NMUN • NY

UN-WOMEN
BACKGROUND GUIDE 2015

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Dear Delegates,

We are pleased to welcome you to the 2015 National Model United Nations Conference New York (NMUN•NY)! This year's United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) staff are: Directors Dinah Douglas (Conference A) and Sarah Walter (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Marleen Schreier (Conference A) and Dieyun Song (Conference B). Dinah holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and a M.A. in Political Communication from the American University. She works in communications for a non-profit focusing on issues facing women and girls. This year is Dinah's fourth year on the NMUN-NY staff. Marleen holds a B.A. in Social Science and Communications Theory from the University of Erfurt, Germany. She is enrolled in the M.P.P. program at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. This is her first time on staff at NMUN-NY. Sarah holds a M.A. in Political Science from the University of Potsdam, Germany. She is currently working for the Association of Private Health Insurance in Germany. This is her third year on staff at NMUN•NY. Dieyun is currently a senior pursuing a B.A. in Economic Crime Prevention and Investigation and Management at Lynchburg College, Virginia. This is her second time on staff at NMUN-NY.

The topics under discussion for UN-Women are:
I. Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Beijing +20 Review
II. Achieving Gender Equality Post-2015 By Eliminating Violence against All Women
III. Strengthening Women's Political Participation

UN-Women plays a unique role within the United Nations it serves as the primary organ to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and women's rights as crosscutting issues related to development. UN-Women works to formulate new standards and norms within the UN system and to support Member States adapting to these standards. UN-Women provides expert knowledge to the Commission on the Status of Women on political considerations and reports to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on its operational activities. Finally, UN-Women is in charge of holding the UN system accountable for fulfilling its commitment to gender mainstreaming.

At NMUN•NY 2015, we are simulating the Executive Board of UN-Women in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the conference. On the contrary, for the purposes of NMUN•NY 2015, and in line with the educational mission of the conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UN-Women in line with the overall function of the organization.

This background guide is not meant to replace further research and we highly encourage you to consider the background guide, Bibliography, and Annotated Bibliography as starting points as you explore in-depth your countries' policies regarding these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will be submitting a position paper. Please take note of the NMUN policies on the website and in the Delegate Preparation Guide regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct/dress code/sexual harassment, awards philosophy/evaluation method, etc. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory. The NMUN Rules of Procedure are available to download from the NMUN website. This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. It is thus an essential instrument in preparing for the conference, and a reference during committee.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the Committee or the Conference itself, feel free to contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Development Department, Sonia Patel (Conference A) and Patrick Parsons (Conference B). You can reach either USG by contacting them at: usg.development@nmun.org. We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A	Conference B
Dinah Douglas, *Director*	Sarah Walter, *Director*
Marleen Schreier, *Assistant Director*	Dieyun Song, *Assistant Director*

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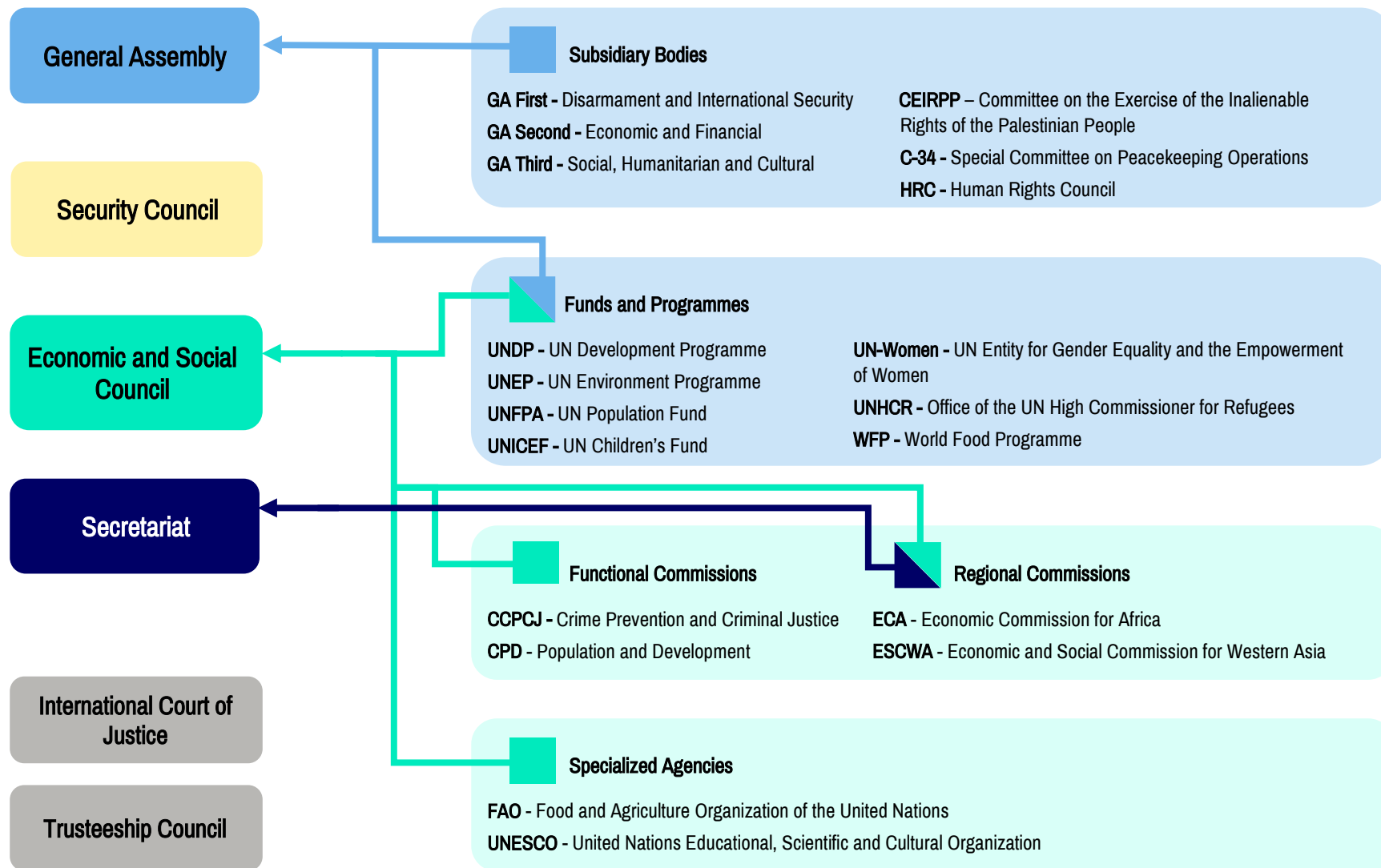
Abbreviations

BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Groups
CSO	Civil society organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CWGL	Center for Women's Global Leadership
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GA	General Assembly
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Gender Equality Architecture Reform
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IGO	Intergovernmental organizations
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IPV	Intimate partner violence
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SC	Security Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USG	Under-Secretary-General
VAW	Violence against women
WAND	Women's Action for New Directions
WEDO	Women's Environment & Development Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WLP	Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace

United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN System simulated at NMUN•NY. It shows where each committee "sits" within the system, to help understand the reportage and relationships between the entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose and powers within the UN System.

General Assembly

Security Council

Economic and Social Council

Secretariat

International Court of Justice

Trusteeship Council

Subsidiary Bodies

GA First - Disarmament and International Security
GA Second - Economic and Financial
GA Third - Social, Humanitarian and Cultural

CEIRPP – Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
C-34 - Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
HRC - Human Rights Council

Funds and Programmes

UNDP - UN Development Programme
UNEP - UN Environment Programme
UNFPA - UN Population Fund
UNICEF - UN Children's Fund

UN-Women - UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNHCR - Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP - World Food Programme

Functional Commissions

CCPCJ - Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
CPD - Population and Development

Regional Commissions

ECA - Economic Commission for Africa
ESCWA - Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Specialized Agencies

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Committee Overview

"Ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women by 2030 is the mission of our time."[1]

Introduction

Up to this day, no country, developing or developed, has achieved complete gender equality.[2] To advance efforts at an international level, the General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in July 2010 with the universal directive "to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment, and upholding women's rights."[3]

> The **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women** (UN-Women) is a Programme and Fund of the United Nations, reporting to the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly.

The work of UN-Women is guided by the principles laid down in the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA), UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women, Peace and Security," the *Millennium Declaration*, Millennium Development Goals, and other norms related to women's rights and gender equality.[4] CEDAW and the BPfA are the cornerstones of the activity of UN-Women and provide the overall guiding principles for its work.[5] Over the past 15 years, UN Member States have also gained greater awareness and understanding regarding the role women play in peace and security due in part to the adoption Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and subsequent resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2122 (2013).[6] These resolutions "represent a critical framework for improving the situation of women in conflict-affected countries," and ground efforts at the international, regional, national and local levels to protect and promote women's rights in conflict-affected situations.[7] Supporting efforts to mainstream implementation of these global norms, as well as the principle of gender equality at the international, regional and national level is central to UN-Women's mandate and at the heart of the organization's mission. Achieving this mission is not a goal in itself but an important contribution to sustainable development as a whole.[8]

> At NMUN•NY 2015, we are simulating the **Executive Board of UN-Women** in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the conference. On the contrary, for the purposes of NMUN•NY 2015, and in line with the educational mission of the conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UN-Women in line with the overall function of the organization.

History

For the first 60 years of the existence of the UN, there were a plethora of entities with overlapping mandates addressing issues related to women's rights and gender equality. The concept of one, coherent entity took shape as part of discussions held by -High-Level Panel convened by the UN Secretary-General, to discuss possible reforms of the UN system to achieve greater coherence and coordination in 2006.[9] To build momentum for practical reform of the UN system to foster gender equality and women empowerment, a range of civil society networks and organizations began to focus pressure and advocacy strategically. One notable group was formed out of the

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[1] Mlambo-Ngcuka, *Closing remarks of UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the Executive Board Annual Session, 19 June 2014*.

[2] UN-Women, *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017*, 2013, p. 2.

[3] Ibid.; UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010.

[4] UN-Women, *Guiding Documents*, 2014.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid; UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325)*, 2000; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1820 (2008))*, 2008; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1888 (2009))*, 2009; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1889 (2009))*, 2009; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1960 (2010))*, 2010; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2106 (2013))*, 2013; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2122 (2013))*, 2013.

[7] UN-Women, *Guiding Documents*, 2014.

[8] UN-Women, *UN-Women strategic plan, 2014-2017*, 2013, p. 3.

[9] WEDO, *GEAR Campaign*, 2014.

Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) and the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), which, together with several women's rights activists launched the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign in February 2008.[10] The GEAR Campaign "sought to mobilize women's groups and human rights and social justice allies to push for the adoption of a new UN entity for gender equality and women's empowerment."[11] Over two years, an international campaign was successful in gaining support at regional, national and local levels, for one UN entity focused on gender equality, in one of the largest and most organized grassroots advocacy campaigns the world had seen. In 2010 civil society organizations and activists finally celebrated the decision of the General Assembly to consolidate the resources and mandates of the four existing gender equality focuses UN programs into one entity.[12] From 2011 onwards, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) took up their work united as UN-Women.[13]

Mandate

The mandate for UN-Women, is articulated in General Assembly resolution 64/2009 as follows:

> "Based on the principle of universality, the Entity shall provide, through its normative support functions and operational activities, guidance and technical support to all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions, at their request, on gender equality, the empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming."[14]

UN-Women combines the mandate of four agencies.[15] The mandate is separated into political, norm-setting activities and operational activities in cooperation with UN Member States.[16] To improve coherence, consistency and coordination, it is pivotal to establish common standards in the field of gender equality and women empowerment.[17] To this end, UN-Women now serves as the secretariat to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and supports the agency in formulating such norms and standards by inter alia submitting an annual report to the Commission.[18] This mandate was taken over from DAW when the programs were consolidated.[19] Whereas CSW is overall responsible for the formulation of standard-setting policies, it is UN-Women that carries out these policies in its operational activities in the field.[20] UN-Women provides technical and financial assistance, capacity building as well as policy guidance to Member States that requests the Entity's support.[21] UN-Women further facilitates the work of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the Security Council in their efforts to advance the global agenda on gender equality.[22] Finally, UN-Women was assigned to hold the UN system accountable for its efforts to mainstream gender across all aspects of its work.[23]

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UN-Women is governed by an Executive Board, which is responsible for intergovernmental support and supervision of all operational activities.[24] The Board consists of 41 members that are elected by ECOSOC for a term of three

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[10] WEDO, *GEAR Campaign*, 2014.

[11] Ibid.

[12] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 8; WEDO, *GEAR Campaign*, 2014.

[13] UN-Women, *About UN Women*, 2014.

[14] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 9.

[15] Ibid.

[16] UN ECOSOC, *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (E/CN.6/2014/2),* 2013, p. 2.

[17] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 9.

[18] Ibid.

[19] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2013-14*, 2013, p. 225.

[20] UN ECOSOC, *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (E/CN.6/2014/2),* 2013, p. 3.

[21] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014.

[22] UN ECOSOC, *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (E/CN.6/2014/2),* 2013, pp. 4-10.

[23] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 9.

[24] Ibid.

years and are allocated by regions as follows: ten from the group of African States, ten from the group of Asian States, four from the group of Eastern European States, six from the group of Latin American and Caribbean States, five from the group of Western European and Other States.[25] The final six seats are allocated to contributing countries, from which four seats go to the countries that provide the highest voluntary contribution to UN-Women and two seats to developing countries.[26]

UN-Women is headed by an Executive Director, who is considered a senior official at Under-Secretary-General (USG) level. The current Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, was appointed in 2013.[27] The Directorate performs the administrative functions of UN-Women and is responsible for human resources including employment in operational activities.[28] The Executive Director also reports to the Secretary-General and works to improve system-wide coordination by seeking exchange with other agencies and programs both inside and outside the UN system.[29] The normative processes of UN-Women are funded by the regular budget of the UN.[30] However, its operational activities depend on voluntary contributions of its members.[31] In 2013, voluntary contributions added up to a total budget of US $275.4 million.[32]

Powers and Functions

UN-Women's areas of activity include peace and security, political participation and government planning, the fight against HIV/AIDS, the economic empowerment of women, participating in and shaping the process of formulating sustainable development goals for the upcoming decades, and ending violence against women and girls.[33] To this end UN-Women works closely with other UN bodies, programs, funds, civil society organizations, and Member States in designing adequate policies, laws, programs, and services.[34] Within the UN system, UN-Women functions as a normative body that supports CSW in setting standards and norms by providing expert knowledge and information on gender mainstreaming.[35] It supports the work of CSW by submitting an annual report to the Commission informing it about the implementation of the Commission's policy guidance.[36] The chairperson of CSW can also be invited to address the Executive Board of UN-Women directly.[37] A second annual report is submitted to the General Assembly through ECOSOC.[38] This report delivers information on the Entity's operational activities and provides research, policy analysis, and recommendations for further action.[39] The General Assembly and ECOSOC can also draw the Entity's attention to issues and request UN-Women to hold additional sessions when deemed necessary.[40]

On an operational level, UN-Women facilitates regional conferences and meetings with civil society organizations and national policymakers and provides training for Member States to help them implement standards through technical and financial support.[41] This includes support in formulating new laws or strategies, working on national educational programs, training women to run more efficient political campaigns, or assisting civil society organizations in becoming national advocates for gender equality.[42] Depending on the area of action, UN-Women

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[25] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 10.
[26] Ibid., p. 10.
[27] UN-Women, *About Us - Directorate*, 2014.
[28] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, pp. 11-12.
[29] Ibid., p. 12.
[30] Ibid., p. 10.
[31] Ibid.
[32] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, 9. 24..
[33] UN-Women, *What we do*, 2014; UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 4.
[34] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 4.
[35] Ibid., p. 5.
[36] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 11.
[37] UN General Assembly, *Comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women (A/64/588)*, 2010, p. 16.
[38] UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, p. 11.
[39] UN ECOSOC, *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (E/CN.6/2014/2)*, 2013, p. 4.
[40] UN-Women Executive Board, *Draft rules of procedure of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (UNW/2011/6)*, 2011.
[41] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 15.
[42] Ibid.

works together with other programs and funds, among them the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).[43] To examine coherence and coordination of measures taken, UN-Women undertook an evaluation in cooperation with UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, Norway, and Spain in November 2013, which has helped drive efforts to continue to strengthen UN-Women's work.[44] The results of UN-Women programs help drive the development of evidence-based normative standards and policies by the Commission on the Status of Women.[45]

Current Priorities

The current UN-Women strategic plan for the period 2014-17 identifies women's economic and political empowerment and ending violence against girls and women as top priorities.[46] With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concluding in 2015, one further area of action is to work on a post-2015 agenda by attending and shaping the process of developing sustainable development goals for the upcoming decades.[47] Using the 2015 process, and the Beijing +20 review process to further these issues remains of high importance for the organization.[48] Furthermore, UN-Women's Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka explicitly called for increased support for older women and women with disabilities as they are too often neglected in norm-setting considerations.[49]

Recent Sessions

UN-Women provided substantive support for the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in March 2014.[50] The meeting discussed the challenges and achievements in implementing and evaluating the MDGs for women and girls as well as how to speed up underperforming MDGs.[51] CSW criticized that the evaluation and implementation of the MDGs too often lacks a gender perspective and that the role of women and girls in achieving the MDGs needs to be further acknowledged.[52]

UN-Women's Executive Board held its annual session from 17-19 June 2014 at the UN Headquarters.[53] The meeting assessed the implementation of the strategic plan 2011-2013 and evaluated coherence achieved within the UN system.[54] Member States stressed the importance to make gender equality a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 agenda and to further the economic empowerment of women, as well as their role in peace and security.[55] Furthermore, several Member States made presentations about the Entity's activities on the ground and different programs that have been launched with support of UN-Women.[56] During the second regular session, which was held from 15-16 September 2014, Member States addressed the report of the annual session and started preparations for the 2015 regular and annual sessions.[57] Other areas of concern discussed at the second regular session included strategies to improve program evaluation and monitoring mechanisms as well as fostering collaboration with sister organizations to promote gender equality.[58]

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[43] UN-Women, *UN-Women strategic plan, 2014-2017*, 2013, p. 10.
[44] UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office, *Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System*, 2014.
[45] UN-Women, *UN-Women strategic plan, 2014-2017*, 2013, p. 5.
[46] UN-Women, *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017*, 2013, p. 8.
[47] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 4.
[48] NGO Committee on the Status of Women - Geneva, *UN Women Executive Director meets with NGO CSW Geneva on 15 January 2014*, p. 2.
[49] Ibid., p. 1.
[50] Ibid., p. 2.
[51] UN ECOSOC, *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls (E/CN.6/2014/L.7)*, 2014.
[52] Ibid.
[53] UN-Women, *Annual Session*, 2014.
[54] Ibid.
[55] UN-Women Executive Board, *Report on the annual session of 2014, 17 to 19 June 2014 (UNW/2014/5)*, 2014.
[56] Ibid.
[57] UN-Women Executive Board, *Annotated provisional agenda and workplan (UNW/2014/L.4)*, 2014.
[58] UN-Women Executive Board, *Closing Remarks of UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka*, 2014, p. 2.

The second regular session further deliberated on the implementation of the BPfA and preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing+20).[59] UN-Women was also represented at the AIDS Conference held in Melbourne, Australia from 20-25 July 2014.[60] Representatives gave presentations on and participated in panels regarding advocacy and political networks of women living with HIV, legal empowerment of women living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, and integrating gender equality and sexual rights in the post-2015 framework.[61]

Conclusion

Since 2011, UN-Women has played a pivotal part in connecting standards set by intergovernmental bodies with operational activities in the field.[62] So far, this approach has indeed improved coherence and coordination within the UN system.[63] Furthermore, in its conclusion of the fifty-eighth session, CSW highlighted the role of UN-Women in monitoring and evaluating the progress towards meeting international development goals, such as the MDGs.[64] Thus, with joint efforts, UN-Women can effectively carry out its mandate and integrate a gender perspective in considerations of peace and security, human rights, economic empowerment, and sustainable development. However, it can only accomplish this mission by strengthening its collaboration with UN agencies, Member States, and civil society organizations, which are all essential stakeholders when it comes to achieving gender equality.

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[59] UN-Women Executive Board, *Annotated provisional agenda and workplan (UNW/2014/L.4),* 2014.
[60] UN-Women, *Amplifying the voices of women living with HIV: UN Women at the 2014 International AIDS Conference*, 2014.
[61] Ibid.
[62] UN-Women, *UN-Women strategic plan, 2014-2017*, 2013, p. 7.
[63] Ibid.
[64] UN ECOSOC, *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls (E/CN.6/2014/L.7)*, 2014, p. 2.

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United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2013). *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (E/CN.6/2014/2)*. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2014/2
> This source clarifies the linkage between UN-Women and the Commission on the Status of Women. Since delegates may find it difficult at first to identify the distinct features of the Commission on the Status of Women, as a functional commission reporting to ECOSOC, and UN-Women, as a composite, operational entity, the report of the Executive Director of UN-Women will be helpful to understand how UN-Women supports and complements the work of CSW. Thus, the report may be helpful for delegates to develop strategies within their resolutions and to identify partners within the UN system to whom they may refer proposals.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-fourth session. (2010). *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*. Retrieved 16 June 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/289
> General Assembly resolution 64/289 of 21 July 2010 established UN-Women and is thus the guiding document to understand the Entity and its work. The resolution lays down the structure and function of UN-Women in detail and establishes the Entity's standing in the UN system. Delegates will find this source very helpful to become familiar with this committee and its mandate.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Executive Board, Second regular session. (2013). *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017 - "Making this the century for women and gender equality" (UNW/2013/6)*. Retrieved 13 August 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=UNW/2013/6&Lang=E
> The strategic plan gives a comprehensive outlook on UN-Women's current priorities and those over the next years. It also deepens the understanding of what means UN-Women is using to achieve its goals. It also puts the work of UN-Women in context of the UN system and explains in which ways UN-Women is influencing the work of other UN bodies. Delegates will find this source helpful as it also clarifies the Entity's part in improving coherence and coordination within the UN system.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2013). A transformative goal in the region for the future we want [Report]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/10/UNW_TransGoal_Brief_bklt_EN_ONLINE_FINAL%20ENGLISH%20pdf.pdf
> This source summarizes the mandate, governance, structure, and key areas of focus of UN-Women and thus provides a great overview for delegates. The source not only puts the committee in the context of its guiding documents but also provides a roadmap that shows past and future areas of focus for UN-Women. Additionally, the source gives delegates an idea of the operational activities of UN-Women using the example of Latin America and the Caribbean.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2014). *Annual Report 2013-2014*. Retrieved 12 August 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/58ED9AE6A3B544149C9DEFA302CC9884.ashx
> This source features a short overview about the work of UN-Women in its key areas of action. The annual report provides a first understanding about the operational activities of UN-Women in the respected areas of action and how UN-Women works together with other UN programs and local civil society organizations. The report also gives some general information on the mandate and governance of UN-Women and current priorities to improve coordination and coherence within the UN system. Delegates will find this source helpful to familiarize themselves with the areas of action of UN-Women and what exactly the program works in each of these areas.

Bibliography

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I. Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Beijing +20 Review

"Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace."[65]

Introduction

The year 2015 marks two decades since the international community converged in Beijing, China, for the Fourth World Conference on Women.[66] Approximately 17,000 individuals from 189 governments and thousands of civil society organizations attended the conference, making it the largest international convening of its kind to this day.[67] The outcome of the conference, the *Beijing Platform for Action* (BPfA), serves as the foundation for the international community's efforts to achieve gender equality, complementing existing international human rights law. The BPfA "emphasizes that women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world."[68] The BPfA "marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality" and identified 12 critical areas of concern of the advancement of women as: 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 Mechanism for the Advancement of Women, Human Rights of Women, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment, and The Girl-child.[69]

Progress in achieving gender equality and advancing women's rights has been made in some areas since 1995. However, gaps remain across every priority area.[70] One-third of all women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.[71] Every day, 800 women die in childbirth because they lack reproductive rights and health care.[72] Barriers to the implementation of the BPfA include limited capacity at national and regional levels, detrimental social norms and attitudes, lack of political will, and inadequate monitoring and accountability frameworks. One of the fundamental principles underpinning the BPfA is that achieving gender equality does not only mean empowering women but also means empowering humanity and global development as a whole.[73] The 20 year review of the BPfA (referred to as the "Beijing +20 review") provides a valuable opportunity to "reconnect, regenerate commitment, charge up political will and mobilize the public" for the advancement of women."[74] UN-Women plays an instrumental role in ensuring governments effectively implement the BPfA.

International and Regional Framework

Aiming to assert and improve the rights of women, the United Nations (UN) organized the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City in 1975.[75] The conference adopted the *Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace* and defined the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of Objectives of the International Women's Year.[76] Taking the conference outcomes into consideration, Member States adopted General Assembly (GA) resolution 3520(XXX) on 15 December 1975 on "World Conference of the International Women's Year" and established the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).[77] In 1980, the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, with 145 Member States in attendance.[78] The body discussed special actions needed in areas of equal

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[65] United Nations, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Add.1)*, 1996, p. 211.
[66] UN-NGLS, *Historic Overview on the World Conference on Women*, 2014.
[67] Ibid.
[68] United Nations, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*, 1996, p. 7.
[69] UN-Women, *World Conference on Women*.
[70] UN-Women, *The Beijing Platform for Action: inspiration then and now*.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] United Nations, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*, 1996, p. 189.
[74] UN-Women, *The Beijing Platform for Action: inspiration then and now*.
[75] UN-NGLS, *Historic Overview on the World Conference on Women*, 2014.
[76] UN-Women, *World Conference on Women*.
[77] UN General Assembly, *World Conference of the International Women's Year (A/RES/30/3520(XXX))*, 1975.
[78] UN-Women, *World Conference on Women*.

employment opportunity, adequate health care, and education services for women.[79] The conference recognized equality as not only a legal term but as the "rights, responsibilities and opportunities for the participation of women in development, both as beneficiaries and as active agents."[80] The Copenhagen conference created a Program of Action, which addressed further international technical cooperation with the INSTRAW as well as improving gender-specific and economic indicators data accuracy and sharing.[81] The adoption of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 1979 created a further guiding document for UN-Women's work to achieve gender equality.[82] The Third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985.[83] The conference adopted the *Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, which emphasizes the importance and necessity of women's participation in social and economic development.[84]

In 2000, the General Assembly held a special session entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" to conduct a five-year review of implementation of the BPfA (Beijing +5).[85] The discussion included topics of gender-sensitive citizenship, gender perspectives in peacekeeping, and strengthening men's role in combating sexual and gender-based violence.[86] As an outcome, the GA adopted resolution S-23/3 on "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" on 16 November 2000.[87]

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) conducted a 10-year review and appraisal of the BPfA (Beijing +10) during its 49th session in 2005.[88] The Commission emphasized the essential role of the effective implementation of the BPfA in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).[89] A 15-year review on BPfA (Beijing +15) took place during the 54th session of the Commission in 2010.[90] The Commission sought to overcome obstacles by sharing experience and good practices and reviewed the implementation of the MDGs.[91] Emerging matters and concerns, such as women's economic empowerment, ending female genital mutilation, and releasing women and children taken hostage during armed conflict, were brought to the attention of the body through several resolutions adopted by CSW.[92] CSW also drafted a declaration that reaffirmed Member States' pledges to take further actions to accelerate full implementation of the BPfA.[93]

In resolution 2013/18 of 1 October on "Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women", the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) designated CSW as the entity to conduct a twenty-year review and appraisal of the BPfA, known as Beijing +20, to be held at its fifty-ninth session in 2015.[94] In preparing for the review process, ECOSOC requested that CSW focus on achievements reached and remaining challenges, and further identify opportunities for including women's empowerment in the post-2015 agenda.[95] Another important

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[79] UN-Women, *World Conference on Women*.

[80] UN Division for the Advancement of Women, *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace*, 1986, para. 10.

[81] UN Division for the Advancement of Women, *Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (A/CONF.94/35)*, 1980.

[82] UN-Women, *Training for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*.

[83] UN-NGLS, *Historic Overview on the World Conference on Women*, 2014.

[84] UN Division for the Advancement of Women, *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace*, 1985, para. 4.

[85] UN-Women, *Follow-up to Beijing*.

[86] UN-Women, *Summaries of Panel Discussions during the Beijing+5 Special Session of the General Assembly*, 2000.

[87] UN-Women, *Five-year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +5) Held in the General Assembly 5-9 June 2000*, 2000.

[88] UN-Women, *Follow-up to Beijing*.

[89] UN Economic and Social Council, *Declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of women at its Forty-ninth Session (E/CN.6/2005/L.1)*, 2005, p. 2.

[90] UN-Women, *Follow-up to Beijing*.

[91] UN-Women, *Global 15-year Review Process in the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women*.

[92] UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Report on the fifty-fourth Session (E/CN.6/2010/11)*, 2010, p. iii.

[93] Ibid., pp. 2-37.

[94] UN Economic and Social Council, *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2013/18)*, 2013, p. 2.

[95] Ibid.

addition to the review process was ECOSOC's call for Member States to conduct national reviews for compilation during regional reviews of the BPfA to be submitted to CSW.[96]

Role of the International System

UN-Women
To prepare for the review process, UN-Women, together with UN regional commissions, developed a common guidance note to assist in and facilitate the preparation of Member States' national reviews.[97] UN-Women calls upon Member States to collaborate and cooperate with all relevant stakeholders to prepare comprehensive national reviews that include trends, achievements, remaining gaps, and challenges as well as proposals to accelerate national implementation of the BPfA.[98] UN-Women also emphasizes the importance of supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's organizations' roles and contributions to implementation efforts.[99] The guidance note emphasizes implementation, impact, and future plans and initiatives.[100] It also stressed the importance of considering particular groups, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS.[101] UN-Women will compile national and regional reviews into a global review and appraisal and submit it to the 59th session of CSW that will take place at UN headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2015.[102]

Commission on the Status of Women
Established as a functional commission by ECOSOC in 1946, CSW is "the principle global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women."[103] ECOSOC resolution 1996/6 outlined the leading role of CSW in monitoring the progress and assessing shortcomings in the implementation of the BPfA.[104] To fulfill its role, CSW hosts discussions and debates on key emerging issues and designates a certain theme each year to further the progress on women's empowerment.[105] UN Member States, civil society organizations (CSOs), and UN entities engage in discussions on progress and gaps in the implementation of the BPfA along with emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women during CSW's annual session.[106] The outcomes of the session are reported to ECOSOC for follow-up.[107]

Civil Society Organizations
With diverse expertise and resources, civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in implementing the BPfA and advocate for stronger frameworks that support implementation.[108] UN-Women values CSOs as essential stakeholders of the Beijing +20 review and views CSOs' efforts as crucial to effectively accelerating implementation.[109] Examples a how CSOs effectively implement priority areas of the BPfA include:

1. **Women and poverty:** PCI Global launched an initiative called *Women Empowered* (WE) dedicated to empower women fighting against poverty by forming self-managed and self-sustaining saving groups.[110] PCI provides training in group governance, record keeping methods, and entrepreneurship skills.[111] So far, WE initiatives have been initiated in Bolivia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Malawi, and is planning

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[96] UN Economic and Social Council, *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2013/18)*, 2013, p. 2.
[97] UN-Women, *Preparations*.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] UN-Women, *Guidance Note for the Preparation of National Reviews*, p. 2.
[101] Ibid., p. 3.
[102] UN-Women, *Preparations*.
[103] UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.
[104] UN ECOSOC, *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/RES/1996/6)*, 1996.
[105] UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] UN-Women, *Major Partners*, 2014.
[109] UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.
[110] PCI Global, *PCI's Mission: Disease Prevention, Community Health & Sustainable Development*.
[111] PCI Global, *Women Empowered: About the Initiative*, 2013.

for more countries to follow.[112] WE does not only provide resources to women, but is also a skill building program aimed at enabling women to become transformational leaders in their community.

2. **Women and the economy:** The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women has made influential contributions to women's economic empowerment.[113] Its Mentoring Women in Business Program will reach over 1,000 women entrepreneurs from 55 countries with tailored mentoring and training by the end of 2015.[114] By October 2013, 94% of the program participants thought they improved business skills and over 93% were able to achieve a business goal.[115]

3. **Violence against women, and human rights of women**: In the fight to end violence against women, Zonta International provides financial support for UN-Women's Safe Cities programs and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.[116] This is an example of a multi-faceted approach – linking urbanization with efforts to address violence against women Zonta International also develops strategies, such as "mobilizing communities around cultures of non-violence," to strengthen knowledge on actions to stop violence.[117]

4. **Education and training of women, and women in power and decision-making:** Soroptimist International (SI), an international non-governmental organization that "educates, empowers and enables opportunities for women and girls," conducted 3,727 projects in 2012 to increase women's access to education and leadership, of which 16% focused on increasing girls' school enrollment, retention and passing rates; 35% addressed the learning needs of adult women; and 20% aimed to increase women's participation in decision-making.[118] SI's initiatives benefited 109,632 women and girls directly.[119]

5. **Women and health:** Funded in 1990 in Tanzania, *Kiwakkuki* is a devoting CSO that focuses on women and health issues.[120] Kiwakkuki conducted community sessions to promote healthy behaviors to prevent potential risks. In 2009, 10,510 female were reached with information, 1,838 received zero status test, and 1,161 patients received counseling and medication.[121] Kiwakkuki reduced HIV prevalence in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, from 7.3% to 1.9% from 2004 to 2009.[122]

6. **Women and armed conflict:** The UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women, Peace and Security" on 31 October 2000.[123] The resolution was historic in calling for women's greater participation in peace and security efforts, resulting in an increase in attention at the international level on the gender dimensions of armed conflict.[124] The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG), a coalition of 15 international NGOs with experience in every region in the world and expertise across issues ranging from disarmament to peacebuilding to climate change, was established by the civil society organizations who promoted the adoption of the resolution. For the last 15 years, the NGOWG has been the only actor of its kind working on women, peace and security issues at UN Headquarters, providing both regular expert policy guidance on women, peace and security, and monitoring the Security Council's work on this issue. Its members work on every level of decision-making from local to international and undertake activities ranging from advocacy to humanitarian assistance. As a coalition of civil society organizations, the NGOWG also works alongside women and women-led organizations in conflict and post-conflict situations. Integrating the voices of women human rights defenders and civil society

[112] PCI Global, *Women Empowered: Meet the Women of WE*, 2013.
[113] UN-Women, *Major Partners*.
[114] Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, *Mentoring Women in Business Programme*, 2013.
[115] Ibid.
[116] UN-Women, *Major Partners*.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Soroptimist International, *Global Impact Report 2012-13 Global Action: Overview*, 2013.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Kiwakkuki, *About Kiwakkuki*, 2013.
[121] Kiwakkuki, *Kiwakkuki Annual Report 2009*, pp. 5-6.
[122] Ibid., p. 4.
[123] UN Security Council, *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.
[124] Ibid.

organizations is an important facet of its work as the experiences of women affected by situations being considered by the Security Council must be front and center in decision-making processes in New York.

7. **The girl-child:** Nanhi Kali is a NGO aiming to provide elementary education to over 100,000 girl children living in poverty in nine states in India.[125] Nanhi Kali had a number of total graduates of 2,605 and decreased the dropout rate through 10th grade to 10% compared to a national average of 70% between 2012 and 2013.[126] In addition, Nanhi Kali also provides job-related skill training programs to students and reached 100% job placement in the same time frame.[127]

Regional Reviews

The five regional commissions, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) are the primary actors at the regional level, responsible for advancing plans to review regional and national implementation of the BPfA by preparing and organizing meetings and trainings to feed into the international review process.[128]

Africa
The regional review for Africa took place as part of the 9th African Regional Conference on Women, from 17 – 18 November 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.[129] Some of the challenges identified in the implementation of the BPfA in the region include issues such as climate change, terrorism, armed conflict, global economic and financial crises and increasing inequality.[130] The outcome document "called for African governments to allocate adequate resources by adopting appropriate strategies, including gender budgeting; to accelerate the strategies, including gender budgeting; to accelerate the implementation of the remaining gaps from the BPfA through strengthened domestic resource mobilization and allocation to women's needs."[131] Further, attendees also emphasized the importance of international partners' support, both technical and financial, for Africa's development efforts broadly. Women's movements, including civil society organizations, were identified as key players. The outcome asked that governments "provide the space and resources for the women's movement in Africa to play their critical role of providing services to women and girls and demanding accountability for the implementation of agreed upon national, regional and global commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment."[132]

Asia and the Pacific
ESCAP's regional review took place in Bangkok from 17-20 November 2014 with over 40 Member States attending.[133] Member States highlighted achievements in enhancing and implementing gender equality policies, legislation, and action plans to eliminate violence against women and girls and to advocate for women's leadership and participation in politics.[134] Establishing normative frameworks with the support of all government ministries and departments as well as creating institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women were identified as key regional challenges.[135] Member States further identified the need for greater gender consciousness, gender capacity, cooperation and partnership, resources, and accountability to realize the empowerment of women.[136] Sustainable approaches and mechanisms were identified as necessary in order to fulfill these needs.[137]

Europe

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[125] Nanhi Kali, *About Project Nanhi Kali*.
[126] K.C. Mahindra Education Trust, *Rise for Good: Annual Report 2012-13, 2013*, pp. 5, 11.
[127] Ibid., p. 5.
[128] UN-Women, *Regional 20-year Review Process*.
[129] UN ECA, *Beijing plus 20*.
[130] UN ECA, *African ministers recommit to implementing Beijing Platform for Action*, 2014.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] UN ESCAP, *Asia-Pacific Countries Commit to Accelerating Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, 2014.
[134] UN ECOSOC, *Review of the Progress and Remaining Challenges in Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific: Note by the Secretariat (E.ESCAP/GEWE/1)*, 2014, pp. 1, 17.
[135] Ibid., p. 1.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., p. 18.

The European region review was conducted in Geneva from 6-7 November 2014.[138] Member States highlighted major progress including the political will to promote gender equality, the improvement of effective and adequate national equality mechanisms, financial commitment accountability, effective regional legislation, and the cooperation between women's organizations and governments.[139] Weak legal implementation and barriers, as well as limited access to services and justice, were identified as the key regional challenges.[140] Member States came to the agreement that implementing the post-2015 development agenda could provide opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the BPfA and support regional priorities such as furthering women's economic empowerment, eliminating violence against women, increasing women's participation in decision-making processes, eradicating gender stereotypes, and fostering men's and boys' advocacy for gender equality.[141]

Latin America and the Caribbean
From 18 – 19 November 2014, the Latin American and Caribbean regional review was held in Santiago, Chile and attended by delegations from 21 countries.[142] A report published by ECLAC which was based on input from governments in the region, framed the discussion.[143] The report noted that although there are promoting gender equality, in practice policies aren't successful because they are influenced by unequal gender relations and, in the context of development, the gender dimensions of poverty.[144] The political elite and culture privileging those with particular socioeconomic status or political connections was identified as a particular barrier. Without addressing this, the report noted that consolidation of progress would be difficult, if not impossible. Further, the report emphasized that particular attention is required on rural women's role and situation in regards to their access to capacity building, land, natural and productive resources, credits, development programs and cooperative structures.[145] Particularly due to changes in demographic and economic patterns, the growth will expand the demand for energy, water, minerals and food, and inequality in the access and consumption of these items will determine future challenges.[146] The outcome of the review particularly highlights the need to ensure there are adequate resources supporting the implementation of gender equality policies in the post-2015 development framework.[147] Further, the outcome established a technical working group within ECLAC, and supported by UN-Women, which would strengthen gender-sensitive budgeting and financing mechanisms at the regional level.[148] Civil society participation was another strong theme, similar to other regional reviews, with the outcome particularly emphasizing the fundamental role played by non-governmental organizations, including particular women's organizations and the feminist movement.[149]

Western Asia
From 20-22 October 2014, the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW) held an Expert Group Meeting discuss the regional report reviewing progress on implementing the BPfA.[150] The report, and subsequent discussion during the meeting highlighted the broader context in the region, particularly the way in which insecurity and armed conflict, which creates disparity between countries in the region and impacts gender equality.[151] It was noted that despite the fact that, although, the Arab spring resulted in political change and shifts across the region, women did not see a benefit in increased protection or promotion of rights or strengthening of gender equality.[152] The robust participation of women in economic and poverty alleviation policies and establishment of protections to allow women to own

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[138] UN ECE, *Beijing +20*.

[139] UN ECE, *Regional review of progress: regional synthesis: Note by the secretariat (ECE/AC.28/2014/3)*, 2014, p. 5.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., p. 20.

[142] UN-Women, *Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirm commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 2014.

[143] ECLAC, *Informe regional sobre el examen y la evaluación de la Declaración y la Plataforma de Acción de Beijing y el documento final del vigésimo tercer período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General en los países de América Latina y el Caribe*, 2014.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] ECLAC, *Special Session on Beijing +20 in Latin American and the Caribbean: Statement,* 2014.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid.

[150] ESCWA, *Regional Review Report on the Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab Region*, 2014.

[151] Ibid; ESCWA, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Regional Review*, 2014.

[152] Ibid.

property and land are particular priorities.[153] Further, protection of human rights defenders and women's rights activists, strengthening efforts to end child marriage, and establishment and expansion of quotas promoting women's participation in political processes were all identified as key issues of focus at the regional level.[154] Similar to other regional reviews, civil society engagement was particularly emphasized.[155] Further, civil society organizations in particular emphasized the need for healthier discourse amongst religious stakeholders on extremism and marginalization, both of which impact the realization of women's rights.[156]

National Capacity Building

Capacity building programs are an important factor in reaching gender equality and the empowerment of women.[157] Respective programs do not only develop a Member States' or CSO's knowledge and skills on an issue, they are also a pivotal instrument for UN-Women and other UN bodies to enhance the technical and logistic support they provide to Member States.[158] The UN-Women Training Centre conducts numerous programs that provide courses and resources to ensure effective quality trainings for Member States, women, girls, and men.[159] For instance, the *UN Women Community of Practice* is a knowledge-sharing platform that features successful practice and innovative tools in addition to hosting virtual dialogs in implementing gender equality.[160] The fourth *Virtual Dialogue* took place from 13th to 31st of October 2014, with a focus on "Training for Gender Equality and Beijing +20."[161] Experts, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders had the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss key issues regarding Beijing+20.[162] Additionally, UN-Women works with the *Gender Training Experts Roster*, a global online platform where experts in fields of gender equality, economic empowerment, political participation, peace and security, and HIV/AIDS meet.[163] Together the two entities can identify and collaborate with a diverse group of experts and trainers on gender equality worldwide.[164]

As Member States participate in capacity building programs initiated by the UN system, they are also initiating their own national capacity building program to further implement the BPfA.[165] Tanzania provided capacity building programs for female politicians, which has made significant impact on female's decision-making and political involvement.[166] Thus, it is a great success that women brought in a motion to name a woman the Deputy Speaker of the Special Constitutional Parliament in Tanzania and passed it despite opposition from male members of parliament.[167] The Women's Economic Empowerment Programme at GeAD, developed and implemented by the Botswana government, local NGOs and CSOs, disburses grants to women's NGOs and civil groups to help them generate income from projects, which creates more employment opportunities outside of home for women and also enhances women's entrepreneur skills and decision-making capability.[168]

The BPfA and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

UN-Women has set three priority goals to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women post-2015, which are "freedom from violence against women and girls," "gender equality in capabilities and resources," and

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[153] ESCWA, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Regional Review*, 2014.
[154] Ibid..
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] UN-Women, *Training for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] UN-Women, *Next Virtual Dialogue: Beijing +20*, 2014.
[162] Ibid.
[163] UN-Women, *Training for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*.
[164] Ibid.
[165] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 7.
[166] Tanzania, *Country Report on the Review and Progress Made and Challenges Encountered in Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Outcomes of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly – Beijing +20*, 2014, p. 27.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Botswana, *Botswana Country Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing Plus 20 Years)*, 2014, p. 31.

"gender equality in decision-making power in public and private institutions."[169] UN-Women particularly emphasizes that future frameworks must take structural causes into consideration.[170] These causes for gender inequality include, but are not limited to violence against women, unpaid work, women's limited control over their assets and property, as well as unequal access to private and public decision-making.[171] UN-Women has proposed to increase the number of indicators, to specify structural obstacles to gender inequality.[172] UN-Women also calls for gender-responsive accountability systems that enable women to claim their rights towards public authorities in order to have a stronger voice in decision-making, protect their rights, and prevent abuses more effectively.[173]

In the context of the post-2015 development agenda, women and girls' empowerment and the protection of their rights are stated centerpieces of the post-2015 agenda.[174] This vision also states the importance of transforming "transform the structural factors that underpin the widespread persistence of gender inequalities, gender-based violence, discrimination and unequal development progress between women and men, girls and boys" in the global agenda.[175] Learning from past experiences, the UN system has realized the crucial role of a comprehensive approach on a global, regional, and national level and therefore the UN system seeks to develop a coherent, system-wide approach that ensures the implementation of an effective agenda by governments and other stakeholders beyond 2015.[176] A one-size-fits-all approach is not encouraged in the post-2015 development agenda; instead, targets tailored to regional, national, and sub-national conditions and priorities should be applied.[177]

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are the means through which the post-2015 development agenda will be measured and tracked. Whereas the level of education is the only indicator in the MDGs to measure gender equality, proposed SDG 5 is focused entirely on gender equality and proposes eight core indicators, such as prevalence of women that have experienced sexual or physical violence within a certain time frame, percentage of investigated and sentenced cases of sexual and gender-based violence, cases of child-marriage or harmful traditional practices, prevalence of women working under precarious labor conditions, participation of women in regional or national policymaking, and others.[178] Consequently, proposed SDG 5 could be a step towards better reflecting the goals set in the BPfA beyond 2015.[179]

The value of civil society in the implementation of the BPfA is widely recognized, which is why, in promoting the BPfA, UN-Women sets its overarching strategy to involve civil society as much as possible.[180] UN-Women aims to enrich and inform its political dialogues and advocacy positions along with facilitating alliance-building with governments and stakeholders with the support of civil society expertise.[181] To this end, UN-Women coordinates and facilitates the participation of civil society groups on a regional and national level to explore common positions and use them to advocate gender equality and empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.[182]

Key Gaps and Challenges

It is important to note that the key gaps and challenges in implementing the BPfA are still being discussed and will become clear in the early part of 2015 as the results of the regional conferences are reviewed. However, there are some specific gaps that can be referenced:

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[169] UN-Women, *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components*, 2013, pp. 16-17.
[170] Ibid., p. 2.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid., pp. 6, 23-26.
[173] Ibid., p. 19.
[174] UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General*, 2012, pp. 23, 25.
[175] Ibid., p. 24.
[176] Ibid., p. 42.
[177] Ibid., p. 8.
[178] UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a Data Revolution for the SDGs*, 2014, pp. 59-62.
[179] UN Division for Sustainable Development, *Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals*.
[180] UN-Women, *Civil Society Engagement in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.

- **Monitoring:** The absence of "concrete time-bound targets and indicators" is one of the biggest challenges to monitor and further implement the BPfA.[183] Tailor targets for different States and regions should be implemented instead of one-fit-all goals and requirements.[184]

- **Accountability:** While political will is one obstacle to realizing the goals set in the BPfA, there are also some matters directly linked to the document.[185] Contradictory demands and lacks of clarity as to the responsibilities of the different stakeholders involved limit national mechanisms.[186]

- **Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Development:** It is crucial to interpret gender equality should not independently from other development issues, but as an integral part of development as a whole.[187]

- **Institutional Barriers:** Since its adoption in 1995, the BPfA has not managed to overcome economic and social barriers to gender equality and these issues will remain of importance beyond 2015.[188] In Africa women contribute to 40% of the agricultural workforce but only 20% of women are landowners.[189] Similar numbers can be found in Latin America and in East and South Asia.[190] Limited access to justice, resources, and technologies remains one of the biggest challenges to further implement the BPfA.[191]

Conclusion

The creation and adoption of the BPfA offers a defining policy framework and roadmap for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. It not only energized international political commitment to the fight against gender inequality, but it also effectively mobilized other stakeholder including CSOs, parliamentarians, media, the private sector, and grass-root leaders. During the past 20 years, progress has been made, but there is still no country that has fully implemented the BPfA.[192] As the deadline of the MDGs approaches, a renewed political will and a rejuvenated commitment are needed from the Beijing +20 Review process. Time oriented and sustainable development goals with tailored targets on a national, regional, and global level need to be set in order to accelerate the implementation of full promise of BDPA and MDG3. Women make up half of the global population, and empowering women means a significant step toward strengthening humanity.[193] With the international community's cooperation and the UN system's continuous support, the year 2015 poses a unique opportunity to not only design the post-2015 development agenda but to finally put into effect the vision laid down in the BPfA.

Further Questions

Some important questions for delegates to consider include: What are the best lessons-learnt during the past 20 years of implementation of the BPfA that can inform the Beijing+20 review process and the post-2015 agenda? In what way can UN-Women support capacity building to further women empowerment and have an impact on the social norms and attitudes that shape women's rights? What measures should be created and implemented to enhance women's equal opportunity in decision-making in both private and public sectors and economic empowerment? What are the priority areas among the 12 critical areas of concerns of the BPfA in the post-2015 agenda, or are there any critical areas that the BPfA has failed to address? Gender responsive budgeting is one issue that arose out of the

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[183] UN Division for the Advancement of Women & Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Achievements, Gaps and challenges in Linking the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Expert Meeting Group*, 2005, p. 10.

[184] UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General*, 2012.

[185] UN Division for the Advancement of Women & Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Achievements, Gaps and challenges in Linking the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Expert Meeting Group*, 2005, p. 11.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Ibid.

[189] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Economic and Social Survey 2013: Sustainable Development Challenges*, 2013, p. 104.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid.

[192] UN-Women, *The Beijing Platform for Action: inspiration then and now*.

[193] United Nations, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*, 1996, p. 10.

regional reviews; how can the international community support increased gender responsive budgeting? What monitoring and accountability mechanisms can be established by the international community to ensure implementation of the BPfA?

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http://www.nanhikali.org/who-we-are/images/financials/annual_report_12-13.pdf

> *The Nanhi Kali project has been taking influential initiatives in implementing girl-children's rights. This annual report provides details and statistics of Kanhi Kali's educational and skill training programs and relative influence. This could serve as a useful resource in the research of CSOs engagement in implementing BPfA's concerning areas and also SDG5. Delegates could start from this example and build up more effective proposals on protecting girl-child.*

Kiwakkuki. (2009). *Kiwwakkuki Annual Report 2009*. Retrieved 24 November 2014 from:
http://www.kiwakkuki.org/annual_report_2009.pdf

> *As a successful example of CSO's engagement implementing the BPfA, Kiwakkuki's annual report provides details and statistics on its initiatives. This document includes the organization's implementations in areas of concern including, women and education, women and health, and women and human rights. This is a primary example for delegates to study to have a clear idea on how CSOs could effectively engage in the implementation of SDGs and the BPfA. The lessons learnt section could also help delegates understand obstacles and challenges CSOs face in the implementation and in general.*

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. (1996). *Summary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved 5 October 2014 from: http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/declaration.pdf

> *This document is a summary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It does not only provide essential information but also interpretive background on the document adoption. It is useful for delegate research because it succinctly summarizes the Beijing Declaration section by section and thus provides an easy guide to understanding the Declaration. It would be a useful place to begin research in order to gain a basic understanding of the resolution the present topic is based on.*

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (n.d.). *Gender equality and women's rights in the post-2015 agenda: A foundation for sustainable development.* Retrieved 10 July 2014 from:
http://www.oecd.org/dac/POST-2015%20Gender.pdf

> *This document speaks clearly to the Post-2015 Agenda and where women and gender equality fit into it. It explains how women can be incorporated into the agenda and also why women play an important role in the agenda. The document also proposes a few approaches to gender equality in the future framework, including women and education, women's economic empowerment, violence against women and girls, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's leadership, women and peace building, and women and environment. This is also a great resource on tying the BPfA implementation to agreeing on Sustainable Development Goals.*

United Nations. (1996) *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Add.1)*. Retrieved 2 October 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1

> *As the milestone document of the advancement of women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the crucial source of research for this topic. This document introduces the BPfA's mission statement, global framework, 12 critical areas of concern, and their strategic objectives and actions, as well as institutional and financial arrangement on the regional, national, and international level. Delegates should study this document and gain more knowledge on the roadmap and framework the international community has been implementing during the past two decades.*

United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. (2012). *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General* . Retrieved 5 October 2014 from:
http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf

> *As the main supporter of the post-2015 UN development agenda, the UN System Task Team (UNTT) provides consultation, analytical input, expertise, and outreach for the post-2015 development process. This report focuses on the UN system's general vision and strategy in post-*

2015 and top priorities and areas of concerns. Delegates can gain more insights and knowledge of global trends and challenges the post-2015 UN development agenda should respond to and how gender equality could be better implemented and fostered in the big picture. In addition, a review of the strengths and weaknesses of the MDG framework is included in the Annexes, which could help delegates research more on the effectiveness and lessons-learnt of establishing and implementing frameworks, such as the BPfA.

United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women & Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2005). *Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Expert Group Meeting*. Retrieved 5 October 2014 from: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/bpfamd2005/EGM-BPFA-MD-MDG-2005-REPORT-final.pdf

> *This document is a great source for delegates who want to gain more knowledge on the link between the implementation of the BPfA and the MDGs. Since gender equality is a cross-cutting matter across many issues, the implementation of the BPfA should also be expanded on a broader scale. The report introduces the Expert Group of the Division for the Advancement of Women, process of the implementation of the BPfA and MDGs and their challenges, gaps, and opportunities. Besides, it discusses the interrelationship among the implementation of the BPfA, MDGs, gender equality, and human rights and how the objects of all frameworks could be effectively achieved on an international scale and fully carry out their promises.*

United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe. (2014). *Regional review of progress: regional synthesis: Note by the secretariat (ECE/AC.28/2014/3)*. Retrieved 24 November 2014 from: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/ECE.AC.28.2014.3.E.pdf

> *This is the report of UNECE's regional review on Beijing +20. This document highlights the progresses, obstacles, future priorities and action proposals of the region's BPfA implementation in post-2015. Delegates could find this report helpful in gaining insights on the current situation and positions of European States' regarding the implementation process. Specific implementation examples and statistics are also included in the document that could help delegates while drafting their positions.*

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2013). *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2013/18)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/2013/27). Retrieved 5 October 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2013/18

> *This is the defining document of the review process of Beijing +20 and CSW's role within it. It includes sections on methods of work of CSW, the theme of the Beijing +20 review and themes for 2016 and beyond. This resolution explains CSW's role and major actions needed to be taken during the conference, which could help the delegates understand how UN-Women could support the Commission and what priorities could be discussed during the conference.*

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Review of the Progress and Remaining Challenges in Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific: Note by the Secretariat (E.ESCAP/GEWE/1)*. Retrieved 24 November 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/ESCAP/GEWE/1

> *This document compiles the national reviews and information in Asia and the Pacific on the implementation of the BPfA. This document highlights the progresses, obstacles, future priorities, and action proposals of the region to implement the BPfA post-2015. Delegates could find this report helpful in gaining insights on the current situations and opinions of Asian and Pacific States' concerning the BPfA implementation process. Specific implementation examples and statistics are also included in the document that could help delegates with drafting their proposals.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Twenty-third special session. (2000). *Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/RES/S-23/3)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (A/S-23/10/Rev.1). Retrieved 2 October 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/S-23/3

This is the resolution that formed the outcome document of the Beijing +5 Review. It was an exceptional tool in researching this topic and will be very useful for delegates in shaping their understanding of the challenges surrounding the implementation of the Beijing Declaration. It clearly lies out and canvasses the challenges faced but also the achievements made in the first five years following the adoption of the Beijing Declaration. Delegates could find this document helpful as it provides insights into and lessons learnt from the previous implementations of the BPfA, based on which they might develop further actions for post-2015.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session. (2012). *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)* [Resolution], Retrieved 24 November 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288
As a milestone document in the transition from MDGs to SDGs, this resolution gives delegates a clear vision of the UN's goals and values in the post-2015 development. Rio+20 marks the start of the era of sustainable development. As the outcome of the conference, this document serves as a road map in the implementation of SDGs in post-2015. The section that focuses on gender equality and women empowerment serves as good starting point for delegates to further their research. In addition, the section on the implementation of institutional frameworks is also a valuable resource for delegates while researching on mechanisms of women's advancement, since many regions identified that as a major challenge during their review process.

United Nations, Sustainable Development Solutions Network. (2014). *Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a Data Revolution for the SDGs* [Report]. Retrieved 24 November 2014 from: http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/140724-Indicator-working-draft1.pdf
Indicators are one of the most important components of a realistic and effective framework. As MDGs come to an end in2015, implementations on SDGs along with the BPfA would come to the center of global attention. This document introduces all the proposed core indicators of all SDGs. Delegates could evaluate the effectiveness of indicators for SDG5 and compare it to the indicators of MDG3 for their research on appropriate measurements of gender equality and the implementation of the BPfA.

UN-Women. (n.d.). *In Brief: Beijing +20* [Background Note]. Retrieved 5 October 2014 from http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/intergovsupport/unw_beijing_brief_v2%20pdf.ashx
This is the UN-Women's official brochure of the Beijing +20 review that would be a good introductory document for delegates to gain a broad understanding of the background and purpose of the Committee. The document explains the significance of the BPfA and the crucial needs of implementing gender equality in post-2015. It also includes UN-Women's Beijing +20 Action Plan, which could help delegates understand UN-Women's position and priorities during the 20th-year review of the BPfA.

UN-Women. (2012). *Identifying Women's Peace and Security Priorities* [Background Note]. Retrieved 2 October 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Media/Publications/en/03BIdentifyingWomens.pdf
This document is a focus article on women, peace, and security. It provides delegates with some background information as to why women in peacekeeping are important, and then goes on to discuss methods of achieving this. It is thorough in the way that it illustrates the practical application of an aspect of the Beijing Declaration.

UN-Women. (2013). *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components*. Retrieved 2 October 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/10/unwomen_post2015_positionpaper_english_final_web%20pdf.pdf
This document speaks greatly on gender and women's rights in the Post-2015 Agenda. It emphasizes the importance of keeping gender as its own stand alone goal in drafting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is useful for delegates' research in that it gives a very thorough breakdown of exactly how this would be achieved and what components are particularly important.

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http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015/preparations

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UN-Women. (2014). *Next Virtual Dialogue: Beijing +20* [Website]. Retrieved 24 November 2014 from: http://gtcop.unwomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=368%3Aproximo-dialogo-virtual-capacitacion-para-la-igualdad-de-genero-y-beijing-20&catid=1%3Anoticias&Itemid=36&lang=en

II. Achieving Gender Equality Post-2015 by Eliminating Violence against All Women

"The most pervasive human rights abuse in the world today, violence against women and girls is a manifestation of gender-based discrimination and a universal phenomenon which has tremendous costs for societies."[194]

Introduction

Ending the cycle of violence that subjugates women, limits their economic opportunities, and polices their movements in society is one of the primary goals of UN-Women.[195] Gender equality in development, particularly the elimination of violence against women (VAW), is the primary target for UN-Women in the post-2015 agenda.[196] The looming expiration of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) at the end of 2015 has paved the way for a post-2015 development agenda shaped by (at present) 17 draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Goal 5 aims to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."[197] Similar to Goal 5 of the SDGs is the stand-alone goal that UN-Women set forth in its official position on the post-2015 development agenda.[198] The first of the three targets UN-Women identified to achieve Goal 5 of the SDGs is to eliminate violence against women and girls.[199]

The Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls at the 57th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2013 reiterated the UN definition of VAW, 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 [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."[200] In their introduction to the problem, the experts explain that VAW directly relates to the systematic, historical oppression of women.[201] Violence against women takes many forms, and the preponderance of VAW typically falls into two categories: intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence.[202] The World Health Organization (WHO) finds that 35% of women around the world have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence.[203] Separately, the same WHO report shows that 30% of all women who have been in relationships experience some kind of violence by an intimate partner.[204] Not only does IPV put women's lives in mortal danger (intimate partners account for 38% of all murdered women), but abuse leads to higher rates of health problems like anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and vulnerability to HIV.[205]

The causes of gender-based violence (GBV) are truly global.[206] Gender inequality, impunity for perpetrators under the law, low levels of education, witnessing abuse between parents, or having experienced abuse as a child are among social and cultural norms contributing to the complexity of VAW.[207] As with many abuses, conflict and post-conflict situations create conditions that exacerbate existing levels of violence and lead to its normalization.[208]

Violence against women is a primary obstacle in the path to gender equality and UN-Women stands poised to learn from past actions to make achieving this goal realistic. A complex but essential approach to eliminating VAW includes addressing specific topics such as creating safe public spaces, engaging men and boys to reduce intimate partner violence, working against norms that subjugate women and excuse abuse against them, and valuing women

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[194] UN-Women, *UN Women Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] UN DESA, *Outcome Document – Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals*, 2014.
[198] UN-Women, *UN Women Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*.
[199] Ibid.
[200] UN-Women et al., *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (EGM/PP/2012/Report)*, 2012, p. 4.
[201] Ibid.
[202] World Health Organization, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*, 2013, p. 2.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] UN General Assembly, *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1),* 2006, p. 27.
[207] World Health Organization, *Violence against women*, 2013; UN-Women et al., *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (EGM/PP/2012/Report)*, 2012, p. 11.
[208] World Health Organization, *Violence against women*, 2013.

and girls with disabilities and the contributions and experiences of ageing women.[209] It is also necessary to address VAW from a standpoint of prevention rather than just treatment. UN-Women has made it clear that VAW is a priority post-2015 in order to move the development agenda forward.[210]

International and Regional Framework

Prior to 1975, the UN took action on issues relating to women's rights and gender equality, particularly through the activities of the CSW as well as with the 1953 *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*, the 1957 *Convention on the Nationality of Married Women,* and the 1962 *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages*.[211] The UN Decade of Women from 1975-1985 aimed to highlight women's rights and gender equality as a priority issue on the international agenda, prompting the organization of world conferences on women and research into the effects of violence on peace, development, and equality.[212]

Despite an understanding of how violence against women impacts gender equality, one of the most important documents relating to gender in the international system does not directly address it.[213] The 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), a legally binding document that came into force in 1979, makes no explicit mention of VAW, but General Recommendations 12 and 19 do make recommendations to parties to the Convention on the issue.[214] The Optional Protocol to CEDAW followed in 1999, bringing forth the right for women who are victims of discrimination to petition for action.[215] Thus, the link between violence against women and the rights of women began to be made clearer.

In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights called VAW a human rights violation, and, in the same year, the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* outlined action on the issue at both national and international levels.[216] The latter identified VAW as acts or threats of acts that coerce women, deprive women of liberty, and result in psychological or physical harm, in private or in public.[217] With these actions, the UN system indicated a shift to considering such issues pertaining to women and inequality as mainstream, not strictly "women's issues," as the international community tended to view them in years prior.[218]

In 1994, the *International Conference on Population and Development* was convened in Cairo, Egypt, and resulted in the *Cairo Programme for Action*. The conference illustrated a relationship between reproductive health and the negative effects of VAW, and recommended states take urgent action to protect women and girls.[219] Similarly, the 1995 *Beijing Platform for Action*, outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, expanded the definition of types of violence against women and includes 12 areas for priority action for governments to take, one of which is devoted to VAW.[220] In 2000, Security Council Resolution 1325 placed emphasis on violence against women in conflict situations and indicated that Member States have a responsibility to make sure perpetrators are punished for their crimes against women.[221] The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (informally known as Rio+20) and the 57th session of the CSW in March 2013 represented the most recent actions on the topic by articulating a desire to incorporate a gender perspective in a wide range of policies.[222] Collectively, this work

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[209] World Health Organization, *Violence against women*, 2013; UN-Women et al., *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (EGM/PP/2012/Report)*, 2012, p. 27.
[210] UN-Women, *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components*, 2013, p. 3.
[211] UN CSW, *A Brief History of the CSW*.
[212] UN-Women, *Timeline of policy commitments and international agreements*, 2012.
[213] UN-Women, *Global Norms and Standards: Ending Violence against Women*.
[214] Ibid.
[215] UN CSW, *A Brief History of the CSW*.
[216] UN-Women, *Global Norms and Standards: Ending Violence against Women*.
[217] Ibid.
[218] UN CSW, *A Brief History of the CSW*.
[219] UN-Women, *Global Norms and Standards: Ending Violence against Women*.
[220] Ibid.
[221] UN General Assembly, *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2006, p. 17.
[222] UN-Women, *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components,* 2013, p. 3.

provides a past framework and informs the efforts of UN-Women to help achieve gender equality, especially through the elimination of VAW, a goal that no nation has achieved.[223]

Regionally, in 1994, the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* became the first regional level legally binding document on the subject.[224] The *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution* in 2002 and the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* in 2003 provided additional regional legal protections from VAW.[225] In 2011, the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence,* also known as the *Istanbul Convention*, another regional and legally binding agreement, was adopted.[226] It is interesting to note how efforts on violence against women are only a few decades old and have evolved mainly from work against domestic violence to broader-ranging concerns such as trafficking and sex crimes in conflict settings.[227]

Aside from regional work, the international community worked together on this topic through the MDGs, which UN-Women has stated neglected to name "structural causes of gender inequality" such as VAW, thus hindering progress.[228] The development agenda in the post-MDG era has an opportunity to fully incorporate priorities that protect and empower women and girls by combating violence at its roots, and, in turn, promote equality for all.[229]

Role of the International System

Past actions in the international system dealing with VAW depict how closely this topic relates to many areas of concern, including development, human rights, and population. UN-Women partners with governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and others to advocate for an end to violence, increase awareness, and build capacity. In 2013-2014, UN-Women ran anti-violence against women programs in 85 countries, the highest number of across all of the entity's programmatic areas.[230]

The Secretary-General's "In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women" (A/61/122) of October 2006 was the first wide-ranging UN report on VAW, carried out in response to a mandate in General Assembly resolution 58/185 of December 2003, seeking to galvanize political and social efforts to address this issue.[231] A primary conclusion of this study explains simply why past efforts at eliminating VAW have not been enough: "violence against women has yet to receive the priority attention and resources needed at all levels to tackle it with the seriousness and visibility necessary."[232] The post-2015 agenda provides an opportunity to learn from past action (or inaction) and put this issue at the forefront as a means to achieving gender equality.

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women provides grants to 77 programs in 70 countries, totaling $56.8 million.[233] Established by UN General Assembly resolution 50/166, the Trust Fund seeks to treat and prevent VAW in three ways: engaging at-risk populations and would-be perpetrators in prevention programs, providing services to survivors, and building capacity to implement laws and policies designed to protect women and girls.[234] Initiatives undertaken by Trust Fund grantees exhibit many approaches to addressing a multifaceted problem. For example, the Samoa Victim Support Group has trained community leaders on how to stop violence and contact the authorities when VAW is present, and has helped pass legislation stiffening penalties for crimes against women.[235]

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[223] UN-Women, *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017(UNW/2013/6)*, 2013, p. 1.

[224] UN-Women, *Timeline of policy commitments and international agreements*, 2012.

[225] Ibid.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid.

[228] UN-Women, *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components*, 2013, p. 3.

[229] Ibid.

[230] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 2.

[231] UN-Women, *Global Norms and Standards: Ending Violence against Women*.

[232] UN General Assembly, *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2006, p. 12.

[233] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 22.

[234] UN-Women, *UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women*.

[235] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, pp. 22-23.

Puntos de Encuentro, a Nicaraguan CSO, creatively took on VAW by producing a soap opera that reached millions of viewers when it aired on commercial television, portraying a young woman endangered by a sex trafficking ring.[236] A grassroots organization called Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (COWLHA) works in southern Malawi to prevent intimate partner violence by teaching healthy attitudes of masculinity and femininity, HIV risk awareness, and communications skills.[237] Through support from the Trust Fund, the non-governmental organization (NGO) Center for Domestic Violence Prevention ran campaigns in Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to engage communities in challenging norms that perpetuate gender inequality and raise awareness about violence and its causes.[238] Partner violence was 52% lower where this intervention program was deployed, according to one study.[239] Partnerships between the UN system and CSOs can greatly enhance work in this field, as local, on the ground organizations know their own communities best and benefit from outside investment.[240]

In September 2014, UN-Women Global Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson announced the launch of a new initiative, called HeForShe, to recruit and encourage men and boys to join the cause for gender equality.[241] In 12 months' time, the campaign seeks to have mobilized one billion men and boys as allies in the effort; the campaign hopes this show of solidarity will help end gender inequality by 2030.[242] The campaign is described as "…a solidarity movement for gender equality that brings together one half of humanity in support of the other half of humanity, for the benefit of all."[243] The work of the international system emphasizes the importance of a full-bodied effort to engage allies in as many ways as possible to achieve gender equality through eliminating violence against women.

Causes, Consequences, and Costs of Gender-Based Violence

Violence against women occurs irrespective of culture, geographic location, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, religion, and all other markers of identity.[244] The historical, social, and political domination of men over women (patriarchy) is at the root of the causes of gender-based violence (GBV).[245] Gender norms that devalue the role of women in society, such as those that dictate female sexuality and family roles, can lead to GBV when a woman is punished for activity perceived as outside the norm, perpetuating male dominance over women as well as social standards that oppress women.[246] Cultural norms and traditions also can lead to GBV, e.g. "honor killings," female genital mutilation, child marriage, son preference, and rape excused by custom (such as marital or "date" rape).[247] Discrimination against women has real economic impacts that diminish their power in society and can keep women from obtaining work (or work that pays a fair, livable wage).[248] Financial abuse by partners keeps women out of control of their (or their household's) finances and limits their ability to leave an abusive situation without their own money or economic literacy skills.[249] Situations of conflict also bring about GBV through use of rape and sexual and reproductive coercion as an act of war and a tool of ethnic cleansing.[250] The complex and varied causes of violence against women exhibit why the international community must devote significant resources to ending it post-2015.

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[236] UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, *Within Our Reach: Solutions to End Violence Against Women and Girls*, 2014, p. 8.
[237] Ibid., p. 9.
[238] UN-Women, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, 2014, p. 23.
[239] Ibid.
[240] UN-Women, *UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women*.
[241] UN-Women, *Press release: UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson calls out to men and boys to join HeForShe campaign*, 2014.
[242] Ibid.
[243] UN-Women, *HeForShe*, 2014.
[244] UN General Assembly, *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2006, p. 28.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid., p. 30.
[248] Ibid., p. 32.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid., p. 33.

A number of fields in particular are known to be under-documented, and would benefit from increased attention by the UN system and the international community.[251] According to the 2006 study from the Secretary-General, these include:

> "Femicide; sexual violence against women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations; trafficking in women for sexual and other exploitation; traditional harmful practices (other than female genital mutilation/cutting); prenatal sex selection and neglect of infant girls; forced marriage; early marriage; acid throwing, dowry or "honor" related violence; stalking; sexual harassment and violence in custody, workplaces and educational settings; and economic violence."[252]

The Secretary-General's report illuminates the issue of violence against women to remind the international community that VAW is not just something that is hidden behind closed doors, or used as an act of war, or happens just between partners, but rather wears many masks and for this reason is a primary barrier to gender equality.[253] Incorporating ways to better document these atrocities as a means to treat the causes, and prevent perpetration, is essential to future work.

Economic costs of VAW take the form of services related to treating violence and compare it to the loss of employment and opportunity.[254] The aforementioned CSW Expert Group Meeting in 2013 gives one example from Chile, where a study found that domestic violence against women and the resulting lost earnings accounted for more than 2% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[255] The World Bank estimates that domestic violence and sexual violence make up 5% of the disease burden for women 15 to 44 in developing countries, 19% in developed countries.[256]

Failure to take steps to end violence against women is a tacit excusal of discrimination against women.[257] A lack of action to protect women from violence violates their human rights and is a barrier to indicators of economic independence such as access to safe housing, an education, and employment.[258] Governments have a responsibility to make sure direct services for women and girls who have been abused are not just provided, but protected, as the existence of inhospitable environments for providing such services just further contributes to an already dire problem.[259]

Addressing Abuse of Ageing Women and Women and Girls with Disabilities

The idea of "multiple discriminations," defined as more than one factor that disadvantages someone or a group of people, becomes apparent when discussing violence against women and the different sub-populations it affects, particularly women and girls with disabilities and elderly women.[260]

A recent UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) report reveals that violence against older women takes many forms, including accusations of witchcraft, particularly against widows, that are used to justify violence.[261] This has been reported in 41 Member States in Africa and Asia.[262] The UN acknowledges that other

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[251] UN General Assembly, *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2006, p. 66.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid., p. 51.
[255] UN-Women et al., *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (EGM/PP/2012/Report)*, 2012, p. 6.
[256] UN General Assembly, *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2006, p. 52.
[257] Ibid., p. 74.
[258] Ibid., p. 74.
[259] UN-Women et al., *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (EGM/PP/2012/Report)*, 2012, p. 17.
[260] UN-Women & Puri, *Forgotten Sisters: Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities*, 2012.
[261] UN News Centre, Feature: *UN findings flag violence, abuse of older women accused of witchcraft*, 2014.
[262] Gogineni, *Older Kenyans Seek Protection From Abuses*, 2014.

abuse against older women includes neglect, physical, and financial abuse.[263] Researchers estimate that abuse against the elderly is under-reported by as much as 80%.[264] A review of the *Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing* in 2012 illustrated that the abuse and neglect of older persons was a major policy issue around the world, with no regard to a state's level of development.[265] Like other forms of abuse, this stems from discrepancies in power and control and is often perpetrated by someone known to the older person, and victims are most often women.[266] While statistics on this issue are difficult to ascertain because of how under-reported this problem is, the WHO estimates four to six percent of elderly people have experienced abuse.[267]

The UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri, opened a discussion on addressing violence against women and girls with disabilities by reporting that the disability prevalence rate is 19.2 percent for women and 12 percent for men.[268] Seven in 10 women report a physical and/or sexual assault at some point in their lifetime and of all sexual assaults, 50 percent are perpetrated against girls under 16.[269] There is a power dynamic of caregiver and the one receiving care that factors into this issue; either the caregiver may be taking advantage of their position or the person receiving the care is reluctant to report because of her dependence on their caregiver.[270] Often, women and girls with disabilities also face barriers to reporting abuse because information is not accessible and their mobility may be restricted, e.g. a deaf girl who is experiencing abuse from her parents may not be able to communicate with someone who can help without the aid of an interpreter, who may be a parent.[271] Additionally, girls with disabilities are more likely than boys with comparable disabilities to be victims of so-called "mercy killings" at a young age.[272]

Addressing human trafficking is an important part of eliminating VAW. The four major risk factors for susceptibility to trafficking are poverty, ignorance, minority status, and being female.[273] Considering the concept of multiple discriminations, women and girls with disabilities may be extra susceptible to trafficking because their disabilities may mean a lower level of access to education and wealth, in addition to the extra discrimination that people with disabilities face daily.[274] It will be necessary to consider how to combat human trafficking while considering how women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable.[275]

For this reason, the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women stated that UN-Women will incorporate a disability perspective in all its actions, including the implementation of CEDAW.[276] This includes providing input to other UN entities and encouraging the inclusion of a gender perspective in work on disability, as well as improving data collection on the intersection of these issues.[277] Puri noted that there is a great deal of support for incorporating disability into the SDGs for the post-2015 development agenda, but debate on the subject has lacked a sensitivity for gender and the challenges women and girls with disabilities live with.[278] Ameliorating social and cultural norms that perpetuate the maltreatment of people with disabilities will also help end violence and work towards equality.[279]

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[263] UN News Centre, *Feature: UN findings flag violence, abuse of older women accused of witchcraft*, 2014.
[264] Ibid.
[265] UN DESA, *Neglect, Abuse and Violence of Older Women. Report of the Expert Group Meeting*, 2013, p. 1.
[266] Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, *What Is Domestic Violence in Later Life?*.
[267] World Health Organization, *Elder maltreatment*, 2011.
[268] UN-Women & Puri, *Forgotten Sisters: Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities*, 2012.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.
[271] UN-Women & Puri, *Forgotten Sisters: Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities*, 2012; UN Children's Fund, *Summary Report: Violence against Disabled Children*, 2005, p.6.
[272] UNICEF, *Summary Report: Violence against Disabled Children*, 2005, p. 6.
[273] Ortoleva & Lewis, *Forgotten Sisters - A Report on Violence Against Women with Disabilities: An Overview of its Nature, Scope, Causes and Consequences*, 2012, p. 10.
[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid.
[276] UN-Women & Puri, *Forgotten Sisters: Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities*, 2012.
[277] Ibid.
[278] UN-Women & Puri, *Forgotten Sisters: Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities,* 2012.
[279] Ortoleva & Lewis, *Forgotten Sisters - A Report on Violence Against Women with Disabilities: An Overview of its Nature, Scope, Causes and Consequences*, 2012, p. 12.

Focusing on Prevention and Education

While there has been success at expanding useful services for women who survive violent situations, UN-Women is clear that the best way to treat VAW is to prevent it in the first place.[280] Three primary means of prevention include working with men and boys, creating safe public spaces, and education on the root causes of violence.[281]

Women in cities and urban spaces experience violence at twice the rate of men.[282] Women frequently do not feel comfortable walking alone at night and perceive their safety in a different way than men.[283] This limits women's ability to be equal, full participants in society and further contributes to gender inequality.[284] The UN Safe Cities Initiative seeks to counteract this by taking into account how public spaces are used and how they can be designed to be more welcoming to all types of users.[285] Design takes into account that careful consideration can improve quality of life for all, combat notions of power and control over public spaces, and make for sustainable communities.[286]

A joint program between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Women, and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) is called Partners for Prevention (P4P). In Asia and the Pacific, P4P provides support to prevent GBV as this region has the highest reported levels in the world.[287] This program primarily works in three ways: researching causes of men's violence against women, including the effect of attitudes of masculinity; building capacity and engaging CSOs as partners; and communicating prevention strategies to various audiences.[288] Such work engaging men as a means of understanding and putting an end to VAW is an example of how to effectively address the root of the problem. Engaging men in school, and through community education programs tailored to income and other factors, can be effective at curbing VAW.[289]

UN-Women has provided technical assistance to national organizations in tens of cases, including two programs in Ethiopia and in Mexico.[290] The program in Ethiopia involves expanding a network of safe houses that offer survivors access to health care, legal aid, and job-seeking resources and can help women report crimes.[291] The National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Mexico provides a service that involves anti-VAW advocacy as well as services to survivors and serves indigenous women all across the country.[292]

Conclusion

Violence against women is a major impediment to achieving gender equality. Over the past 20 years, the UN and other actors in the international system have shown a dedicated effort to eliminating VAW, yet VAW is still a major barrier to development. The complexity of the issue, arising from the sheer amount of violence suffered by women from all manner of societies and experiences, provides a strong impetus for moving forward to end VAW for good. The multiple causes and complex consequences of gender inequality requires a concerted and united effort to eliminate it, from broad education and prevention methods, to policies to target specific discrimination against age and disability. The HeForShe campaign signals a renewed effort to engage the whole of society in promoting human rights and liberating humanity from "prescribed social roles and gender stereotypes" to reap the social, political and economic benefits that occur when women are empowered.[293]

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[280] UN-Women, *Focusing on Prevention to Stop the Violence*.
[281] Ibid.
[282] UN-Women, *Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women*.
[283] UN-Women, *Safe Cities*, 2013.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Partners for Prevention, *What We Do*, 2013.
[288] Ibid.
[289] World Health Organization, *Violence against women*, 2013.
[290] UN-Women, *Services for All Women*.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] UN-Women, *Action Kit*, 2014, p.3.

Further Research

Going forward, there is an opportunity to better demonstrate a link within the UN system's policy priorities between development, gender inequality, and VAW, and determining ways to collect better data on these topics is an important step in the right direction. Future discussion on this issue must take into consideration how economic pressure and problems around the world plus conflicts old and new will affect the momentum against VAW. UN-Women must consider how to protect hard-to-reach populations such as the elderly and the disabled, who are particularly vulnerable to violence. What role can civil society and the private sector play in sustainably ending VAW? How can financial literacy be better incorporated into anti-VAW programming? What are strategies to tailor anti-VAW initiatives to local communities given its varied causes?

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> *This source evaluates four different programs that employ methods of engaging men and boys as a way of reducing gender-based violence (GBV). It introduces challenges involved in implementation, and makes recommendations to further the programs. Community-based intervention in India, sports-based intervention in Brazil, health-sector-based intervention in Chile, and workplace-based intervention in Rwanda, took different steps to change attitudes, and research shows a statistically significant shift in attitudes about violence against women in three of the cases. These programs used education and information campaigns to encourage men and boys to be more involved in domestic work, advocate for education for women and girls, and change ideas about masculinity. The report indicates that challenges to these programs include retaining participants and monitoring and reporting outcomes. This is a useful resource for its recommendations on this crucial tactic in ending GBV as well as for its descriptions of programs that have shown to be effective and potentially improved upon and used in other countries.*

International Center for Research on Women, Instituto Promundo. (2007). *Engaging Men and Boys to Achieve Gender Equality: How Can We Build on What We Have Learned?* [Report]. Retrieved 4 September 2014 from: http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/Engaging-Men-and-Boys-to-Achieve-Gender-Equality-How-Can-We-Build-on-What-We-Have-Learned.pdf

> *After experts convened for a seminar on how to move forward with involving men and boys in efforts to achieve gender equality, this document summarizes the data and examples presented, which underscore how imperative it is to have men and boys involved in the wellbeing of women and girls. A major finding was that generally, social norms are stacked against women and progress is seen when men and boys' attitudes and behaviors shift to show respect for the health and happiness of women and girls. The report discusses how social norms must change but that alone is not sufficient to achieve equality by ending VAW; local partnerships and programs targeting would-be perpetrators of VAW are necessary to stop the problem locally, and eventually, globally.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2013). *Safe Cities* [Website]. From the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.endvawnow.org/en/modules/view/12-safe-cities.html

> *This online learning module introduces key concepts on what makes a safe city and how such a safe place can be ensured through governmental change and civil society cooperation. Taking a practical approach to the issue (making public spaces that are accessible, well-lit, have seating spaces, and support a diverse set of programs and groups), the module explains that better public spaces keep women safe. The module provides a history of the safe city spaces movement and how this concept has been interpreted and implemented around the world. Allowing women to feel safe and welcome in public spaces is an important part of ending VAW and this module provides resources on how to create more welcoming environments.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2014). *UN-Women Annual Report 2013-2014* [Report]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2014/Annual%20Report%202013-2014%20pdf.pdf

> *As ending VAW is central to the work of UN-Women, it stands to reason that the most recent Annual Report provides useful information on what is being done about it around the world. Touching on topics of engaging men, community services, strengthening laws and policies, and collecting data, this source is helpful for understanding how ending VAW and achieving gender equality fits into the work of UN-Women. The report also cites an interesting survey of men in Asia and the Pacific that revealed that nearly half of the men surveyed admitted to using physical*

or sexual violence against a partner, broadcast reporting of which reached 32 million people and inspired new work in the region.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women with ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO. (2012). *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (EGM/PP/2012/Report)* [Report]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from:
http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/11/Report-of-the-EGM-on-Prevention-of-Violence-against-Women-and-Girls.pdf

> *A partnership of UN bodies convened this Expert Group Meeting of diverse authorities on the topic of violence against women and girls. Their findings emphasize the cost to women and societies in general when there is violence that either takes women out of the workforce temporarily or long-term. In addition, the report addresses health care expenses and the frequent inability of women in abuse situations to control their finances and escape the situation. The experts note that violence against women and girls is a human rights violation and they draw a clear link between the need for states to institutionalize policies that work towards gender equality and the elimination of GBV. This report's holistic approach to the issue of violence against women and gender equality will help delegates understand how the two issues must be addressed in tandem.*

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Economic and Social Council. (2013). *Neglect, Abuse and Violence of Older Women* [Press Release]. Report of the Expert Group Meeting. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/ageing/ReportofEGMNeglectAbuseandViolenceofOlderWomen.pdf

> *One of the most thorough and recent discussions on abuse specifically against older women, this report is helpful because of the definitions it provides of the problem as well as the data to help support its claims. It begins by helping the reader understand the issue in general before going to sections on the following forms of abuse: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse and exploitation, self-neglect, and perpetrators of abuse. It explains risk factors and gaps in research that will help delegates focus their work on the most urgent areas relating to older women and abuse.*

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2013). *Policy brief: Abuse of Older Persons* [Press Release]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/egm/NeglectAbuseandViolenceofOlderWomen/ECE-WG-14.pdf

> *This overview of abuse against elderly people makes research on the topic easy to navigate and defines the issue, gives useful statistics, and provides strategies for prevention. Primarily, strategies to prevent elder abuse includes training caregivers and case workers on recognizing signs of abuse and explains why this kind of abuse is difficult to detect because there is often a kind of power dynamic involved. The policy brief also includes case studies from different programs that have had success identifying and addressing the problem of abuse against the elderly, and disproportionately, elderly women.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-first session. (2006). *Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1)* [Press Release]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from:
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/SGstudyvaw.htm

> *An extensive study on VAW, the report explains that while such violence persists, gender equality is unattainable. This report is one of the foundational documents on the topic for its discussion on the persistence of VAW and its intent to put political pressure on states and stakeholders to address the issue locally as well as globally. There is a statistical overview of the issue, an explanation of the causes of VAW, the costs of the issue, and the report provides best practices for addressing the issue. Because it touches on so many themes present in this topic, it is an essential resource that should inform debate on the issue and provide inspiration for finding solutions.*

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Twentieth session. (2012). *Thematic study on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/20/5)* [Report]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from:
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/ThematicStudyViolenceAgainstWomenGirls.pdf

There is a gap in policy and in attitude regarding violence against women and girls with disabilities and this report is a resource for delegates to understand the issue and the specific solutions it requires. It begins by defining what constitutes violence against women and girls with disabilities and explaining the need for an approach that empowers women and does not victimize them. A discussion of the international legal framework indicates why these women and girls are more vulnerable, and what action has been taken so far. The report discusses recommendations for legislation changes in Member States and stresses the difficulty in finding examples of prevention programs focusing on this population.

World Health Organization. (2013). *Violence against women*: *Fact sheet 239* [Press Release]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/

This comprehensive fact sheet addresses this multifaceted issue with evidence and talking points presented in a digestible manner. It begins with statistics on how many women are affected worldwide by VAW and introduces the scope of the negative effects of VAW on individuals and societies, which helps make the connection that this is not just a problem for women, but for economies. By sharing risk factors, health problems, and strategies for prevention and reduction, this is an excellent resource for starting to understand the issue of VAW.

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III. Strengthening Women's Political Participation

"The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community."[294]

Introduction

Strengthening women's political participation is essential for achieving gender equality. Giving women decision-making power furthers women's advancement, effectively reduces poverty, enhances economic and social development, and ultimately reinforces peace.[295] Equal and full political and public participation calls for women's engagement in legislative, judiciary, and executive authorities.[296] There is a history of strong, organized policymaking effort to empower women in social, economic, and political spheres by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), national governments, parliaments, political parties, unions, civil society, and grassroots movements.[297]

In the last three decades, several international standards were set, including: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1990/15 of 24 May 1990, which recommends a minimum 30% quota for female political leaders with an end goal of equal representation, and the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, which calls upon public and private institutions to guarantee equal opportunities for women and strengthen their abilities to participate in the political and public sphere through training mechanisms.[298] Various institutions, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), a Geneva-based international organization that fosters worldwide parliamentary dialogue, monitor fulfillment of these goals.[299] Their activities focus on topics such as representative democracy, international peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian law, and women in politics.[300] IPU frequently publishes statistics of women's participation in parliament.[301] Despite the global community's progress in strengthening women's roles in politics, disparities on all levels prevail in many Member States.[302] Decision-making processes are still carried out by a male majority.[303] For instance, the benchmark of a minimum of 30% female representation has not been achieved.[304] The world average for women in national parliaments is 21.8%, and in regions such as the Arab States, participation lies at 15.9%.[305] There are only 24 women serving as the head of their government or state.[306]

The following sections outline the international framework and role of the UN system in promoting women's equality in politics. Further, the most prevalent obstacles women face in achieving equal political participation will be discussed along with norms and standards and the role of civil society. This section examines opportunities of participation in transitional societies and explores how women's civic involvement is essential for countries' development agendas and for achieving the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) and after the year 2015.[307]

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[304] Ibid.

[305] Ibid.

[306] UN-Women, *Leadership and Political Participation*, 2014.

[307] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, Ch. V.

International and Regional Framework

The *Charter of the United Nations* and the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) proclaim equal rights of men and women.[308] The latter explicitly states that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country," to vote, and to have access to public services regardless of sex.[309] Furthermore, the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) and its *Optional Protocol* protect the political rights of women and ensure equal opportunities "to take part in the conduct of public affairs."[310]

The second international treaty with great importance for the issue at hand is the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) as it is legally binding to all States Parties. CEDAW holds Member States accountable to end discrimination against women and ensures equal opportunity in all spheres of life.[311] In Article 7 of CEDAW, State Parties have agreed upon the elimination of discrimination against women, particularly in the sphere of politics.[312] Furthermore, it states that women should have equal rights when it comes to voting, participation in governmental structures, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and associations that are actors in politics and public affairs.[313]

The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, is a milestone in the effort to achieve gender equality.[314] One of its 12 critical areas of concern is the restricted political participation of women.[315] It outlines two strategic objectives to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in politics, and increases their capacity to do become involved.[316] Actions such as gender balanced and inclusive policies, education programs, and skills training need to be taken by both public and private entities at all levels.[317] Every five years, a follow-up conference takes place to review and share knowledge and best practices.[318] In 2013, ECOSOC launched a new reviewing process (Beijing+20) to analyze the progress made until 2015.[319] This enhances the discussion on how to strengthen gender equality within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, as the year 2015 will also see the expiration of the MDGs, and the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[320]

The third MDG, Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, has led to significant progress in the empowerment of women.[321] One indicator looks at the progress in political participation by the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.[322] This way, MDG 3 is a helpful tool for established NGOs and local civil society organizations (CSOs) advocating for women's equal political status to hold governments directly accountable for female representation in their legislative and executive bodies.[323] Advocates call for more political will and investment of resources in order to achieve the goal.[324] Consequently, national development agendas acknowledge gender inequality as a problem, the importance of gender-sensitive and inclusive policy programs, and the need to monitor achievements within the framework of the MDGs.[325] The third MDG has made an overall positive impact and strengthened women's rights to full participation in all spheres of life over the last 15 years.[326]

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[308] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Preamble; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948, Preamble.
[309] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948, Art. 21.
[310] UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.
[311] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.
[312] Ibid., Art. 7.
[313] Ibid.
[314] UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid., p. 81.
[317] Ibid., p. 81.
[318] UN-Women, *Beijing and its Follow-up*.
[319] UN-Women, *Beijing at 20+: ECOSOC launches review of progress on women's rights*.
[320] Ibid.
[321] United Nations, *Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*.
[322] UNDP, *Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, p. 23.
[323] Woodroffe & Smee, *Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in the Post-2015 Framework*, 2012, p. 6.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid., p. 6.
[326] Waldorf, *Pathway to Gender Equality: CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs*, 2004, p. 3.

Role of the International System

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN-Women is part of the Programmes and Funds under the General Assembly (GA) and ECOSOC. There are seven key issues that are crucial for gender equality and societal development that UN-Women advocates for, one of which focuses on women's leadership and political participation.[327] Specific strategies identified by UN-Women on this issue include: providing education and training to female politicians and candidates in elections, advocating legislative and constitutional reforms to incorporate gender perspectives, and supporting and cooperating with civil society.[328] UN-Women cooperates with various local programs worldwide.[329] The entity has successfully deployed a grant-making mechanism that has funded 96 programs in 72 countries spending $56.5 million USD since 2009. This UN-Women Fund for Gender Equality is committed to advance women economically and politically by supporting initiatives that aim for gender-sensitive policy frameworks.[330] The fund offers specific support to transparent, innovative, and high-impact strategies by CSOs and government organizations for women's political empowerment at a local, national, and regional level that are monitored and evaluated regularly.[331] These initiatives effectively train mainly marginalized women, such as rural, indigenous, and young women and domestic workers a wide range of skills and provide them with resources to be able to compete well in elections and claim their political rights.[332]

In September 2014, UN-Women launched the global HeForShe campaign.[333] This solidarity movement asks men and boys to stand-up for equal rights of women and girls, raise their voice, take action and be advocates and agents of change to finally eliminate gender inequalities by 2030.[334] The initiative has set itself the goal of encouraging one billion men and boys over the course of 12 months to join the effort and to take on responsibility tackling gender inequality as a human rights issue that affects all individuals.[335] UN-Women has provided toolkits on the campaign's website outlining possible implementation plans and campaign tools for UN entities, CSOs, universities and colleges, and individuals.[336] The global activation calendar is structured in 3 phases, each focusing on one key issue of gender equality. In the second quarter of 2015, the focus will be directed towards women's political participation and how the movement can contribute to stronger female participation in politics and peace building.[337]

United Nations General Assembly
During the 68th session of the GA in 2013, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented a comprehensive report (A/68/184) on the implementation of the adopted resolution 66/130 of 19 December 2011 on "women and political participation" as requested by the GA.[338] The report provides an in-depth analysis of the current rates of women's participation in different sectors and levels despite difficulties of acquiring exhaustive and comparable data.[339] Furthermore, it looks at actions that governments, political parties and other public institutions took in reforming their constitutional and legal frameworks and fostering a participatory environment.[340] The data reflects increased participation of women in elected bodies and appointed positions within the political system, as well as voting behavior.[341] Obstacles that women still face include disadvantaging political structures, discriminatory norms, gender stereotypes, violence, and women's and girls' limited access to education.[342] The Secretary-General's report

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[327] UN-Women, *What we do*, 2014.
[328] UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2014.
[329] UN-Women, *Women in Power and Decision-making*, 2014.
[330] UN-Women, *Parliaments and Local Governance*, 2014.
[331] UN-Women, *Fund for Gender Equality*, 2014; UN-Women, *Grant-Making*, 2014.
[332] UN-Women, *Women in Power and Decision-making*, 2014.
[333] UN-Women, *UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson calls out to men and boys to join HeForShe campaign*, 2014.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid.
[336] UN-Women, *HeForShe Action Kit*, 2014, p. 2.
[337] Ibid., p. 5.
[338] UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, p. 5.
[339] UN General Assembly, *Measures taken and progress achieved on the promotion of women and political participation: Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/184)*, 2013, p. 3.
[340] UN General Assembly, *Measures taken and progress achieved on the promotion of women and political participation: Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/184)*, 2013.
[341] Ibid., p. 3.
[342] Ibid., p. 8.

(A/68/184) points out necessary measures to tackle these obstacles.[343] Final recommendations encourage Member States to implement reforms and best practices and to work more closely with CSOs to promote women's political participation.[344] Both documents reaffirm the importance of equal participation of men and women at all levels of the political process in order to protect women's rights and further overall gender equality.

Commission on the Status of Women
The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has protected the rights of women and promotes gender equality in local, national, and global life since 1946.[345] Annual meetings take place to discuss various issues of gender inequality that are the most relevant and to take action to further women's empowerment.[346] CSW is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC with an exclusive objective of advancing women and advocating equal rights.[347] In 2006, CSW considered "equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels" as a priority theme for its 50th annual session.[348] The Agreed Conclusions stress the importance of all Member States to abide by their obligations to achieve equal participation of women in decision-making processes, express concern about still persisting disparities, and urge governments to take the measures outlined by the Commission to achieve de facto equal political rights.[349] The important role of equal and full political participation has been mentioned throughout several annual reports in recent years in different contexts, such as the adopted resolutions 56/2 on "gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters" and 56/4 on "indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication" in 2012, as well as the Agreed Conclusions on "the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls" in the report of the 57th session of the CSW of March 2013.[350]

Setting Norms and Standards

In strengthening the role of women in political and public life, it is important to both eliminate discriminatory legal and cultural structures that hinder equal participation and actively equip women with the necessary tools such as education, training, and personal resources.[351] Effectively addressing the obstacles of lacking education and access to health, poverty, discrimination, and violence against women (VAW) as the root causes of inequality are a crucial part in achieving gender equality.[352] Advancing the rights of and including marginalized women from rural areas, indigenous heritage or any ethnic, cultural, or religious minority into the decision-making process will give many women a voice that face discrimination on a daily basis and struggle to care for their families.[353] As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in reference to the MDGs, "it is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race."[354] A diverse political structure and civil society equally represented through men and women is the key to women's empowerment.[355]

The UN system has established a number of global standards and measures to be taken by Member States, NGOs, and the UN itself.[356] These norms call for non-discriminatory policies and practices, allowing women to express their political opinion through voting and to engage in political activities through party membership or engagement in civil society.[357] The most prevalent norm that still has to become reality in many countries is reaching a minimum female representation of 30% as a first step to eventually achieve equal representation and full substantive political

[343] UN General Assembly, *Measures taken and progress achieved on the promotion of women and political participation: Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/184)*, 2013, p. 9.
[344] Ibid., p. 19.
[345] UN CSW, *About the Commission*, 2014.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.
[348] UN CSW, *Fiftieth Session*, 2006.
[349] UN ECOSOC, *Report on the fiftieth session (E/2006/27-E/CN.6/2006/15)*, 2006, Ch. I D, p. 28.
[350] UN ECOSOC, *Report on the fifty-sixth session (E/2012/27-E/CN.6/2012/16)*, 2012; *Report on the fifty-seventh session (E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11)*, 2013, Ch. I A, Art. 19.
[351] UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2014.
[352] UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011.
[353] Ibid.
[354] Annan, K, *Message from the Secretary General of the United Nations*, 2007.
[355] Ibid.
[356] UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995, p. 81.
[357] Ibid.

participation.[358] In order to do so, a range of actions have been demanded by UN entities to reduce and eliminate factors that hinder women's engagement in politics or limit their political careers.[359] Policy programs may include legal reforms mainstreaming a gender perspective in public and private institutions, awareness campaigns, and inclusive education systems.[360] To help women run for political positions and compete effectively, training in public speaking and self-assertion, political campaigning, working with journalists, lobbying, networking, negotiating skills, and leadership competencies are necessary.[361] Furthermore, encouraging shared parental responsibilities between men and women will enable women to manage their family and professional life.[362] Within the professional environment Member States have to implement a policy of zero tolerance for any type of assault or harassment of female politicians and candidates.[363] Based on this, it is possible that impunity of perpetrators may silence other women's attempts to gain power in decision-making processes. Additionally, voting barriers for women, such as polling stations in unsafe areas, hinder the successful election of female candidates.[364]

Member States are failing to implement policies to ensure gender-balance within their political systems.[365] Together with other international actors, UN-Women engages in policy dialogues to promote gender equality in national agendas.[366] For many of the necessary steps towards gender equality, socialization is a crucial factor. Discrimination, gender role stereotypes, and denying women autonomous access to public life often lie not only within discriminatory law but also cultural and religious beliefs that then become a barrier to empowerment.[367] In this case, the advancement of women requires modification of opinions and beliefs. Through media, for example, it is possible to inform the public about and depict standards of gender equality.[368] The media can have a positive impact on equality.[369] Women tend to be underrepresented in news during election periods.[370] Equal media coverage for women prior to elections is necessary in order to express their opinions and present their ideas freely.[371] Moreover, the everyday image of women in television shows contributes to the socialization process and creation of gender stereotypes.[372] To achieve the substantive inclusion of women in politics, societal stereotypes and prejudices need to be tackled through official governmental campaigns and cooperation with civil society actors and the media.[373] The media raise awareness of the positive influence that women's participation has on the political process and promote public debate on the roles of men and women in society.[374] New information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as social media, can also help foster the discussion by informing and getting people actively involved posting and commenting on topics of gender equality.

Participation in Civil Society and Support Through Civil Society

UN-Women works closely with CSOs in order to build capacity for women's groups, as well as with women's rights NGOs to share expertise with UN bodies and governments in order to strengthen policymaking as well as to help shape the post-2015 development agenda. Global, regional, and national Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs) offer a forum for dialogue on policy, programing, operational activities and normative, intergovernmental work.[375] Exchanging ideas and allowing input from civil society on the matter to be included in the new normative

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[358] UN ECOSOC, *Recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 (1990/15)*, 1990.

[359] UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995; UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011.

[360] Ibid.

[361] UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995, p. 81.

[362] Ibid.

[363] UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/58/142)*, 2003, p. 4.

[364] UN-Women, *Elections*, 2014.

[365] UN-Women, *Parliaments and Local Governance*, 2014.

[366] Ibid.

[367] UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

[368] UN-Women, *Media*, 2014.

[369] Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women Politicians in the Media*, 2014.

[370] UN-Women, *Media*, 2014.

[371] UN-Women, *Media*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, p. 2.

[372] UN-Women, *Media*, 2014; Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women Politicians in the Media*, 2014.

[373] UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, p. 3.; UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995, p. 82.

[374] Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women Politicians in the Media*, 2014.

[375] UN-Women, *The Premise and Promise of UN Women's Partnerships with Civil Society*, 2013, p.6.

framework is important.[376] Active civil society groups play a pivotal role on strengthening women's political participation, such as the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP); the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics); Women's Action for New Directions (WAND); and many national and local groups. Their engagement to further women's political status differs in methods and context. WLP is a network that brings together those with access to resources, knowledge, and technologies and develops partnerships with resource-poor women.[377] The organization's focus is to provide leadership training, political and societal education, and ICTs training.[378] WLP does that by publishing manuals, such as the leadership training handbook and a manual on how to prevent VAW.[379] iKNOW Politics is an international interactive network of women in politics who share experiences, resources, advice and collaborate on issues of interest.[380] Projects include seminars, webinars, and networking events.[381] WAND is a United States NGO that organizes events and provides training for women in politics through webinars.[382] Their goal is to empower women in order to affect legislation on nuclear weapons, the military budget, and war.[383] WAND shares expertise with peace and security movements and builds up contact with organizations with a similar vision.[384]

The participation of women in CSOs is another way for women to engage in political activities, contribute to society, and reduce disadvantages for women on local levels.[385] Women's movements have had great success in advocating women's empowerment.[386] Grassroots mobilization, established CSOs, and internationally-recognized female advocates carefully monitor the progress of policy implementations on the advancement of women, as well as collect data on achievements made and persisting deficiencies, and help hold officials responsible.[387] CSOs are essential partners for governmental bodies in achieving equal rights for men and women because the cooperation enlarges the impact of measures taken and increases their effectiveness.[388] Effective tools to support NGOs and women's groups in their efforts to shape political, electoral, and governance processes are provided through skills workshops, such as communication and leadership training.[389] Women's political empowerment is significantly fostered by the support of civil society groups in their communities.[390]

Participation in Societies in Transition

Democratic deficits and discriminatory laws in many countries undermine women's substantive political participation.[391] To strengthen their chances of participation, it is important that countries undergo democratization processes and adopt laws that foster equal rights and opportunities for men and women.[392] Societies in political transition have the best opportunities to include women's perspectives and gender-sensitive policies into new constitutions and legal frameworks. They are the foundation for governance structures and legal principles that help achieve gender equality.[393] GA resolution 66/130 "calls upon states in situations of political transition to take effective steps to ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men in all phases of political reform, from decisions on...reforms in existing institutions to decisions regarding transitional governments, to the formulation of government policy, to the means of electing new democratic governments."[394] Transitional processes are often

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[376] AWID, *Special Focus: Post 2015 Development Agenda*, 2014.
[377] Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace, *Home*, 2014.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] iKNOW Politics, *Home*, 2014.
[381] iKNOW Politics, *Project Update*, 2014.
[382] WAND, *Home*, 2014.
[383] WAND, *History of WAND*, 2014.
[384] Ibid.
[385] UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995, p. 80.
[386] UN-Women, *Women's Movements*, 2014.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Ibid.
[389] UN-Women, *Women's Movements*, 2014.
[390] UN-Women, *Civil Society*, 2014.
[391] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (A/HRC/23/50)*, 2013, p. 12.
[392] UN-Women, *Constitutions and Legal Reforms*, 2014.
[393] Ibid.
[394] UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, p. 3.

derived from conflict, such as international and civil wars.[395] Therefore, the inclusion of women in the peacebuilding process is essential to ensure a more equal footing of women and men during and after the transition.[396]

There are a number of documents that provide a framework of UN efforts related to gender equality, including women's participation, in conflict-affected or post-conflict situations.[397] In 2000, the United Nations Security Council (SC) adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women, peace and security," which urged Member States to ensure women's full participation in all forms of decision-making, including peace processes, political processes, and conflict resolution and prevention.[398] In 2010, the Secretary-General presented a report on resolution 1889 (2009), adopted by the SC on "women's participation in peacebuilding" which outlines the need for women to participate in post-conflict contexts and lists challenges to their participation in peacebuilding.[399] The report also included a 7-Point Action Plan that Member States should take into account for gender-responsive peacebuilding.[400]

The Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice established by the Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2010 issued its first comprehensive report in 2013, which includes a thematic analysis on "eliminating discrimination against women in political and public life, with a focus on political transition."[401] The report points out that the outcome of transitional processes and achievements made for gender equality differ between countries.[402] According to the report, advocating for women's involvement during the political transition, establishing quotas, and including women in peacebuilding and democratic process facilitated an augmentation in female members of parliament.[403]

Women's Political Participation in the Development Agenda

The promotion of women's empowerment not only increases levels of political involvement and economic growth, but also levels of education and health by fighting poverty, hunger, and disease within the female population.[404] Once women assume leadership positions, they integrate another perspective into policies and may better articulate women's interests, including the commitment for equal rights for men and women at all levels in all spheres of life. According to the IPU, women are more attentive towards social welfare programs and legal protections, as well as improving public confidence.[405] As research shows, female politicians are just as effective as men, have substantive opinions on policymaking, and strengthen their communities.[406] Introducing women's perspectives into policy programs benefits whole societies in their development and gives them a more democratic foundation.[407]

The MDGs have been a powerful tool in the last 15 years to spur sustainable development.[408] Women's movements, advocates, and officials have fought to increase equal opportunities for education and improved health conditions for women and girls in order to give them the opportunity to enter the labor market, and get involved in public life to contribute to their country's development.[409] As the MDG deadline is 2015, the post-2015 agenda will establish a new set of SDGs.[410] Within this process, UN-Women advocates for a "transformative stand-alone goal" to put an

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[395] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (A/HRC/23/50)*, 2013.
[396] UN General Assembly, *Women's participation in peacebuilding: Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/354-S/2010/466)*, 2010.
[397] UN-Women, *Recovery and Peacebuilding*, 2014.
[398] UN Security Council, *Women, peace and security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.
[399] UN General Assembly, Security Council, *Women's participation in peacebuilding: Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/354-S/2010/466)*, 2010, p. 8ff; UN General Assembly, Security Council, *7-Point Action Plan*, 2010.
[400] Ibid.
[401] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (A/HRC/23/50)*, 2013.
[402] Ibid., p. 8.
[403] Ibid., p. 8.
[404] Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Debating Subjects concerning Women*, 2014.
[405] UN-Women, *Women in Power and Decision-making*, 2014.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid.
[408] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000.
[409] UNDP, *Millennium Development Goals Report 2014*, p. 21.
[410] UN Open Working Group, *Proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals*, 2014.

end to gender inequality by 2030.[411] The new framework for women's empowerment focuses on three key areas that have hindered complete equality, namely gender-based violence, lack of capabilities and resources, and lack of substantive participation in the political and public sphere.[412] Political empowerment goes hand-in-hand with economic empowerment, both of which are dependent on a violence-free environment for women.[413] In the upcoming year, there is the opportunity to reconsider the present development agenda and prioritize those three key issues. Moreover, it is necessary that all of the SDGs and their targets have to consider gender-sensitive policies.[414] There is the need to strengthen and improve accountability mechanisms for the SDGs on the local, country, regional, and global level.[415] In order to have a stronger impact than the MDGs, it is important to give monitoring and accountability greater priority, to drive a data revolution, which provides timely and accurate figures to assess the progress made, and to hold governments responsible when they are not meeting their political and financial commitments.[416] Stronger female participation in political processes and involvement in the development of policies are important since women and girls belong to the most vulnerable groups of society that face the challenges of poverty, lack of education and health access, and economic and social inequality more prominently. Furthermore, political participation brings the opportunity to formally demand accountability.[417]

Conclusion

Women make up around 50% of the world's population. In order to ensure a democratic and inclusive national society, women need to participate equally in the policymaking of their countries.[418] Previously mentioned measures represent only a part of the necessary approaches to empower women politically. UN-Women, the Fund for Gender Equality, and CSW have conducted, supported, and financed many initiatives to achieve MDG 3. Depending on a Member State's historical and cultural background of women's involvement into society and the political structures, different means are necessary to show the advantages of a gender-sensitive national agenda and the contributions women make to societal development.[419] Therefore, delegates should consider many specific programs adequate for different regions to accelerate progress instead of broad global initiatives that have been in place for decades.

Further Research

While researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: What are successful strategies for involving women in politics? How can UN-Women address the causes of low political participation of women such as poverty, gender-based violence, lack of access to education, political training, health services, the double burden of unpaid care work, and gender stereotypes? How can UN-Women help countries in transition to implement a gender-sensitive political structure and agenda? What role does civil society play in fostering women's political opportunities and how can cooperation with such organizations be enhanced? How can UN-Women involve itself in the post-2015 process advocating political participation and leadership as a key component for gender equality?

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[411] UN-Women, *"This should be the beginning of the end of gender inequality"* [Speech], 2014.

[412] UN-Women, *A transformative Stand Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights, and Women's Empowerment: Imperative and Key Components*, 2013.

[413] UN General Assembly, *Measures taken and progress achieved on the promotion of women and political participation: Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/184)*, 2013.

[414] UN-Women, *UN Women Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2014.

[415] Davis et al., *Young people's engagement in strengthening accountability for the post-2015 agenda*, 2013, p. 6.

[416] Post2015 Women's Coalition, *The Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2014.

[417] Davis et al., *Young people's engagement in strengthening accountability for the post-2015 agenda*, 2013, p. 8.

[418] UN ECOSOC, *Equality in political participation and decision-making (1990/4 (E/1990/68))*, 1990.

[419] UN-Women, *Progress 20 years on: Beijing+20 reviews are underway*, 2014.

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Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2014). *Women in national parliaments*. Retrieved 2 October 2014 from: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm

> *The Inter-Parliamentary Union's statistical archive compiles useful data on women's representation in national parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies. It calculates the latest world and regional averages of women in politics. A number of UN reports draw their data from the IPU. This website is a helpful tool for delegates to find out their Member State's position on equal women's political participation in comparison to others, such as neighboring states and other regions. IPU works closely together with UN-Women monitoring progress on women's political participation.*

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2006). *Fiftieth Session* [Website]. Retrieved 13 August 2014 from: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/50sess.htm

> *This website offers a range of information and documents on the issue at hand. The 50th session of CSW considered "equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels" as one of its two priority themes. Hence, delegates will find a number of official documents such as the Agreed Conclusions on the topic in the commission's final report, the report of the Secretary-General, relevant press releases, several statements by women in leadership positions and Member States, and panel papers. Furthermore, the Expert Group Meeting information gives detailed background information on further documents that create the international normative framework on women's empowerment in the political and public sphere.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2010). *Power, Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific* [Report]. Asia-Pacific Human Development Report. Retrieved 15 August 2014 from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rhdr-2010-asiapacific.pdf

> *The Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) covers a great variety of topics that matter around the globe. This report specifically concentrates on the Asia-Pacific region and provides details on where involvement of women still lacks and how to tackle the persisting disparity. It dedicates a complete chapter on how to promote women's political participation in a very comprehensive way. This document is important not only for delegates representing Member States of the region, but also for all delegations.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Fiftieth Session. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf

> *The Declaration is a milestone in the fight for gender equality and women's empowerment. It is a key document for all future efforts that were taken after 1995 until today. It offers a diagnosis of women in power and decision-making. Further, it addresses two strategic objectives to successfully strengthen political participation of women. The first goal describes actions to be taken by governments, political parties, and other relevant actors to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making. The second one addresses measures to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-Sixth Session. (2011). *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/130

> *This resolution stresses the critical importance of women's political participation in times of peace and of conflict. It points out the unique opportunity that provides a stage of political transition to successfully address obstacles to equal participation of men and women. This resolution provides a comprehensive list of actions that all Member States should pursue to ensure women's participation. It further calls upon international organizations to assist Member States in their efforts to achieve gender equality.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-Eighth session. (2013). *Measures taken and progress achieved on the promotion of women and political participation: Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/184)*. Retrieved 12 August 2014 from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/184

Under the item "advancement of women" the report of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon provides delegates with crucial knowledge on the current situation of women in the political sphere. This source is very important to read as it contains 1) a brief background chapter giving an overview about the international framework, 2) precise data on women's participation in politics on all levels in different regions, 3) measures taken by Member States and other actors so far to improve women's role in politics, and 4) a list of recommendations to achieve further progress in the matter. Examples are drawn from every region in the world, giving delegates the opportunity of comparison within their respective regions.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2013). *Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (A/HRC/23/50)*. Retrieved 15 August 2014 from: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/A.HRC.23.50_English.pdf

As the opportunity to successfully strengthen women's political participation is most prevalent during the time of political transition, the report of the Working Group focuses on "eliminating discrimination against women in political and public life" during that stage. This report shall form the basis for delegates to understand the challenges and opportunities for advocating gender equality in times of political transition. The Working Group provides facts and figures on women's political participation. Further it identifies democracy and human rights as fundamental prerequisites for women's equality and democratization as the chance to eliminate structural and societal discrimination. The report addresses key problems and presents a list of recommendations that the delegates should keep in mind when stipulating further measures for improvement.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2013). *A transformative Stand Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights, and Women's Empowerment: Imperative and Key Components* [Press Release]. Retrieved 17 August 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/News/Stories/post-2015-case-for-standalone-gender-goal%20pdf.pdf/

As the year 2015 comes closer the question of how to shape the new normative framework for women empowerment and gender equality pushes for an answer. Therefore, UN-Women, as the main body focusing on advancing women's rights and engagement in all spheres of life on all levels within the UN system, has published this report. It is a great source to embed the international agenda on women's empowerment into the new comprehensive framework of the post-2015 development agenda. It advocates a transformative stand-alone goal and focuses on three crucial elements that must be included into this international framework. Delegates will find explicit information on how the new agenda sets targets and indicators to further women's right to leadership and participation, next to the goals of freedom from violence, and increased access to capabilities and resources.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2014). *Annual Report 2013-2014*. Retrieved 10 August 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2014/8/annual-report-2013-2014

This report presents a number of examples where UN-Women has worked successfully with governmental and non-governmental organizations, initiatives, and programs to strengthen women's positions in election campaigns and to implement constitutional and legal reforms in order incorporate a gender perspective into the legal framework of Member States. It offers a list of best practices and case studies for 13 countries all around the world. In 2013, most efforts of UN-Women focused on Latin American and African countries advocating a 30% minimum quota and constitutional and legal transformations. Additionally, projects in Pakistan for female voter education and mobilization and in Afghanistan for female candidate training proved to be successful approaches to strengthen women's roles in politics. The report gives delegates a concrete idea of the function of the Trust Fund for Gender Equality.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2014). *Women in Power and Decision-making* [Website]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/decision-making#top

This website serves as a source for various important information on the topic. It provides insight on facts and numbers, gives an overview about the agenda, the goals to be achieved, includes an inspiring speech by president Michelle Bachelet, and most importantly, it gives numerous examples for women's active participation and great influence in society. It is a great source for further research as it includes links to a global map on women in politics and the UN-Women Fund for Gender Equality which is a grant-making mechanism dedicated exclusively to the economic and political empowerment of women worldwide. Programs support women with what they need and require regaining control over their lives. The Fund supports women-led civil society organizations' and governments' proposals based on strategic priorities to advance women's rights in their countries.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2014). *Women's Leadership and Political Participation* [Website]. Retrieved 10 July 2014 from: http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation

> *This website provides a first overview for every delegate about the work of UN-Women with regard to women's political empowerment. As a number one priority for UN-Women, this source points out current problems and obstacles for equal participation in decision-making and introduces the delegates to strategies that UN-Women is following in order to further women's participation in politics. Moreover, the website provides invaluable information on 1) global norms and standards, 2) women's movements which highlights the importance of civil society actors in achieving this goal, 3) UN-Women's work with parliaments and local governments, elections, and media, and 4) examples of constitutions and legal reforms.*

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