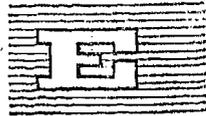


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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Twenty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 652nd MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 28 September 1976, at 9.50 a.m.

Chairman:

Mrs. BOKOR-SZEGO

(Hungary)

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1. International instruments relating to the status of women:
 - (a) Draft convention on the elimination of discrimination against women (agenda item 3) (continued)
2. The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1976-1985
 - (b) The programme for the Decade and related questions including technical co-operation activities (agenda item 4) (continued)

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INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN (agenda item 3):

- (a) DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
(E/CN.6/574, 591 and Add.1; E/CN.6/L.683, E/CN.6/NGO/259) (agenda item 3)
(continued)

Article 16 (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to continue consideration of the original text of paragraph 3 of article 16.
2. Mrs. ESFANDIARI (Iran) proposed that the beginning of paragraph 3, namely, the words "To eliminate discrimination against unwed mothers and", should be deleted. Drafting changes could then be made in the rest of the paragraph.
3. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) and Begum FARIDI (Pakistan) supported the proposal of the representative of Iran.
4. Mrs. DEVAUD (France) pointed out that if unwed mothers were no longer to be included in the beginning of paragraph 3, the rest of that paragraph seemed illogical in relation to article 16 as a whole.
5. Mrs. ESFANDIARI (Iran) explained that the purpose of her amendment was simply to make paragraph 3 acceptable to delegations which wished to delete it.
6. Miss TYABJI (India) proposed that paragraph 3 should begin as follows: "In recognition of the importance of the role of women as mothers and to give effect...".
7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the words "unwed mothers" should be replaced by the words "single mothers".
8. Mrs. ESFANDIARI (Iran) said that her delegation might perhaps be able to accept a wording in which the word "unwed" would not appear; but she could not take a position on that matter immediately.
9. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the meeting should be suspended for a few minutes in order to give delegations time to define their positions.
10. The meeting was suspended at 10 a.m. and resumed at 10.03 a.m.
11. Mrs. COCKCROFT (United Kingdom) proposed that the words "unwed mothers" should be replaced by the words "single parents" so that the expression could apply not only to unwed mothers but also to mothers who were divorced, separated or widows.
12. Mrs. ESFANDIARI (Iran) accepted the amendment proposed by the United Kingdom representative.
13. Ms. CARLSSON (Sweden) supported the United Kingdom proposal.
14. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought that the United Kingdom representative's amendment would be entirely acceptable if the words "single parents" were replaced by the expression "single mothers".

15. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France), speaking on a point of order, moved the closure of the debate under rule 48 of the rules of procedure.
16. In conformity with the provisions of rule 48 of the rules of procedure, the CHAIRMAN put the motion for the closure of the debate to the vote.
17. The motion for the closure of the debate was adopted unanimously.
18. The CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention to the two amendments which had been proposed to the original text of paragraph 3.
19. Miss GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico) said that at the preceding meeting, the Cuban representative, supported by the Mexican representative and other delegations, had proposed that the words "legal and" be inserted before the words "social protection", and that that amendment should apply to all the versions proposed for paragraph 3.
20. The CHAIRMAN said that in the absence of any objections, she would consider that the Commission accepted that amendment.
21. It was so decided.
22. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the amendment proposed by the United Kingdom representative whereby the words "unwed mothers" would be replaced by the words "single parents".
23. The United Kingdom amendment was adopted by 12 votes to 10, with 1 abstention.
24. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote paragraph 3 of draft article 16 as a whole, with the amendments by Cuba and the United Kingdom.
25. Paragraph 3 of draft article 16, as amended, was adopted by 12 votes to 3, with 8 abstentions.
26. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote draft article 16 as a whole, as amended.
27. Draft article 16 as a whole, as amended, was adopted by 21 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.
28. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America), speaking in explanation of her vote, said that her delegation had abstained in the vote on article 16 as a whole because it considered that, as at present worded, paragraph 1(g) meant that no woman could have property of her own unless her husband had rights to that property.
29. Mrs. ROMANOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) explained that her delegation had abstained in the vote on paragraph 3 because it referred to both parents, which was not in keeping with the spirit of the convention.
30. Mrs. HUSSEIN (Egypt) said that although she had voted for article 16 as a whole, she had abstained in the vote on certain sub-paragraphs and would have wished paragraph to be deleted. With regard to paragraph 1(g), she thought, unlike the United States delegation, that it in no way restricted the rights of women to possess their own property.

31. Begum FARIDI (Pakistan) said she had abstained in the vote on article 16 as a whole because the Pakistan committee which was considering the rights of women had not yet submitted its report.
32. Ms. LAMINA (Madagascar) explained that although her delegation had voted for paragraph 16 as a whole, it had nevertheless had to vote against paragraph 3 because it referred to both parents and not only to the mother.
33. Mrs. SALYO (Indonesia) said she had voted for paragraph 3 of article 16 because the replacement of the expression "unwed mothers" by "single parents" had made that paragraph acceptable to her delegation.
34. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) said that he wished it to be recorded, in the summary record that, although his delegation had voted for article 16 as a whole, it had reservations concerning certain sub-paragraphs or paragraphs in that article.
35. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) said she was surprised by the remarks made by the United States representative in explanation of her vote. In the amendment in question, the Belgian delegation had wished to ensure that spouses had the same rights to their own property and to their joint property. The drafting group should check the wording of the English text of paragraph 1(g) of article 16.
36. Miss TYABJI (India) said she too was surprised by the interpretation given by the United States delegation to paragraph 1(g) of article 16. Her delegation, in spite of some reservations concerning the compulsory registration of marriages, had in principle accepted article 16 as a whole.
37. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that she also was surprised by the reservation made by the United States representative concerning paragraph 1(g). The Soviet delegation had considered that it should vote for article 16, which was a useful article, though she still thought that paragraphs 2 and 3 were weak. In paragraph 2, for example, there was no reference to the marriage of adolescent girls, yet adolescence was an especially vulnerable age. Paragraph 3 placed emphasis on the parents, whereas the convention dealt essentially with women. Her delegation thought that the Economic and Social Council should re-examine paragraphs 2 and 3 of article 16 when it came to consider the draft convention.
38. Mrs. COENE (Belgium) explained that her delegation had voted against paragraph 3 of article 16, because, in its opinion, it contained provisions which were out of place in a convention whose purpose was to eliminate discrimination against women. Nevertheless, she had voted for article 16 as a whole, as it was an important feature of the convention.
39. Mrs. HUTAR (United States of America) said she wished it to be recorded in the summary record that her delegation had voted against paragraph 1(g) of article 16 for the reasons which she had already given. If the problem raised by that sub-paragraph was only a problem of the wording, it could perhaps be settled when the definitive text of the convention was being prepared.

40. The CHAIRMAN said that certain delegations wished to introduce a draft resolution on the situation of women in rural areas with a view to its being included in the draft convention. She invited the Indian representative to submit the draft, the English text of which had been distributed to members of the Commission.

41. Miss TYABJI (India) said that the draft resolution was being introduced by several delegations which had met in a working group to prepare it. The sponsors of the proposal hoped that the text would be included as an article in the draft convention, but left it to the Drafting Committee to decide where to place it. The purpose of the resolution was to draw attention to the situation of rural women, who in many countries represent the majority of the female population, yet, despite the important role they played in agricultural development, derived little benefit from progress made in that connexion. The idea was to enable them to participate, equally with men, in agricultural and rural development and to enjoy all the resulting benefits such as planning, health, training, community activities, credit, agricultural reform, etc.

42. Mrs. ROMANOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that it would be difficult for her to give her views on the Indian proposal, as it had not been translated into Russian.

43. Mrs. HIRLEMANN (France) said that she too would find it difficult to examine the Indian proposal without a French text.

44. The CHAIRMAN suggested that discussion of the Indian draft resolution be postponed until the text had appeared in the other working languages. She invited the Commission to take up the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (E/CN.6/L.682) on the programme for the United Nations Decade for Women, the subject of item 4 of the agenda.

THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, 1976-1985

(b) THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE AND RELATED QUESTIONS INCLUDING TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES (E/CN.6/594, and Corr.1 and Add.1, E/CN.6/L.682) (agenda item 4)
(continued)

45. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) said that the working paper (E/CN.6/L.682) submitted to the Commission had been prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of suggestions which members of the Commission had made to it in writing, in accordance with the decision taken by the Drafting Committee at its first meeting. The suggestions of the German Democratic Republic and of Venezuela had not been included in the working paper as they had not reached the Secretariat in time.

46. The Secretariat had started from the assumption that some of the questions dealt with in working paper E/CN.6/L.682 should be included in special resolutions. It understood that some delegations were already working on resolutions dealing with, for instance, the International Institute for Research and Training for the Advancement of Women which was to be established in 1977 in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998 (LX); the World Conference of 1980; and the strengthening of services concerned with the status of women and their staff requirements. The written proposals submitted by the delegations included recommendations on those questions. In the working paper (E/CN.6/L.682), the Secretariat had reviewed all the written suggestions it had received and the comments made in the course of the general debate on item 4 of the agenda.

47. In section I (General observations and recommendations), the Secretariat had tried to establish a link between the World Plan of Action and the Programme for the Decade, while emphasizing that they were two quite distinct matters. It had proposed implementing the Programme for the Decade in two phases - 1976 to 1980 and 1980 to 1985 - and it had stated in paragraph 8 that the programme outlined in the working paper focused on the first half of the Decade, in other words 1976 - 1980; a new or expanded programme could be drawn up for the second half. In proposing that stress should be laid on the first half of the Decade the Secretariat had taken account of the fact that the World Conference of 1980 would review the results achieved during that period. It had also been of the opinion that, if the programme was to attain its objectives, it was essential to set specific deadlines for its implementation.

48. The Secretariat considered that the programme submitted in document E/CN.6/594 sometimes lacked clarity because it was too concise; it had consequently dealt with certain points at greater length in order to make it clearer to those who would be carrying it out. References to certain documents had also been added; but as all the desired documentation was not available, it had been obliged to leave a few gaps which would be filled in the final version.

49. In paragraph 3 of section I, the Secretariat had stated that, in accordance with the Plan of Action, "each country should decide upon its own national strategy and identify its own targets and priorities within the present 'World Plan'." It had listed the minimum objectives laid down in the Plan, and had emphasized that they should be developed in more specific terms in regional plans of action and be achieved by 1980. In each section the Secretariat had included some suggestions concerning measures to be taken at the national level. She wished to make it clear that those suggestions adhered strictly to the proposals made by delegations. In framing them, the Secretariat had tried to make a distinction between the World Plan of Action, which covered the whole of the Decade, and the Programme of Action, which was mainly concerned with the first half of the Decade.

50. Section II of document E/CN.6/L.682 mentioned the "specific areas for action to attain the threefold objectives of the Decade" and addressed the three areas already singled out in document E/CN.6/594, namely, the formulation and implementation of international standards to eliminate sex discrimination, the integration of women in development, and the increased involvement of women in political life and in international co-operation and the maintenance of peace.

51. The Secretariat had added a section III on informational and educational activities for the Decade for Women, which had not been included in document E/CN.4/594. There were gaps in that section, as some of the proposals concerning information and education had been submitted in connexion with section IIA and B and had not been included, as they should have been in section III. She thought that the Drafting Committee could easily rectify that omission. The Secretariat had also included a separate section - section IV - on review and appraisal of progress made.

52. Mrs. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ (Mexico) asked for time to examine the Secretariat's working paper E/CN.6/L.682 and to consult the other Latin American delegations.

53. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the meeting be adjourned to give delegations time to study the document.

54. Mrs. BRUCE (Assistant Director, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) suggested that discussion of working paper E/CN.6/L.682 be postponed in order to allow the Drafting Committee time to examine it beforehand.

55. Mr. EHSASSI (Iran) thought it would be a good idea if the regional groups could meet and hold consultations before the Drafting Committee examined the working paper.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.