

**ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL**

E/HR/6
1 May 1946

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY RECORD OF MEETINGS

First meeting held on Monday, 29 April 1946, at 3 P.M.

Members of the Commission on Human Rights

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| 1. Mr. Paal Berg (Norway) | Unable to attend first session. |
| 2. Prof. Rene Cassin (France) | |
| 3. M. Fernand Dehousse (Belgium) | Unable to attend first session. |
| 4. Mr. Victor Raul Haya de la Torre
(Peru) | Unable to attend first session. |
| 5. Dr. C. L. Hsia (China) | |
| 6. Mr. K. C. Neogi (India) | |
| 7. Mr. Dusan Brkish (Yugoslavia) | |
| 8. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt (United States) | |
| 9. Mr. Nicolai Kiukov (U.S.S.R.) | |

1. Mr. Henri Laugier, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of Social Affairs, opened the first meeting.

M. LAUGIER - Ladies and gentlemen, it is a new thing and it is a great thing in the history of humanity that the international community organized after a war which destroyed material wealth and spiritual wealth accumulated by human effort during centuries has constituted an international mechanism to defend the human rights in the world. I will not take a long time to greet you here. You know that the United Nations organization is happy to see you here and you know also that all men of all the free peoples and of all the people liberated from slavery, put in you their confidence and their hope, so that everywhere the authority of these rights, respect of which is the essential condition of the dignity of the human person, be respected. And, if we close our eyes, we can also imagine a welcome, grave and serious, from the other side, where the shadows of all the soldiers, sailors, and aviators, all the fighters for the civilian resistance who died on all the battlefields of the

world, hoping that right and liberty be re-established all over the world. Do not measure the importance of your commission on the basis of its present dimensions. We are only at the starting point of a very great enterprise, the volume of which and the action of which will have to grow, day after day. You are the seed out of which great and beautiful harvests must come. When you will have elected your president and set up the rules for your work - you will first have to look for the methods to complete the commission and make proposals for the constitution of a final commission sufficiently numerous, so that all the views of the thought of free men will be represented, but small enough so that its work will be quick and ~~truthful~~ - and then you will also have to define and determine the study programme of the commission and start the action of the Organization of the United Nations on the road which the Charter has set for it.

Summary Record of Meetings - First Session

In the reconstruction of the world, the material tasks are most important, but the effort of all town planners, of architects, or doctors, will only assume its real significance if humanity starts again to have confidence in its destiny, if the human community gets together around a minimum of common principles.

You will have to study all the declarations of rights which were born in the spirit of man and people on the march toward their liberation. You will have to show that the political rights are the first condition of liberty but that today the progress of scientific and industrial civilization has created economic organizations which are inflicting on politically free men intolerable servitude, and that therefore, in the future, the declaration of the rights of man must be extended to the economic and social fields. You will have to look for a basis for a fundamental declaration on human rights, acceptable to all the United Nations, the acceptance of which will become the essential condition of the admission in the international

community. You will have before you the difficult but essential problem to define the violation of human rights within a nation, which would constitute a menace to the security and peace of the world and the existence of which is sufficient to put in movement the mechanism of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace and security. You will have to suggest the establishment of machinery of observation which will find and denounce the violations of the rights of man all over the world. Let us remember that if this machinery had existed a few years ago, if it had been powerful and if the universal support of public opinion had given it authority, international action would have been mobilized immediately against the first authors and supporters of fascism and nazism. The human community would have been able to stop those who started the war at the moment when they were still weak and the world catastrophe would have been avoided.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure that you will not hesitate before the tremendous scope of our task which the confidence of the people has put on our shoulders. I pray that your actions and work may be a permanent guide for men of good will, who are looking toward a better future, and that they will show them the way, like a guiding star.

2. Election of Chairman

Dr. Hsia nominated Mrs. Roosevelt, who was elected Chairman by acclamation.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:- Thank you very much. I shall do my best, although my knowledge of parliamentary law is somewhat limited. I know we are all conscious of the great responsibility which rests upon us. I know we are all confident that we shall be able to do much to help the United Nations achieve its primary objective of keeping the peace of the world by helping human beings to live together happily and contentedly.

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3. Adoption of Rules of Procedure (Document E/Commissions/1)

The Commission decided to adopt each rule separately.

Rule 1 was amended to read:

"The Commission shall elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Rapporteur from among its members, who shall hold office until the first meeting of the Commission after it has been fully constituted by the Economic and Social Council".

Rule 10, which, in the Provisional Rules of Procedure (E/Commissions/1) reads:

"English and French shall be the working languages of the Commission; in accordance with the language rules of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission may, with the consent of all of its members, agree to use only one of the working languages."

was amended to read:

"English and French shall be the working languages of the Commission, in accordance with the language rules of the Economic and Social Council".

All other Rules were adopted without changes.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur

Mr. Brkish nominated M. Cassin as Vice-Chairman, who then was elected by acclamation. Dr. Hsia nominated Mr. Neogi as Rapporteur and Mr. Neogi was elected by acclamation.

5. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

Mrs. Roosevelt read the provisional agenda and Dr. Hsia moved their adoption in toto. His motion was carried.

6. Appointment of three Members to Serve as Ex-Officio Members on the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women (Document E/27)

At the suggestion of Dr. Hsia, the Commission decided to appoint, wherever possible, members to the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women whose countries are not already represented on the Sub-Commission.

The Commission voted that these ex-officio members shall hold office for the first session, i.e., until the first meeting of the Sub-Commission after it has been fully constituted by the Economic and Social Council.

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Dr. Hsia then nominated Mrs. Roosevelt, Mr. Brkish, and Prof. Cassin as ex-officio members on the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women, and they were appointed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 P.M.
