

Gender Aspect of UN Activities in the Context of Global Transformations

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Abstract: The article presents the historical origins and critical analysis of the activities of the United Nations in addressing the issue of gender equality, identifies the stages of this activity. This analysis is carried out on the basis of the reflection of those historical realities that led to the evolution and real changes in UN policy on gender issues. The reasons for the difficulties in realizing the equality of men and women, formally declared by the UN, are reflected during the two decades of the organization's activity. The author focuses on the significance of the feminist movement of the third wave, which not only allowed the adoption of qualitatively new documents concerning the problem of women's emancipation, but also influenced changes in the structure of the UN, and also contributed to the formation of the corresponding new substructures of this international organization and ensured a certain degree of effectiveness of their actions. The author comes to the conclusion that the historical dynamics in the context of which the UN activities developed led to the transformation of this organization into a truly international one, covering global gender problems, which opens up prospects for their solution at a qualitatively new level.

Keywords: Gender, Globalism, United Nations, Human Rights, Women, International Women's Movement, Women's Organizations

1. The Beginning of the Era of Globalism

The beginning of the era of globalism was engendered by the First World War. The most important aspect of this process was the development of the international women's movement and its organizational design. In this regard, mention should be made of the International Women's Union (League) for Peace and Freedom (1919), the International Federation of Women Workers and other international women's organizations, whose activities are reflected in a collective monograph *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945* edited by Karen Offen. [1]. In the interwar period, the activities of the International Labor Organization (ILO), created as a structural subdivision of the League of Nations in 1919, were of great importance in the struggle for the realization of the rights of women workers. We emphasize that back in 1919, the ILO adopted two conventions: Maternity Protection Convention (No.

103), Women's Night Work Convention (No. 4). An analysis of the activities of this organization in the interwar period is presented in an article by the Austrian scholar, specialist in gender history, Susan Zimmermann [2]. Note that in 1946, it was the ILO that became the first specialized division of the UN.

The United Nations, established in 1945, adopts the Statute, which declares: "We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equality of men and women... to unite our efforts to achieve these goals... our goal is to carry out international cooperation in the promotion and development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of race, gender, language, religion" [3]. The consolidation of these principles in the Statute formed the

basis for further UN activities to realize women's rights.

Since the protection of human rights, and women in particular, was directly linked to the capabilities of specific states to ensure a particular set of human rights, in 1945 the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established - one of the main bodies of the United Nations, which coordinates cooperation in economic, social areas of the UN and its specialized agencies. The scope of activities of the Economic and Social Council includes: promoting economic and social progress, including raising the standard of living and full employment of the population; development of ways to resolve international problems in the economic, social and health sectors; promoting international cooperation in the field of culture and education; creation of conditions for universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It should be noted that the Commission on Human Rights, created in 1946, became part of ECOSOC [4].

An important consequence of the adoption of the UN Statute was the creation of a sub-commission on the status of women under the Commission on Human Rights, although it was not numerous, only 15 members, but it was its further activities that, to a certain extent, influenced the vector of UN policy in the women's issue. On June 21, 1946, the Sub-Commission formally became the Commission on the Status of Women, a full-fledged structure within the Economic and Social Council. In addition, the aforementioned International Women's Union for Peace and Freedom has received consultative status with ECOSOC since 1948.

The Commission on the Status of Women has researched actively defended women's rights in political and legal spheres of various countries. While participating in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, members of the Commission reasonably criticized the thesis that the term "men" can be regarded as synonymous with humanity as a whole [5].

This declaration was adopted on December 10, 1948 by the UN General Assembly, Article 2 emphasized that "every person should have all the rights and all freedoms proclaimed by this Declaration, without distinction of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other convictions, national or social origin, property, class or other status" [6].

The undoubted achievement of the international community was the fact of recognition that women during the Second World War, on an equal basis with men, actively participated in the defense of their states and therefore the Geneva Convention adopted in 1949 for the Protection of Civilian Population in Time of War, women were mentioned in articles that women, once captured, are considered combatants and receive the status of prisoners of war. In addition, this Convention provides women combatants with special protection in addition to the rights enjoyed by men. provided to women as part of the civilian population. This provision of the Convention, developed in Additional Protocol I, contains a provision on the extraordinary dismissal of pregnant women and mothers with young children [7].

2. UN Document on Equality Between Men and Women

The first UN international document that focused specifically on the equality of men and women was the Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value, adopted on June 29, 1951 at the thirty-fourth session of the General Conference of the International Labour Organization. However, in the 1950s. only 27 countries have ratified it. [8].

In 1950, the Commission on the Status of Women presented a report on clear discrimination against women in the area of political rights. This initiated the adoption by the UN General Assembly on December 20, 1952 of a document of significant status: the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which provided women with the right to vote in elections and to be elected to all institutions established by national law that require public elections, as well as the right to hold position in public service and perform all public-state functions established by national law [8]. This Convention was not only the first international law to protect the equal status of women enjoying political rights, but also the first international treaty obliging states to protect the political rights of citizens. Subsequently, the Convention on the Citizenship of Married Women was adopted in 1957, which gave women the right to choose citizenship at their own discretion [9].

And also, 1962, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages [9]. UNESCO also took action to eliminate discrimination against women with the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education [10].

Note that the above documents created an international legal framework for gender equality. However, even the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, given its normative nature, by 1967, out of 117 member states, had only been ratified by 42 states. [11]

This testifies to the fact that the UN, as an international organization, has failed to achieve the required effectiveness in solving the problems of women's emancipation. The situation was aggravated by the beginning in the 60s. XX century, the second wave of the feminist movement, whose members actually demanded the realization of the rights contained in the adopted UN Conventions. The Commission on the Status of Women justified the growing international women's movement and its efforts were increasingly focused on justifying the contribution of women to the development of society and initiating change [12]. Therefore, in 1963 the General Assembly, in its resolution 1921 (XVIII), recommends that the Commission on the Status of Women begin the development of a draft declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women. [12].

In fact, these events triggered the adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1967 the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which contained concerns about significant discrimination against women. And her first article stated: "Discrimination against women, leading to the

denial or restriction of her equality with men, is an injustice in its essence and constitutes a crime against human dignity." [13]. Article 11 of the Declaration emphasized that: "The principle of equality between men and women requires its implementation in all states in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." [13]

It must be admitted that the Declaration was an important step in securing the legal basis for equality for women. Note that this Declaration was unanimously approved by the members of the UN General Assembly, but its impact on the world community was limited, and the level of response from governments was low. It should be recognized that the United Nations, despite its commitment to "equality between men and women," in the first two decades of its activity was far from implementing an extensive program of ensuring equal rights for women. On the one hand, this was due to the complexities of the international situation determined by the Cold War, on the other hand, the emerging confrontation between the two directions of the feminist movement: liberal and socialist, which actively participated in the struggle for the rights of working women in the interwar period through the ILO [2].

Therefore, at the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, one of the adopted resolutions emphasized the need to create a single long-term program for the advancement of women, improve the status of women, as well as eliminate discrimination and help women in developing countries [12].

3. International Conferences on the Status of Women

In the context decision of these challenges, in 1972, to mark its 25th anniversary, the Commission on the Status of Women recommended that 1975 be declared the International Year of Women. The General Assembly supported this decision and identified equality, development and peace as the three key principles for the advancement of women. The Commission on the Status of Women also called for the organization of an international conference marked to the International Year of Women. This first world conference was held in Mexico City in 1975. We note that this global conference with the participation of 133 government representatives and about 6,000 representatives of non-governmental organizations, developed a World Plan of Action to achieve the goals of the International Decade of Women, which proposed comprehensive guidelines for improving the situation of women until 1985. After 5 months, this program was approved by the UN General Assembly. [14]. The conference also decided to develop a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The text of the Convention was prepared by the working groups of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1976, discussion of which continued over the next three years and was adopted by the General Assembly in

1979 and entered into force on September 3, 1981. This international legal act is the most important in the field of human rights, implementation rights of women, and received the name "Charter of Women's Rights". In fact, for the first time *de jure*, at the international level, women's rights were recognized as equal to those of men. In addition, the Convention united all women's rights, such as civil, political, as well as economic, social and cultural, which had previously been divided into two categories. One of the most important provisions of the 1979 Convention is the issue of "discrimination against women". In accordance with Art. 1 of the Convention "Discrimination against Women" means any distinction, exclusion or limitation on the basis of sex, aimed at weakening or nullifying the recognition, use or exercise of women, regardless of their marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women, human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, public or any other field. [15].

Article 2 stipulates that "the participating States condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree without delay in all appropriate ways to pursue a policy of eliminating discrimination against women. Moreover, in Article 3, the participating States committed themselves "to take all appropriate measures, including legislative, to ensure the comprehensive development and advancement of women in order to guarantee them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men" [15]. Thus, this Convention was binding on the states that ratified it.

To review the implementation of the said Convention, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was established, composed of twenty-three experts elected from States parties. The Committee annually, through the Economic and Social Council, submits a report to the United Nations General Assembly on its activities and may make general suggestions and recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from States parties. Note that by 1985, in the context of assessing the achievements of the Decade UN Women: Equality-Development-Peace (1975-1985) the said Convention has been ratified by 74 states out of 157 UN member states. At the same time, it must be admitted that the adoption of this Convention is the result of an active 30 years activities of the Commission on the Status of Women and recognition of the certain effectiveness of this activity. [16].

During the UN Decade of Women, new divisions for women were created, such as the United Nations Fund for Women in 1976 (UNIFEM) and the International Institute for Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) led to the fact that some states, arguing that the Commission on the Status of Women met every two years, even proposed to abolish it and advocated the transfer of its functions directly to ECOSOC. Let us recall that it was this Commission, which existed since the creation of the UN and initiated the proclamation of 1975 as the Year of Women. And, the newly created units did not have the proper work experience yet.

As part of the UN Decade for Women, the Second World Conference was held in July 1980 in Copenhagen. The conference not only reaffirmed the importance of the CEDAW Convention, but also sought to update its Action Plan for the coming years, which focused on: employment, health and education for women. The 1980 Copenhagen Agenda for Action called for more active action by States to secure women's ownership of property, as well as to implement inheritance, child custody and citizenship rights. At the same time, more than 8000 participants from 187 countries took part in discussions on the identified issues at the NGO forum.

Continuing the tradition of protecting the rights of women workers, the ILO has achieved the adoption of the Convention on Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981), which states that participating States "recognize that in order to achieve full equality between men and women, it is necessary to change the traditional role of both men and women in society and in the family" [17].

Moreover, Article 3 stipulates that, in order to ensure genuine equality of treatment and opportunity for men and women workers, one of the goals of each member's national policy is that persons with family responsibilities who are performing or wish to do paid work can exercise their right to do so without discrimination and, as far as possible, harmoniously combining professional and family responsibilities. Also, the above Convention regulated the revision of the traditional role of women and men in society to achieve full equality [17].

At the Third World Conference, held in Nairobi in 1985, a new strategy was developed for the advancement of women and the protection of their rights. Let us emphasize that it was in the Nairobi strategies that a clear definition of "equality" was contained, which largely determined the historical significance of the document. Namely, the document says: "... for women, equality means the exercise of rights that they are denied as a result of discrimination in the field of culture, in the organizational structure, norms of behavior, as well as in relations between men and women. Equality is essential for development and peace as national and global inequality perpetuates injustice and exacerbates conflicts of all kinds" [18]. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies until 2000 were based on a range of activities aimed at achieving gender equality at the national level, for example, governments were tasked with identifying their own priorities based on resource capacities and their own development strategies. approach to solving the problems of improving the status of women, it was decided that the equality of women is not isolated and should be addressed systematically, taking into account all spheres of human activity.

Since 1987, the Commission has met annually, its membership has increased, and the Commission's efforts have shifted towards promoting women's equality as a cross-cutting theme of economic development, human rights, and political, cultural and social policy. His approach was now to tackle women's issues as part of mainstream agendas, rather

than as a separate concern.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Commission on the Status of Women, the CEDAW Committee and eventually the Commission on Human Rights raised the issue of violence against women, which until now was considered a private matter, not a public one. The Commission on the Status of Women prepared a draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1993. In accordance with Art. 5 of the Declaration, the bodies and specialized agencies of the UN system shall, within the limits of their competence, promote the recognition and implementation of the rights and principles set forth in this Declaration, contribute to the implementation of the decisions of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in the summer of the same year. In this Declaration, for the first time, the concept of "violence against women" is revealed. Thus, they have an arbitrary act of violence committed on the basis of gender, which can cause or cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or cause suffering to women, as well as threats to commit such acts, forced or arbitrary deprivation of liberty or personal life [19].

The 1990s were marked by a qualitatively new struggle for women's rights and the "third wave of feminism", which in the scientific literature was defined as intersectional feminism, which in fact meant the recognition of the influence of socio-cultural conditions on the formation of gender identity, criticism of classical European liberal feminism, the active spread of post-colonial gender epistemology, and the emergence of concepts such as black feminism, Islamic feminism [20].

During the 1990s, a number of global conferences and summits were held on the critical dimensions of gender equality within the UN. Particular interest in this regard are the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro; The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna; The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo; The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen; The 1996 Habitat II Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul; and the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome. The aforementioned conferences and meetings have placed gender equality issues at the center of international debate and policymaking related to environment, population, reproductive health, human rights, food security, social development and human settlements.

A qualitatively new stage in solving gender problems was the holding of the UN Beijing Conference in 1995. A review prepared by the UN Women's Division noted: "The fundamental transformation that took place in Beijing was the recognition of the need to shift the focus from a generalized concept of women to a gender concept, recognizing that the entire fabric of society and all relationships between men and women within its framework are subject to fundamental revision. Only such a fundamental restructuring of society and its institutions will help women to fully take their rightful place as equal partners with men in

all spheres of life..." [21].

The conference adopted documents that constitute a set of measures and recommendations for the empowerment of women, in the context of a gender approach. In fact, the Beijing Conference recognized that only with the joint efforts of all women's organizations at the national and international levels, with the support of international legal instruments and the will of the international community, can the goals set in Beijing be achieved [22]. This contributed to the further development of transnational feminism.

Since the equality of women and men was proclaimed as one of the goals of the United Nations, the Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 proclaimed: "No one and no country should lose the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of development. Equality of rights and opportunities for men and women must be ensured" [23]. With the aim of taking stock of the implementation of the tasks set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the continuation of the implementation of the main tasks aimed at achieving gender equality, the UN General Assembly held in 2000, 2005, 2010 constituent sessions, which were respectively called "Beijing + 5", "Beijing + 10" and "Beijing + 15".

To better coordinate actions in addressing the tasks in ensuring gender equality, on June 30, 2010, at the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, a new structure called "UN-Women" was created, which united four previously separate UN divisions. The organization started its activities in January 2011. Its functions included promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, supporting intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in the formulation of strategies, global standards and norms, helping member states implement these standards and monitoring how the UN system fulfills its gender equality commitments. In fact, UN Women coordinates the advancement of gender equality across the UN system, pooling the resources and powers of the United Nations [24].

UN-Women has created a special Internet resource UN-Women, which not only covers the activities of this organization, but is also the most important portal for accessing information on gender issues and the international women's movement [25].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion note, based on the analysis of the historical realities that led to the evolution and real changes in UN policy on gender issues, it can be noted that the 20th century has become a reassessment of the problems of the status of women. The Beijing Conference recognized the need for a fundamental rethinking of the concept of women. This was facilitated by the feminist movement of the third wave, thanks to which qualitatively new documents concerning the problem of women's emancipation were adopted, and also influenced changes in the structure of the UN and contributed to the formation of the corresponding new substructures of this international organization, which ensured a certain

degree of effectiveness of their actions.

Thus, the historical dynamics in the context of which the UN activities developed led to the transformation of this organization into a truly international one, covering global gender problems, which opens up prospects for their solution at a qualitatively new level.

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