

Geneva, February 12th, 1932.

LEAGUE OF NATIONSCONFERENCE FOR THE REDUCTION AND LIMITATION
OF ARMAMENTSCOLLABORATION OF WOMEN IN THE ORGANISATION
OF PEACE*Note by the Secretary-General:*

In accordance with a decision taken by the Council of the League of Nations at its meeting on January 26th, 1932, the Secretary-General has the honour to communicate to the delegates at the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments a memorandum on the question of the Collaboration of Women in the Organisation of Peace, with particular reference to their possible collaboration during the Conference. The report by the representative of Spain, adopted at the above-mentioned meeting of the Council, is added for easy reference.

I. CO-OPERATION OF WOMEN IN THE ORGANISATION OF PEACE.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL.¹

The Twelfth Assembly of the League of Nations adopted on September 24th, 1931, a resolution introduced by the Spanish delegation regarding the co-operation of women in the organisation of peace. The resolution was as follows:

“ The Assembly,

“ Convinced of the great value of the contribution of women to the work of peace and the good understanding between the nations, which is the principal aim of the League of Nations,

“ Requests the Council to examine the possibility of women co-operating more fully in the work of the League.”

When this resolution was referred to it, the Council, at its meeting on September 29th, decided, as a first step, to consult the women's organisations, in order to ascertain their views as to the means of giving effect to the resolution. It instructed the Secretary-General to carry out this consultation, adding that it should refer both to the ways in which women could co-operate at the Disarmament Conference and also to their collaboration in the general work of the League. The results of the first consultation were to be communicated to the Council before the Disarmament Conference met— *i.e.*, at its January session, while a complete report would be submitted to the Assembly in September 1932.

In order to facilitate this consultation of women's organisations, the Secretary-General had a circular letter drawn up which referred *inter alia* to the Assembly resolution, and also contained a commentary taken from the report of the Third Committee of the Assembly and the report to the Council inviting the associations to send before January 1st, 1932, any observations they might wish to make on their co-operation with the Disarmament Conference.

This circular letter was sent towards the end of November to twenty-two women's international organisations, to certain national organisations with which the Secretariat is in particularly close touch and to a number of prominent persons in different countries, more especially the women delegates to the League of Nations Assembly.

¹ Council document C. 77. 1932, dated January 22nd 1932.



Up to the present, nine associations or groups have sent communications to the Secretariat. They are:

(a) *The Disarmament Committee of the Women's International Organisations*.¹ This Committee comprises 14 large international organisations, namely:

- (a) The International Council of Women, which has national councils in 41 countries.
- (2) The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which has national sections in 26 countries and corresponding members in 21 countries.
- (3) The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, which has affiliated societies in 44 countries.
- (4) The International Co-operative Women's Guild, which has affiliated national organisations in 12 countries, local organisations in 11 countries and correspondents in 11 other countries.
- (5) The World's Young Women's Christian Association, which has associations in 50 countries with a total of 7,000 branches.
- (6) The League of Jewish Women, which has members in various countries, principally countries of eastern Europe and Switzerland.
- (7) The World Organisation of Jewish Women.
- (8) The International Federation of Business and Professional Women, which has national branches in 15 countries.
- (9) The World's Women's Christian Temperance Union, which comprises 700,000 members in 40 countries.
- (10) The International Federation of University Women, which has national associations in 31 countries.
- (11) The World Union of Women for International Concord, which is represented in 29 countries and has 75,000 members.
- (12) The National American Committee on the Cause and Cure of War, the combined membership of which included one-fifth of the adult women of the United States.
- (13) The European Federation of Soroptimist Clubs.
- (14) The League of Mothers and Women Educationalists in the Cause of Peace.

(b) *The International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues*, which comprises 60 federated leagues in numerous countries.

(c) *The International Trade Union Committee of Women Workers*, which represents more than two million women organised in the trade unions affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions.

- (d) *The Federation of German Women's Associations*.
- (e) *The Federation of German University Women*.
- (f) *The French Union for the Suffrage of Women*.
- (g) *The National Council of French Women*.
- (h) *The Bureau of the Committee of the National Women's Suffrage Union*, which represents a group of French women working "for the organisation of peace by a policy of international rapprochement, while guaranteeing security and national defence".
- (i) *The National Council of Danish Women*.

These communications² may therefore be regarded as representative of the opinions, views and aspirations of a large number of women from different parts of the world, in so far as it has been possible to get into touch with them in the very short space of time at the Secretary-General's disposal before the opening of the Disarmament Conference. They also give some idea of the working, aims and activities of most of these organisations.

The International Trade Union Committee of Women Workers has informed the Secretariat that it would send its reply through the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Trade Unions. The latter states that, as regards disarmament, the members of women's trade unions have wholly and unreservedly supported the general view of the international labour movement represented on the Joint Disarmament Commission of the Socialist Workers' International and the International Federation of Trade Unions.

Apart from certain demands which do not affect the question of the co-operation of women in the work of the Conference for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments (appointment of women delegates both to assemblies and to conferences and a wider appeal for the co-operation of women in the executive work of the League of Nations), the principal suggestions hitherto submitted may be summarised as follows:

- (1) That the Council should study the possibility of inviting representatives of women's organisations as experts or observers at meetings of the Conference, both plenary and private;

¹ This organisation was founded in September 1931 for the purpose of centralising women's work for disarmament.

² They are deposited in the archives of the Secretariat and may be consulted by the members of the Council.

(2) That the women's organisations should, during the Conference, be able to send to the President studies, memoranda, etc., relating to some particular aspect of the disarmament problem;

(3) That the women's organisations should be able to keep in touch with delegates, so as to be in a position to inform their national organisations as to the views and intentions of the delegations of their respective countries;

(4) That the President of the Conference should appoint a day to receive at a plenary meeting of the Conference women's deputations desiring to submit to the Conference texts or declarations in favour of disarmament signed by millions of men and women of all countries;

(5) That the documentary information placed by the Secretariat at the disposal of the Press should also be communicated to these organisations, and that arrangements should be made for their accredited representatives to have access to meetings of the Conference.

The various points raised would seem to be of a nature which can only be decided by the Conference itself, but the Secretariat, for its part, would be prepared to make the necessary arrangements for access to the Conference halls and for the regular distribution of documents.

II. COLLABORATION OF WOMEN IN THE ORGANISATION OF PEACE.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN.

The Twelfth Assembly of the League of Nations adopted on September 24th, 1931, a resolution concerning the co-operation of women in the organisation of peace, and requested the Council to examine the possibility of women co-operating more fully in the work of the League. At its meeting of September 29th, 1931, the Council instructed the Secretary-General to submit a report at the January session on the question of the collaboration of women with the Disarmament Conference. The present memorandum, of which my colleagues have certainly already taken note, has been prepared by the Secretary-General.

It is clear that most of the points raised in the memoranda presented by the women's organisations and summarised in the report before us are either questions of national concern or questions which can best be settled by the Conference itself. I would therefore venture to propose that the Secretary-General should be requested to communicate his memorandum in due course to the Conference.

At the same time, the Council will no doubt desire to thank the women's organisations for the memoranda submitted. They will also wish to express their appreciation of the splendid work done by women in favour of peace, as well as to express the hope that the Conference will be able to utilise the services of the women's organisations in the manner suggested, or in some other way.
