

Southern Regional Model United Nations, Atlanta 2013
Beyond 2015: Reshaping the Millennium Development Goals for an Empowered Future Sustainability
November 21-23, 2013 - Atlanta, GA
Email: csw_atlanta@srmun.org



Dear Delegates,

I would like to welcome you to the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) Atlanta 2013 Conference and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It is a privilege for me to serve as your director. This is my third year with SRMUN and I look forward to working with each of you in committee and helping you make the most of this experience. Working on SRMUN staff is a rewarding experience each year that I am able to participate and I look forward to working with each of you in committee.

The Commission on the Status of Women is one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in the United Nations and is dedicated to 'gender equality and the advancement of women.' The CSW was established in 1946 with the mandate to promote equality and implement measures for the empowerment of women by the 45 Member States elected to the commission. The CSW focuses primarily on the advancement of women in social, cultural, political, and economic spheres and works to raise awareness of the most pressing issues facing women.

We have chosen the following topics to discuss at this year's conference because of the importance they play in advancing the status of women around the world.

- I. Strengthening the Rule of Law in Addressing Violence Against Women
- II. Combating the Challenges of Protecting Refugee Women and Girls

Each delegation is required to submit a position paper which covers both of the topics mentioned above. The papers should be no longer than two pages, singled spaced, as outlined on the SRMUN website. The purpose of the position paper is to discuss your countries position on the two topics and persuade your fellow delegates to follow the course of action laid out in your paper while in committee. These position papers are incredibly important to your success in committee and should provide insight into your countries position on violence against women and refugee women and girls.

Delegates are encouraged to use the paper as a means of stating what your country hopes to achieve in committee, and outline the best course of action for all Member States. Having a clear position outlined in the paper will serve as the foundation for your success in committee, and should thus portray accurate positions relating to our country. More information about position papers can be found on the SRMUN website (www.srmun.org). **All position papers MUST be submitted by November 1st, 11:59pm EST via the online submission system located at www.srmun.org**

I look forward to serving as the director for the Commission on the Status of Women during the Southern Regional Model United Nations Atlanta 2013 Conference. I wish you luck as you prepare for the conference and eagerly anticipate working with each of you at the conference in November. Please feel free to contact Fawn, Katie or myself should you have any questions during your preparation for the conference.

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History of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

In 1945, the United Nations (UN) was founded to promote the principles of peace and justice and promote equality, regardless of gender. The UN Charter reaffirms the ‘faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small’ and ‘promotes social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.’¹ Four of 160 government officials— Bertha Lutz of Brazil, Wu Yi-Fang of China, Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic, and Virginia Gildersleeve of the United States of America, succeeded in inscribing women’s rights in the founding document of the United Nations.² In February 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt, a former delegate of the United Nations General Assembly (GA) and first chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), during its inaugural meetings in London read an open letter address to the women of the world wherein it called upon ‘the Governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more active part in national and international affairs.’³ The sub-commission dedicated to the Status of Women was created under the auspices of the Commission on Human Rights. This body later evolved into the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 11 (II) of 21 June 1946. Under this resolution, the CSW is a specialized agency that reports directly to the ECOSOC on the political, social and economic development and advancement of women around the world.⁴ The first meeting of the CSW was held in February 1947 in Lake Success, New York, and all fifteen⁵ Member State representatives in attendance were women. From this early stage, non-governmental organizations also became a part of the unique character of the CSW as several international women’s organizations addressed the body. This dynamic continues today as the 57th session of the CSW in March 2013 included thousands of representatives from governments, inter-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector. Since its establishment, the mandate of the CSW underwent revision in 1987 and again in 1996.⁶ ECOSOC Resolution 1987/22 is known for expanding the terms of reference of the CSW to include the functions of promoting the objectives of equality, development and peace, monitoring and implementation of measure for the advancement of women, and reviewing and appraising progress made at the national, sub-regional, regional, sectoral and global level.⁷ The 1996/6 ECOSOC resolution followed up the Fourth World Conference on Women and decided that the Platform for Action should be implemented through the work of all bodies and organizations of the United Nations and further defined identification methods regarding trends and issues affecting gender equality.⁸ Today, the CSW is a functional commission for the ECOSOC, with membership consisting of 45 Member States. Each Member State of the ECOSOC sends one representative to the annual session and serves a four-year term as the delegate of the CSW. The CSW consists of ‘thirteen members from Africa, eleven from Asia, nine from Latin America and the Caribbean, eight from Western Europe and other States, and four from Eastern Europe’.⁹ In addition, each CSW Member State elects a representative by region to serve on the CSW Bureau for two years.¹⁰ Being elected to the CSW Bureau makes the representatives responsible for setting the agenda of the annual session. The current five representatives are: H.E. Ms. Marjon V. Kumara of the African States, Chair; Ms. Ana Marie Hernandoof of the Asia-Pacific States Group, Vice Chair; Ms. Irina Velichko of the Eastern European States Group, Vice Chair; H.E. Mr. Carlos Garcia Gonzalez of the Latin American and Caribbean States Group, Vice-Chair; and Mr. Filippo Cinti of the Western European and other States Group, Vice Chair.¹¹

¹ United Nations, Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice, p. iii, iv and 3

² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2006, p1.

³ Ibid, p. 1

⁴ Ibid, p.1

⁵ Original members: Australia, Belarus, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Guatemala, India, Mexico, Syria, Turkey, Former USSR, UK, USA, Venezuela

⁶ Ibid, p.3

⁷ Resolution 1987-22. Economic and Social Council. 26 May 1987.

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/673/80/IMG/NR067380.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁸ Resolution 1996/6. Economic and Social Council. 22 July 1996. Follow up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-6.htm>.

⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, Membership of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-fifth session (2011)

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Commission on the Status of Women, The Bureau, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html>

The CSW is a quintessential specialized agency of the UN system as it continues to work for the equality and fair treatment of women around the world. Making decisions through majority vote, the CSW has had success in its conventions, resolutions, and treaties. The Beijing Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, remain among the CSW's landmark successes.¹² The entity, UN Women, was created in 2010 and now supports the CSW in its policy formation. UN Women is funded largely by both voluntary contributions and the regular UN budget. At least US\$500 million annually has been recognized by Member States as the minimum investment needed for UN Women.¹³

Beginning in 1975, the CSW successfully sponsored an international conference for the advancement of women. The CSW held its first World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975. In 1995, the CSW held its fourth conference in Beijing, which is known for its success in the creation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which focused on 12 areas of concern.¹⁴ The mission of the Beijing Platform for Action is to emphasize a working partnership between men and women thus creating equality and to create a peaceful, just and humane world based on human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁵

In March 2013, the CSW held its 57th session, focused on the priority theme of the elimination and prevention of violence against women and girls. The two-week session ended on March 15, 2013 with the adoption of a global ban to end gender-based violence. In addition, the Commission focused on evaluating the progress and challenges for implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that impact women and girls as the 2015 benchmark approaches. Another focus of the most recent CSW session dealt with major gender-equality issues reflected in the post-2015 development framework.¹⁶

The current members of the Commission on the Status of Women include:

ARGENTINA, BANGLADESH, BELARUS, BELGIUM, BRAZIL, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, CHINA, COLOMBIA, COMOROS, CUBA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, EL SALVADOR, ESTONIA, FINLAND, GAMBIA, GEORGIA, GERMANY, GUINEA, INDONESIA, IRAN, HAITI, IRAQ, ISRAEL, ITALY, JAMAICA, JAPAN, LIBERIA, LIBYAN ARAB JAMIRIYA, MALAWI, MALAYSIA, MAURITANIA, MONGOLIA, NETHERLANDS, NICARAGUA, NIGER, PHILLIPINES, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, RWANDA, SPAIN, SWAZILAND, THAILAND, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, URUGUAY, ZIMBABWE

¹² "Overview." UN Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html#about>

¹³ "About UN Women," UN Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/daw/index.html>; "Frequently Asked Questions: Budget," UN Women. <http://www.unwomen.org/about-us/faq/#budget>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Platform for Action, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#objectives>

¹⁶ UN commission on women ends with adoption of global plan to end gender-based violence. 15 March 2013. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=44405&Cr=women&Cr1=#.UUUaPBnsfto>

I. Strengthening the Rule of Law in Addressing Violence Against Women

“All too often, perpetrators go unpunished. Women and girls are afraid to speak out because of a culture of impunity. We must fight the sense of fear and shame that punishes victims who have already endured crime and now face stigma. It is the perpetrators who should feel disgraced, not their victims.”

– UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon

“Far too often, in far too many countries, women cannot find justice. They are denied the very essence of the rule of law...The law has quite simply, failed women.”

– International Development Law Organization (IDLO) Director Irene Khan

Introduction

In 2008, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stated, “violence against women is an issue that cannot wait... No country, no culture, no woman young or old is immune to this scourge.... And we know that when we work to eradicate violence against women, we empower our greatest resource for development.”¹⁷ The Elimination and Prevention of Violence Against Women is one of the UN’s priority areas as gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. This issue impacts the lives of both men and women in developed and developing countries, resulting in “physical, sexual, and psychological harm and includes any form of violence or abuse that targets men or women on the basis of their sex.”¹⁸ While affecting both genders, the majority of GBV victims worldwide are women, and the UN has responded to this fact with a number of initiatives and resolutions seeking to shed light on the victimization of women and girls as well as their protection and empowerment. As a response to GBV, CSW should continue to look to the codified documents of international law within the UN system that recognize some forms of GBV as crimes against humanity, while also further encouraging the eradication and punishment of such violence through actions called for by the Member States of this body.

Gender-based violence is exacerbated during times of conflict, but it takes place in many forms on a daily basis around the world. While 139 countries include constitutional guarantees against gender inequality, and 125 countries claim to outlaw domestic violence, UN Women reports that seven in ten women will be raped, beaten, abused, or mutilated in their lifetime. Of the world’s women subject to this abuse, an estimated 80% have little or no access to their country’s justice system.¹⁹ It is for this reason that CSW’s role in addressing this problem through legal reforms can be particularly effective and transformative. This topic fits into the wider Millennium Development Goal (MDG) three that deals with gender equality and women’s empowerment, and it will allow CSW delegates to consider and address the obstacles that inhibit women from accessing legal protection to secure and sustain their rights.²⁰ In addition, sub-topics include the consideration of the establishment of legal frameworks for prosecution of crimes committed against women in conflict and post-conflict settings, as well as part of larger transitional justice planning and implementation.

In March 2013, the fifty-seventh session of the CSW highlighted this topic as a priority. The Commission defined “violence against women” as “any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls.”²¹ All Member States along with twenty non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worked for two weeks to reach agreed conclusions that resulted in the adoption of two draft resolutions. The agreed

¹⁷ “A Life Free of Violence: Unleashing the Power of Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality,” (U.N. Development Fund for Women UNIFEM, 2008).

¹⁸ “A Guide to Programming Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Activities,” (Gender Based Violence Working Group U.S. Agency for International Development, 2009), 4.

¹⁹ “Violence against Women: Facts and Figures,” UN Women, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.html.

²⁰ The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed to by all of the UN Member States at the 2000 Millennium Summit, laying the foundation for the international development community’s agenda for action, with the goal of major progress by the year 2015. For a list of all eight and more resources, visit: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

²¹ U.N. Economic and Social Council. Commission on the Status of Women, 57th, 2013. *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century,”* New York, 14-15 March 2013.

conclusions recalled the role of UN Women in responding to discrimination and violence against women while reaffirming such initiatives as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Rome Statute.²² The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an international declaration of women's rights, outlined in 1995 at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women. It covered issues that affect women in poverty situations, women in decision-making roles, and women afflicted by violence.²³ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often described as the international bill of rights for women, was accepted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, calling for equality between men and women in political and public life as well as in accessing healthcare, education, and employment.²⁴ Recognizing that a life free of discrimination for women is also linked to a life free of violence, The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, complementing the CEDAW and evoking the same rights that make up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).²⁵ The Rome Statute is the first international treaty to identify crimes against women as crimes against humanity.²⁶ At the same time that the 57th session reaffirmed this previous work, the Commission also recognized that significant gaps and challenges still remain, particularly when it comes to the inadequate implementation of legal and policy frameworks.²⁷ The agreed conclusions focus on a commitment to international cooperation regarding the prevention, investigation, and punishment of violence against women as well as the support and protection of women's rights, which is an area where this body can pick up the task.

History of this Topic: The UN Security Council's Role in Addressing Violence Against Women

Within the framework of human rights and the rule of law, the UN and its Member States have made a commitment to the protection of women and their rights to justice through Security Council resolutions. On October 31, 2000, a watershed moment for the role of women in peace and security, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was adopted unanimously. 1325 focuses on the impact of war on women as well as emphasizing their role post-conflict during the peace process. It called for greater participation of women in all levels of the decision-making process as well as paying special attention to the protection of women and girls. It also called for the inclusion of a gender perspective in UN programming. It was the first time that civil society organizations (CSOs) were mentioned as having a role in post-conflict peace processes. UNSCR 1889, adopted in October 2009 was presented by Vietnam and builds on 1325 by calling the consideration of women necessary agents of the creation of sustainable peace and security. Both of these resolutions recognize that women are both victims during war as well as agents of change and the maintenance of peace.²⁸

In June 2008, the United States presented UNSCR 1820, which specifically addresses women as victims of sexual violence during conflict. In addition, it calls for the elevation of women to positions that allow them to combat sexual violence. Some of the key components of 1820 are critical to keep in mind for this topic. For example, it calls for the end to impunity for sexual crimes by excluding sexual violence from amnesty provisions. It also notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, a crime against humanity, or coincide with an act of genocide. It elevates the seriousness of GBV, especially as it pertains to women, by identifying it as a matter of international peace and security.²⁹ In September 2009, UNSCR 1888, also presented by the United States, outlines the problem of sexual and GBV as a weapon of war. In addition to calling for the appointment of a Special Representative to focus on efforts to end conflict-related sexual violence, UNSCR 1888 calls on Member States to "undertake comprehensive legal and judicial reforms, as appropriate, in conformity with international law, without delay, and with a view to bringing perpetrators of sexual violence in conflicts to justice and to ensuring that survivors have access to justice, are treated with dignity throughout the justice process and are protected and receive redress for their suffering." It is in response to this demand that the CSW takes up the advancement of the topic and

²² "Commission on the Status of Women : Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session," (ECOSOC, 2013).

²³ "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," (Beijing: UN Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995).

²⁴ "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ", (United Nations General Assembly, 1979).

²⁵ "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women," (United Nations General Assembly, 1993).

²⁶ "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court ", (1998).

²⁷ "Commission on the Status of Women : Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session."

²⁸ "Un Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security," (The Institute for Inclusive Security, 2010).

²⁹ U.N. Security Council, 5916th, 2008. *Resolution 1820*, New York, 19 June 2008.

pushes for further advocacy of the rule of law as it relates to eliminating violence against women. The CSW has called for the implementation of these UNSCRs. They utilize these documents as a call to action and work to respond to them in their agreed conclusions and resolutions at their annual meetings and online resources. All of these UNSCRs contain important provisions, but the accountability and implementation mechanisms are left up to the Member States.

The CSW and UN Women's Role in Addressing Violence Against Women

The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the UN Fund for the Development of Women (UNIFEM), merged together under the mandate of UN Women. Each of these previously separate parts of the UN system now works as one voice to highlight and advance topics that affect the lives of women. It is important to understand the work that has laid the foundation for the progress over the last decade when it comes to raising awareness about violence against women. In particular, UNIFEM developed strategies, practices, reports, recommendations and programs that dealt with the issue of gender justice. Based on the understanding that violence against women exists due to structural inequality and many forms of discrimination, its strategy has been focused on ways to transform systems and empower women through the provision of access to education, skills, resources, and opportunities.³⁰

UNIFEM's Strategy for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls focuses on four priority areas: (1) implementing national commitments and promoting upscaling, (2) aligning national and local laws, policies, and programs with international and regional human rights, (3) addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, (4) intensifying the focus on prevention, working with men and young people.³¹ Priority area one focuses on data collection and analysis that will inform National Action Plans (NAPs) which are responses to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 within a specific national context. The first priority area also highlights the need for gender-sensitive budgeting, capacity development and technical assistance as well as a need for focusing on the economic security of women who may be at risk or are survivors of sexual violence. The second priority area calls for a continued focus on pushing for the universal ratification and implementation of related human rights conventions and protocols, such as CEDAW. Priority area two also focuses on bridging the gap between human rights standards and their application in formal and informal justice systems. Area three focuses on the continued promotion of compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 as well as incorporating action for prevention, protection, prosecution and response to sexual and GBV through security sector reforms and processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). It also seeks to assist in the development of community-based responses to sexual violence and access to justice in post conflict situations. Priority area four's focus on prevention highlights the importance of working with men and young people in both a strategic and advocacy way.³²

In 2008, the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon launched the UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign. It calls on governments, civil society, women's organizations, the private sector, men, young people, and the media to join the cause and promote advocacy initiatives at the national, regional, and global level. This campaign is a response to the recognition that men have a crucial role to play in speaking out in their diverse capacities to hold governments accountable, promote prevention activities, and call for adequate laws. The campaign is implemented through series of events and awareness-raising partnerships that focus on goals of promoting the adoption of national laws and national action plans that emphasize prevention and support mechanisms for victims. The main point of access for the campaign has been through the internet, where a multitude of resources can be accessed by the entities called upon, as mentioned above. There are different action plans available for schools, universities, local governments, civil society, and businesses. However, it is important to note that this campaign still creates a gap between those women and organizations operating in countries where internet access is limited. This lack of access limits the reach of the "main point of access" of the campaign without leaving some activists and partners dependent on those who can readily access the materials.

³⁰ "A Life Free of Violence: Unleashing the Power of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality," 9.

³¹ "A Life Free of Violence: Unleashing the Power of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality," 12-18.

³² Ibid.

Advancing Gender Justice: Strengthening Justice Institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

In many Member States, the rule of law still rules women out. Some 102 countries have no specific legal safeguards to prosecute or protect women from domestic violence.³³ Issues stemming from under-reporting of sexual crimes and under-representation of women in justice system, among others, contribute to the problem. In Egypt for example, forty percent of women have been sexually assaulted, but fewer than ten percent have been found likely to report it.³⁴ Not only is it important to investigate and understand overall what is preventing women from accessing legal and judicial systems, but also, the need to address the roots of economic, political, and social inequities that are part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remain. Advancing gender justice is seen as a key to achieving MDG three, especially as progress has been the slowest on the gender equality dimensions. In a 2010 report on the progress of the gender dimensions of the MDGs, continued discrimination against women was found to be at the core of the hindrance of progress.³⁵

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 mentioned the role of CSOs in the peace process for the first time. However, CSOs have been integral, yet often untapped, partners for providing support to victims of sexual violence and gender-based crime. In addition, they have been at the forefront of advocacy within Member States for compliance with international law and the political commitment to implement legal and judicial reforms that allow for gender justice. Where government funding is limited, for example, women's legal organizations have provided support in a variety of ways. From assisting in putting a stop to violence, representing women in legal cases, or helping women pursue divorce cases or acquire access to land rights, CSOs have also spearheaded gender-sensitive law reform at the national level.³⁶ CSOs have also led efforts to provide training on such reform. The International Association of Women Judges and Sakshi in India, whose programming extends to 16 countries in Asia and the Pacific, has facilitated specialized training to female and male judges to assist in the effort to build understanding on gender equality. This has been linked to groundbreaking rulings on cases presided over by judges who participated in the organization's training.³⁷

The DAW within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs developed a Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women in 2010 as an extension of the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign.³⁸ The handbook is intended to assist governments, civil society, and women's organizations or other stakeholders in developing new laws or enhancing existing ones that can help provide "justice, support, protection, and remedies to victims and to hold perpetrators accountable."³⁹ Beyond the development of legislation, the handbook makes clear that adequate funding, resources, monitoring, and enforcement combine for a holistic approach to responding to violence against women. A cornerstone of its approach involves consultation with victims and survivors so that an evidence-based approach to legislation can be made possible. The handbook also recognizes the crucial role of civil society in all phases from development to implementation and enforcement. While this handbook offers advice on a national level, it was only possible from the cooperation and coordination on the international level through the DAW. In addition to national entities, partner intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations were key in its development, and indeed are key in its application.

The Handbook builds upon the gains made over the past two decades in terms of legislation development that is responsive to violence against women and incorporates prevention tools. However, it has only been in existence for three years, and legal reform is a long-term approach rather than a short-term fix. Violence against women is a problem that stems from structural issues in societies that may not have yet been touched by the various campaigns spearheaded by the specialized UN agencies and Member States committed to responding to these issues. The gains that CSOs have made must be matched and integrated into the reform and work of judicial institutions. It has been

³³ "Violence against Women: Facts and Figures," UN Women,

http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.html.

³⁴ "Women's Access to Justice: Addressing Justice Chain Barriers," (Association for Women's Rights in Development AWID, 2011), <http://awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/Women-s-Access-to-Justice-Addressing-justice-chain-barriers>.

³⁵ "Gender Justice: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals," (U.N. Development Fund for Women UNIFEM, 2010).

³⁶ "Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice," (U.N. Development Fund for Women UNIFEM, 2011).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women," (Division for the Advancement of Women, U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010).

³⁹ Ibid.

an approach of CSW from the beginning to include relevant CSOs in its meetings and work. With regard to this issue in particular, this history of partnership will only strengthen the work being called for to eliminate violence against women through legal means.

Increasing Physical Access to Justice for Women and Girls

Data on violence against women is scarce, but it is estimated that between 15 and 76 percent of women are victims of sexual and physical violence in their lifetime. Many countries have legislation that deal with this issue, but in a variety of contexts, implementation still faces challenges.⁴⁰ Especially in the aftermath of violent conflict, women and girls face significant barriers to accessing justice for sexual and GBV crimes that may have been committed during or prior to the conflict. This is due to a variety of reasons in addition to the fact that women simply may not have access to basic services that are health related, let alone legal services. Also, due to the chaotic nature of conflict periods, legal services, if they existed prior to the conflict, may not yet be restored. In addition, societal structures may exclude women from traditional justice systems, especially in patriarchal societies like Afghanistan where 80 percent of women are victims of domestic violence, but incident go unreported for fear of being ostracized or worse - death.⁴¹

Women face barriers all along the “justice chain” because of legal, political, social, cultural, or economic barriers. In order to better understand these challenges, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) issued a report in February 2013 entitled, “Accessing Justice: Models, Strategies, and Best Practices on Women’s Empowerment,” which advocates that the law is an essential tool for advancing the rights and equality of women and girls. It demonstrates how formal and informal systems can change and respond to sensitive intervention and women’s empowerment, providing reports from Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific, focusing on what works and what is missing. What is interesting to note about the findings of this report, especially as the CSW considers legal approaches to addressing violence against women, is that informal courts solve four out of five cases in developing countries.

Traditional, customary, or non-state legal systems, all terms used to describe informal legal systems, differ heavily between societies, but in general, the informal resolution of disputes is carried out through some sort of arbitration or mediation. Often, the authority of an informal legal system is drawn from religious or cultural foundations and emphasizes the importance of community rather than individual rights. Rules within an informal system may be flexible, but ultimately, they hold an authoritative value within communities. Women, particularly in rural or poverty-stricken areas, turn to informal justice systems often because they simply do not have physical access to formal justice systems or because there are social disincentives or discriminatory laws that turn them away from formal systems. Nine out of ten respondents to a study carried out by the Asia Foundation in East Timor indicated that they preferred the informal justice system to solve their problems.⁴² In Afghanistan, 73 percent of women participating in a study carried out by the IDLO said they believed the local jirgas and district shuras⁴³ better followed the local customs and norms of the people. There is a plethora of information on why women do or do not turn to informal justice systems to address their grievances, but we must consider that much of the data indicating a lack of women turning to formal justice systems may be indicative of societal consequences. For example, if a woman gains a victory over a man in court, she may be ostracized by both the men and women in her community. Informal justice systems are not without their problems, and their utility should not be substituted for a serious effort to reform legal precedence throughout a country’s justice system.

⁴⁰ "Gender Justice: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

⁴¹ Annalise Moser, "Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-Affected Contexts," (U.N. Development Fund for Women UNIFEM, 2007), 10-11.; "Women for Women International Testimony for the Congressional Record: International Violence Against Women and U.S. Response," (Women for Women International, 2009) <http://www.womenforwomen.org/news-women-for-women/violence-against-women-girls.php>.

⁴² "Accessing Justice: Models, Strategies, and Best Practices One Women's Empowerment," (International Development Law Organization IDLO, 2013), 16.

⁴³ Jirga is a Pashto term referring to a type of dispute resolution involving ad-hoc meetings. Shura is a Dari word that describes permanent and quasi-permanent local councils. J Dempsey and N Coburn, Informal Dispute Resolution in Afghanistan, US Institute for Peace, Special Report 247 (August 2010) 2.

For example, women often face discrimination when it comes to traditional justice systems. In addition to being excluded from decision-making structures in general, women may also be prevented from testifying, which not only hinders the recognition of gender-based crimes, but also, it hinders their prosecution and punishment.⁴⁴ By contrast, often the problem may not lie in the lack of laws to address GBV. The lack of implementation of laws is a common reason for the impunity of violence against women, which is generally linked to the lack of knowledge about laws aimed at protecting women in conflict and as victims of GBV among the broader population, but specifically women. Exacerbating this problem, women who are victims, especially in war-torn societies where long-term conflict has shaped their lives, are often extremely hesitant to report crimes due to lack of trust of the police and institutions.⁴⁵

Developing legislation and justice systems should not be limited to any one concept of what a court system means. Implementation and enforcement is an inseparable part of making sure victims of GBV find justice as well as further prevent cases from occurring, so reforming laws and strengthening institutions will look different for each Member State while ensuring domestic laws and regulations are in line with international standards for gender equality.⁴⁶

Developing Effective and Accountable Justice Mechanisms that Address Gender-Based Crimes

While much progress has been made in terms of recognition of the magnitude of this issue all over the world, there is still work that remains in terms of developing effective and accountable mechanisms of justice that work for the individual and collective body of CSW Member States that address gender-based crimes. Much work still remains both in terms of prevention as well as post-conflict contexts, in particular.

Better provisions are still necessary for ensuring that gender-sensitive reconciliation processes are created and carried out during the peace-negotiation process as well as the broader post-conflict period. This is where universal implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 will really make great strides for including a female perspective in the formation of peace plans that are acceptable to and address women's needs that have been neglected in many societies before, during, and after conflict.

UN Women's 2011-2012 Progress of the World's Women report is entitled "In Pursuit of Justice" as it profiles what justice means for women, how justice systems can be made to work for women, gender justice and the MDGs, as well as funding to increase women's access to justice. It profiles legal cases that have been groundbreaking in terms of changing women's lives and the recognition of gender-based crimes. In addition, case studies of legal frameworks, pluralism and justice in Nepal, Bulgaria, and Ecuador are included as examples of the progress made and the challenges that still remain. The Progress of the World's Women report on women's access to justice includes ten recommendations on how to make justice systems work for women. These recommendations include: supporting women's legal organizations, supporting one-stop shops and specialized services to reduce attrition in the justice chain, implementing gender-sensitive law reform, using quotas to boost the number of women legislators, putting women at the frontline of law enforcement, training judges and monitoring decisions, increasing women's access to courts and truth commissions during and after conflict, implementing gender responsive reparations programs, investing in women's access to justice, as well as putting gender equality at the heart of the MDGs. Member States can have a direct role in deciding which of these recommendations are the most important for their context as well as the ones that the CSW can specifically provide the support and resources for.

Conclusions

UN Women developed the Global Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls in partnership with civil society.⁴⁷ It provides resources to organizations and government policy makers in 60 languages with 800 practical tools that can be used in legislation formation. It is an expansive resource that helps Member States within the CSW and throughout the UN System move from acknowledgement to action. Some of the

⁴⁴ "Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-Affected Contexts," 10-11.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "Accessing Justice: Models, Strategies and Best Practices on Women's Empowerment," *reliefweb*(2013), <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/accessing-justice-models-strategies-and-best-practices-women%E2%80%99s-empowerment>.

⁴⁷ <http://www.endvawnow.org/>

Knowledge Centre's modules are still being developed and can be supported by the expertise of this body and its participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It is important for CSW delegates to look to other bodies within the UN system that have also highlighted this issue for inspiration and partnership. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) created an Eight Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery, which includes Advancing Gender Justice as one of the points. This point calls for increasing women's access to justice as well as bringing a gender perspective into transitional justice, constitutional, electoral, legislative, judicial, institutional, and security sector reforms.⁴⁸

Prevalence of GBV reveals that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) still lacks political commitment and resources. This historical document can have a continued and increased effect on the fight against GBV if Member States adhere to its declarations and further their commitments and enact meaningful enforcement. Sustained political will is a necessary impetus for this important and urgent topic to be moved from one of a "soft" security issues to one that demands the intervention and action of the CSW Member States at the national and international levels. The UN Women's 2011-2012 report on the Progress of the World's Women is essential in the analysis and development of a solution and should be carefully reviewed in order to understand the scope of discrimination in plural legal systems as well as how this can be reformed with the help of governments, communities, and even individual women needing to navigate the legal system.

Progress on not only the elimination of violence against women, but also on the implementation of rule of law measures that address the crimes themselves cannot be separated from progress on the MDGs. The conditions that perpetuate violence against women and girls lie at the heart of the circumstances that the MDGs seek to work on, such as promoting gender equality, universal primary education, maternal health, combatting HIV/AIDS, and reducing child mortality.⁴⁹ Member States must work together to ensure their domestic policy reflects and enforces that which is agreed upon within global resolutions. Member States often find inspiration through their own or others' domestic policies and consequences of policies both positive and negative. Member States should consider their own National Action Plans (NAPs) and their multi-sectoral implementation in public services. For example, through the implementation of some NAP initiatives in the Latin America region, the creation of women's police stations in thirteen countries has led to higher visibility of GBV in the collective consciousness as well as crime reporting rates. Complementary to the consideration on NAPs, the Handbook on Legislation for Violence against Women can provide useful tools for delegates to work on the action front in terms of a response to this topic. While it is an issue that has become a priority, the gap regarding its implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability remains. That is where the work of this committee should begin, first by recognizing and grounding our work in the strides made so far, and deciding the most effective response for going forward.

Committee Directive

Addressing violence against women is no easy task as much of the causes for the perpetuation of this problem lie in structural issues within countries and communities. The rule of law is attempts to not only respond to the abuses that women have already endured, but also, it is an avenue that can set a long-term precedent for prosecution of crimes and prevention for the future. As delegates begin their research, they should first start by understanding the various resolutions and initiatives that have already been created and enacted within the UN system. They should then study which ones their countries have signed onto and what the progress of their ratification and implementation are. The resolutions and declarations regarding women, their rights, and the elimination of violence against them are instruments of law in and of themselves. Calling for universal adoption and implementation is the key to making sure that this work has a real impact for women now and in the future. CSW Member States should review the UNIFEM Strategy for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, paying special attention to the four priority areas. Delegates should investigate the progress of his or her country within the priority areas so that the work of the committee can complement and advance it.

Delegates should also look into the types of violence that women in their countries and regions bear witness to the most. What are the causes of this violence? Why does it occur? How can legal avenues be explored and strengthened in order to combat this violence? How can the work of the Commission be built upon in order to advance gender justice in an international way? How can the other Member States of the CSW learn from the progress that has been

⁴⁸ "Eight Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery," (UNDP, 2008).

⁴⁹ "Gender Justice: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

made in your country's context? Are there efforts to carry out specialized gender-sensitive legal training for judges and those in positions of power within the judicial institutions? How can fellow Member States support your country in building its gender-sensitive legal reforms?

II: Combating the Challenges of Protecting Refugee Women and Girls

“In every community in the world there are people who have been affected by acts of brutality. Atrocities committed by armed groups in conflict situations are often well publicized, while abuses committed behind closed door in the confines of one’s own home often remain completely hidden. Refugees and internally displaced people, who do not enjoy the protection of their own governments, are among those most vulnerable to acts of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence”
-Ruud Lubbers, UNHCR

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is dedicated to the protection and empowerment of women around the world. The CSW strives to highlight the issues facing all life-cycles of womanhood, and is broadly focused on all the challenges that women face. The CSW often works with other UN bodies and agencies that deal with particular challenges that women face, one such body is the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The UNHCR works in conjunction with the CSW to protect the rights and survival of women and girls that have been displaced because of conflict and humanitarian crises. The two commissionary bodies often collaborate in their research on the challenges facing women and girls, especially gender base violence and discrimination. The UNHCR provides essential value to the challenges faced in the protection of refugee women and girls and aids the work being done by the CSW. Specifically the two commissions collaborate to understand and improve the conditions in which refugees live. Refugees are the most vulnerable people in the world, and as Member States often do not take responsibility for them, it is up to international organizations to facilitate change. CSW and UNHCR hold meetings on a regular basis in order to assess the challenges facing women and refugee women and girls, while also searching for new ways of implementing change. Collaboration between UN bodies, organizations, and Member States is essential in order to properly alleviate the challenges facing refugee women and girls.

The CSW is the foremost body within the UN that deals with the challenges facing women and girls. Their meetings often result in a greater understanding of the challenges facing women and raises international awareness of these issues. Each year Member States from around the world meet at the UN Headquarters in New York to discuss the most pressing issues facing women, known as International Women’s Day. International Women’s Day has grown since its inception in 1975 and is a day to celebrate women, and to further change in the role of women. The theme for 2013 was “A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women.” This theme was part of the CSW’s focus on preventing violence against women and supporting survivors. Violence against women can occur in many forms, including forced marriage, partner violence, forced pregnancy, forced criminal activity, genital mutilation, sexual violence, harassment, trafficking, and general violence against women. According to several studies, 7 out of 10 women experience violence against them in their lifetimes.⁵⁰ This violence can have long term consequences, even intergenerational consequences. These consequences can be physical, mental, sexual, or reproductive. Also, children who are exposed to domestic violence have a higher risk of depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, and decreased academic achievement. These children are also more likely to be abused or abusers in the future.⁵¹ This violence reduces economic and social prosperity. These physical, economic, social and mental challenges are often exacerbated in refugee situations and lead to dire consequences for women and girls struggling to survive in refugee camps.⁵²

The challenges that women face are often exacerbated in refugee situations, and thus are of critical importance to the UN, especially the CSW and UNHCR. Refugee women and girls account for nearly 50% of the world’s refugee and IDP population and face particular challenges that men and boys do not face.⁵³ These challenges include three major categories: first, discrimination; second, sexual and gender based violence; and third, access to protection and assistance. These three challenge categories are common among all refugee women and girls, representing some of

⁵⁰ “Unite To End Violence Against Women: Human Rights Violation,” The United Nations, <http://endviolence.un.org/situation.shtml> (Accessed July 20, 2013).

⁵¹ “Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect,” U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long_term_consequences.cfm (Accessed July 20, 2013).

⁵² “Unite To End Violence Against Women: Human Rights Violation,” The United Nations, <http://endviolence.un.org/situation.shtml> (Accessed July 20, 2013).

⁵³ *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/516285b89.html>

the most heinous crimes against a group of people. In 2011 the UNHCR released their most recent statistical yearbook and found that there are 34.4 million people in their population of concern.⁵⁴ The population of concern represents those who are refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, asylum-seekers, returned refugees, returned IDPS and others of concern. During the course of their research they found that 50% of the population of concern were women, and 46% of were children. Even more startling, 47% of this population were children under 18 and 13% were under five.⁵⁵ The need for helping refugee women and girls has become greater over the past several years as more and more areas around the world are in conflict. The CSW and the UNHCR continue to work together to generate lasting change in the protection of women and girls across the world.

Challenges facing Refugee Women and Girls

The CSW and UNHCR both play a critical role in protecting women, especially those in refugee situations. Being a narrowly focused commission the CSW is able to explore the issues that face women, and how those issues play out in the global arena. The first challenge in protecting refugee women is that of discrimination. Discrimination against women has been a key focus of the CSW, especially discrimination in the political process. Women in refugee situations are essentially extradited from the political process and in the development of policies that directly affect them. As women cross transnational and international borders they are separated from the government which is responsible for their well-being, which places them in even greater risk of experiencing discrimination. The CSW has found that as women participate in the political process issues facing women receive stronger attention, by being cut out of this process this attention severely decreases.⁵⁶ As noted in their document covering governance discrimination, the CSW's "work is advancing women's political participation and good governance, to ensure that decision-making processes are participatory, responsive, equitable and inclusive. Efforts are focused through strategic entry points that can advance the status of women by catalyzing wide-ranging, long-term impacts."⁵⁷ The UNHCR also recognizes that refugee "women and girls face specific risks and are less likely than men and boys to have access to their rights, due to their gender roles and position in society."⁵⁸ Discrimination based on gender and position in society is heightened during refugee situations and their community structures break down. In order to combat this problem the CSW and UNHCR first raise international awareness, work with other UN bodies, NGOs and other women's organizations "to bring more women into government, train women leaders, and boost women's skills to actively participate in elections and candidates and voters."⁵⁹ The CSW also uses documents such as The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform to target and eliminate discrimination. CEDAW was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."⁶⁰ This definition plays a critical role in the work of CSW and other UN bodies and agencies as they help fight discrimination of women.

Along with facing discrimination, women are all too often the victims of sexual and gender based crimes. Sexual and gendered based violence effect women in every part of the world, this violence includes femicide-the act of murdering women-, physical abuse, human trafficking and sexual exploitation, forced marriage and pregnancy, rape, genital mutilation and harassment. The CSW, along with other bodies in the UN Women group, report that "Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined, perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation that we know today, violence

⁵⁴ *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/516285b89.html>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "Democratic Governance," UN Women, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/democratic_governance/. (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Women: Particular Challenges and Risks," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d9.html>, (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁵⁹ "Democratic Governance," UN Women, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/democratic_governance/. (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁶⁰ *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*, United Nations General Assembly, December 18, 1979.

against women devastates lives, fractures communities and stalls development.”⁶¹ Violence against women, in all its forms wreaks havoc in communities and has been steadily rising over the past several years. The CSW is highly concerned with this issue and the major theme of its fifty-seventh session, March 4-15, 2013, was focused on the elimination of violence against women. The session recognized that “violence against women and girls is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men and of systematic gender-based discrimination.”⁶² In a high-level round in the 57th session, the commission also noted “civil society, in particular women’s organizations, plays a crucial role in addressing the scourge of violence against women and girls.”⁶³ This role is becoming more important than ever because according to the CSW and UN Women, in South Africa a woman is killed every six hours, in Guatemala two women are killed a day on average, women and girls represent 80% of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked every year, and approximately 100 to 140 million women and girls in the world have suffered genital mutilation/cutting.⁶⁴ In refugee situations these experiences are often exacerbated and more frequent, especially for young girls. According to the UNHCR’s *Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons-Guidelines for Prevention and Response*, young girls face many of the same types of violence against women, but they are also more susceptible to child prostitution, sexual violence within the family, sexual exploitation, abuse and violence caused by those with unrestricted access to children. These young refugee girls are also highly susceptible to trafficking and harmful traditional practices.⁶⁵

One of the greatest struggles the refugee women and girls face, next to violence and discrimination is adequate access to protection and assistance. Without adequate access to housing, sanitation and assistance provided by the UN agencies, refugee women and girls are at even greater risk of experience the discrimination and sexual/gender-based violence mentioned previously. Inequality between men and women has been one of the longest challenges the world has yet to properly address, and has only just begun to make progress towards. The CSW has made gender equality one of their top priorities in their annual sessions and in 1995 introduced “gender mainstreaming” at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Gender-mainstreaming is a strategy used by the CSW to promote equality between women and men, and was adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1997 as part of their agreed conclusions.⁶⁶ In the ECOSOC 1997/2 agreed conclusion, it states that,

*Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, and as a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.*⁶⁷

The CSW plays a critical role in gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality for all women, while the UNCHR focuses on promoting this equality for refugee women and girls. The UNHCR recognizes that women and girls have different needs and face different challenges as that of men and boys, and has thus created guidelines to help women and girls. The *Women, Girls, Boys, and Men-Different Needs-Equal Opportunities*, lays out the guidelines for helping men and women in times on conflict and crisis, as well as in refugee situations. This handbook “sets forth standards for the integration of gender issues from the outset of a new complex emergency or disaster, so that humanitarian services provided neither exacerbate nor inadvertently put people at risk, reach their target audience; and have maximum positive impact.”⁶⁸

⁶¹ “Facts & Figures on VAW,” UN Women, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.html, (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁶² E/CN.6/2013/CRP.3. *High level round table on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*. Commission on the Status of Women. March 12, 2013.

⁶³ E/CN.6/2013/CRP.3. *High level round table on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*. Commission on the Status of Women. March 12, 2013.

⁶⁴ “Facts & Figures on VAW,” UN Women, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.html, (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Commission on the Status of Women: Follow-up to Beijing,” UN WOMEN, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/critical.htm#gender>, (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities*, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action, December 2006. <http://www.unhcr.org/50f91c999.html>

Along with providing adequate shelter and food sources for refugee women, and protection in the camps, the UNHCR and CSW strives to address very specific protection needs, such as providing young girls with programs to increase their enrollment and retention in school which helps them overcome any future economic barriers. Ultimately the goal of the UNHCR is to help build “women’s resilience and strength to support their empowerment and strengthen their protection, and promotes their full participation in all decisions affecting their lives. Despite the many challenges, displacement can enable women to take on new roles and instigate positive change.”⁶⁹In order to make these changes the CSW in partnership with the UNHCR and other agencies work tirelessly to provide all women with the opportunity to live free from threat of discrimination and physical harm. These two commissions have worked to set forth standards and guidelines for helping women and girls, especially refugees live in an ever conflicted world.

Guidelines and Programs for Aiding Refugee Women and Girls

The goals of the CSW and UNHCR go hand in hand in the work that they do to promote gender equality and opportunities for women to lead safer, healthier lives. The work of the CSW and UNHCR aims to eliminate any barriers that women face, whether it be political, economic or social. In order to combat these changes, and many more, the CSW and UNHCR set forth various protocols, standards, and guidelines. These measure help ensure that women get the protection and assistance they need, while also taking accurate data measurements so that the UN can fully understand the ongoing trends in the treatment of women in every Member State. The CSW is guided by the Beijing Platform, as well as a series of conventions including CEDAW and various resolutions adopted by both ECOCOC and the General Assembly. The Beijing Platform for Women is an agenda for women’s empowerment, and works “at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making”⁷⁰ The platform was originally adopted by the CSW in 1995 in Beijing, China and “reaffirms the fundamental principle set forth in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.”⁷¹ Since 1987 the CSW has run on a multi-year program of work, for the 2010-2014 the themes focus on implementation of the Beijing Declaration, access and participation of women and girls to education, empowerment of rural women, the elimination and prevention of violence against women, and for 2014 as preparation for the 2015 MDG deadline, the theme is challenges and achievements in the implementation of the MDGS for women and girls. Along with their annual sessions in the UN headquarters, and as mentioned in the introduction, the CSW observes International Women’s Day on March 8th each year and for two hours their sessions are suspended for a special event planned by UN Women. The Commission is guided these standards and works to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Beginning in 1980s UNHCR held a series of round table meetings in order to discuss the growing refugee population, looking specifically discussing women. In 1985 an executive committee concluded that “refugee women and girls constitute the majority of the world refugee population and that many of them are exposed to special problems in the international protection field.”⁷² This was one of the first instances when women were exclusively discussed in a UN meeting, especially refugee women. The committee recognized that the issues women face “result from their vulnerable situation which frequently exposes them to physical violence, sexual abuse and discrimination.”⁷³ The conclusion encouraged Member States to work within the programs set forth by the UNHCR and UN systems. In 1987 UNHCR met to discuss the protection of refugees, recognizing the general lack of protection for all refugees. This 1987 meeting also recognized “that refugee women have special protection assistance needs as well as special resources which can be utilized for the benefit of all refugees, reiterated the need

⁶⁹ “Women: Particular Challenges and Risks,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d9.html>, (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁷⁰ *The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women Platform on Action*. UN Women. Beijing, China. September 1995. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#statement>

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² “Refugee Women and International Protection,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, EXCOM Conclusions No. 39, (October 18, 1985), <http://www.unhcr.org/3ae68c43a8.html> (Accessed June 1 2013).

⁷³ Ibid.

to give particular attention to their situation with a view to improving existing protection and assistance programmes...⁷⁴

In 1988 the members of UNHCR began to introduce new measures of integrating women's issues into their programs, including "check lists within technical sector guidelines, gender issues in the Executive Committee country chapters, detailed reference in the UNHCR Programme Manual"⁷⁵ This was a landmark decision in the treatment of refugee women and girls. Since the 1980s the treatment of refugee women and girls has become one of the most important issues that the UN, CSW and UNHCR has addressed. In 1991 the UNHCR introduced *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, the first of its kind and focused solely on women. The guidelines were comprised of four main parts, first, guidelines for assessing protection of refugee women; second, suggestions for protection which is broken down into two parts, physical and legal; third, suggestions for improvements that can be made to existing refugee camps, and last, actions to take once protection problems can be identified. These guidelines went into specific detail about how to physically and legally care for refugee women and were used throughout the 1990s and early 2000s as a means of standardizing care for displaced women. In March 2008 the UNHCR unveiled its *Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls*, which superseded the guidelines of 1991. While the members of UNHCR recognized that much had been done to protect refugee women "a massive culture of neglect and denial about violence against women and girls, that culture of neglect and denial exists everywhere, and we must face up to it, this means working to change our attitudes and actively promoting equality for women and men, girls and boys, and respect for women's and girls' rights."⁷⁶ The handbook consists of six chapters, each discussing a component to address the protection of women, including practices of gender equality, identification and response, ensuring protection and the legal framework. The work of the UNHCR continues to change the way refugee women and girls are treated and aims to empower women while promoting gender equality and working with Member States to protect women and girls.

Resolutions and Reports Affecting Refugee Women and Girls

The CSW and UNHCR work to gather data and publish relevant reports on the status of women and refugee women. Similarly, the Security Council (SC), the United Nations General Assembly (GA), and ECOSOC all have worked to adopt resolutions and reports affecting women in all Member States. These resolutions play a vital role in the protection of women and work to ensure they are given proper assistance. The GA has adopted a number of resolutions over the past several years that are geared toward the advancement of women's issues in the UN system. In December 2012 the GA 67th sessions adopted resolutions A/RES/67/144 and A/RES/67/148, which deal specifically with the Fourth World Conference on Women and the elimination of violence against women. A/RES/67/148 "Encourages all actors, including Governments, the United Nations system, other international organizations and civil society, to continue to support the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in fulfilling its central role in the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action."⁷⁷ The resolution also calls upon Member States to "comply fully with their obligations under the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto and to take into consideration the concluding observations as well as the general recommendations of the Committee, urges States parties to consider limiting the extent of any reservations that they lodge to the Convention"⁷⁸ While the GA encourages all Member States to be active participants in the UN process and ratify those conventions and treaties important to the protection of women, they recognize that "States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent violence against women and girls, provide protection to the victims and investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and that failure to do so violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms"⁷⁹

⁷⁴ "General Conclusion on International Protection," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, EXCOM Conclusions No. 46, (October 12, 1987), <http://www.unhcr.org/3ae68c95c.html> (Accessed June 1 2013).

⁷⁵ "Refugee Women," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, EXCOM Conclusions No. 54, (October 10, 1988), <http://www.unhcr.org/3ae68c4370.html> (Accessed June 1 2013).

⁷⁶ *The Handbook: Forward*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. <http://www.unhcr.org/47cfad7f2.html>

⁷⁷ A/RES/67/148. *Follow up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly*. United Nations General Assembly. March 6, 2013.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

One of the greatest issues facing the CSW and all bodies of the UN is violence against women, which cuts across all sectors of the UN and affects every Member State. Violence is something that too many refugee women face at some point during displacement. In 1995 the UNHCR outlined the *Sexual Violence Against Refugees Guidelines on Prevention and Response* which describes how the UNHCR should handle sexual violence against refugees and recognizes that “women and young girls-and, less frequently, men and boys-are vulnerable to attack both during their flight and while in exile.”⁸⁰ Women and girls are more likely to encounter some form of violence, especially in refugee situations while preparing for departure and while in the refugee camps. One of the largest problems the most UN agencies encounter while gathering data in the field is the lack of cooperation and the negative consequences of reporting violent attacks. In the *Sexual Violence Against Refugees* guidelines, one of the areas reported on is the under-reporting of sexual violence which can often be attributed to fear and the fact that many instances of violence are viewed to bring shame on a women’s honor and victims are often ostracized and blamed for the violent action as opposed to the offender.⁸¹ Women are especially susceptible to being stigmatized and may lead to being alienated from their communities, and in some cases held legally responsible for the crime that was committed against her.⁸² While it is the responsibility of the CSW and UNHCR to aid in reporting instances of violence against women, the GA recognizes that “States have the obligation, at all levels, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women and girls, and must exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and eliminate impunity and should ensure protection.”⁸³

The Security Council, along with the CSW, UNHCR and GA have a vested interest in the protection of women and girls and have adopted numerous resolutions to ensure the safety of women around the world. In the SC session of this year the Council adopted resolution SC/RES/2106 concerning women, peace and security and encouraged all Member to recognize all forms of sexual violence as major national crimes with full legal ramifications.⁸⁴ Many refugees seek refuge from conflict situations and zones around the world, and women in conflict have become an important issue in the SC, especially the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. In resolution 2106 the SC declared sexual violence a crime against humanity and compared sexual violence crimes to genocide.⁸⁵ The resolution is important to the development towards women’s rights as it equates rape and sexual violence during times of conflict equivalent to war crimes.⁸⁶ The SC, along with CSW and UN Women recognize that “women’s political, social and economic empowerment, gender equality and the enlistment of men and boys in the effort to combat all forms of violence against women are central to long-term efforts to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations.”⁸⁷ This resolution is important to all women, whether or not they are in conflict or refugee situations because it recognizes that women face discrimination, threat of sexual violence, and lack adequate protection and assistance, all of which are the foremost challenges that refugee women face. The most recent resolutions comes nearly thirteen years after the landmark resolution, 1325 an outcome of the March 8, 2000 International Women’s Day. The resolution recognized the needs of both women and girls, as well as sensitive populations like refugees. At the time the SC was expressly concerned with women and children living in conflict zones, a population targeted by combatants. The resolution calls for increased representation of women both in Member States and the UN, at all decision making levels, as well as the integration of gender perspective programs, protection of women and children in armed conflict and increased funding of women’s foundations in the UN. The resolution calls upon Member States to take into account women and children within refugee camps during war or times of conflict.⁸⁸ The work of the Security Council and other UN bodies and agencies are critically important to the health and well-being of all women, regardless of their situations and circumstances in life.

⁸⁰ *Sexual Violence Against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6b33e0.pdf>

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ A/RES/67/144. *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women*. United Nations General Assembly. February 27, 2013.

⁸⁴ SC/RES/2106. *Women Peace and Security*. United Nations Security Council. June 24, 2013.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ SC/RES/1325. *Women Peace and Security*. United Nations Security Council. October 31, 2000.

Legal Framework for Refugee's and IDPs

The international refugee law is in place to help people who seek refuge from torment and those classified as refugees. Many resolutions and treaties make up the body of the international refugee law. These include the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1953 Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons, the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa⁸⁹. The first defined “refugee” and set general guidelines about refugees. Since this Convention was established soon after World War II, the definitions emphasize refugees displaced from their countries. The subsequent protocols and conventions made international refugee law more modernized as the definition of a refugee changed with time⁹⁰. Of note is that the international refugee law does not specifically protect women or girls who are persecuted. The original 1951 convention protected those who are persecuted based on race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion. This person must also be outside of his or her home country, and cannot be protected by his or her own country or come back because of torment. Specific regions may also have their own protocols.

Two specific examples are the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, which addressed refugee movements in the post-colonial era in Africa, and the Cartagena Declaration, which expands the Latin American refugee definition to generalized violence in the region. In regards to specific legal protections, women may face discrimination since they do not have any specific laws relating to them, and can be subjugated by men in refugee communities. Therefore, women’s access to protection may be less than men. A significant problem in the convention for women is the loophole in not allowing gender to be listed as a condition of displacement under the original 1951 convention or in any subsequent convention. This loophole can be used to turn away women who seek protection solely for gender reasons. In many instances, however, women face other discrimination, as outlined in the refugee law, so this loophole does not apply.

Another important law governing women is previously mentioned CEDAW, which pushes for less discriminatory treatment of women. This and other laws governing women can be helpful for refugees⁹¹. Unfortunately, many states have heavy restrictions that make these laws useless. A specific code that can affect refugees is Sharia law. This code sets restrictions on women. A partnership “The Right to Asylum between Islamic Shari’ah and International Refugee Law: A Comparative Study” makes important points on the right of refugees seeking help in states who abide by Sharia law⁹². States that implement Sharia law can seem oppressive to women who seek greater freedoms, and those refugees who seek asylum in Sharia code-abiding states may continue to feel oppressed, but in a different manner. Therefore, making nations more accountable when they break the international refugee law is a significant weakness, and something that may continue should changes not be made.

Targeted Actions set forth by CSW and UNHCR

The CSW in coordination with UNHCR have worked to improve the quality of life for all women and holds countless meetings and discussion panels to learn how they can improve. In 2011 the UNHCR published its *Survivors, Protectors, Providers: Refugee Women Speak Out*, a discussion between 1,000 women and girls who were either refugees, asylum-seekers, or IDPS. Between November 2010 and December 2011. These women came from different areas of the world, including India, Colombia, Jordan, Zambia and Finland who share common struggles. The discussion focused on ten key areas, including documentation, education, women in leadership, health, legal issues and sexual and gender-based violence. This discussion has allowed the CSW and UNHCR to become better equipped to deal with the struggles of refugee women and girls.⁹³ The women were candid in their

⁸⁹ “Fundamental tools for the protection of the displaced,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/en/resources/legal-documents/international-refugee-law.html>. (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁹⁰ *Refugee Protection: A Guide to International Refugee Law*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2004. <http://www.unhcr.org/3d4aba564.html>

⁹¹ Sushil Raj, “The Gender Element in International Refugee Law: Its Impact on Agency Programming and the North South Debate,” *ISIL Year Book of International Humanitarian and Refugee Law*, 2001, <http://www.worldlii.org/int/journals/ISILYBIHRL/2001/9.html> (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Survivors, Protectors, Providers: Refugee Women Speak Out*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/50f919f39.html>

discussion of what needs to be done in order to better address the needs of this fragile population, which includes more protection for refugee women against sexual and gender-based violence, increasing the role of women in the refugee camps, using trained cultural mediators to help in the transition process for refugees, and proper documentation for refugee women and girls. The UNHCR has also created the “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence” program which helps to raise awareness of the plight of women who are the victims of sexual violence. In 2012 during November 25-December 10, the UNHCR shared stories of women who were the victims of multiple rapes in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Programs like these help to raise awareness of the difficulties women face in trying to protect themselves against violence every day.

As much as the UNHCR does for refugee women, the CSW is the foremost UN body that works to empower women and protect them from danger. The CSW has been committed to the issues facing women since it was created under the umbrella of ECOSOC. As noted, in 2013 the focus of the CSW was the elimination of violence against women, resulting in a number of agreed conclusions that in some way or another addressed violence against women and girls. One agreed conclusion called for a clearer definition of this violence, which is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”⁹⁴ The Commission also condemned violence against women in conflict situations, working closely with the Security Council to more clearly define this kind of violence and its repercussions and urged Member States to likewise condemn this violence. The agreed conclusions also touched on the need for gender equality and the end of discrimination against women, which is a persistent obstacle for all women and refugees. The conclusions also stressed that “the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including women’s economic empowerment and full and equal access to resources, and their full integration into the formal economy...is essential for addressing the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls.”⁹⁵ The struggle over discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence and the protection of women play a huge role in the work of the CSW. Along with gathering data, they give concrete examples of how the livelihood of all women can be improved, such as strengthening the implementation of the legal frameworks such as CEDAW, addressing the root causes of the challenges women face, especially violence, increasing cooperation between Member States, NGOs and the UN, and improving the collection of data. All these improvements can lead to a greater understanding of the suffering of women and refugees, and help improve the efforts set forth by the UN. Ultimately, the CSW concluded in its most recent session that more work must be done to end violence against women in order for Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on an individual and global basis.⁹⁶ The goals of the CSW and the UN overall are incredibly important to the lives of women and have become a central focus of many UN bodies. As the 2015 deadline for the MDGs approaches, the CSW is more focused than ever on how the goals relating to women can be reached.

Looking to the future and MDGs

In the future, the CSW hopes to implement strategies to decrease violence against women, with programs starting in over fifteen countries. The UNHCR has several operational priorities for the near future specifically focused on women and girls. These priorities include creating access to an environment that will protect a refugee, a process of fair documentation and protection, a modicum of security from exploitation and violence, providing basic services and needs, and ensuring solutions to the refugee problem⁹⁷. These foci will allow the UNHCR to more clearly focus on the needs of refugees. These programs do not specifically focus on women, but women will benefit from more focus on refugees in general. The CSW, in 2013, proposed a complete overhaul of its methods, with the draft resolution “Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of women.” This resolution

⁹⁴ E/CN.6/2013/11. *Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*. Commission on the Status of Women. July 24, 2008.

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_\(CSW_report_excerpt\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf)

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ “Global strategic priorities 2012-2013,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/4ec230e916.html> (Accessed June 1, 2013).

also proposed that by 2016 a new plan for future work would be set into place. The CSW is also attempting to facilitate the return of displaced Palestinians to their homeland with Israeli delegates⁹⁸.

A push for action by the United Nations includes MDG Momentum, 1000 days of action. The Millennium Development Goals are hoped to be achieved by 2015, which is less than 1000 days away. This push by the UN is important to achieve these difficult goals, proposed at the turn of the century. The push to eradicate poverty, by dropping it to less than half, should be fulfilled by 2015. Women are also close to contributing equally to wage earning, increasing in the past few years⁹⁹. Women are also now more likely to go to school, but the gender gap in schooling is significant, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 26 percent of girls do not attend primary school. This goal is not likely to be met by 2015. Women are still not represented equally in parliament or the workforce, and are likely to face discrimination everywhere, especially in environments such as refugee camps. Women unfortunately only represent about 20 percent of parliaments around the world. Women also only have about 25 percent of high level management positions in the job market. This is low, although women have 40 percent of the jobs in the world now, which has increased five percent since 1990. The gap between genders in terms of schooling and jobs is likely even higher in the refugee community. The gender equality MDG will not be met by 2015.

An important MDG is reducing the mortality rate in new mothers, which is unlikely to be achieved since it has only gone down 2.3 percent a year since 1990. The goal was to reduce the rate by 75 percent. Poor and rural areas, which could encompass refugees, still have a high rate of maternal mortality¹⁰⁰. This high rate of maternal mortality could put women in jeopardy in this camp, and cause them to be seen as less consistent, and less likely to be reliable when given a job. Another MDG includes a halt in the spread of AIDS, unlikely to happen for women, for whom HIV is “the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age worldwide.” Women face problems having to care for themselves and others as a result of HIV, especially when employed in less stable forms of work than their male counterparts. Especially in a refugee environment, women may be discriminated against for caring for family members instead of doing wage-earning work. Women and girls are also responsible for collecting water far more than men, leading to heavy burdens for women in areas without easily accessible water sources, such as refugee camps and facilities.

Conclusion

Refugee women and girls face particular challenges that are different from that of many other groups around the world. Along with facing dire challenges to their health and safety, they are in increasing and ever fragile population. The amount of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs is predicted to increase as conflict and natural disaster continue to wreak havoc across the world. It is estimated that 43 million people around the world are displaced, with more than 15 million of them refugees. Of that population roughly 41% are children and around 50% are women.¹⁰¹ Because this population is increasing the need for assistance from both the UNHCR and CSW are needed more than ever. Refugee women and girls face particular challenges that are all too often impossible for them to overcome, these challenges include, discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence, and lack of access to protection and assistance. The CSW and UNHCR remain committed to helping these women achieve gender equality, as well as protection from the threat of violence. The CSW and UNHCR work through a number of guidelines and protocols to help Member States protect the female refugee populations in their areas. The CSW is also guided by the legal framework set forth by CEDAW, which helps to eliminate discrimination of women, which often results in physical and mental violence. The CSW works each year to raise awareness to the most pressing issues that women are facing, as well as giving them a voice in the UN and its Member States. The role of the CSW is vitally important to all women, not just refugee women and girls, because it gathers data that cannot be refuted, showing the world just how much women need help in achieving an end

⁹⁸ “Adopting Agreed Conclusions, Commission on the Status of Women Urges Global Action to End Pervasive Violence Against Women, Girls,” Economic and Social Council, March 15, 2013, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/wom1952.doc.htm> (Accessed June 1, 2013).

⁹⁹ “MDG Momentum 1000 Days of Action,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/news-events/in-focus/mdgmomentum/> (Accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “Global Issues: Refugees,” The United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/refugees/> (Accessed June 1, 2013).

to discrimination, violence and economic instability. The CSW works to empower women and give them a voice when they might otherwise be silenced.

Committee Directives

The delegates of this committee are charged with an incredibly important task, finding sustainable solutions to topics that are all too often overlooked and ignored. The delegates for the CSW should come prepared to discuss real world solutions to the challenges the refugee women and girls face. A working knowledge of both the CSW and the UNHCR is incredibly important to this topic, and delegates should be prepared to synthesize this knowledge. While the work of the UNHCR is incredibly important to this topic, the work of the CSW should be the central focus of not only the position papers, but the debate as well. The delegates should come prepared to answer certain questions, like how best can the UN address the challenges mentioned throughout the background guide? What role does the CSW play in the protection and assistance of refugee women? How can cooperation between UN bodies and Member States aid in addressing the challenges of refugee women and girls? Which protocols and guidelines have proved beneficial in their Member States? What has the delegates Member State done to help protect refugee women and girls? And finally, what are sustainable solutions to the challenges of refugee women and girls?

Technical Appendix Guide

I. Strengthening the Rule of Law in Addressing Violence Against Women

Bogmolov, Alexandre; Cassin, René; Chang, Peng-chun; Dukes, Charles; Hodgson, William; Humphrey, John P.; Malik, Charles; Roosevelt, Eleanor; Santa Cruz, Hernan. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This document is the basis of most human rights documents. Understanding of this document is essential for further research into human rights, and the rights of women. Delegates should utilize this document to comprehend the origin of fundamental rights.

Casey, Erin A. et al. "Context, Challenges, and Tensions in Global Efforts to Engage Men in the Prevention of Violence against Women, An Ecological Analysis." *Men and Masculinities* (2013): 228-251.

Men play an important role in preventing violence against women. This article examines the reasons why men do or do not help prevent such violence. This article may help delegates develop action plans for laws that will engage men in preventing this violence.

Cook, Rebecca J. Human Rights of Women: National and International Perspectives (2011): 573-591

This book offers a look at the rights of women in the law, and is a good introduction to the topic. However, a more useful resource comes within the appendices of the book. Appendix C in particular offers organizational resources. These resources include women's rights groups, governmental organizations with women's rights laws, and other pertinent information. It may be a good place to begin the search for organizations and lawmaking bodies within your country.

Engle Merry, Sally. Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice (2009).

Engle Merry offers a study on the roles of global and local laws in combating violence against women. Her unique position as an observer of United Nation actions and background in female-oriented organizations gives her insight into gender violence and human rights for women. This book would be a helpful start for those seeking to understand the fundamental gaps in human rights for women. This would be a good basis to start building an understanding of the topics.

Galusha, Jeanine M. "Global Leadership to Eliminate Violence against Women." Women as Transformational Leaders: From Grassroots to Global Interests: From Grassroots to Global Interests (2011): 207-238.

A brief overview of the history of violence against women is a good introduction to the topic. This chapter also provides ideas for international leaders to end this violence. It also cites several laws that will be helpful during research.

Ghosh, Ratna. "The Short History of Women, Human Rights, and Global Citizenship." Educating for Human Rights and Global Citizenship (2008): 81-96.

This chapter explains the changing roles of women in current society, with specific emphasis of women in a citizenship role. It also suggests reasons for women's current inequalities in society. It also brings to light important women's issues, such as abortion, and their ties to inequalities in rights for women.

Htun, Mala and Weldon, S. Laurel. "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005." *American Political Science Review* (2012): 548-569.

This recent article summarizes the local action in implementing new policies regarding violence against women. The authors posit that these local actions are what drive the uneven implementation of government actions against gender-based violence. This article would be a good basis to understand the laws and reasoning behind laws that govern violence against women.

Johnson, Penny. "Violence All Around Us: Dilemmas of Global and Local Agendas Addressing Violence against Palestinian Women, an Initial Intervention." *Cultural Dynamics* (2008): 119-131.

The individual frameworks of each human rights organization address violence against women differently. Some specifically address it, others do not at all. This article examines how each framework addresses the issue, and what that means in the broader scope of the issue.

Koss, Mary P.; White, Jacquelyn W. "National and Global Agendas on Violence Against Women: Historical Perspective and Consensus" *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (2008): 386-393.

Research and analysis are important in each step of research. This article contains and policy analysis of international organizations' political agendas in regards to violence against women. It may be a good starting point for country positions.

Parrot, Andrea; Cummings, Nina. "Forsaken Females: Global Violence against Women."

This article has examples of violence against women, and will help delegates get an idea of what the laws in place or that should be in place would prevent. The authors also suggest ways to prevent violence against women, which will help delegates propose an action plan.

II: Combating the Challenges of Protecting Refugee Women and Girls

Buscher, Dale. "Refugee Women: Twenty Years On." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* (2010): 4-20.

Many changes have occurred in refugee law and practices regarding women in the past twenty years. "Refugee Women: Twenty Years On" tracks these changes and examines their benefits. It also outlines things that have not changed but should, and offers recommendations as to which issues should be solved next.

Khory, Kavita. "Taking Gender Seriously in Asylum and Refugee Policies." *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century* (2012): 45-64.

This chapter should give a vision of refugee policies and their differences between genders. It should offer bedrock to build on in understanding the laws regarding refugees, and specifically refugee women. Delegates should use this to help understand their country's specific policies and to begin their research on specific policy points.

Langer, Jennifer. "Crossing Borders: The Extent to Which the Voices of Exiled and Refugee Women Have Adapted to their New Western Diasporic Space." *Journal of International Women's Studies* (2004): 66-74.

Many refugees create their new lives in western society, and this article examines the comfort of refugee and exiled women in the west. It also studies whether women feel comfortable sharing their experience in a wide medium such as print.

Martin, Susan. "Refugee and Displaced Women: 60 Years of Progress and Setbacks." *Amsterdam Law Forum* (2011).

Outlining the changes in refugee law in regards to women in the past sixty years, Martin examines many refugee laws. She also suggests things that refugee laws improved for women, as well as things that have remained lacking and need improvement.

O'Mahoney, Joyce Maureen. "Cultural Background and Socioeconomic Influence of Immigrant and Refugee Women Coping with Postpartum Depression." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* (2013): 300-314.

This resource can help delegates understand the differences in treatment between refugee and non-refugee women. It can also help emphasize the fundamental difficulties created in a person's reactions and mental health by being a refugee.

Munt, Sally R. "Journeys of resilience: the emotional geographies of refugee women." *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* (2012): 555-577.

Geography of refugees is very important to refugee law, and this article examines those places where refugees live. It also uses a case by case basis to humanize the issue and make it more relevant to each country.

Ross, Susan Deller. *Women's Human Rights: The International and Comparative Law Casebook*

This resource is one of the only casebooks that specifically focus on human rights for women. This casebook would be a good resource to cite specific cases in a country's position, as well as to understand human rights treaties.

There is also a specific look into many different women's rights issues, with some references to refugees as well.

Sengupta, Ipshita. "Becoming a Refugee Woman: Gender-Based Persecution and Women Asylum Seekers under International Refugee Law."

This article explains the problems of gender being omitted in most refugee laws. This article is a good starting point for delegates who seek to understand the deepest problem refugee laws have in regards to women: exclusion. The article also suggests ways to combat this problem, which could be a starting point for further research.

Smith, L. Ripley. "Female refugee networks: Rebuilding post-conflict identity." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (2013): 11-27.

This article examines a female refugee's identity and social habits after relocation. This post-crisis life is different than the previous one, in a foreign country. The article draws conclusions based on studies of women to determine their way of creating an identity in a new place. Delegates may benefit from this by understanding the mindset and difficulties of a refugee woman, and what challenges she may face after this transition.

Tomlinson, Frances. "Marking Difference and Negotiating Belonging: Refugee Women, Volunteering and Employment." *Gender, Work & Organization* (2008): 278-296.

Employment is important for refugees as a transition into a new society. This article examines how female refugees in the United Kingdom transition from volunteer work to full employment as well as their integration into society.