



SRMUN ATLANTA 2017

Development through Dialogue: Using Global Cooperation to Build Lasting Change

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Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2017 and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). My name is Sydnee Abel, and I am serving as your Director. This is my second conference as a SRMUN staff member, previously I served as the Assistant Director for SRMUN Charlotte 2017's General Assembly Plenary. I am currently an undergraduate student at Clemson University and earning a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science with a minor in French. Our committee's Assistant Director is Hannah Cake. This is Hannah's first time as a staff member, however she has previously participated as a delegate in SRMUN Atlanta 2016's General Assembly Plenary. Hannah is a graduate of Tallahassee Community College where she graduated with honors and is currently an undergraduate student at Florida State University where she is double majoring in Political Science and International Affairs with a concentration in Economics.

The CSW is dedicated to the promotion of women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

By focusing on the mission of the CSW and the SRMUN Atlanta 2017 theme of "*Development through Dialogue: Using Global Cooperation to Build Lasting Change*," we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

- I. Preventing Sexual Violence against Women in Conflict Zones
- II. Strengthening the Role of Women in Diplomacy and Political Affairs

This background guide provides a strong introduction to the committee and its topics and should be utilized as a foundation for the delegate's independent research. While we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in an intellectual inquiry of their own. Preparing for committee includes writing and submitting position papers, which should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, please visit srmun.org. ***All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 27, 2017 by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website.***

Hannah and I are enthusiastic about serving as your dais for the CSW. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you in the near future. Please feel free to contact Director-General Chase Kelly, Hannah, or me if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

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History of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946, shortly after the United Nations was formed.¹ Under Council Resolution 11, as set forth by ECOSOC, “the function of the Commission [on the Status of Women] shall be to prepare recommendations to the [Economic and Social] Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of Women’s rights.”² This Resolution also states that the CSW is to consist of representatives from fifteen Member States chosen by ECOSOC.³ In 1996, the powers of the CSW were further extended by Resolution 1996/6, which granted the CSW the ability to review and monitor the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA).⁴ As of 2015, the CSW was granted responsibility towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 5.⁵

The CSW is an intergovernmental legislative body with the goal of promoting women’s rights, gender equality, and the empowerment of women. This Commission is the embodiment of the United Nation’s commitment towards women and equality, a commitment which is illustrated in Article 1 of the UN Charter: “To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”⁶ In addition, Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”⁷ The CSW creates a platform for Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss potential solutions to the challenges facing women and to accurately report the realities, struggles, and inequalities in the lives of women.⁸

In the past, the CSW has produced numerous conventions, which aimed to further the rights of women. “From 1947 to 1962, the Commission focused on setting standards and formulating international conventions to change discriminatory legislation and foster global awareness of women’s issues.”⁹ These conventions included the Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 1953, the first convention to protect the rights of women under international law.¹⁰ The CSW furthered these rights through contributions to the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, the Convention on the Consent to Marriage (1962), and the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (1951).¹¹

There have been several World Conferences on Women, which have guided the CSW. The first conference was held in Mexico City in 1975, followed by Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and, most recently, Beijing in 1995.¹² The outcome of the Beijing Conference was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The BPfA was later reviewed in the “Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century” (Beijing +5).¹³ The CSW regularly conducts reviews on the implementation of the BPfA, such as Beijing +5 and the Beijing +20 conference which was held in 2015.¹⁴ The BPfA is “an agenda for women’s empowerment and [which] stands as a milestone for the advancement of women in the twenty-first century.”¹⁵ This Conference established the agenda

¹ “A Brief History of the CSW,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/brief-history> (accessed May 11, 2017).

² Resolution 11(II) United Nations Economic and Social Council (accessed May 25, 2017).

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Commission on the Status of Women,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw> (accessed May 10, 2017).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Charter of the United Nations*. The United Nations. June 26, 1945.

⁷ “Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” The United Nations. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/> (accessed May 9, 2017).

⁸ “Commission on the Status of Women,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw> (accessed May 10, 2017).

⁹ “A Brief History of the CSW,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/brief-history> (accessed May 9, 2017).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “The Four Global Womens’ Conferences 1975 - 1995,” United Nations (UN Women), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/hist.htm> (accessed May 11, 2017).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015),” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015#> (accessed May 27, 2017).

¹⁵ “The Four Global Womens’ Conferences 1975 - 1995,” United Nations, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/hist.htm> (accessed May 10, 2017).

of the CSW for decades to come. As part of this agenda, the BPfA noted twelve areas of concern that should be focused upon: women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl child.¹⁶ In adopting this Platform for Action, Member States made a commitment to combat inequality and empower women in their regions and across the globe.

In 2010, UN General Assembly established UN Women, otherwise known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.¹⁷ UN Women merged the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to one comprehensive branch.¹⁸ UN Women, in its current form, has three major roles: to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in policy development, to assist Member States in implementation of these standards, and to lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality as well as promote accountability.¹⁹

Presently, the CSW proposes multi-year programmes, which assess progression towards its goals and improve upon current methods of implementing the BPfA.²⁰ For example, the focus for 2017 is workplace equality, the economic empowerment of women, and review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.²¹ Review and assessment is a large component of the responsibilities of the CSW. The Commission must document, research, and collect data that can serve as a foundation for the furtherance of women's rights and for the empowerment of women.²² The CSW conducts, "extensive research produced a detailed, country-by-country picture of their political and legal standing, which over time became a basis for drafting human rights instruments."²³ This research helps determine the standing and need of women globally and assists policymakers in remedying these inequalities and violations of human rights. When the Commission is in session, it recognizes new goals, discusses progress and arising issues, and appraises the current situation as well as performing its many other functions.²⁴ At the end of the session, the CSW comes to a consensus on further action to take in actualizing its goals.

In March 2017, the CSW began its 61st session to continue the implementation of the BPfA and to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.²⁵ Following in the footsteps of Beijing +5, it was concluded in review of the BPfA that no country has achieved gender equality or the empowerment of women and girls.²⁶ For this reason, it is imperative that the CSW continues to make progress and foster new agreements to improve the status of women around the globe.

The following Member States are offered at SRMUN Atlanta 2017:

ALBANIA, BANGLADESH, BELARUS, BELGIUM, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BRAZIL, BURKINA FASO, COLOMBIA, CONGO, ECUADOR, EGYPT, EL SALVADOR, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, ERITREA, GERMANY, GHANA, GUATEMALA, GUYANA, INDIA, IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF), ISRAEL, JAPAN, KAZAKHSTAN, KENYA, KUWAIT, LESOTHO, LIBERIA, MALAWI, MONGOLIA, NIGERIA, NORWAY, PAKISTAN, PARAGUAY, QATAR, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SPAIN, SWITZERLAND, TAJIKISTAN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, UGANDA, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AND URUGUAY.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "About UN Women," United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women> (accessed May 21, 2017).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Commission on the Status of Women," UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw> (accessed May 10, 2017).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Commission on the Status of Women," UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw> (accessed May 27, 2017).

²⁵ "CSW 61 (2017)," UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw61-2017> (accessed May 29, 2017).

²⁶ Ibid.

I. Preventing Sexual Violence against Women in Conflict Zones

“Sexual violence in conflict needs to be treated as the war crime that it is; it can no longer be treated as an unfortunate collateral damage of war.”

- UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura²⁷

Introduction

Sexual violence in conflict is a grave, present-day atrocity that affects millions of people, primarily women and girls.²⁸ According to the United Nations (UN), sexual violence in conflict is “...a conscious strategy employed on a large scale basis by armed groups to humiliate opponents, terrify individuals, and destroy societies.”²⁹ Rape during conflict is often committed with the intention of deliberately infecting women with HIV, altering the ethnic make-up of the next generation, or rendering women from the targeted community incapable of bearing children.³⁰ As reported by the UNiTE campaign, “women as old as grandmothers and as young as toddlers have routinely suffered violent sexual abuse at the hands of military and rebel forces.”³¹ Additionally, sexual exploitation may come from the most unlikely of sources, such as the humanitarian aid workers tasked with protection.³² Globally, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse during her lifetime.³³ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “...in armed conflicts, the breakdown of social support structures, families, communities, and the disruption of services leave women and children vulnerable to sexual violence.”³⁴ As a result, women may submit to sexual abuse in order to obtain food and other basic life necessities.³⁵

Current Situation

During the conflict in Bosnia in the early 1990s, between 20,000 and 50,000 women were raped and during the 1994 Rwandan genocide approximately 500,000 women were raped.³⁶ According to the UN, approximately 1,100 rapes were reported each month in the Democratic Republic of Congo between March 1993 and June 2003; an average of 36 women and girls per day.³⁷ Additionally, the unending conflict in Sudan’s Darfur region, women and girls are still being subject to rape and sexual violence.³⁸ Furthermore, sexual violence perpetrated by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) remain a defining characteristic of the conflict in Syria since the beginning of the conflict in 2011.³⁹ According to the UN, these crimes primarily occur during “house searches, hostage taking, in detention, and at checkpoints.”⁴⁰ However, data on these occurrences can be extremely unreliable due to the ongoing insecurity in the conflict zone, lack of safe services, and fear of stigma and retaliations.⁴¹ As a result, there are still numerous unreported acts of sexual violence against women in conflict that occur daily.

²⁷ “Background Information on Sexual Violence used as a Tool of War,” Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgsexualviolence.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

²⁸ “About UNiTE: Human Rights Violation,” UNiTE to End Violence against Women, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/situation.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Background Information on Sexual Violence used as a Tool of War,” Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgsexualviolence.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

³¹ “About UNiTE: Human Rights Violation,” UNiTE to End Violence Against Women, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/situation.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

³² Ibid.

³³ “Violence Against Women,” World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> (accessed May 21, 2017).

³⁴ “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence: Sexual Violence and Conflict,” World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index9.html (accessed May 21, 2017).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “About UNiTE: Human Rights Violation,” UNiTE to End Violence Against Women, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/situation.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Syrian Arab Republic,” UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, <http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/syrian-arab-republic/> (accessed June 25, 2017).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Recent contentions highlight the systematic and specific targeting of women for sexual violence during conflicts.⁴² According to the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the manner of the sexual violence is often to maximize the humiliation of the victim, their family, and community, as well as to ensure a level of powerlessness and fear that will remain entrenched following the conflict.⁴³ In addition to traditional rape, perpetrators achieve their aims through gang rape, sexual torture, psychological torture, and an expressed motive for the rape.⁴⁴ DCAF estimates that 90 percent of rapes in war are gang rapes, which are often a spectacle with non-voluntary (family, other victims, local population) and voluntary (military and militia) spectators.⁴⁵ Sexual torture consists of rituals, mutilation, and filming for pornography, while psychological torture includes being forced to sing songs or say prayers whilst being raped.⁴⁶ Perpetrators use an expressed motive to forcibly expel populations by threatening to repeatedly rape communities if they do not leave, which can drastically affect the survival of affected communities after the conflict ends.⁴⁷

The impacts of sexual violence continue to affect the victims, their families, and the community after the conflict concludes. Victims may experience unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections or diseases, stigmatization, genital injuries or mutilations, and depression.⁴⁸ Women who are impregnated by rape face the psychological trauma of carrying the child of their rapist, as well as the physical risks of being pregnant during or after an armed conflict when safety is precarious and resources are scarce.⁴⁹ Additionally, DCAF states that survivors of sexual violence may experience severe, ongoing physical injuries, such as cutting off breasts to serve as an ever-present reminder of the rape.⁵⁰ Victims of sexual violence in conflict may experience psychological symptoms, including anxiety, sleep disorders, nightmares, apathy, loss of self-confidence, depression, psychosis, self-loathing, and suicidal thoughts.⁵¹ Moreover, “a woman who has suffered sexual violence is often ostracized by her family or the wider community, due to the perception that the woman has brought ‘dishonor’ upon them.”⁵² As a result, survivors often need medical care, HIV treatment, psychological support, economic assistance, and legal redress. However, most post-conflict Member States do not have the resources necessary to meet their needs.

Actions Taken by the United Nations

Since the inception of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations has dedicated itself to improving the lives of women in every corner of the world. The original predecessor of the current UN framework to combat sexual violence against women in conflict is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 by the General Assembly.⁵³ The Convention defines discrimination against women 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

⁴² *Women in an Insecure World: Violence against Women Facts, Figures, and Analysis*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. Geneva: DCAF. 2007. <http://www.dcaf.ch/Chapter-Section/Executive-Summary-Women-in-an-Insecure-World> (accessed June 25, 2017).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Background Information on Sexual Violence used as a Tool of War,” Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgsexualviolence.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁴⁹ *Women in an Insecure World: Violence against Women Facts, Figures, and Analysis*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. Geneva: DCAF. 2007. <http://www.dcaf.ch/Chapter-Section/Executive-Summary-Women-in-an-Insecure-World> (accessed June 25, 2017).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Overview of the Convention,” United Nations Women, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/> (accessed May 21, 2017).

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.”⁵⁴

By accepting the Convention, Member States committed themselves to undertaking measures to end discrimination against women. This includes incorporating the principle of equality of men in their legal system, abolishing all discriminatory laws by adopting appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women, establishing tribunals and other public institutions, and ensuring elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations, or enterprises.⁵⁵ Even though CEDAW does not explicitly mention violence against women, General Recommendations No. 12 and 19 shed light on that the Convention including this issue and provides specific references for how Member States should eradicate and overcome all forms of sexual violence against women.⁵⁶

In 1993, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which became the first international instrument to explicitly address violence against women and created a framework for international action.⁵⁷ The Declaration defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”⁵⁸ Article Three of the Declaration states that women are entitled to all human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the right to life, the right to liberty and security of person, and the right not to be subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.⁵⁹ Additionally, Article Four of the Declaration outlines seventeen different ways for Member States to eliminate and condemn violence against women, including the development of national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence and the creation of penal, civil, labor, and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence.⁶⁰

The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China in 1995 and adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.⁶¹ The Beijing Declaration discusses, at length, the status of all forms of violence against women, human rights of women, trafficking, and women in armed conflict.⁶² The Declaration is crucial to assessing sexual violence against women in conflict zones because it explains how sexual violence is used as a means of war and terrorism. Not only this, but it explains that women are vulnerable to violence perpetrated by persons in positions of authority in both conflict and non-conflict situations.⁶³ The Platform for Action includes analyzing the consequences of violence against women and eliminating forced prostitution of women.⁶⁴ The Beijing Declaration gave priority to the elimination of gender violence in every Member State.

In 2008, then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the UNiTE Campaign to End Violence Against Women, which “aims to raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and ending all forms of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world.”⁶⁵ The UNiTE campaign reaffirms the suggestions laid out in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women by encouraging ongoing political commitments of national governments backed by adequate resources.⁶⁶ Through its advocacy initiatives at

⁵⁴ *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, United Nations General Assembly. December 18, 1979.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ “Global Norms and Standards: Ending Violence Against Women,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/global-norms-and-standards> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ A/RES/48/104. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*. United Nations General Assembly. (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. UN Forth World Conference on Women. 1995. (accessed May 25, 2017).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “About UNiTE,” UNiTE to End Violence against Women, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/about.shtml> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

the global, national, and regional levels, UNiTE pursues the establishment of national laws that punish all forms of violence against women, as well as encourages national action plans that emphasize prevention of violence and support for women and girls who have been abused.⁶⁷ UNiTE also seeks to address sexual violence in conflict situations as well as protect women and girls from rape as a tactic of war.⁶⁸

Two years after the creation of UNiTE, the UN General Assembly established UN Women in 2010, otherwise known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.⁶⁹ The creation of UN Women merged and built upon the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).⁷⁰ By merging these four branches into one, UN Women has three main roles: to support inter-governmental bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women in their formulation of policies, to help Member States implement these standards by providing suitable technical and financial support, and to lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality as well as promote accountability.⁷¹ The entity promotes gender equality in both developed and developing Member States across the world in Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, as well as Europe and Central Asia.⁷²

In order to assist with its goals, UN Women administers grants to national governments and or proactive initiatives in developing Member States through two different funds. First, The Fund for Gender Equality is dedicated to the economic and political empowerment of women worldwide by providing technical and financial support to high-impact civil society organizations that remove women from situations of marginalization.⁷³ Second, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) awards grants to initiatives that demonstrate that violence against women and girls can be systematically addressed, reduced, and eliminated.⁷⁴ The UN Trust Fund works with many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and UN Member State teams to prevent violence against women and girls, improve access to services, and strengthen implementation of laws, policies, and action plans.⁷⁵ According to the UN Women Annual Report 2015-2016, UN Women helped twenty-six Member States with a combined population of over one billion women and girls strengthen their legislation to address all forms of violence against women.⁷⁶

UN Women concentrates its efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict by partnering with UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (UN Action). This international body within the UN system unites the work of thirteen UN entities like the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to end sexual violence in conflict.⁷⁷ UN Action has three main pillars: country level action, advocating for action, and learning by doing.⁷⁸ Through these pillars, UN Action works with national governments and NGOs to: “generate public awareness on the growing use of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare, and how to prevent it; end impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict; improve and scale up services for survivors; and address the longer term impacts of sexual violence on communities and national development.”⁷⁹ UN Action recognizes that, while serious efforts have been made to combat sexual violence in conflict, they are far from achieving their aims and the

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ “About UN Women,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² “Where We Are,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁷³ “Fund for Gender Equality,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/fund-for-gender-equality> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁷⁴ “UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/un-trust-fund-to-end-violence-against-women> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *UN Women Annual Report 2015-2016*. United Nations Women. New York: United Nations Women. 2016.

⁷⁷ “About UN Action,” Stop Rape Now: UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, <http://www.stoprapenow.org/about/> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ “Stop Rape Now Brochure,” UN Action, <http://www.stoprapenow.org/uploads/aboutdownloads/1282162584.pdf> (accessed May 21, 2017).

international community has been unable to prevent sexual violence “from becoming a daily feature of most conflicts.”⁸⁰

Legal Protocols

Even though there have been several recommendations concerning sexual violence against women in conflict during recent decades, there was no legal framework to implement these recommendations until the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998.⁸¹ The Rome Statute of the ICC, which came into effect in 2002, recognizes “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity” as crimes against humanity.⁸² In addition to declaring these acts crimes against humanity, the Rome Statute also states that these actions are considered “war crimes” when perpetrated in the midst of conflict.⁸³ While the statute acknowledged the creation of legal standards, such as convictions and prosecution, it did not establish standard consequences for those found guilty.⁸⁴ The Rome Statute of the ICC provides a substantial international foundation for prosecution of crimes of sexual violence during conflict; nevertheless national government courts still have the ultimate sovereignty regarding prosecution.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The use of sexual violence against women is endemic in various regions of the world. It can occur at any time, anywhere but the presence of an armed conflict consequently leads to an exponential increase of sexual violence against women within the impacted communities. In these situations, sexual violence is used as a means to destroy communities, societies, and the morale of the victims. Perpetrators of this atrocity intentionally commit this crime as a way to drastically affect societies and ensure a level of powerlessness for generations after the conflict ends. Victims of sexual violence often experience unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections or diseases, stigmatization, genital injuries or mutilations, depression and other psychological effects. For decades, the global community has struggled to ensure the basic human rights of these victims and to end the violent sexual attacks. Even though Member States have created countless programs and initiatives to combat this epidemic, there is still no clear way to ensure the basic rights of victims in conflict zones. Additionally, the global community continues to struggle with uniformly condemning the perpetrators on an international scale, rather than through a Member State’s court system. Creating solutions to these two major struggles is a responsibility that every Member State shares. Sexual violence against women is neither inevitable nor acceptable. It is an outcome of conflict and a grave violation of human rights that must be corrected.

Committee Directive

To tackle this delicate issue, delegates should first focus on factors that make women susceptible to sexual violence. How can the global community better protect women who are at a high risk of sexual violence throughout the duration of a conflict? How can the CSW strengthen partnerships with other UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and national governments in order to fully prevent sexual violence in conflict zones? Delegates should be aware and accommodating of the cultural implications of implementing solutions to prevent sexual violence against women. How can cultural differences be bridged to reduce sexual violence against women? How can Member States uniformly criminalize sexual violence on an international scale, while also protecting the human rights of individuals in the same jurisdiction? Upon entering committee, delegates should have knowledge and an understanding of their Member State’s efforts to prevent sexual violence against women in conflict zones and if this issue impacts their Member State directly. While there are many causes for sexual violence against women, the committee should not solely focus on the causes, but rather on how to solve this global problem.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*. UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. 1998. http://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99_corr/cstatute.htm (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

II. Strengthening the Role of Women in Diplomacy and Political Affairs

“Girls and women have a right to engage in civil society, vote in elections, be elected to government office, serve on boards, and make their voices heard in any process that will ultimately affect them, their families, and their communities.”

- Tatiana DiLanzo, “Strengthen Women’s Political Participation and Decision-Making Power”⁸⁶

Introduction

The very establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women by the United Nations is evidence of the recent progress made for women and their involvement in politics and diplomacy around the world. In this traditionally male dominated field, women have broken boundaries and norms to become more involved in recent decades. However, there is still more progress to be made. Women are often discriminated against and disadvantaged in their political participation, which has serious consequences for the legislation, representation, and progress of governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Women experience inequalities and are often denied their right to participate in government at all levels equally to men. The benefits of women in diplomacy and politics are far reaching and their involvement will better reflect the needs of the population as a whole. This is exemplified by a statement in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), “The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women’s social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life.”⁸⁷ The UN has long made gender equality within the political arena a priority and has drafted several action plans and resolutions calling for Member States to take action on this issue.

Current Situation

Though the participation of women has slowly improved, women involved with politics still face challenges and inequalities. UN Women, which acts as an executive organization to Member States and the CSW to coordinate gender equality efforts, states that “only 22.8 percent of all national parliamentarians were women as of June 2016, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995.”⁸⁸ The number of women who serve as Heads of Government and State has stagnated by comparison. “As of July 2013, eight women served as Head of State and 13 served as Head of Government,”⁹⁰ compared to the “ten women are [currently] serving as Head of State and nine serving as Head of Government” as of January 2017.⁹¹ Though these percentages may seem small, the number of women in parliament has almost doubled in the past two decades. Comparatively, this is a huge stride for women in politics and diplomacy, but there is still more work to be done in order to reach proportionality and equality among women and men who hold public office.

Several challenges women face in politics and government occur even before their election. Women lack equal access to resources, which makes it more difficult for women to compete in elections.⁹² According to UN Women, structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions still limit women’s options to run for office. “Capacity gaps” imply that women are “less likely than men to have the education, contacts, and resources needed

⁸⁶ Tatiana DiLanzo, “Strengthen Women’s Political Participation and Decision-Making Power,” Women Deliver, 1. http://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Good_Campaign_Brief_8_092016.pdf

⁸⁷ The Fourth World Conference on Women, “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,” 15 September 1995. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>

⁸⁸ “Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation,” UN Women, August 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures> (accessed June 20, 2017).

⁸⁹ “About UN Women,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women> (accessed May 21, 2017).

⁹⁰ “Women’s Leadership and Political Participation” UN Women, August 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20womenlgthe mbriefuswebrev2%20pdf.ashx> (accessed July 26, 2017).

⁹¹ “Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation,” UN Women, August 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures> (accessed June 20, 2017).

⁹² “Women’s leadership and political participation,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation> (accessed June 20, 2017).

to become effective leaders.”⁹³ In addition to these disadvantages, Sigrid Kaag, former United Nations Development Programme Assistant Secretary-General, stated that the main obstacles facing women in politics and diplomacy are the four C’s: “culture, child care, cash, and confidence.”⁹⁴

To mitigate these problems, several Member States have developed and implemented quota systems in the form of reserved seats, legal candidate quotas, or voluntary political party quotas to ensure that women have a greater opportunity to participate.⁹⁵ These quotas are often instituted to maintain a “critical minority” of 30 to 40 percent, with the aspiration of reaching 50 percent in the future.⁹⁶ The quotas aim to lessen discrimination and increase women’s representation in government, though others would argue that they are undemocratic and that women should be treated equally instead of given preferential treatment.⁹⁷ Additionally, once women are elected or appointed, they are often limited in the roles and portfolios they will be given.⁹⁸ As of January 2015, women made up only 17 percent of government ministers and a majority of those ministries are in the social sector, overseeing family matters, and education.⁹⁹ Women are given the least portfolios in finance, budgeting, public administration, defense and veteran affairs, human rights, and parliamentary affairs.¹⁰⁰ Women are more limited and most often work in government positions in the fields of social affairs, women’s issues, family, childcare, and education.¹⁰¹ Women cannot effectively contribute to the decision-making processes when they are discriminated against rather than included in all areas of governance as per a 2008 Inter-Parliamentary Union study said:

“There is established and growing evidence that women’s leadership in political decision making processes improves them. Women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women’s caucuses – even in the most politically combative environments – and by championing issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws and electoral reform.”¹⁰²

Further, the diversification of appointments and positions held by women is important to ensuring equality and accurate representation throughout government.

Beyond issues women face when they seek consideration as a viable candidate within elections, women also experience challenges when it comes to casting their votes. According to UN Women, “if polling stations are located in remote or unsafe areas, women voters may be reluctant to use them.”¹⁰³ Similar issues, such as the disenfranchisement of women voters, cause them to be underrepresented by elected officials. Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to find data that is both credible and recent on these issues but they are nonetheless important and relevant to women’s political participation. Though voting is a primary platform for political involvement, it is also important to recognize the challenges facing women in political movements outside of casting their votes. “(Women,) in pushing for change and accountability, develop skills; some use these in turn to enter and transform

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “UNITAR supporting women leadership and diplomacy at the United Nations Headquarters in New York,” UNITAR, <https://www.unitar.org/unitar-supporting-women-leadership-and-diplomacy-united-nations-headquarters-new-york> (accessed June 20, 2017).

⁹⁵ Drude Dahlerup, “About Quotas,” International IDEA and Stockholm University, 2009. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/are-quotas-for-women-in-politics-a-good-idea/251237/> (accessed June 20, 2017).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ “Sluggish progress on women in politics will hamper development,” Inter-Parliamentary Union, March 10, 2015. <http://www.ipu.org/press-e/pressrelease201503101.htm> (accessed June 20, 2017).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation,” United Nations Women, August 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹⁰² “Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments,” Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2008. <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/equality08-e.pdf> (accessed August 30, 2017).

¹⁰³ “Elections,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/elections> (accessed June 20, 2017).

political areas.”¹⁰⁴ It is essential that Member States protect the political freedom and expression of women in an equal level to men.

Women’s involvement in peace and diplomacy can have positive effects and they can be the agents of change. According to UN Women, less than ten percent of peace negotiators have been women between 1992 and 2011.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, between those years, only four percent of signatories to peace agreements have been women.¹⁰⁶ To use the language of the UN General Assembly Security Council in Resolution A/65/354:

“Ensuring women’s participation in peacebuilding is not only a matter of women’s and girls’ rights. Women are crucial partners in shoring up three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy ... women’s engagement as civic leaders and public officials both signals and encourages more inclusive forms of politics and governance. By contrast, where women are underrepresented in public office or women’s and girls’ rights can be violated with impunity, political legitimacy suffers”¹⁰⁷

Women play a crucial role in creating and maintaining stability in their respective Member States and across the global community. The inclusion of women in the peacebuilding process increases the probability of an agreement’s long term successful prognosis.¹⁰⁸ When women are involved, the probability that an agreement will last for two years increases by 20 percent and the probability that a peace agreement will last 15 years increases by 35 percent.¹⁰⁹ From this data, we see the positive effect women bring to conflict resolution and peacebuilding as a whole, and that equality can promote peace.

Actions Taken by the United Nations

Shortly after the founding of the United Nations, provisions to protect the rights of women proved necessary in the political sphere. In 1953, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women approved by the UN General Assembly created basic standards for the political rights of women.¹¹⁰ The first three articles of this Convention state that women have the right to vote, are eligible for all publicly elected bodies, and that women are entitled to hold public office and perform all functions of their position equally to men without discrimination.¹¹¹ This Convention was a crucial step by Member States and the international community towards equality. The UN has since created the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century to continue working towards the goals set forth in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

An area of concern recognized by the BPfA is women in power and decision-making. The BPfA addresses this critical issue on the national and international level, as well as evaluating electoral processes, political parties, and the utilization of quotas.¹¹² Strategy Objectives G. 1 and G. 2 specify ways in which governing bodies and political parties can further achieve the goals set forth in the BPfA.¹¹³ Monitoring, reviewing, gender balanced elections, and supporting NGOs are a few examples of the actions the UN recommends to Member States to further these goals.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁴ “Women’s Movements,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/womens-movements> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹⁰⁵ “Facts and Figures: Peace and Security,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures> (accessed July 15, 2017).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ A/65/354–S/2010/466, *Women’s participation in Peacebuilding*. Security Council, (accessed July 15, 2017).

¹⁰⁸ “Facts and Figures: Peace and Security,” UN Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures> (accessed July 15, 2017).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*, United Nations General Assembly, December 20, 1952. (accessed July 15, 2017).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² “Women 2000: Women in Power and Decision-Making Fact Sheet No. 7,” United Nations Department of Public Information, May 2000.

¹¹³ The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, “Platform For Action: Women in Power and Decision-making,” September 1995.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

The UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/66/130 in 2011 on Women and Political Participation. This Resolution highlights the importance of women's political participation as a right and calls upon Member States to uphold those rights, with respect to:

“...engaging in political activities, taking part in the conduct of public affairs, associating freely, assembling peacefully, expressing their opinions and seeking, receiving and imparting information and ideas freely; Voting in elections and public referendums and being eligible for election to publicly elected bodies on equal terms with men; Participating in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof, holding public office and performing public functions at all levels of government;”¹¹⁵

The General Assembly promotes equality in political transitions on all levels of government and elections.¹¹⁶ This Resolution urges Member States to ratify and comply fully with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.¹¹⁷ It recommends that Member States grant suitable maternity and paternity leave to further women's ability to fully participate in politics.¹¹⁸ In addition, this Resolution endorses the creation of programs to introduce women and girls to the political process and encourage women's participation in those processes.¹¹⁹ The General Assembly further encourages Member States to appoint women to positions in the government, which oversee the election process, including “constitutional, electoral, political, or institutional reforms.”¹²⁰ The UN continues to support gender balanced decision-making and the incorporation of young women into the world of leadership and politics regardless their disabilities, ethnicity, religion, or location.¹²¹

Another way the UN demonstrates its commitment to this issue is by addressing them in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender Equality is Goal Number Five of the seventeen SDGs, which covers many different issues regarding women and equality including political empowerment and involvement in government.¹²² As part of the SDGs, gender equality is at the forefront of the issues the UN is currently focused on. One of the targets of SDG Five is ending “all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere,” which encompasses several inequalities women experience in the political arena.¹²³ As recommended by UN Women, Member States should recognize that: “Women have a right to equality in all areas. [This] must be embedded across legal systems, upheld in both laws and legal practices, including proactive measures such as quotas.”¹²⁴

Case Studies: Rwandan Women in Government and Gender Equality in Iceland

Rwanda was devastated after the bloody conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis. The genocide was brought to an end in 1994 when the Rwandan Patriotic Front took the entire territory of Rwanda.¹²⁵ The genocide took place over a period of 100 days and approximately one million people were killed; a majority of which were the ethnic minority Tutsi.¹²⁶ Due to the violence of this genocide, Rwanda's surviving population was 70 percent women.¹²⁷ It should

¹¹⁵ A/RES/66/130, Women and political participation, United Nation General Assembly. (accessed 15 July 2017).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² “Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empowering All Women and Girls,” United Nations, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹²³ “SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls,” United Nations Women, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-5-gender-equality#sthash.iHhgnJd.dpuf> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ “Out Reach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations,” United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/education/rwandagenocide.shtml> (accessed July 26, 2017).

¹²⁶ Elizabeth Bennett, “Rwanda Strides Towards Gender Equality in Government,” Kennedy School Review, 15 August 2014 <http://harvardkennedyschoolreview.com/rwanda-strides-towards-gender-equality-in-government/> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

be noted that prior to the genocide, women held only 10 percent to 15 percent of the seats in the Rwandan Parliament.¹²⁸ The Member State was left with fewer choices for candidates and a desperate need to rebuild post-genocide.¹²⁹ Rwandan leaders drafted a new constitution, which included a quota reserving 30 percent of seats in Parliament for women. Following the implementation, Rwanda had the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide with 63.8 percent of seats in their lower house being held by women.¹³⁰ Not only are women stepping up as leaders in the Rwandan government, they are making a difference in their Member State through new legislation. “Women-orientated legislation has been passed, including several laws aimed at preventing and punishing gender-based violence, laws granting more extensive property rights to women, and key legislation on women in the workforce.”¹³¹ Though Rwanda does not represent a flawless version of equality, this Member State has shown tremendous progress and exemplifies the success quotas can have and the impact of women in government.

On the contrary, in Iceland’s most recent parliamentary election of 2016, women won 30 of the 68 total seats in Parliament, meaning that women currently hold 48 percent of seats.¹³² Most notably, this percentage was achieved without a quota system.¹³³ Iceland has a long history of gender equality in politics and government. Iceland’s fourth President, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, was elected in 1980 and was the world’s first democratically elected woman Head of State.¹³⁴ Additionally, the electoral success of women in Iceland is achieved without the implementation of gender quotas. In October of 1975, 25,000 Icelandic women went on strike and took the day off from work to emphasize their economic importance.¹³⁵ The day of this protest is now observed as a holiday and has been a catalyst for change and gender equality in Icelandic society.¹³⁶ Following the strike, women have steadily increased their electoral success, new maternity, paternity, and abortion laws have been implemented and, as of 2013, Icelandic companies will mandate their boards to consist of 40 percent women as a minimum required by law.¹³⁷ However, the government of Iceland recognizes that there is still progress to be made, according to the Center for Gender Equality Iceland:

“The increase of women in local councils has been slow in the last 50 years, but with increased debate and focus on the importance of women’s participation in politics, the percentage of women has improved . . . Even though the overall numbers have improved and the number of women candidates has increased, there are still many challenges.”¹³⁸

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ “Eastern and Southern Africa: Rwanda,” United Nations Women, <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³¹ Elizabeth Bennett, “Rwanda Strides Towards Gender Equality in Government,” Kennedy School Review, 15 August 2014, <http://harvardkenedyschoolreview.com/rwanda-strides-towards-gender-equality-in-government/> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³² Bill Chappell, “Women Win 30 Seats In Iceland’s Parliament — More Than Any Party,” National Public Radio. (accessed 20 June 2017). <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/10/30/499973354/women-win-30-seats-in-iceland-parliament-more-than-any-party> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ “History: The world’s first democratically elected female president,” Iceland Monitor, http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2016/11/08/history_the_world_s_first_democratically_elected_fe/ (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³⁵ “Why is Iceland the World’s Global Leader in Gender Equality?” 24 March 2014. <https://www.womenpoliticalleaders.org/why-is-iceland-the-world-s-global-leader-in-gender-equality/> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³⁶ Marcie Bianco, “40 Years After Women Went on Strike in Iceland, Here’s What Gender Equality Looks,” 26 March, 2015. <https://mic.com/articles/113620/40-years-after-women-went-on-strike-in-iceland-here-s-what-gender-equality-looks-like#.fD5OEXFiN> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³⁷ “Why is Iceland the World’s Global Leader in Gender Equality?” 24 March 2014. <https://www.womenpoliticalleaders.org/why-is-iceland-the-world-s-global-leader-in-gender-equality/> (accessed June 20, 2017).

¹³⁸ “Gender Equality in Iceland,” The Center for Gender Equality Iceland, January 2012, https://eng.fjarmalaraduneyti.is/media/Gender_Equality_in_Iceland_012012.pdf (accessed June 20, 2017).

Iceland has made much progress in recent years and continues to increase equality and further include women in government and through new legislation, but the Icelandic government still recognizes that there are many challenges to be overcome.

Conclusion

There are many lessons that can be learned from Member States like Rwanda and Iceland, which have made great strides in gender equality, particularly in the field of politics and diplomacy. The effects of proper representation and the inclusion of women can be seen in the legislative agendas, budgets, social programs and goals put forth by their governments. The success of these Member States also draws attention to needed improvements and the importance of SGD Five and the implementation of BPfA. The BPfA states that: “without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development, and peace cannot be achieved.”¹³⁹ The international community can never reach its goals if half of the population is left out of the conversation. This is the dilemma that should be the focus in this committee as it strives to improve upon the BPfA, to achieve SGD Five, and to strengthen the role of women in diplomacy and political affairs.

Committee Directive

In solving this issue, delegates should be mindful of the political status and level of engagement of women in their Member State. Delegates should consider the root causes of inequality in politics and diplomacy and work to lessen the effect these causes have on women. How can the BPfA be improved upon so that women have better access to positions in government and diplomacy? How can SGD Five, particularly as it pertains to women in politics, be fully realized? Delegates should share best practices and information to achieve equality, improve the BPfA, and make strides to achieve targets set forth by SGD Five. Delegates should consider culture, childcare, cash, and confidence (the Four C's) and their effect on women's ability to be engaged in politics and diplomacy. How can Member States increase the number of women who vote, run for office, and are appointed to government positions for more equal representation? Delegates should be aware of the electoral and quota systems that have been most successful in achieving equality. Delegates should have an understanding of the cultural norms and practices as well as legislation in their individual Member State and how they affect this issue as well as an understanding of their involvement in the many resolutions, conventions, and conferences previously mentioned. This committee should focus on improving current frameworks, sharing best practices, and implementing the BPfA as well as the many resolutions previously passed by the United Nations to ensure equality for women in politics and diplomacy.

¹³⁹ The Fourth World Conference on Women, “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,” 15 September 1995.

Technical Appendix Guide (TAG)

Topic I: Preventing Sexual Violence against Women in Conflict Zones

A/RES/48/104. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*. United Nations General Assembly. 1993. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

This declaration is the first major framework to acknowledge the large number of women and girls who are victims of sexual violence during times of conflict and war. In addition to defining what constitutes violence against women, the declaration also states the basic fundamental rights of all women and establishes methods for how the UN and national governments can protect women and girls from both physical and sexual violence. The declaration also created a dialogue of how Member States can support survivors of sexual violence beyond the crime itself including medical care and ongoing counseling. Most importantly, it highlights the severity of sexual violence perpetrated on women and girls during times of conflict, leading it to become one of the first frameworks to acknowledge and condemn this issue. This resource will help delegates understand what many later UN programs and initiatives are based on as well as learn what steps were previously taken when addressing the multitude of issues faced when dealing with sexual violence against women in conflict zones.

“Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict: Key Initiatives,” The United Nations, <http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/our-work/key-initiatives/>

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSV-SVC) serves as the United Nations’ spokesperson and political advocate on conflict-related sexual violence, and is the chair of the network UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. This source will help delegates familiarize themselves with the key initiatives of the UN that address conflict-related sexual violence such as strengthening protection and prevention, programmatic and funding challenges and opportunities, and comprehensive strategies to combat sexual violence. Additionally, delegates will be able to learn about reports and resolutions from UN bodies that pertain to sexual violence in conflict areas.

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. 1998. http://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99_corr/cstatute.htm

The Rome Statute is important because it is one of the first international legal frameworks to specify that sexual violence against women during conflict includes situations such as forced pregnancy, forced prostitution, and human trafficking. The statute also recognizes that sexual violence is not only a “crime against nature,” but also a “war crime” when used during periods of conflict and war. This will be an important source for delegates to utilize in order to understand the legal norms of what can be prosecuted by international law and the International Criminal Court. Delegates can also use this source as a basis for how to establish better international standards to condemn and prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence during conflict.

S/2017/249. *Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General*. United Nations Security Council. 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/events/elimination-of-sexual-violence-in-conflict/pdf/1494280398.pdf>

In this report, the Secretary-General of the United Nations outlines specific measures that are being taken by national governments, the UN, and non-governmental organizations in order to prevent sexual violence in conflict zones, support survivors, and protect citizens from such violence. The report focuses on 19 Member State case studies including 13 conflict settings, four post-conflict settings, and two additional situation of concern. These case studies are important for delegates to read and understand the different stages of sexual violence in conflict and how the societies are affected during and after the conflict ends. Additionally, this report gives recommendations for all of the case studies as an example of the work the UN does on the ground in these conflict-ridden locations. This source also provides good examples of recommendations that Member States need to implement directly.

Topic II: Strengthening the Role of Women in Diplomacy and Political Affairs

Global Database of Quotas for Women, International IDEA, Stockholm University and Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015. <http://www.quotaproject.org/>

The quota database is a project headed jointly by Stockholm University, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. This project was created to support women's rights through providing accessible data about quota systems around the world. This site provides information about quotas and the functions of different types of quota systems as well as information and data about quotas systems, reserved seats, and reserved party seats in all Member States that have them. This site provides in-depth explanations of equality, how quota systems work, and the pros and cons of using quotas.

"Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database," UN Women. <http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en>

The Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database was established by UN Women and organizes gender equality policy and constitutional provisions for women from 195 constitutions around the world. This database can be used to research the specific gender policy of any of the 195 Member States included and organizes the information to be easily accessed by country, topic, or area of government involved. After a specific policy has been searched, the database will provide excerpts from articles of each Member State's constitution as they pertain to the searched topic. This site is particularly helpful when conducting research on a specific Member State or region to find pertinent information about constitutional provisions for women.

"The Beijing 12 critical areas of concern deconstructed," UN Women. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>

This site details the 12 critical areas of focus for the BPfA: poverty, education, health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, institutional mechanisms, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, the girl child, and women in power and decisions making. This site provides background information about the BPfA as a whole and as well as examples and resources for each issue. Understanding the main objectives of the BPfA and the particular issues targeted by the plan will ensure a better understanding of both of the topics at hand and the goals of the committee as a whole. This site also provides real-world examples of these issues and their effect on the lives of women all over the world.

"Women in Politics," Inter-Parliamentary Union. <http://www.ipu.org/iss-e/women.htm>

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is an organization composed of parliaments, which seeks to foster international parliamentary communication and peace. In addition, the IPU conducts surveys and records data about parliaments around the world, including their levels of political participation among women. This site provides accounts of the historical achievements of women in politics, the results of surveys and statistics about women in parliaments, and discusses the BPfA and its history in depth. This site is particularly useful for researching Member States that use a particularly system of government as it can be used to find and compare data about different parliamentary systems per region and around the world.