Inspiring youth
to
create a better world

Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2016 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2016 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA} format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.
We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of

UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:

• Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)

• International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

• Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

• United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

The main roles of UN Women are:

• To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.

• To help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.

• To hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Source: http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women

Equal Representation for Women

Topic Background

Women have been economically, socially, culturally, and politically subjugated in communities across the globe for decades. The traditional role of women has been misconstrued as the sole caretakers of the house, food, and children, thereby leading to limited political participation, lesser pay in the workplace, and limited civil liberties. In nations such as India and China, many female daughters are either abandoned or killed because of the preference for male children, and such actions should be condemned and prevented by local governments. National governments hold significant influence over the progress of a nation by implementing laws and carrying out actions to promote gender equality.

In 2012, a draft constitution put in place by **Egypt's** government ignored women's rights and democratic freedoms.[1] The ratification of this constitution could pose a threat to many liberties of women including the ability to inherit property, pass on citizenship to their children, earn equal wages, and the option to decisions independent of male family members.[2]

There are many other examples of governments that are responding to the rising global revolution for women's rights. The **Libyan** government, in previous years, had a slow progression of women's rights due to the cultural and social values that subjugated women for years. Under the rule of Muammar Gaddafi, former dictator of Libya, women served small roles in government such as bodyguards, but few women were politically involved in government decisions.[3] Today, women participate in ministries such as health and social affairs in the Libyan government.[4]

The Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, **China**, in September of 1995, resulted in the development of a five-year plan to enhance the women's rights by addressing their health, advancing their education and promoting their independence.[5] Several nations have initiated further advancement of women's rights as a result of the Beijing Women's Conference. The government plays a huge role in determining the principles that its citizens follow, and for that reason it is important to improve society's gender equality stance.

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[1] Villarreal, Ryan. "Women's Rights and Democracy at Risk Under Proposed Egyptian Constitution: Amnesty International." International Business Times. December 4, 2012. http://bit.ly/TDjzMC

[2] Walt, Vivienne. "Women's Rights at Odds in Egypt's Constitution Wars." Time. December 9, 2012. http://ti.me/TLCVf1

[3] "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa – Libya." Freedom House. October 14, 2005. http://bit.ly/rkGm9t

[4] Hawley, Caroline. "Libyan women battle for empowerment." BBC. December 13, 2011. http://bbc.in/v8Mvba

[5] "Fourth World Conference on Women" http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html

Past International Actions

During the signing of the United Nations charter, only 4 of the 160 signatories of the document were women.[6] The goal of these women was to encourage equal rights for men and women, and by focusing on the political aspect of gender equality, they worked to eliminate discrimination against the female population. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly to construct an international plan to promote gender equality, and is considered to be the "international bill of women's rights".[7] This universal Convention sets standards for women worldwide with regards to education, health, and employment, and hopes to set an agenda for national governments and institutions to further equality.

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goal 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women, by considering social, economic, and political involvement globally.[8] The United Nations stresses the empowerment of women, discouraging of gender-based violence, and female leadership and independence, however, the pace of the gender equality movement is slow, and must be addressed immediately.

In 2010, the new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN Women was created in order to develop equality between men and women in the international community.[9] By combining several committees into one overarching institution, the entity was able to address many aspects of the issue including violence against women, leadership and political involvement, and economic empowerment.

Later in 2015, the UN will adopt the Sustainable Development Goals, building on the success of the Millennium Development Goals at the UN Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. The new agenda is based on 17 goals, including a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as well as gender sensitive targets in other goals. To further spur concrete commitments and position gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment at the centre of the global agenda, UN Women and the People's Republic of China are co-hosting and co-organizing a "Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action."[10]

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[6] "Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women." *The United Nations and the Advancement of Women, 1945-1996.* 2000. http://bit.ly/csJ95X

[7] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. UN Division for the Advancement of Women. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/

[8] "MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women." World Health Organization. http://bit.ly/V6yfqf

[9] "About UN Women." UN Women. http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women

[10] "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/post-2015#sthash.DFUOE8jO.dpuf

Subtopic A: Political Equality

It is imperative for women to become politically active within all nations, in order to provide a more objective view with regards to legislation and government action, whether it be through gender quotas, reforming constitutional law, or increasing media involvement.

A 2012 UN report stated that 19.7 percent of parliament members internationally were women, which is a 75 percent increase since the year 1995, when women made up 11.3 percent of seats globally. Though the numbers are slowly increasing, the number of women representing individual governments is still low, and unequal to the political representation by men.[11]

In what ways can the government progress with regards to equal representation for women and set an example for other nations? How can we encourage women to become more politically aware?

Subtopic B: Economic Equality

To integrate women into society, they must be given equal opportunities to become educated through primary education and college, along with job training, which will further the progress of incorporating women into the working world.

One type of job training is entrepreneurship, or starting a business. A woman in a rural area, for example, may want to buy a cow and sell its milk. To buy a cow, however, she needs money. Microfinance and small loans are ways to successfully help a woman who is trying to start a business. However many women are financially illiterate and are unable to receive fair services from banks and financial institutions.

One NGO that focuses on gender equality is Women for Women, an international organization that works towards promoting equality by ensuring health, education, and economic stability.[12] The organization provides general education, job training, and decision making guidance through an efficient program, which is currently being implemented in 8 nations. By spreading knowledge to women globally, Women for Women is effective in reducing the marginalization of women and promoting equal representation for women.

How can we promote education to place women at the same level as men? How can we promote economic stability for women trying to advance in the working world?

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[11] "Millennium Development Goal 3." UNDP. http://bit.ly/ODpkmO

[12] "About Us." Women for Women International. http://www.womenforwomen.org/about-us

Bloc Positions

Because of social and cultural influences, different parts of the world address women's rights from varying perspectives. Equal representation for women is progressing globally; however, each region has specific aspects to women's rights including social, economic, and political ones that require reform to ensure gender equality.

The West: The West is the most progressive out of all the blocs. The predominant stance among nations is absolute equality for women and men. All rights are equal constitutionally, and cultural expectations are continuing to equalize as well. The Western nations are still struggling with equal economic opportunity as gender bias still exists in the public and private sectors. Females still make considerably less than males, and the majority of big business leaders are men, and not women. The West would like a comprehensive solution involving all aspects of the issues; however, the focus would be on equalizing economic opportunity. To attain the principles in the 3rd Millennium Development Goal, Western nations should focus on providing economic incentives to women in order to promote female employment and business involvement.

Asia: Asia is seen to be less progressive than that of the position of the West.. Much of the inequality for women arises from social and ethnic beliefs that have segregated the roles of men and women. Poor families must rely on their children to support the household, and women oftentimes provide a series of economic hardships that families simply cannot deal with. Some Asian countries must also deal with high rates of violent crimes against women. Much of the progress that Asia will be looking for will entail protecting women, educating women, and providing them with economic opportunities. The 3rd Millennium Development Goal can be slowly achieved in this region by focusing on reforming the social aspect of subjugating women through education and media initiatives, while balancing the cultural principles existing in nations.

The Middle East: The Middle East is the most conservative out of all the bloc positions, and their stance originates from religious doctrine, and cultural roles. Islam is the predominate religion in the Middle East, and many countries still follow Sharia Law, which describes specific practices for men and women to follow. Many Middle Eastern countries have their own laws for dealing with crimes against women, and women in the public and private sector. The Middle Eastern nations would use national sovereignty as their main argument against comprehensive reform, which would hinder the progression of Millennium Development Goal 3.

Africa: There are many conflict areas that have left millions of innocent people in danger, and women are the main targets of this abuse. In many parts of Africa, women are in danger of being victim to gendered violence. In order to resolve the issue of gender equality in Africa, African nations would pursue humanitarian aid to alleviate poverty, and in some cases, foreign peacekeeping troops to reduce the crimes against women. Furthermore, Africa would pursue a policy that seeks to educate women, and incorporate a portion of them into the workforce. To reach Millennium Development Goal 3, African nations would have to focus on gender-based violence and education of women to reintegrate them equally into society.

Guiding Questions

1. What measures has your government taken to eradicate the double standard in society?

2. How can we implement the gender equality measures outlined by previous conventions and resolutions?

3. How can we encourage women to become more politically active?

4. How does religion play a role in gender equality?

Research Sources

● United Nations Global Issues-Women

● UN Women

● Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

● Global Issues-Women's Rights

● Human Rights Watch-Women's Rights

Worksheet Questions

1. What is CEDAW?
2. When was CEDAW adopted by the UN General Assembly?
3. Where and when was the Fourth World Conference on Women?
4. In 2012, how many percent of parliament members internationally were women?
5. What is UN Women and why was it created?

Answer Key

1. The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
2. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.
3. Beijing, China, in September 1995.
4. A UN report stated that 19.7 percent of parliament members internationally were women.
5. The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN Women was created in order to develop equality between men and women in the international community.