa Rica)
Mrs. Lefauchoux (France)
Miss Basterrechea (Guatemala)
Mrs. Hamid Ali (India)
Mrs. de Castillo Ledger (Mexico)
Mrs. Cooma (Syria)
Mrs. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Miss Sutherland (United Kingdom)
Miss Kenyon (United States of America)
Mrs. Urdaneta (Venezuela)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. Rowe (ILO)
Miss Mass (UNESCO)

Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss Sender (AFL)
Mrs. Fuhrmann (ICA)

Secretariat: Mr. Lawson
Miss Bowerman (Secretary of the Commission)

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Secretariat should be asked to make a draft of the proposals submitted by the representatives of Australia, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and India, as all three related to amendments to various paragraphs in the Report of the Sub-Commission. The
to consider the question of how she could give expression to her wish to enter into close relations with the International Federation of Women.

The CHAIRMAN stated that there was no provision in the Commission's agenda for considering such a procedure.

At the Chairman's suggestion, the Commission returned to the examination of that part of its report concerning specialized agencies.

DECISION: A re-draft of the paragraph on relations with UNESCO, which would draw the attention of UNESCO to paragraph (a) of section I of the report of the nuclear Commission (recommendations of the Commission concerning education) was adopted by 12 votes to 0.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out a gap in the Commission's report: there was no mention of the possibility of collaboration with the International Refugee Organization, on which many refugee or deported women depended.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) remarked that the IRO was not a specialized agency.

Mr. LAWSON (Secretariat) said that this was true, but that steps would be taken to collaborate with the IRO and all the organizations concerned.

There was an exchange of views on the manner in which the various proposals before it would be incorporated in its conclusions.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) requested that the proposals submitted by members should be added to the report of the nuclear Commission.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) recalled that the report of the nuclear Commission had been adopted, since the Commission had approved it in substance. It was understood that no amendment would be made to it; proposals by members of the Commission would be in the form of resolutions.

The CHAIRMAN proposed the adoption of separate resolutions incorporating the recommendations made.

The meeting rose at 1:05 p.m.
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Wednesday 19 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. Lefaucheux (France)
Miss Easterrechea (Guatemala)
Mrs. Hamid Ali (India)
Mrs. de Castillo Ledon (Mexico)
Mrs. Cosma (Syria)
Mrs. Popova (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Miss Sutherland (United Kingdom)
Miss Kenyon (United States of America)
Miss Urdaneta (Venezuela)

Representatives of Specialized Agencies:

Mrs. Rowe (ILO)
Miss Izasa (UNESCO)

Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:

Miss Sender (AFL)
Mrs. Fuhrmann (ICA)

Secretariat: Mr. Lawson
Miss Bowerman (Secretary of the Commission)

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Secretariat should be asked to make a draft of the proposals submitted by the representatives of Australia, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and India, as all three related to amendments to various paragraphs in the Report of the Sub-Commission. The
Commission would then discuss the draft as prepared by the Secretariat.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) understood that the draft to be prepared by the Secretariat would form the programme to be adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women based on the programme adopted by the Sub-Commission.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) assumed that the instructions to the Secretariat regarding the proposals in question would be based on the resolution and decisions taken at the eighth meeting of the Commission held on 14 February. At that meeting the Commission had expressed its satisfaction with the Report, the main principles of which would be used for a basis of future work.

The CHAIRMAN said that when the Commission had before it the new draft prepared by the Secretariat it would have to decide what parts should be included in the future programme of the Commission.

She put to the vote the proposal that the Secretariat should be asked to make one draft of the amendments submitted by the representatives of Australia, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and India, regarding certain paragraphs in the Sub-Commission's report.

DECISION: The proposal was adopted by 13 votes to 1.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) read the joint draft proposal for development of a regional conference programme submitted by the representatives of China and of the United States, and said that it was an effort to find some concrete means of putting the Commission's principles into practical effect. She urged the Commission to support it.

Mrs. NEW (China) considered that the holding of regional conferences would bring the Commission's work before the women of the various countries, and such conferences might be a preliminary step towards the holding of a world conference.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the proposal submitted by the representatives of China and of the United States was premature, as the Commission had not yet availed itself of the experience gained by...
Mrs. CSSMA (Syria) supported the proposal and considered it of special value to the countries of the Middle East.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) said that the proposal was an important one, but considered that it should not be left to the Secretariat to decide where and when the regional conferences should take place.

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) supported the representatives of China and of the United States, and agreed with the representative of Syria that regional conferences would be very useful. The international women's organizations could be asked to help through their branches and by sending in suggestions.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) pointed out that the Commission on the Status of Women would naturally make the decision at its next session as to where and under what circumstances such regional conferences might be held, but felt that the Secretariat should work out two or three possible alternatives so that it would be easier for the Commission to make a decision.

Mrs. STREIT (Australia) considered that discussion of the joint proposal should be postponed until the next session to enable the Secretariat to collect information on the political, civil and economic status of women in the various countries.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said she would like to amend the word "would" in paragraph 1 of the joint proposal to read "might".

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) said that the Commission should indicate to the Secretariat as to where and when the regional conferences should be held.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) supported the proposal of the representatives of China and the United States and considered that the Commission should express agreement with it in principle. She felt that such regional conferences could not be arranged quickly. There were budgetary considerations to be taken into account, and therefore the Secretariat should be asked to make one or two alternative suggestions as to place and time of the conferences.
The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the proposal of the representative of Australia that consideration of the joint proposal of the representatives of China and Australia regarding the holding of regional conferences should be postponed until the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

DECISION: The proposal was defeated by 3 votes to 9.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) submitted the following amendment:

"It will pertain to the Commission on the Status of Women to indicate to the Secretariat the time and place which it deems desirable for the organization of regional conferences."

The CHAIRMAN said the Commission could not outline a detailed program regarding regional conferences; the Secretariat would be asked to do so.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote, paragraph by paragraph, the joint proposal of the representatives of China and the United States of America, which reads as follows:

It is therefore proposed that:

1. The Commission undertake a tentative programme of regional conferences, the first of which might be held during 1948.
2. The Secretariat be requested to outline detailed alternatives as to place, programme, budgets, leadership, and potential attendance, for consideration at the next meeting of the Commission.

DECISIONS: Paragraph 1 was adopted by 12 votes to nil.

Paragraph 2 was adopted by 11 votes to nil.

Referring to the remark of Mrs. Lefaucheux that the Commission should not support the proposal without giving instructions to the Secretariat as to where and when it desired the conferences to take place, Mrs. COZMA (Syria) suggested that the first regional conference should be in Syria, but she left it to the Secretariat to choose any other country in the Middle East.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) and Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the proposal of the representative of Syria.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the draft resolution on relations with the
Social Commission prepared by the Secretariat, based on the texts submitted by the representatives of Australia, Denmark and France, and reading as follows:

The Commission on the Status of Women, considering that the bad state and lack of housing constitutes a major obstacle to the betterment of the condition of women, supports the resolution of the Social Commission relating to town planning and housing.

The Commission requests that if the Economic and Social Council arranges for the establishment of a Service of Housing and Urbanism as proposed in the Social Commission's resolution, it arrange for effective collaboration between that Service and the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Commission requests that its desire that provision be made for community centres and facilities for the care of children and the equipment of homes with labour-saving devices to enable the housewife to participate actively in public and civil affairs be made known to the Social Commission.

DECISION: The draft resolution was adopted by 12 votes.

Miss KENYON (United States of America), referring to her proposal on the use of questionnaires concerning the status of women, stated that parts of the proposal had been covered by resolutions already adopted. She had modified her proposal, striking out those parts already covered and including one item from the Australian draft.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to the Danish proposal concerning the questionnaire, said that she would redraft it and submit it to the Commission on the following day.

The Chairman then read the draft proposal submitted by the representative of Mexico regarding the Inter-American Women's Commission.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (México) withdrew point 2 of her draft proposal.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether the
Inter-American Women's Commission was a governmental or non-governmental organization, and whether the women of that organization were also members of other international organizations.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) said that the organization was an international one, and the letter which had been sent to the Secretary-General, and of which members had copies, gave the whole history of the organization.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) asked if there was any agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-American Women's Commission. The proposal stated that the organization was an inter-governmental one composed of government delegates. Article 57 of the Charter stated that the specialized agencies established by inter-governmental agreement should be brought into relationship with the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 63.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) said the Inter-American Women's Commission was not a specialized agency. The letter to which she had already referred gave a clear idea of the functions of the Commission, and she asked that the letter be read.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Denmark, said that the organization was an important one as it represented twenty-one governments of the American countries. She considered that the Commission should work closely with the Inter-American Commission of Women although it was neither a specialized agency nor a non-governmental organization.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) explained the work achieved by the Inter-American Commission on Women for the last eighteen years. It had defended the cause of women's franchise in many world conferences. At San Francisco it had taken the initiative of recommending the adoption of the principles set forth in several Articles of the Charter relating to the rights of women. The present Commission itself was the outcome of a joint proposal submitted by the Inter-American Commission on Women and the Australian Delegation.

/Mrs. de Castillo Ledon
Mrs. de Castillo Ledón wished to pay tribute to the co-operation of Australia, New Zealand and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

She read an amendment adopted at San Francisco on her initiative, to the effect that "the Commission should co-operate with similar commissions in different parts of the world".

In proposing therefore the establishment of relations between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Inter-American Commission on Women, she was not concerned with the latter's official status but merely wished that ways and means should be found to co-ordinate the work of the two Commissions, in order to avoid duplication.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), while appreciating the statement made by the Mexican representative, felt no necessity for establishing formal contracts with the Inter-American Commission on Women, since the representative of Mexico was herself Vice-Chairman of that organization.

The Inter-American Commission on Women, being a non-governmental organization, came under Articles 53 and 67 of the Charter. Accordingly the present Commission was not qualified to contact that organization before the Economic and Social Council gave it official status.

She proposed that, in accordance with the terms of the Charter, the Mexican resolution should be referred to the Economic and Social Council for their consideration.

Mrs. de ECHEVERRIA (Costa Rica) and Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) emphatically supported the Mexican resolution.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom), while expressing her sympathy with the resolution, considered that the Inter-American Commission on Women was not a specialized agency, but a regional inter-governmental agency. Consequently, under the provisions of the Charter the Economic and Social Council was solely qualified to permit collaboration between the two Commissions. A request to that effect should therefore be introduced in the resolution.
resolution before referring it to the Council.

She proposed the following amendment to paragraph 4 of the resolution:

"The Status of Women: Economic and Social Council should implement the resolution that they consider ways and means of implementing this resolution, recognizing that the Inter-American Commission on Women is a regional inter-governmental organization working on the same problems as the Commission on the Status of Women."

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) agreed with the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and stated that pursuant to Articles 53 and 67 of the Charter, the whole matter should be referred to the Economic and Social Council.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) moved that the Commission should accept paragraph 3 of the resolution and refer the rest to the Economic and Social Council for further clarification.

Vote on the amendments proposed by the representatives of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the United Kingdom and Australia respectively:

1. The Byelorussian amendment to the effect that the Economic and Social Council should be requested to determine the status of the Inter-American Commission on Women, before the present Commission entered into contact with that organization, was rejected by 2 votes in favour and 10 against.

2. The United Kingdom amendment quoted above was adopted by 12 votes in favour and 2 against.

/3. Mrs. STREET
3. Mrs. STREET (Australia) withdrew her amendment.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) and Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressly stated that they had abstained from voting because the Mexican resolution was contrary to the provisions of the Charter.

Mr. LAWSON (Secretariat) stated that the resolution contained a mere recommendation to the Economic and Social Council and did not contravene the provisions of the Charter.

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) replied that Mr. Lawson's explanation did not satisfy her.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) recalled that Articles 53 and 67 of the Charter referred to specialized agencies only and that the Inter-American Commission on Women was not a specialized agency.

Adoption of paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Mexican resolution (paragraph 2 being withdrawn).

DECISION: Paragraph 1 was adopted by 11 votes in favour and 2 against.
Paragraph 3 was adopted by 10 votes in favour and 2 against.
The decision, accordingly, reads as follows:

The Commission decides:

1. to establish relations with a view to co-operation and co-ordination of the work with the Inter-American Women's Commission, in order to make use of its experience and the valuable studies by that organization in regard to the status of women in the Americas;

2. to request the Inter-American Women's Commission to send an observer to the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, to act in an advisory and informative capacity;

3. to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that the Council consider ways and means of implementing the Terms of this resolution, recognizing that the Inter-American Women's Commission is a regional intergovernmental organization working on the same problems as the Commission on the Status of Women.

Consideration of the Syrian Proposal Regarding the Methods of Work

Mrs. URALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) wished to know what was the basic idea of the proposal.
Mrs. COSMA (Syria) explained that it aimed at the practical means of implementing the decisions and purposes of the Commission.

DECISION: The proposal, which reads as follows: "In order to make known and stimulate interest in the work of the Commission and to assist in compiling the information required, the Commission recommends that the Secretariat arrange with Member States for one or more members of the Commission to visit Member States", was adopted by 11 votes in favour and none against.

Discussion of the French Proposal Relating to the Appointment of Women Correspondents of States not Represented on the Commission

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) stated that it was not possible to request Governments to appoint correspondents to a particular Commission, for purposes of information. The Governments had their own channels of information.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) explained that many Governments were not well informed of the activities of women's organizations and of those of the present Commission. Moreover Governments would not have to appoint the correspondents but simply approve the nominations made by the Secretariat.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) while agreeing with the purpose of the resolution said that two proposals already adopted provided for the carrying out of the liaison work envisaged in the French draft. She enumerated the practical difficulties in the way of appointing correspondents and pointed out that other Commissions might ask for the same privilege.

Miss KENYON (United States of America), Mrs. NEW (China) and Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) considered that the French suggestion had no practical utility especially in large countries like their own. The Members of the present Commission should themselves undertake the task of informing their respective countries of the work accomplished by the Commission.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) stated that she had put forward her proposal with a view to simplification. Since the Members of the Commission thought otherwise she would withdraw it.

Discussion of the Danish Proposal Relating to the Appointment of a Permanent Head of Women's Section

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the proposal but thought
that the clause "who has taken an active part to improve the status of women" precluded brilliant young women from being eligible to the post.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) proposed that a proviso should be added to the effect that nominations should be approved by the Commission on the Status of Women.

Mr. LAWSON (Secretariat), supported by Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) stated that Article 101 of the Charter, implemented by a resolution of the General Assembly gave the Secretary-General discretionary powers in all matters regarding the appointment of staff.

A discussion ensued in which the representatives of the United States and Australia pointed out that no vote could be taken on an amendment that was contrary to the provisions of the Charter.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) said that she was not convinced by the arguments put forward, and the vote on the Danish proposal was postponed until a definite ruling on the legality of the amendment could be obtained from the Secretary-General’s Office.

Discussion of the French Proposal Regarding the Rights of Women

Mrs. STREET (Australia) felt that it was preferable to put the resolution in the form of a question and ask the Governments concerned what steps they were taking to fulfill the pledges they made when signing the Charter.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) said that the matter was already brought up in the questionnaire that had been forwarded to the various Governments.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) pointed out the lack of logic in Governments sending representatives on the Status of Women Commission, while denying women political rights in their respective countries.

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) supported the French proposal and stated that States not carrying out their pledge should not be represented on the Commission.

/The CHAIRMAN
The CHAIRMAN answered that those representatives were very valuable as a direct source of information regarding the status of women in their countries.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) proposed that after the word "rights" the words "in addition to having explicitly accepted such principles by voting for the General Assembly resolution embodying them", should be added.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) accepted to withdraw the proposal, but on Mrs. COSMA's intervention the Commission requested the representatives of the United States of America, France and Syria to work out a new text in order to obviate the difficulty.

The meeting rose at 5:50 p.m.