

Begtrup (Denmark). Women delegates and representatives of non-governmental organizations called for a separate body specifically dedicated to women's issues and four months later the Sub-Commission was upgraded to a fully-fledged Commission - the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Commission was established with two basic functions - to "...prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields", and to make recommendations on "...urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights." Following the Nairobi conference in 1985, the mandate of the Commission was expanded to provide policy input to the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In 1987, its mandate was further expanded to review progress in implementation of the outcomes of the World Conferences on women.

The Commission met for the first time at Lake Success, New York, in February 1947. Initially, the Commission focused on legal measures to protect the human rights of women and developing awareness of the status and situation of women around the world. Debates in the Commission brought unfamiliar issues into the international political arena. From the very beginning, the work of the Commission attracted the interest, participation and support of the growing international women's movement.

By the mid 1960s, the Commission had began to recognize and address women's role in economic and social development. Delegates from developing countries drew attention in particular to th

The high profile of the ten-year review at the 49th session of the Commission, with significant levels of participation - including over 80 Ministers - was an indication of the continuing importance attached to the implementation of the Platform for Action and of the critical role of the Commission in providing a forum to bring all stakeholders together. At this 50th session, we must both celebrate the achievements of this important global mechanism and consider ways to enhance its role in the new millennium to effectively address the challenges ahead. The development of the new multi-year programme of work provides