

LVMUN VII

7th Annual Las Vegas Model UN Conference
February 7-8, 2020

Dear Delegates,

My name is Taylor Wilkerson, and I have the pleasure of being one of your chairs this year at LVMUN. This is my second year as a chair at LVMUN, and I have had the opportunity to moderate and debate topics that greatly affect our future. I am a senior this year and have enjoyed becoming a global citizen and advocating for change over my 4 years in MUN. I have attended many prestigious conferences including BruinMUN, UCI MUN, National High School MUN (held in New York), RebelMUN, and LVMUN. I have had the privilege to win a Commendation award at UCI and become an influential member of the Commission on the Status of Women Committee (CSW) in the conference in NHSMUN.

Due to my background in the CSW, I have an extensive background in working with this subject and am very excited to see innovative solutions within this debate to increase the significance women play within society. While I recognize that this issue seems to be addressed in More Developed Countries, there is still much progress to be made in this area in accordance with societal judgments and subconscious bias within employment. It is also important to address the key issues within less developed countries as well.

This Background guide will help you understand the basics of what we are looking for within this committee; however, we highly advise branching off the ideas we present through your own research to create individual solutions. This ensures that we are able to hold an invigorating debate that produces comprehensive solutions and teaches delegates the importance of being a global citizen.

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Zachary Boggs, and I will also be one of your chairs for the 7th annual Las Vegas Model United Nations conference. This is my third year as a member of Model UN, and I have been a delegate at several conferences such as NHSMUN in New York. I aim to use my experience to encourage new and experienced delegates and make participation in our committee a positive experience. MUN has played a large role in encouraging me to consider a global perspective and to stay aware of politics locally, nationally and internationally.

At SVHS, I have participated in multiple activities and organizations including Cross Country and Swim teams, as well as being an active member of the school's Vexillology club and a member of the International Baccalaureate Program. MUN has improved my ability to advocate for myself as well as providing skills to use in debate and discussion over many different topics. In order to give delegates, the best experience possible and to allow for personal growth, I will aim to maintain a productive and efficient committee and encourage delegates to take this opportunity seriously and put thought into the execution of their position paper and their performance in debate. Overall, remember that MUN is supposed to be a fun experience and to keep it interesting one must be prepared. Thank you, delegates.

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Committee Background

ECOSOC was created at the inception of the UN as one of the main 6 organs created by the UN Charter in 1946.¹ It functions as a committee dedicated to advancing sustainable development economically, socially, and environmentally. The committee consists of 54 member governments elected by the general assembly for overlapping three-year terms.² ECOSOC is structured to promote topics in more specific areas than the general assembly addresses.³ These topics include education availability, the universal standard of human rights, and data collecting on standards of living. ECOSOC can recommend solutions to important issues; however, final resolutions have to be passed by the Security Council to be enforced by the United Nations.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is an international body that was created by ECOSOC in 1946 (almost immediately after its beginning) to focus specifically on Women's rights in the international community.⁴ While it is not a main organ of the UN, it is able to establish Women's Rights despite governmental control. This is one of the main causes of why the Taliban regime in Afghanistan fell in 2001.⁵ The CSW primarily focuses on monitoring and reviewing progress towards women's rights and collects data that is then reviewed by

¹ "ECOSOC - UN Economic and Social Council." <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

² "ECOSOC Members - UN Economic and Social Council." <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/members.shtml>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

³ "What is ECOSOC?" <https://library.fiu.edu/c.php?g=160201&p=1047174>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

⁴ "Commission on the Status of Women | UN Women" <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

⁵ "Women of Afghanistan." <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/place-table-safeguarding-women's-rights-afghanistan>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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ECOSOC.⁶ Due to LVMUN's topic being Commission on the Status of Women that is a subsection of ECOSOC, this committee is closely intertwined with ECOSOC and their policies on the issue.

History of the Topic

Individual rights first started becoming a modern issue after the French Revolution in 1789 which helped many people advocate for equal classes, much like equal genders.⁷ Women's rights were acknowledged with the advocacy of all human rights, which begins to gain recognition in the late 1800s, during the independence rights movements in many countries (Including the US with the Seneca Falls meeting was held in 1848).⁸ They gained suffrage in the early 1900s which lead to increased political activity within Women.⁹ When the United Nations was formed in 1945 after World War Two, Women were able to become a primary concern on their agenda. This led to the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women, and their involvement within The Universal Declaration Of Human Rights (UNDHR) 3 years later.¹⁰ Since the signing of the UNDHR, the UN has been a key proponent to ensuring women's rights in less developed countries.

UN Involvement

The UN is heavily involved in protecting women's rights and has been able to implement policies in theocratic governments despite strong opposition. For example, in 1996 the UN held a conference in which the objective was to prevent further detrimental harm to women and

⁶ "Commission on the Status of Women | UN Women ..." <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

⁷ "French Revolution - HISTORY." 9 Nov. 2009, <https://www.history.com/topics/france/french-revolution>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

⁸ "The Woman Suffrage Movement | National Women's History" <https://www.womenshistory.org/resources/general/woman-suffrage-movement>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

⁹ "19th amendment." <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/19th-amendment-1>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

¹⁰ "UNDHR" <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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initiated a task force that was able to aid the fall of the Taliban government in 2001.¹¹ After the fall of their regime, many women were able to increase employment and education opportunities and eventually social progression. The UN advocates against these situations and is key to implementing solutions.

The basis for the UN actions pertaining to the equality of women is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women. This document, adopted by the General Assembly in 1979, is legally binding to the almost 100 countries who have ratified or acceded to the convention. The convention defines what constitutes discrimination and created an agenda for all nations to follow in order to eliminate it.¹²

The UN Security Council has been influential within this topic by passing resolutions¹³ that recognized the use of sexual violence as a tactic in war and established that they were war crimes against humanity and could be a precedence to genocide. Subsequent resolutions to 1820 work to create a system for monitoring acts of sexual violence within countries and create accountability for countries in stopping conflict-related sexual violence.¹⁴ It is important to note that these resolutions establish sexual violence as a matter of international peace and creates the need for security response, possibly by the UN peacekeeping force.

The UN is also namely responsible for the creation of the GDI (Gender Development Index) under the UNDP (United Nations Development Program, a section under ECOSOC).

¹¹ "UN resolution with Israel." <https://undocs.org/en/E/1996/96>, Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

¹² "Major Resolutions | UN Women – Headquarters." <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

¹³ "Security Council | UN Women – Headquarters." <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions/security-council>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

¹⁴ Ibid

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Gender inequality, as represented by the GDI, is present in all nations of the world, with no country reaching an ideal index of 0.00.¹⁵ The GDI rates countries using a number of variables in order to create a rating for gender inequality in a nation, with a rating for 1.00 to 0.00, with lower numbers representing lower gender inequality.

The GDI uses three types of variables in its calculation: health, labor market, and empowerment¹⁶. In the health portion, the maternal mortality ratio, which is the number of mothers who die during childbirth, and the adolescent birth rate, which is the rate at which mothers are adolescent children.¹⁷ The adolescent birth rate, in particular, is important to consider as giving birth as an adolescent endangers and harms the future of many young girls before they become adults. The labor market inequality is calculated by finding the ratio of females to males employed in the labor market. This is indicative of women's economic freedom in a country and the social climate around women's right to work. Empowerment is calculated by comparing the number of parliamentary seats held by women and men in a country as well as comparing the number of women with at least a secondary education and the number of men with the same. This is an important part of the calculation as it shows the relative power which women have within a nation.

These actions have been able to significantly decrease the physical discrimination against women; however, many rights are still disregarded. In many less developed countries

¹⁵ "Data - Human Development Reports - UNDP." <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.

¹⁶ "Gender Inequality Index (GII) | Human Development Reports." <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid

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women have a role within the household, like retrieving water, and those roles prevent them from getting an education that many young boys receive. This prevents them from entering the workforce and creates a dependence on their marital status for survival.¹⁸

Commission on the Status of Women

Gender inequality exists in both developed and undeveloped countries, with variations solely in the method that it is exhibited. Inequality can occur because of systematic discrimination and physical discrimination. Physical discrimination is widely known and publicized; however, systematic discrimination is subtle and is steeped within societal norms that prevent true equality economically, inaccessibility, and educational opportunities.

According to the World Bank, only 6 nations in the world have full legal equality for men and women, while 56 states have remained stationary in women's inequality for the past decade.¹⁹ This stationary state prevents women recognizing that their inalienable rights and advocating for those rights. When considering the topic of women's rights, it is also important to note that by furthering the status of women, all people's rights can be recognized and developed nations into balanced societies. 43 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries is female, and if these women had the same access to resources the yields would significantly increase, and raise the total agricultural output of these countries.²⁰

Similarly, when the income of women increases, child nutrition, health, and education also

¹⁸ "Women legal discrimination Worldwide." <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/dec/03/women-legal-discrimination-worldwide-consequences>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

¹⁹ "Despite Gains, Women Face Setbacks in Legal Rights Affecting Work." <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/02/27/despite-gains-women-face-setbacks-in-legal-rights-affecting-work>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

²⁰ "Facts & Figures | UN Women – Headquarters." <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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improve.²¹ This is because women are primarily charged with the care of children and they rely on their mothers to provide essentials to progress. However, women cannot provide these tools to their children if they do not possess the knowledge themselves. As women make up 49.6% of the world's population, it can be extremely beneficial to the economies of nations to integrate women into the workforce, as they can labor for the benefit of the community and increase the number of people that consume products.²²

In addressing the advancement of the status of women, it is important to note that the geographical challenges for many women. Many students within rural communities receive less education than urban counterparts, because of their socioeconomic advantage and greater access to education (less geographical distance).²³ In Pakistan after the age of 14 less than 13 percent of girls continue their educational career due to physical distance, and their inaccessibility to sanitation facilities necessary for menstruation.²⁴ This distance is highly problematic within rural communities, and the lack of feminine hygiene prevents 1 out of 10 African girls from receiving an education.²⁵

Furthermore, women in rural areas are less likely to have access to maternal health care and access to doctors due to cultural distrust. There are also many cultural traditions concerning female genital mutilation at young ages, which is a procedure which is in direct

²¹ Ibid

²² "Gender Ratio - Our World in Data." <https://ourworldindata.org/gender-ratio>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

²³ "Difference Between Rural and Urban Education ... - Women's." 1 Feb. 2018, <https://women-s.net/difference-rural-and-urban-education/>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

²⁴ "Pakistan must live up to promise to build more girls' schools" 13 Nov. 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-education-girls/pakistan-must-live-up-to-promise-to-build-more-girls-schools-activists-say-idUSKCN1NI20J>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

²⁵ "Why Periods Are Keeping Girls Out of School — and How You" 30 May. 2018, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/menstrual-hygiene-day-education/>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

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violation of the rights of a woman and can cause lifelong pain and medical issues²⁶, as well as the practice of child marriage,²⁷ which puts young girls lives and futures at risk and limits their ability to further their status in the world.²⁸ These women often also suffer from rape and abuse that is untreated due to lack of medical access, and stable transportation routes.

Women living in war zones are forced to endure higher gender-based violence, which can lead to an increase in internally displaced women and refuge seeking individuals.²⁹ Due to unstable conditions, women in conflict zones have higher rates of rape, forced marriage (including child marriage), and restrictions on their education.³⁰ Additionally, sexual violence has begun to be used as a tactic in war for interrogation and war conquests. These increased risks often go unaddressed, with many governments ignoring crimes in fear of losing political power. This greed for power is even present within the UN's own peacekeeping corps, who either ignore or participate in these war crimes.³¹

Internationally, states also have a significant gender pay gap. According to the Global Gender Gap Report in 2018, one-hundred and forty-nine countries are trying to decrease economic, political, and health inequality.³² The UN also developed the Gender Inequality Index

²⁶ "Female genital mutilation - World Health Organization." 31 Jan. 2018, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

²⁷ "The facts about child marriage - Girls Not Brides." 20 Sep. 2011, <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/the-facts-about-child-marriage/>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ "Targeted Attacks, Rape, Displacement Threaten Women in" 12 Mar. 2015, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/wom2028.doc.htm>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ "War disproportionately affects women, so why so few female" 7 Sep. 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/sep/07/war-disproportionately-affects-women-female-peacekeepers-fiona-hodgson>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

³² "The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 | World Economic Forum." 17 Dec. 2018, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

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that measures development in three areas: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status.³³

NGOs

There are several international organizations dedicated to aiding women in all parts of the world and furthering gender equality. One such organization is Care, an organization that works in many types of humanitarian aid but does work specifically in women empowerment.³⁴ Care helps advance the status of women through educating women and girls facing poverty, advocating for women in the workplace, and combating gender-based violence and child marriage.

Child marriage is a violation against the reproductive rights of women, as defined by the Center for Reproductive Rights. The Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) is an organization that advocates for the recognition of reproductive rights as fundamental human rights throughout the world. The CRR specifically works with policymakers as well as working court cases that involve reproductive rights in many national courts.³⁵ A similar organization that works in a broader field towards general equality between genders is Equality Now.

Equality Now is an organization that strives for legal change as a means of working on issues such as legal inequality, sex trafficking, sexual violence as well as harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. Equality Now achieves this goal

³³ "Gender Inequality Index (GII) | Human Development Reports." <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>. Accessed 27 Sep. 2019.

³⁴ "Women Empowerment - CARE.org." <https://www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

³⁵ "Center for Reproductive Rights." <https://reproductiverights.org/>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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through an international network of lawyers that work to achieve justice for victims of discrimination and violence, hold governments accountable for their promises and inform human rights bodies of local issues.

Block Positions

Asia and Pacific

Countries such as China and Japan have steadily increased the Gender Wage Gap and Inequality index, because of the perspective that many of the citizens hold. This stems from the issue of integrating Gender Perspectives throughout the block. Many citizens believe that women will stop pursuing career interests after they start having children, and as a result, many higher employment options don't want to hire someone that would be leaving soon. This situation occurred in Tokyo where their Medical University was rigged against women, because of their fear of inadequate students that would drop out.³⁶ This block should focus on Social perspective, and various ways that it's impacted (media, events, politics) to be able to promote women's value and intelligence that is equal to Man's.

Africa

Recently the African Union (AU), has significantly increased the political representation of women in politics, with 5 women and 5 men elected as commissioners in 2003.³⁷ Despite Political representation, many countries within the AU live in Poverty, and as such many women

³⁶ "Hong Kong inequality Crisis." <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/hong-kong/article/2160144/gender-equality-high-income-asian-countries>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

³⁷ "African Women Battle for Equality," <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2005/african-women-battle-equality>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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are dependent on their husbands for survival. This is caused by a variety of physical limitations women face in the education system. Due to Menstrual cycles, many young girls are forced to lose a week of school, because of inadequate sanitary systems and disposal sites. This prevents many girls from applying to higher-paying jobs, and if they do get a high paying job 1 in 31 people die from childbirth complications before they are able to make it past the poverty line.³⁸ Most countries within this block should focus on increasing education accessibility to women and the benefits educated women could bring to a country.

Europe and the Americas

This Block has been able to address all Physical forms of discrimination within Gender inequality and has helped fund many countries to do the same. Many countries have strived for employment equality and decreasing the Pay Gap; however, leadership positions are still low within the female gender. This is because many women have degrees within STEM programs, but don't pursue them after the initial stages. This dropout rate is a result of 67% of citizens believing that women are unqualified as doctors and other scientific offices.³⁹ With little support from the community many women settle for what's available without the degree, which wastes a lot of potentials. South America suffers from similar problems because Women do tedious jobs that pay less than minimum wage (increasing income inequality). This Block

³⁸ "Improving Gender equality in Africa." <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/brief/improving-g-gender-equality-in-africa>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

³⁹ "Gender inequality from a European Perspective." <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0896627317309315>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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should focus on promoting STEM and leadership positions for women so that the social stereotype starts to degrade.

Middle East

Though this region is historically known for inequality between genders, improvement in the status of women has varied greatly between many countries of the region. Most notably, states such as Jordan and Algeria have pursued an increase in female participation in the workforce. But still, the majority of men living in middle eastern nations have been surveyed as agreeing that women belong in the home.⁴⁰ Often inequality in this region is proliferated by cultural beliefs, such as a common idea that women should not speak to men outside their family, making it difficult for them to work, see doctors or speak to government representatives. An important statistic to consider though is that when surveyed, 58.5% of women in these countries agree with the above statement. Members in this block should focus on changing cultural norms through increasing education and improving political freedoms for women, as well as normalizing reproductive and general health care.

⁴⁰ "Majority of men in Middle East survey believe a woman's place is in" 2 May. 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/02/majority-of-men-in-middle-east-north-africa-survey-believe-a-womans-place-is-in-the-home>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

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Questions to Consider

1. What are the main obstacles to women's equality and how can they be solved?
2. How can implementation of resolutions be encouraged in countries which have a history of conflicting with UN action on women's rights?
3. How can solutions be adapted to be effective in areas which lack infrastructure and/or are during conflict?
4. What could be done to address the health and safety inequalities of women within Less Developed Countries?