COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Friday, 14 February 1947, at 11:00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mrs. Begtrup (Denmark)
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Street (Australia)
Rapporteur: Mrs. Uralova (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Members:
Mrs. Now (China)
Mrs. de Echeverria (Costa Rica)
Mrs. Lefauchoux (France)
Miss Basterrechea (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)
Mrs. Urdaeeta (Venezuela)

Representative of Specialized Agency:
Mrs. Rowe (ILO)

Consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations:
Miss Sender (AFL)
Mrs. Fuhrman (ICA)

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

Mrs. HAMID ALI (India) greeted the members of the Commission on behalf of India where, she said, women had awakened and where every day saw new demands for greater political, economic and social rights for women. Voting qualifications in India at the present time were such that only six million 

/women
women, as compared with thirty million men, had the right to vote. There was no adult franchise in India, and apart from the literacy vote, women depended on their husbands' property or office rights.

India's women had protested against this type of vote at the Roud Table Conference where the new Indian constitution was discussed, but to no avail. Theoretically there was no bar to women holding the highest office, but practically women had been excluded from every executive office.

The All-India Women's Conference had taken an active part in rousing public opinion in these matters and it was mainly through their efforts that a committee had been appointed to give aid and relief to Hindu women. Economically the position of Moslem women had been more satisfactory, but through lack of representation many bad practices had crept into Shariat or Islamic Law, practices recognized today under the name of Customary Law. All these difficulties could be eliminated only by codifying laws for all countries and all nations, enforcing equal rights for all citizens.

Mrs. URDANETA (Venezuela) moved "the Commission on the Status of Women, having considered Parts I and II of the report of the Nuclear Sub-Commission, wishes to express their satisfaction with this report. In agreement with its leading principles, the Commission on the Status of Women will use it as a basis for its future work."

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the report, with the additions put forward by various members, should be considered in its entirety.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Commission had been asked by the Economic and Social Council to consider the Sub-Commission's report as it stood. However, the Commission was obviously free to make any additions.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) seconded the Venezuelan motion.

The CHAIRMAN, in reply to a question by the member from the Byelorussian SSR, pointed out that the Sub-Commission's report itself could not be charged since it was the work of another commission, but that this Commission's idea...
should be contained in its own report. She explained that acceptance of the Sub-Commission's report as a basis of discussion merely constituted a gesture of recognition.

Miss BASTERRECHEA (Guatemala) felt that by accepting the Sub-Commission's report, the Commission would merely support the principles which had guided the Sub-Commission's work.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) supported acceptance of the report.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) declared herself in favour of the basic principles of the Sub-Commission's work, but wished to know whether the Commission would be able to include the same basic principles in its own report.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the member from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics move so at the proper time.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDON (Mexico) asked that the Commission should go further than accept the Sub-Commission's report and make it the basis of its own report. This view was supported by the members from the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

DECISION: The Venezuelan motion was carried unanimously.


Miss KENYON (United States of America) moved the United States proposal contained on page 2, paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of document E/CN.6/10.

The CHAIRMAN asked for an explanation of paragraph (c).

Miss KENYON (United States of America) thought it was up to the Commission to decide upon the functions of the three members designated. They might assist the Secretariat in the preparation of the report to the Commission.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) favoured the United States proposal since it would avoid shelving the questionnaire. However, there were two kinds of questionnaires, including the shorter one contained in document E/CN.6/W.1. She wished to move as an amendment that this shorter questionnaire be completed in its entirety.

/Miss KENYON
Miss KENYON (United States of America) feared that in asking for the completion of the entire questionnaire the Commission might cause undue delay. A government might find it impossible to complete the entire questionnaire by 1 July and thus by asking for too much the Commission might not even obtain information on the question of political rights.

Mrs. de CASTILLO LEDÓN (Mexico) shared the fears of the United States member regarding completion of the entire questionnaire. She felt that the three members designated under paragraph (c) might help the Secretariat in compiling a report on those countries which had failed to reply.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of Denmark, moved the following amendment to paragraph (b), namely that this phrase should be added at the end of the paragraph:

"and that such a report may be given every year to the General Assembly.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) accepted the Danish amendment.

Mrs. COSMA (Syria) wished to associate herself with the member from Mexico, and asked for consideration of measures by which governments might be persuaded to answer questionnaires.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) thought that most leaders of women's organizations were capable of completing these questionnaires within a few days.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) asked that the Danish amendment should be made a separate point, paragraph (d).

Miss KENYON (United States of America) suggested the following wording:

"that the Commission submit such a report every year to the Economic and Social Council with a recommendation that it transmit it to the General Assembly."

Moreover, the report should not be limited to political rights but should contain all the information at the Commission's disposal.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) thought that while paragraphs (a) and (b) referred to the questionnaire, the annual report covered a far wider field.
Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) suggested that the questionnaire be discussed later and that the Commission should confine itself at the present time to the United States proposal.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) moved an amendment to the effect that the dates be left out of paragraphs (a) and (b) and that the phrase "as soon as possible" or "in time for the next session of the Commission" should be substituted, leaving the matter of the date until the Commission had decided on its next session. She also asked that the word "provisional" in the first line of paragraph (b) should be replaced by the word "interim".

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) said that if the dates were omitted, there would be no sense of urgency left. To clarify matters, the words "after 1 September" might be added at the end of paragraph (c).

Mrs. STREET (Australia) enquired whether the United States and United Kingdom representatives were prepared to leave the dates blank, to be filled in by the Secretariat after the date of the Commission's next session had been determined.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) felt that the dates should remain, on the understanding that, when the date of the next session had been established, the Commission might be free to alter them.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) accepted the suggestion of the United States representative.

Mrs. POPOVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed that it was important to mention dates. She asked whether the Secretariat was prepared to state by what date answers to the questionnaire might be expected.

Mr. LAWSON (Secretariat) replied that the Secretariat could not estimate that date.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Commission might bear the matter in mind when deciding upon the date of its next session. Replying to Mrs. UNALOVA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), she said that it had been decided to ask the Member States to reply first to the part of the questionnaire
questionnaire dealing with political rights both because of the Commission's desire to implement the General Assembly Resolution on the Political Rights of Women, and because it was easier to obtain such information:

Mrs. STREET (Australia) moved the addition of the words "for presentation to the next session of the Commission" at the end of paragraph (b).

Miss KENYON (United States of America) accepted the Danish and Australian amendments to her proposal.

DECISION: The United States proposal, as amended by the representatives of Denmark and Australia, was adopted unanimously.

Consideration of the Danish Draft Resolution Concerning Relations with the Trusteeship Council (Document E/C.11.6/SR.8).

The CHAIRMAN read the proposed resolution concerning relations with the Trusteeship Council.

The representatives of France and the United States of America strongly supported paragraph (a).

DECISION: Paragraph (a) was adopted by ten votes to none, with two abstentions.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) opposed the inclusion of paragraph (b). It was premature for the Commission at the present stage to attempt to make arrangements for consultation with the Trusteeship Council, which had not yet met or adopted its Rules of Procedure. The Economic and Social Council itself had not yet made arrangements for relations with the Trusteeship Council.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that paragraph (b) was merely a request addressed to the Economic and Social Council. The proper time for such a suggestion was precisely before definite rules of procedure had been adopted, so that the wishes of the Commission might receive consideration during the adoption of the rules.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) said that the present Commission was one of the Commissions of the Economic and Social Council, which would make arrangements concerning all its Commissions.

/Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX
Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) agreed with Miss Sutherland (United Kingdom). She felt that the term "consultation" was vague. At a later time, the Commission should propose a more precise form of relationship with the Trusteeship Council.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) also agreed with the United Kingdom representative. Informal consultation could easily be arranged.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) strongly supported paragraph (b).

DECISION: Paragraph (b) was approved by five votes to three.

Miss AGUIRRE (Mexico) proposed an alternative wording for paragraph (b). She agreed to the CHAIRMAN's suggestion that it should be submitted in writing at the following meeting.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) pointed out that the Commission could not make requests directly to the Secretary-General. She therefore proposed that in paragraph (c) the words "the Secretary-General of the United Nations arrange to refer to it" should be deleted, and the words "be referred to it" should be added at the end of the paragraph.

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) felt that the Commission should follow the example of the Commission on Human Rights, which had decided that it was unable at the present stage to make any recommendation upon the matter. The Secretary-General had been instructed by the General Assembly to transmit information with regard to non-self-governing territories to a special ad hoc Committee, which would in turn submit a report to the General Assembly.

Mrs. LEFAUCHEUX (France) supported paragraph (c).

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Commission could obtain any information it desired by addressing an informal request to the Secretary-General. She therefore withdrew paragraph (c).

Miss SUTHERLAND (United Kingdom) said with reference to paragraph (d) of the proposed resolution that the contemplated conferences of representatives of non-self-governing territories would be, as it were, people's parliaments, convened by the administering States. They would be public assemblies, which
members of the Commission would be able to attend; under the Charter, however, the Commission could not be represented at the conferences.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) agreed with the United Kingdom representative. She proposed that paragraph (d) should say that not the Commission, but "local women who are leaders in the movement for obtaining equal rights for women" might be represented at such conferences.

Miss KENYON (United States of America) supported the Australian amendment, and suggested that the words immediately following it, "be represented" should be changed to "be included as representatives"; that would make clear that the local women should appear in the status of representatives rather than mere observers.

Mrs. STREET (Australia) accepted the United States amendment.

The CHAIRMAN accepted both the Australian and the United States amendments to paragraph (d).

DECISION: Paragraph (d) was approved by eight votes to none, the representatives of France and India abstaining.

Mrs. BAKSHI ALI (India) explained that she had abstained from voting because she did not understand the exact purpose either of paragraph (d) or of the two amendments to it, and was not fully informed concerning the nature of the conferences in question.

The meeting rose at 1:15 p.m.