

**ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL****CONSEIL  
ECONOMIQUE  
ET SOCIAL**E/HR/ST/7  
3 May 1946

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING  
OF THE  
SUB-COMMISSION OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN**Held at Gillet Hall  
Hunter College  
New York

1 May 1946 at 10:30 AM

Members present:

Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt - ex officio  
Mrs. Bodil Begtrup - chairman  
Miss Minerva Bernardino  
Miss Angela Jurdak  
Mme. Lefauchaux  
Mrs. Hansa Mehta  
Mrs. W.S. New  
Miss F. Kalinowska

General Discussion on the Scope of the Work of the Sub-Commission

The Chairman took up item 5 of the agenda on the consideration of the scope and program of work of the Sub-commission. She suggested that the Sub-commission might first define the broad principles of its work and when these were laid down, the members could proceed to the examination of details.

Mrs. Hansa Mehta proposed that the scope of the work of the Sub-commission should include political, civic, economic, educational, social and domestic fields. A woman's charter to be discussed by an international conference of women could create a favorable world opinion to implement the recommendations. The Sub-commission might therefore, prepare a broad outline of human rights, leaving the fact-finding to those whose task it would be to prepare the surveys.

Mrs. Roosevelt pointed out that the work of the Sub-commission was tied up with that of the Human Rights Commission and that it was necessary that the work of these two commissions be in harmony and not in conflict.

The Sub-commission should, therefore, cover all the women's fields and be sure that none were overlooked. She said that in her opinion the Sub-commission should last until it was felt that women had reached the point where they were on an equal basis with men in all fields of human endeavor. The Sub-commission's report, which would ultimately be placed before the Economic and Social Council, would be made to the Human Rights Commission in the first place.

Miss Bernardino considered that the Sub-commission should study the status of women in all its aspects, economic, civil, social and educational; that sub-committees should be created to prepare a survey, and that there should be an executive office to carry out proposals approved by the Economic and Social Council. Miss Bernardino agreed with Mrs. Mehta that the Sub-commission could draft broad recommendations without awaiting the result of the fact finding surveys and that, in her opinion, the Sub-commission had to do more than study the status of women, since women all over the world were watching and awaiting the result of the Sub-commission's work. Miss Bernardino also agreed with Mrs. Roosevelt that the first steps towards raising the status of women must be to ensure their participation in the political field.

A general discussion followed on the purpose and terms of reference of the Sub-commission and various members suggested working formulas.

The Chairman defined it as the finding of ways and means of raising the status of women in different countries. These principles should be

1. broad outlines of the ways and means,
2. deep and detailed investigation of woman's position,
3. the maintenance of interest of all women in the world in their problems.

Miss Jurdak suggested, as a starting point, that the members might define the purpose. The main points had been reached previously in a study group of some of the members and they were briefly as follows:

1. To raise the status of women in the world
2. The accomplishment of this task by means of reliable studies
3. The function of the Sub-commission should last only until this purpose is achieved.

Miss Bernardino moved that the members should adopt Miss Jurdak's draft. Mme. Lefauchaux proposed the phrase, "to study means to raise the status of women." Some members considered the terms of reference were too vague. Mrs. Roosevelt pointed out that it was up to the Sub-commission to submit proposals regarding its terms of reference. She drew the attention of members to Section B, paragraph 3 of document E/27 which they had before them. It was generally agreed that it might be better to adjourn the discussion in order to give members time to study and combine the ideas which had been put forward. Miss Bernardino therefore withdrew her motion.

The Chairman then invited Judge Dorothy Kenyon to address the members of the Sub-commission. In welcoming Judge Kenyon, she pointed out that she had been a member of the Committee of Experts set up by the League of Nations Assembly in 1937 to study and report on the legal status of women.

Judge Kenyon said that she was only too happy to be invited to give the members of the Sub-commission the background of the work done by the League. Unfortunately the war had come and the commission had been unable to complete its studies. One result, however, had emerged and that was the Report on the Legal Status of Women prepared by the International Institute of Private Law, Rome, a copy of which she presented to the Sub-commission. Judge Kenyon surveyed the work done by the League Committee. The Committee of Experts had been set up by the League of Nations Assembly in 1937 and their terms of reference were to determine the exact scope of the contemplated comprehensive study on the legal status enjoyed by women in the various countries of the world as a result of the provisions of

national law, and to determine the distribution of work among the scientific institutes. They were, therefore, only a fact finding body and were not concerned with the application of the law. Nevertheless, they did endeavor to widen their scope as far as possible.

They obtained their data mainly from three scientific institutes:

1. International Institute for the Unification of Private Law - Rome
2. International Institute of Public Law - Paris
3. International Bureau for the Unification of Penal Law - Paris

They also received excellent material from women's organizations.

The Committee held three sessions, in April 1938, January and July 1939. At its last session it considered that every effort should be made to publish the study before the 1941 Assembly, but the war upset these calculations. Nevertheless, the report, which she had already presented to the Commission, was completed by the International Institute in Rome in the first half of 1941. A survey of Hindu Law had been undertaken by Sir N. Sircar, a jurist specializing in Indian Law. Judge Kenyon had not seen this memorandum but the secretariat of the Sub-commission had managed to find a copy in New York which had been loaned for study by the Sub-commission.

Judge Kenyon expressed the hope that the Commission's work would include the following items:

1. The information prepared by the League Committee to be revised and brought up to date.
2. A study of the areas where the need to raise the status of women was greatest, particularly where customary law prevailed. The most important and only real means of action in these spheres was the education of women.
3. Dissemination of standards.
4. Establishment of a liaison with international organizations, specialized agencies and other commissions of the United Nations.

5. Provide a centre of exchange of information on all matters pertaining to the status of women.

6. The study of the application of the law.

Miss Bernardino proposed a vote of thanks to Judge Kenyon for her co-operation with the Sub-commission and for the work which she had done for the women's cause on the League Committee of Experts. Miss Bernardino's proposal was adopted unanimously by the Sub-commission.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM.

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