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Commission on the Status of Women Background Guide 2021

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2021 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This year's staff is: Directors Anthony Bassey (Conference A) and Miranda Coleman (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Emma Bott (Conference A) and Marlene Terstiege (Conference B). Anthony studied Biology at Arkansas State University. He currently works for the American Red Cross. Miranda has a B.A. in History and a Bachelor of Education. She is currently an educator in Alberta, Canada. Emma is in her final year of law school at Thompson Rivers University. This is her second year being on staff. Marlene has a M.S. in Political Science from University of Amsterdam and currently lives near Munich, Germany.

The topics under discussion for Commission on the Status of Women are:

- I. Empowering Women Through Entrepreneurship
- II. Promoting the Political Participation of Women
- III. Protecting Women in Migration from Human Trafficking, Sexual Slavery, and Sexual Exploitation

CSW was established as a functional commission of the ECOSOC. Within the UN system, it is the key body working to achieve women's empowerment, to eliminate discrimination against women, and enhance gender equality. Its annual sessions offer an international forum to discuss the link between gender equality and a range of topics including sustainable development. In order to accurately simulate the committee, it is critical that delegates understand its mandate and functions, including its collaboration with ECOSOC and UN-Women.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2021 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the ECOSOC Department, Aiskell Roman (Conference A) and Chase Mitchell (Conference B), at usg.ecosoc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Anthony Bassey, *Director*
Emma A. Bott, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Miranda Coleman, *Director*
Marlene Terstiege, *Assistant Director*

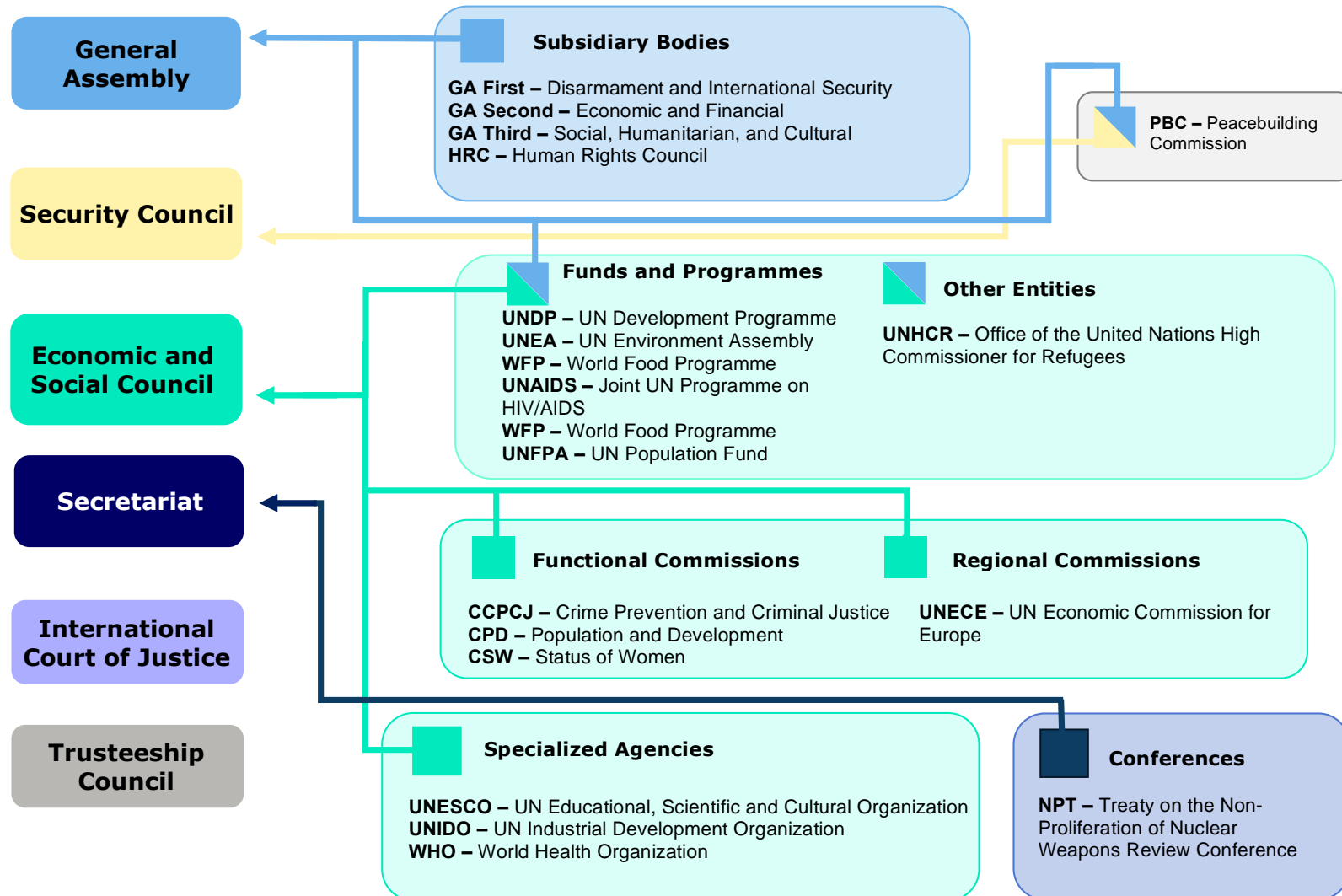


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between 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.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the principal international body for discussion on gender equality and the empowerment of women.¹ CSW and its secretariat, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), have gained significance within the international system as agreement on the need for the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls has become more widespread.² In 1946, the first United Nations (UN) debates on issues of gender equality were carried out in a sub-commission of the Commission on Human Rights.³ As a result of these debates, CSW was established as a functional commission under the auspices of ECOSOC through ECOSOC resolution 11(II).⁴ CSW's priority is to mainstream gender equality within the UN system and link women's empowerment to sustainable development, annually reporting to ECOSOC on its efforts.⁵ UN-Women provides support for all of the work performed by CSW while facilitating civil society actors' participation in the Commission.⁶

CSW is the main forum for discussion in the ongoing process of creating and implementing international norms and standards related to the advancement of women.⁷ CSW's work is guided by the principles of the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, the 1993 *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA), and the outcome document of the 23rd special session of the UN General Assembly as a follow-up to BPfA, entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (2000).⁸ The BPfA outlines the goals that the international community set to achieve gender equality, such as ensuring the full implementation of women's human rights and promoting women's economic independence.⁹ CSW is also influenced by various UN Security Council resolutions, with resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women and Peace and Security" being among the most significant.¹⁰

In 2015, the international community transitioned from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a collection of 17 goals adopted by the General Assembly as part of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹¹ The overall work of CSW is closely aligned with SDG 5 (gender equality), though women's empowerment and gender equality is mainstreamed across several SDGs.¹² Among other targets, SDG 5 aims to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, and to adopt policies and legislation promoting gender equality.¹³

The Beijing+20 conference, also held in 2015, marked the 20th anniversary of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.¹⁴ Beijing+20 drew particular attention to 12 critical areas of concern for the

¹ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

² UN-Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018; UN-Women, *A Brief History of the CSW*.

³ UN-Women, *A Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, p. 1.

⁴ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

⁵ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2019.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ UN-Women, *A Brief History of the CSW*.

⁸ UN-Women, *A Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, pp. 9-15.

⁹ UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

¹⁰ ECOSOC, *Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building (ECOSOC/2004/12)*, 2004.

¹¹ UN-Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

¹² UN-Women, *SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all women and girls*.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ UN-Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

continued empowerment of women including poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, and armed conflict.¹⁵ Representatives at the conference also discussed women and the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, and human rights of women.¹⁶ Challenges in the implementation of the BPfA were addressed during CSW's 59th session, including discrimination, gender based violence, and access to healthcare.¹⁷ The session concluded with an examination of potential opportunities for the global community to achieve gender equality in line with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹⁸

Governance, Structure, and Membership

CSW consists of 45 Member States elected for four-year terms.¹⁹ The allocation of seats follows proportional geographical distribution and is comprised of 13 African states, 11 Asia-Pacific states, four Eastern European states, nine Latin American and Caribbean states, and eight Western European and Other states.²⁰ The Chair and the four Vice-Chairs of CSW's Bureau rotate without specific geographical regulations and are elected for two-year terms.²¹ The Bureau is supported in its actions by UN-Women, which provides CSW with reports on the discussed topics, as well as national and regional reviews on the implementation of the policies set forth by CSW and ECOSOC.²²

In 2010, the UN restructured its operational framework for women's issues in order to improve efficiency and streamline its work on gender equality.²³ The four major UN agencies that addressed women's issues merged and resulted in the establishment of UN-Women.²⁴ UN-Women is the Secretariat of CSW and provides guidance on operational activities aimed at the advancement of women.²⁵ UN-Women supports the work of CSW substantively by providing annual documentation on critical areas of concern regarding gender equality and facilitates interaction between the Commission and civil society organizations (CSOs) at its annual meeting.²⁶ Moreover, the Commission has a Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women, which produces an annual report to CSW identifying "trends and patterns of reliably-attested injustice and discriminatory practices against women."²⁷

CSW commits to multi-year programs of work to track progress on the realization of the Beijing Declaration's goals.²⁸ A new program of work was established by ECOSOC in July 2020 by ECOSOC resolution 2020/15.²⁹ The resolution designates 2021's priority theme as "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" and the year's review theme as "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development."³⁰

ECOSOC also utilizes CSW to coordinate and deliver thematic reviews during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to determine the progress on the SDGs relating to women's empowerment.³¹ The 2018 HLPF discussed the importance of achieving gender equality through

¹⁵ UN-Women, *Summary Report: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UN-Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

¹⁹ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

²⁰ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2019.

²¹ Ibid.

²² UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, pp. 9-11.

²³ Ibid., pp. 8-14.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-10.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁷ UN-Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

²⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2020/15)*, 2020.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ UN ECOSOC, *Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2016/3)*, 2016.

safeguarding the human rights of women and girls and encouraging the inclusion of women in society to increase sustainable development.³² The importance of gender equality to the realization of all SDGs was also re-emphasized.³³

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The original mandate of CSW, adopted in 1946, was to provide “recommendations and reports to ECOSOC on promoting women’s rights in political, economic, social, and educational fields... [and] urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women’s rights.”³⁴ This mandate was substantially expanded as a follow-up to the UN Decade of Women from 1975 to 1985 and the Third and Fourth World Conferences on Women in Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995.³⁵ As a result of the Fourth World Conference and the adoption of the BPfA, ECOSOC stated in resolution 1996/6 that CSW, as its primary responsibility, must take actions to mainstream “a gender perspective in policies and programs,” as well as assist ECOSOC and Member States in the implementation and achievement of the goals set in the BPfA.³⁶ This was re-emphasized at the 23rd special session of the General Assembly in 2000, which set the goal of achieving full gender equality.³⁷ CSW works together with the General Assembly and ECOSOC in a multi-tiered intergovernmental process to provide normative guidance to achieve gender equality.³⁸

The main functions and primary responsibilities are outlined in the original mandate of CSW, its expansions, and several ECOSOC resolutions on the methods of work of the Commission.³⁹ These methods of work have been examined and expanded several times by ECOSOC over the years, most recently in ECOSOC resolutions 2015/6 and 2016/3, in order to ensure coherence with the work of the Council.⁴⁰ The aim of these expansions was to set an effective approach to mainstream gender within the entire UN system and engage in discussions with governmental representatives, experts, and non-governmental actors to identify gaps and challenges to gender equality.⁴¹ At its annual meetings, CSW publishes agreed conclusions that are included in an annual report to ECOSOC, in addition to resolutions.⁴² Agreed conclusions are similar to resolutions adopted by other UN entities; however, their purpose is to call attention to challenges in achieving gender equality which guide its Member States, international governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations when making substantive calls to action.⁴³ The Bureau of CSW takes on all necessary preparation for the annual meetings of CSW, identifying emerging issues, trends, focus areas, or possible new approaches to implementing the BPfA and all other relevant policy guidelines, and provides its findings as a summary of the Chair.⁴⁴ This work is done in consultation with all the Member States of the Commission and the regional groups, experts, and other relevant stakeholders, promoting interactive dialogue, such as high-level ministerial panels or

³² PeaceWomen, *Sustainable Development 2018*, 2018.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Commission on the Status of Women (Res. 11(II))*, 1946, p. 525.

³⁵ UN-Women, *A Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, pp. 9-15.

³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/RES/1996/6)*, 1996; UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/RES/55/71)*, 2000.

³⁷ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017: Programme 14, Gender equality and empowerment of women (A/69/6 (Prog. 14))*, 2014, p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Multi-year Programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2016/3)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Future Organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women (A/RES/2015/6)*, 2015.

⁴¹ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ CSW, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10)*, 2015, pp. 11-15.

expert group meetings for interactive dialogue on “steps and initiatives to accelerate implementation and measures to build capacities for mainstreaming gender equality across policies and programmes.”⁴⁵

CSW continues to organize the Beijing reviews, which are often used as a platform to foster political will for actions that promote gender equality and recommit Member States to relevant frameworks and goals.⁴⁶ CSW also contributes to the annual theme of ECOSOC, strengthening the Council’s impact, and works closely with all other gender-specific UN entities, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, to augment their work.⁴⁷

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

At the 62nd session, CSW resolution E/CN.6/2018/L.6 on the “Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women” formally declared the Commission’s plans to review Member States’ implementation of the BPfA at its 64th session in the year 2020, with the goal being to identify the current obstacles which continue to hinder the achievement of gender equality globally.⁴⁸ The 64th session was scheduled to be held in March 2020, but has since been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, CSW published the Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women in March 2020 reaffirming its commitment to gender equality.⁵⁰ CSW also outlined the international community’s renewed commitment to gender equality and called for all Member States who have not yet ratified the Beijing declaration to do so.⁵¹ CSW64 marked the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the *Beijing Declaration* and the 5-year anniversary of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁵² The 64th session would have focused on healthcare, its role in empowering women, and improving women’s access to quality medical services.⁵³ In September 2020 a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women was held with the theme of “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”⁵⁴

In its 63rd session, held between 11 to 22 March 2019, CSW adopted agreed conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3) on the priority theme, *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*.⁵⁵ CSW called on Member States to adopt policies that focus on improving infrastructure to increase women’s access to social services and safety resources, as well as policies that focus on improving current infrastructure to improve the safety of women.⁵⁶ Several other topics debated and discussed at the session included the importance of properly valuing women’s contributions in the household, making transportation safer for women, and increasing women’s access to social protection.⁵⁷ At the session, Secretary-General António Guterres said in his opening statement “CSW could equally be called the ‘Commission on the Status of

⁴⁵ CSW, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10)*, 2015, pp. 11-15.

⁴⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Future Organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2015/6)*, 2015, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

⁴⁸ CSW, *Future Organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2018/L.6)*, 2018.

⁴⁹ CSW, *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, (E/CN.6/2020/L.1)*, 2020.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² CSW, *Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*, 2019.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ CSW, *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, (E/CN.6/2020/L.1)*, 2020.

⁵⁵ CSW, *Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*, 2019.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Power” while female civil society representatives addressed the Commission asking “for basic social protections to be extended to women and girls around the world, based on need, and in line with their inalienable human rights.”⁵⁸ In September 2019, the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda took place with a number of side events and themes related to women and girls.⁵⁹ In the concluding political declaration, heads of state and government noted that progress towards women’s empowerment is too slow and “reaffirm[ed] that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets.”⁶⁰

Conclusion

CSW is working towards achieving gender equality by setting global standards, establishing a legally binding framework, and promoting women’s rights in all its projects and communications.⁶¹ For several years, the international community has increased its focus on achieving equality for women and reaching the SDGs through women’s empowerment and equal participation on society.⁶² The Commission has developed education and training programs, and gathered data to help improve and define avenues for achieving gender equality.⁶³ With the help of CSOs, its annual meetings, and support from UN-Women, CSW can continue to identify new challenges to gender equality and effectively advise ECOSOC to take action to empower women.⁶⁴

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This resolution, adopted during the CSW’s sixty-second session, addresses particular areas of improvement in order to achieve the progressive realization of gender equality across the global arena. This resolution is one of the most recently adopted by CSW and demonstrates its ability to use discussions and turn them into global, concerted action. Delegates will find this very useful in researching CSW’s mandate and current points of focus.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2019). *Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*. Retrieved 22 August 2020 from:

<https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2019/L.3>

The 2019 Agreed Conclusions offer a summarized review of decisions and conclusions arrived at during CSW63, including strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks as well as access to social protection and public services. Additionally, it gives an update on the status of women and how certain ongoing gender equality goals are progressing versus others. This is a great resource for seeing CSW’s most up-to-date goals and perspectives to help with steering delegations during conference.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2020). *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, (E/CN.6/2020/L.1)*. Retrieved 22 August 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2020/L.1>

⁵⁸ UN DGC, *Annual UN-Women activists’ summit opens with focus on services, infrastructure*, 2019.

⁵⁹ UN DESA, *SDG Summit 2019*, 2019.

⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, *Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (A/HLPF/2019/L.1)*, 2019.

⁶¹ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

⁶² UN DGC, *Economic and Social Council Adopts Texts on Sustainable Development Goals, Women, Non-communicable Diseases, as Coordination, Management Session Commences (ECOSOC/6846)*, 2017.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ ECOSOC, *Ways and means to further enhance the impact of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2014/14)*, 2013.

This Political Declaration was published by CSW in March 2020 while announcing that CSW64 would be suspended until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the document, CSW outlines the continuing mandate and the importance of the work of the body and its stakeholders. This document also gives details on the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Delegates will find a concise overview of CSW's mandate as well as the most recent recommendations made by the body.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Commission on the Status of Women*. Retrieved 22 August 2020 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

This website is an ideal starting point for understanding CSW and serves as the first overview on its foundation, mandate, methods of work, and multi-year programs of work. It is a great source for information on the various priorities and reviews themes the Commission has dealt with in recent years, especially the 62nd (2018) and 63rd (2019) sessions. For further research, it provides links to the history, official outcome documents, and non-governmental organization participation, as well as the CSW Communications Procedure of the Working Group.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*. Retrieved 22 August 2020 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015>

This source is a useful introduction to Beijing+20 and to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The implementation of the Beijing Declaration comes in a crucial moment for the UN as a whole, being related to several of the SDGs. The Declaration and its implementation are leading the work of CSW through the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. This brief overview of Beijing+20 is a useful source for further research on the issues the Commission is dealing with.

United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved 19 August 2020 from: https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800

The Beijing Declaration is the guiding document in all work done by CSW and its secretariat UN-Women. The Beijing Platform for Action identifies the continued challenges that women face in realizing gender equality and protecting the rights of women and girls. Chapter IV outlines specific strategic objectives and actions which are utilized in CSW sessions while compiling agreed conclusions. Delegates will find this document to be essential to understanding the mandate of CSW.

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I. Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship

Introduction

In 2019, female entrepreneurs represented less than 15% of total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) in 41 of 50 countries surveyed by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.⁶⁵ TEA is the percentage of people in a country who are either nascent entrepreneurs, meaning they are still in the process of opening their own business, or already own and manage a new business.⁶⁶ Globally, female TEA is at 10.2% whereas male TEA is at 13.6%.⁶⁷ Only four countries worldwide have gender parity in entrepreneurship.⁶⁸ This underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs is caused by various barriers such as missing educational and financial opportunities or the lack of shared decision-making in the home.⁶⁹ In 2018, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) assessed 189 countries and found in at least 18 of them that men have the legal power to prevent their wives and daughters from working.⁷⁰ Over 2.7 billion women are not legally allowed to do the same work as men, limiting the participation of women in the workforce to 63% globally.⁷¹ In many societies, traditional gender roles and expectations regarding women's positions within the family put women under external pressure to take on the bulk of domestic work such as childcare, food preparation, and cleaning.⁷² Such care work consumes time that could be spent on paid work or gaining skills and education necessary to take on entrepreneurial activities.⁷³

Women acquiring financial autonomy contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted as part of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁷⁴ Achieving the SDGs increases entrepreneurial opportunities for women, for example SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure).⁷⁵ As a policy and norm setting body, CSW regularly calls attention to the gaps in gender equality, such as female entrepreneurship, and makes suggestions to other bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Member States.⁷⁶

International and Regional Framework

In 1967, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 2263 (XXII), the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, in which article 10 states that women have the right to work in any field of their choosing without facing discrimination.⁷⁷ To call attention to the work of the Declaration, CSW adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 1979.⁷⁸ Article 11 of CEDAW outlines a woman's equal right to employment opportunities, choice of

⁶⁵ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019/2020 Global Report*, 2020.

⁶⁶ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, *How GEM Defines Entrepreneurship*, 2020; World Bank, *TCdata360 – Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity*, 2019.

⁶⁷ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, *Women's Entrepreneurship 2018/2019 Report*, 2019.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Buchholz, *Where Female Entrepreneurs are Most & Least Common*, 2020; UN-Women, *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*, 2019.

⁷⁰ UN-Women, *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*, 2019.

⁷¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality*, 2019.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ UN-Women, *Monitoring Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges*, 2015.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/2263 (XXII))*, 1967.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

profession, and job security, especially in the event of pregnancy.⁷⁹ Articles 10 and 14 discuss the barriers that women face, particularly rural women, and reaffirms their right to access education, to form self-help groups and cooperatives, and the right to self-employment.⁸⁰ Article 13 highlights women's right to equally enjoy economic and social assistance measures, such as family benefits, bank loans, or other financial support.⁸¹

Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* calls on governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, NGOs, and financial institutions to develop policies that support women to become entrepreneurs.⁸² This can help achieving objective A.4 of the *Beijing Declaration*, which highlights the linkages between being a woman and living in poverty.⁸³ On average, women are paid less than men, often have little to no access to education or financial opportunities, do unpaid care work, and lack authority in the household, creating a gender gap in the global distribution of poverty sometimes referred to as "feminized poverty."⁸⁴ In March 2020, when the *Beijing Declaration* and the progress made in its implementation was reviewed, CSW expressed concern that the feminization of poverty endures.⁸⁵

The outcome of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), *The Future We Want*, discusses the leadership role of women in addition to outlining the importance of equal contribution from women and men for sustainable economies.⁸⁶ The section titled "Promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all and social protection," notes the need to recognize unpaid domestic work and to provide women with support to take on building small businesses and cooperatives.⁸⁷ The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) was adopted in 2015 and acknowledged that although women's rights have improved globally, women are still drastically underrepresented within the financial and employment sectors.⁸⁸ The AAAA discusses the importance of women starting and participating in micro, small, and medium enterprises, and the role that NGOs and Member States have in assisting these startups and improving access to financial services to support their long-term success.⁸⁹ In 2015, at CSW59, the Commission conducted a 20-year review of the *Beijing Declaration*, commended the steps taken toward gender equality, and drew attention to the work still needing to be done.⁹⁰ Section 5 of the 20-year review recognizes that new challenges arose for women in the economy and recommends that NGOs and Member States take steps to enhance women's economic empowerment.⁹¹ As 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, CSW published a political declaration on this occasion, but suspended its sixty-fourth session due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹²

⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (A/RES/34/180), 1979.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ UN-Women, *The Feminization of Poverty*, 2000.

⁸⁵ CSW, *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (E/CN.6/2020/L.1), 2020.

⁸⁶ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288), 2012.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313), 2015.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ CSW, *Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly* (E/CN.6/2015/3), 2015.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² UN-Women, *CSW64 / Beijing+25 (2020)*, 2020; CSW, *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (E/CN.6/2020/L.1), 2020.

Role of the International System

CSW meets as the largest forum on gender equality annually to review and discuss a priority theme and to adopt agreed conclusions.⁹³ Adopted in 2011, the theme for CSW55 was access and participation of women and girls to education, training, and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.⁹⁴ In section 5 of the report on CSW's 55th session, titled "supporting the transition from education to full employment and decent work," CSW discusses the role of women's education and skill development in empowering women to take on the risks of entrepreneurship.⁹⁵ The report on CSW's sixty-first session in 2017 outlined the importance of women's entrepreneurship as well as the role of Member States and NGOs in facilitating and strengthening women-owned businesses.⁹⁶ In the same report, CSW encouraged Member States to create social policies that promote the full employment of women and the redistribution of unpaid domestic work.⁹⁷

UN-Women serves as the secretariat of CSW, supports and carries out its work, manages programs with NGOs, and actively works toward gender conscious achievement of all the SDGs.⁹⁸ UN-Women facilitates the participation of NGOs, many of which submit statements and report on the progress of women's empowerment at each session of CSW.⁹⁹ The NGOs attending CSW sessions have a responsibility to support gender conscious policies implemented by Member States, as well as hold Member States accountable.¹⁰⁰ UN-Women's *2018-2021 Strategic Plan* outlined its role to provide substantive support in CSW's call for increasing women's economic autonomy and address gender perspectives in entrepreneurial policies.¹⁰¹ In 2018, UN-Women organized an event called "Strengthening female entrepreneurs towards 2030; How to secure financial inclusion and investment in women-owned businesses?"¹⁰² At this event, UN-Women presented the Champions for Innovation (CFI), a group of influential women and men who promote UN-Women's *Global Innovation Coalition for Change (GICC)* program.¹⁰³ GICC is a partnership between various stakeholders from academia, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector aiming to call attention to the obstacles women and girls face in entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation fields.¹⁰⁴ In 2018, UN-Women published the report *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* to shine light on the economic role women play in industries.¹⁰⁵ According to the report, women who have a stable and independent income are likely to reinvest money in their children's health or education, which contributes to a country's economic growth in the long-term.¹⁰⁶

UN-Women has a close partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to create tangible change to economic and labor policies and systems for women, including the promotion of women creating their own economic opportunities and businesses.¹⁰⁷ CSW collaborates with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to support rural women in agricultural businesses and local cooperatives

⁹³ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2019.

⁹⁴ CSW, *Report on the Fifty-Fifth Session (E/CN.6/2011/12)*, 2011.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ CSW, *Report on the Sixty-First Session (E/CN.6/2017/21)*, 2017.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2019.

⁹⁹ UN-Women, *NGO Participation*, 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ UN-Women, *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (UNW/2017/6/Rev.1)*, 2017.

¹⁰² UN-Women, *Strengthening Female Entrepreneurs Towards 2030. How to Secure Financial Inclusion and Investment in Women-Owned Businesses?*, 2018.

¹⁰³ UN-Women, *Champions for Innovation*, 2018; UN-Women, *Strengthening Female Entrepreneurs Towards 2030: How to Secure Financial Inclusion and Investment in Women-Owned Businesses?*, 2018.

¹⁰⁴ UN-Women, *Champions for Innovation*, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ UN-Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ UN-Women, *Decent Work and Women's Economic Empowerment: Good Policy and Practice*, 2012.

that grow female-owned start-ups.¹⁰⁸ The World Bank Group’s “Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative” (We-Fi) was founded in 2017 and is a collaboration among multilateral development banks, governments, and stakeholders focusing on financial support.¹⁰⁹ By 2019, We-Fi collected about USD 249 million to provide women living in developing markets and unstable economies with lines of credit, loans, and business advisory services, which enable them to enter the world of entrepreneurship.¹¹⁰

Recognizing the Informal Economy to Increase Women’s Economic Autonomy

The informal economy refers to economic activity that is not state regulated, meaning there is no accountability system to monitor and ensure the fulfillment of labor rights, job security, or access to old-age pensions.¹¹¹ Of the 2 billion people globally working in the informal economy, including as domestic workers and street vendors or in sub-contracting arrangements, 93% are in developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, and Latin American.¹¹² Approximately 58% of all working women work within the informal economy, which amounts to 740 million women worldwide.¹¹³ In 55.5% of all countries worldwide, more women work in informal employment than men.¹¹⁴ Most women in the informal economy are self-employed or “own-account” entrepreneurs, meaning they have become entrepreneurs out of necessity and lack the ability to hire employees, and are typically in the most vulnerable positions.¹¹⁵ To better support women in the informal economy, strong social and legal protections are necessary, which they often lack entirely.¹¹⁶

Women and girls working in the informal economy are often expected to fulfil unpaid care and domestic work in addition, limiting their work options.¹¹⁷ They are often expected to maintain the home through food preparation, cleaning, and the collection of water, as well as the care of family members, such as children and seniors, in the home.¹¹⁸ While it can include paid labor, such as a nanny or maid, it is often an unpaid gendered responsibility of women and girls.¹¹⁹ In addition, gender norms often restrict women to home-based informal employment, which are typically low paying jobs that lack social protections.¹²⁰ In the 2030 Agenda, SDG target 5.4 states the need to “recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.”¹²¹ UN-Women’s report, *Turning promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, states that investments in infrastructure, such as public transportation and increasing access to running water would dramatically decrease the amount of time that women and girls spend on domestic duties, such as traveling long distances to gather water.¹²² Access to safe running water also decreases the likelihood of health complications in young and elderly family members that women and girls are tasked with caring for.¹²³

¹⁰⁸ UN FAO, *Rural Women’s Entrepreneurship is “Good Business”!*, 2010; FAO, *Empowering Rural Women, Powering Agriculture. FAO’s Work on Gender*, 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, *We-Fi Annual Report 2019*, 2019.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, *Informal Economy*, 2020.

¹¹² ILO, *Women and men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, 2018.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ ILO, *Empowering Women Working in the Informal Economy*, 2018.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality*, 2019.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ ILO, *Empowering Women Working in the Informal Economy*, 2018.

¹²¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹²² UN-Women, *Turning promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Local laws and public policy sometimes penalizes participation in the informal economy, especially for self-employed women, which can result in local authorities harassing workers and confiscating their goods, leading to loss of property and further instability.¹²⁴ Inclusive informal work legislation, such as the opportunity for street vendors to apply for permits, guarantees women in the informal sector a right to conduct business, typically with an area reservation which opens them up to consistent customers in a safe place.¹²⁵ Government-regulated minimum wages are proven to be beneficial as it decreases involvement in forced entrepreneurialism and narrows the pay gap between men and women.¹²⁶ In light of the continued efforts needed to improve the recognition and protection of women working in the informal economy, CSW63 called on Member States to introduce family and health subsidies and to render public services, such as childcare, more affordable.¹²⁷ Member States were called upon to recognize the value of domestic and care work by putting public infrastructure and social protection measures in place, helping women and girls in generating an income from their informal work, and becoming economically autonomous.¹²⁸

In 2020, ILO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) gathered data about the consequences of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²⁹ It shows that public safety measures, such as physical distancing and lockdowns, put women working in the informal economy at greater risk of bankruptcy than men.¹³⁰ In the Sub-Saharan region, many women work in informal retail markets or service provision, but 60% of female entrepreneurs were deprived of their incomes as their businesses had to remain closed due to long lockdowns and the economic subsequent recession.¹³¹ According to UNCTAD, the COVID-19 pandemic affects women living in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) disproportionately as employment there is often informal, low-skilled, or seasonal.¹³² Women living in SIDS suffer from border closures, the decline in global touristic travel, subsequent wage reductions, and loss of employment.¹³³ In response to this, CSW, UN-Women, and other organizations have recommended implementing gender-sensitive policies to address, protect, and support women in the informal economy worldwide in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³⁴

Increasing Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Rural and Remote Women

Rural women and girls make up more than one quarter of the global population but have very limited access to resources, disproportionately affecting them and the risk of poverty with few channels for economic mobility.¹³⁵ Typically, rural women are the primary domestic laborers within the home and spend much of their time gathering food, fuel, and clean water in addition to having agricultural labor responsibilities on large areas of land.¹³⁶ Legal land and property rights play a major role for remote

¹²⁴ ILO, *Empowering Women Working in the Informal Economy*, 2018.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ UN-Women, *Turning promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

¹²⁸ Ibid.; UN-Women, *UN Commission on the Status of Women Delivers Roadmap on Ensuring Women's Social Protection, Mobility, Safety, and Access to Economic Opportunities*, 2019.

¹²⁹ ILO, *ILO Brief: COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy. Immediate Responses and Policy Challenges*, 2020; UNCTAD, *COVID-19 Puts Women Working in SIDS Tourism Industry at Risk*, 2020.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Copley et al., *COVID-19 Pandemic Through a Gender Lens*, 2020; Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, *Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative Invests in Over 15,000 Women-led Businesses Amidst COVID-19 Crisis*, 2020.

¹³² UNCTAD, *COVID-19 Puts Women Working in SIDS Tourism Industry at Risk*, 2020.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ ILO, *ILO Brief: COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy. Immediate Responses and Policy Challenges*, 2020; UN-Women, *Spotlight on Gender, COVID-19 and the SDGs – Will the Pandemic Derail Hard-Won Progress on Gender Equality?*, 2020.

¹³⁵ UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

agricultural enterprises undertaken by women and girls since owning land for planting crops and harvesting food products presents a financial asset.¹³⁷ Less than a fifth of all women globally own land while approximately 75% of a country's wealth stem from land ownership.¹³⁸ This reduces women's access to infrastructure and leaves them vulnerable to poverty and financial instability.¹³⁹ Female labor plays a major role to the survival of the family within rural family dynamics, especially as it relates to domestic care work.¹⁴⁰ Increasing financial autonomy through entrepreneurial activity helps women gain control over their income, expenses, and savings, which women typically use to invest in vulnerable family members such as children, improving the overall quality of life for all household members.¹⁴¹

Articles 10 and 14 of CEDAW encourage the financial empowerment of rural and remote women through state, NGO, and local collectively supported enterprises.¹⁴² FAO notes that although most rural and remote women undertake informal entrepreneurial activities in saturated or high risk markets with low return rates, micro and small enterprises, like cooperatives, can be very beneficial to rural and remote women as work hours are flexible and increase overall empowerment.¹⁴³ CSW also encourages Member States to pass legislation allowing rural women and girls to form unions, cooperatives, and business associations to promote empowerment through collective bargaining.¹⁴⁴ Rural women in some East African states are entitled to land inheritance and are free to join female farmer cooperatives that share resources, such as agricultural equipment, reducing their physical labor and reliance on livestock.¹⁴⁵ Female-led banks in rural and remote areas in South Asia offer support for female entrepreneurs by providing them with personalized loans as well as business and finance trainings, helping women become part of local networks of entrepreneurs and business-owners.¹⁴⁶

In 2018, CSW met for their 62nd session where Member States discussed the empowerment of women and girls through participation in economic activity by improving access to education, healthcare, and resources.¹⁴⁷ The CSW62 agreed conclusions highlighted the necessity to facilitate and encourage entrepreneurial activity among rural women and girls to expand opportunities, particularly in sustainable agriculture and aquaculture where women are already heavily involved in the processing of goods.¹⁴⁸ The declaration issued by CSW64 in March 2020 underlines the importance of advancing women's access to finance and business education as core components of transitioning women and girls out of informal work and into formal entrepreneurship.¹⁴⁹ The UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) highlights that microcredit and microfinancing programs are essential when it comes to fostering rural women's entrepreneurial activities and economic independence.¹⁵⁰ UNESCAP notes that including rural women entrepreneurs into credit program's planning phases contributes to addressing the needs of the poorest rural women.¹⁵¹ Experimental business and psychology studies undertaken in East

¹³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979; Villa, *Women Own Less Than 20% of the World's Land. It's Time to Give Them Equal Property Rights*, 2017.

¹³⁸ Villa, *Women Own Less Than 20% of the World's Land. It's Time to Give Them Equal Property Rights*, 2017.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

¹⁴¹ FAO, *Rural Women's Entrepreneurship is "Good Business"!*, 2010.

¹⁴² UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

¹⁴³ FAO, *Rural Women's Entrepreneurship is "Good Business"!*, 2010.

¹⁴⁴ CSW, *Report on the Sixty-second Session (E/2018/27-E/CN.6/2018/20)*, 2018.

¹⁴⁵ UN-Women, *Women's Cooperatives Boost Agriculture and Savings in Rural Ethiopia*, 2018.

¹⁴⁶ Mann Deshi Bank, *Home*, 2020.

¹⁴⁷ CSW, *Report on the Sixty-second Session (E/2018/27-E/CN.6/2018/20)*, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.; UN-Women, *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2020/L.1)*, 2020.

¹⁵⁰ UNESCAP, *Women's Entrepreneurship: Lessons and Good Practices - National Case Studies from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines*, 2018.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

African states revealed that financial support initiatives are more effective to help rural women become entrepreneurs if they are combined with programs teaching both central business knowledge and soft skills like agency building, negotiation, and leadership.¹⁵² Increasing the amount of rural and remote female entrepreneurs combats gender inequalities as well as stereotypes, and paves the way for economic independence for all women.¹⁵³

Conclusion

Today, there are more female entrepreneurs than there have ever been in the past, but women continue to have lower incomes and fewer employment opportunities than men.¹⁵⁴ Economists estimate that it will take more than 170 years to close the economic gender gap.¹⁵⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic poses a major threat to the progress made in the past 25 years since the *Beijing Declaration* was adopted.¹⁵⁶ The international community and CSW continue to make great strides in encouraging governments to provide social benefits, better infrastructure, and public services that support women doing domestic and care work.¹⁵⁷ These measures also increase women's available time and resources to become financially independent by creating their own micro and small enterprises.¹⁵⁸ In 2018, CSW62 reiterated the importance of future cooperation among UN bodies, NGOs, and Member States in order to address the informal economy and to increase entrepreneurial opportunities for rural and remote women, further closing the income and financial security gap between men and women, particularly during the economic recovery phase from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁵⁹

Further Research

Keeping in mind the mandate of CSW, as a recommending body, delegates should consider questions such as: How can participation in the informal economy help women? What are the challenges unique to women in informal work? What partnerships can be made between UN bodies, NGOs, and Member States to bring security to informal workers? What recommendations can members of CSW and UN-Women make to minimize the risks of self-employment and entrepreneurial activities? How can micro enterprises improve rural women's quality of life? What recommendations can CSW make to improve access to resources for rural women? How can CSW utilize its partnership with UN-Women and other bodies to encourage social and legal policies that protect women owned enterprises?

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This policy brief, published by the World Bank Group's Office of the Chief Economist for the African Region, covers how African countries can respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and help women and girls become economically resilient throughout the ongoing crisis. Delegates can inform themselves about the differences in numbers between female- and male-led business closures due COVID-19. This document also

¹⁵² Siba, *Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Developing Countries - Why current Programs Fall Short*, 2019.

¹⁵³ FAO, *Rural Women's Entrepreneurship is "Good Business"!*, 2010.

¹⁵⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality*, 2019.

¹⁵⁵ UN-Women, *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (UNW/2017/6/Rev.1)*, 2017.

¹⁵⁶ ILO, *The COVID-19 Response: Getting Gender Equality Right for a Better Future for Women at Work*, 2020; UN-Women, *Gender Equality – Women's Rights in Review 25 Years after Beijing*, 2020.

¹⁵⁷ ILO, *Empowering Women Working in the Informal Economy*, 2018.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ CSW, *Report on the Sixty-second Session (E/2018/27-E/CN.6/2018/20)*, 2018; UN-Women, *Spotlight on Gender, COVID-19 and the SDGs – Will the Pandemic Derail Hard-Won Progress on Gender Equality?*, 2020.

explains what type of economic recovery measures could be taken to help women whose businesses have struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic. This concise document offers delegates a list of other useful references for the topic of empowering female entrepreneurs in crisis contexts.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <http://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/MEASURING-WOMENS-ECONOMIC-EMPOWERMENT-Gender-Policy-Paper-No-16.pdf>

In 2019, the OECD published this document to outline policy and program changes that increase women's economic empowerment by decreasing and reallocating unpaid domestic work. OECD makes recommendations to support the achievement of the SDGs while supporting women's economic autonomy. Delegates will find this document to be a comprehensive introduction to the recognition, redistribution, and reallocation of unpaid care and domestic work. The document analyzes data on unpaid domestic work from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru, and South Africa.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. (2017). *Report on the Sixty-first Session (E/CN.6/2017/21)*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/E/2017/27-E/CN.6/2017/21>

This Agreed Conclusions' theme is women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, containing recommendations for female entrepreneurship. Section 3, "Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment," informs delegates on the challenges that women face in achieving economic autonomy. This section outlines the importance of women's entrepreneurship and the role of Member States and NGOs in facilitating and strengthening women-owned businesses.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Monitoring Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20americas/documentos/publicaciones/monitoring%20gendereq%2014oct.pdf?la=en&vs=5400>

This report published by UN-Women suggests indicators for monitoring gender equality and the empowerment of women within the SDGs. SDG 5 discusses the need for equal access to economic resources to achieve gender equality and SDG 8 highlights the right to full and productive work by listing average wages by occupation for women and men. Delegates will gain a greater understanding of what UN-Women is doing within its mandate to address the 2030 Agenda.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2017). *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (UNW/2017/6/Rev.1)*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/en/UNW/2017/6/Rev.1>

This guiding document was published by UN-Women to provide strategies that combat gender inequalities while supporting the Beijing Declaration. The document outlines five strategic priorities, including an increase in income security, decent work, and economic autonomy for women. Delegates will find this document helpful in identifying actionable strategies that narrow economic gender gaps. Outcome 3 contains the priorities and direction of UN-Women's and CSW's mutual goal of women's economic empowerment, as well as additional information regarding the specific SDGs relevant to the outcome.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2018). *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/sdg-report-gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018-en.pdf?la=en&vs=4332>

This report completed by UN-Women provides gender indicators with actionable recommendations for implementation. The document classifies the gender specific targets of the 2030 Agenda between three tiers to showcase the conceptual clarity, quality of progress data collection, and established methodology and achievement standards. The document directly analyzes the proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, providing data on the age and location of women globally. Delegates will find this document to be an excellent resource in identifying, which targets have gendered gaps, as well as steps to address those gaps.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2020). *Gender Equality – Women’s Rights in Review 25 Years after Beijing*. Retrieved 13 July 2020 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-womens-rights-in-review-en.pdf?la=en&vs=934>

This UN-Women report was released to review the progress made since the Beijing Declaration and to identify gaps that still need to be addressed. Delegates can use it to learn about protecting women’s rights while creating opportunities for women’s employment and work. The report also informs about the obstacles rural women are still facing as well as about women working in the informal economy. The document provides and helps understanding the current conditions women are facing around the world.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2020). *Spotlight on Gender, COVID-19 and the SDGs – Will the Pandemic Derail Hard-Won Progress on Gender Equality?*. Retrieved 21 August 2020 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/spotlight-on-gender-covid-19-and-the-sdgs-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5013>

This document informs delegates how women are affected globally by the COVID-19 pandemic. The source includes data about women working in the informal economy and their income loss during the COVID-19 pandemic, and explains why women are at a disproportionate risk of getting infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus due to their frequent employment in care or domestic work. Moreover, this report formulates priority policy areas and enables delegates to understand how policymaking in response to the pandemic can be gender-responsive.

Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative. (2019). *We-Fi Annual Report 2019*. World Bank Group. Retrieved 12 July 2020 from: <https://we-fi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/We-Fi-Annua-Report-2019.pdf>

The Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) offers support to female entrepreneurs around the world by giving them access to financing, professional networks, and continuing education. This document gives delegates an overview of major financing projects in various regions of the world, which goals those projects aim to fulfill, and what We-Fi’s advocacy has achieved. When delegates research ideas on how to improve women’s empowerment through entrepreneurship, this source can provide them with insights into different countries’ support programs, approaches, as well as successes or failures. It is both a recent and comprehensive document, with a focus on financial aspects.

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II. Promoting the Political Participation of Women

“It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.”¹⁶⁰

Introduction

In 2003, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted resolution 58/142 titled “Women and political participation,” marking the first time the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the importance of increasing *women’s participation* in positions of power and decision-making.¹⁶¹ Resolution 58/142 considers political participation of women to include: women engaging in political activities, taking part in the conduct of public affairs, associating freely, assembling peacefully, expressing their opinions, and seeking, receiving, and imparting political information and ideas freely.¹⁶² Voting in elections and public referendums, being eligible for election to publicly elected bodies, participating in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof, holding public office, and performing public functions at all levels of government are also means of political participation.¹⁶³ The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) affirms that equal access of men and women to power, decision-making, and leadership at all levels of political affairs is necessary to make governments more representative of the composition of society and to ensure that the interests of women are taken into account in policy-making.¹⁶⁴ Further, the participation of women in politics is a form of women’s empowerment and it is essential to the protection of women’s political rights and the achievement of gender equality, sustainable development, peace, and democracy.¹⁶⁵

Women’s representation in political decision-making continues to improve slowly.¹⁶⁶ Based on the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s (IPU) annual report, which tracks women’s participation in parliament and monitors its progress and trends, as of 1 January 2020, 24.9% of all national parliamentarians are women, an increase from 11.3% in 1995.¹⁶⁷ However, increases have slowed down significantly since 2015.¹⁶⁸ On the contrary, women’s representation in top-level leadership has even decreased since 2017, from 7.2% of elected Heads of State to 6.6% though increased from 5.7% of Heads of Government to 6.2% in 2020.¹⁶⁹ On the level of ministers, as of 1 January 2020, 21.3% of government ministers are women, who most commonly hold portfolios on “family, children, youth, elderly and the disabled” as well as in social affairs.¹⁷⁰ According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), women in political positions are more likely to address issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, and pensions.¹⁷¹ UN-Women also presents evidence that women’s leadership in political decision-making processes can lead to positive change in society.¹⁷² For instance, in Norway, a direct causal relationship was found between the presence of women in municipal councils and the number of municipal childcare services.¹⁷³ Similarly, in

¹⁶⁰ Annan, *Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations*, 2007.

¹⁶¹ UN-Women, *Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation*.

¹⁶² UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/58/142)*, 2003, pp. 1-5; UN-Women, *Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation*.

¹⁶³ UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, pp. 1-5; UN-Women, *Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation*.

¹⁶⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report on the Fourteenth session (E/3360-E/CN.6/367)*, 1960; UN-Women, *The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20: Women in power and decision-making*.

¹⁶⁵ Women Deliver, *Strengthen Girls’ and Women’s Political Participation and Decision-Making Power*, 2019; UNDP, *Women’s equal political participation*.

¹⁶⁶ UN-Women, *One in five ministers is a woman, according to a new IPU/UN-Women Map*, 2019.

¹⁶⁷ Inter-parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament: 1995–2020 - 25 years in review*, 2020.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Politics: 2020*, 2020.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ UN-Women, *Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation*, 2019.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

India, the number of drinking water projects was 62% higher in areas with women-led councils than men-led councils.¹⁷⁴ In contrast, in a policy brief on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, the UN Secretary-General draws attention to the plight of women during the pandemic, highlighting the increasing inequalities in income, health care, and gender-based violence.¹⁷⁵ To reduce these inequalities, women's equal participation must be ensured in all the COVID-19 pandemic response planning and decision-making, including maintaining a gender perspective in the design of fiscal stimulus packages.¹⁷⁶

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.¹⁷⁷ Equality in political participation is specifically fundamental to Article 21 of the UDHR, which declares that all people have the right to participate in the government of their country and to access public services.¹⁷⁸ Following in 1953, the General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* to protect the equal status of women to exercise political rights, one of which is the participation of women in political decision-making.¹⁷⁹ In 1979, the General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* to further emphasize the necessity of gender equality.¹⁸⁰ In the last three decades, new international standards were set, including the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA), adopted by the international community at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, which tackles twelve areas in women's rights, including women in power and decision-making.¹⁸¹ The BPfA calls on governments to take measures to ensure women's full participation in political structures and to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.¹⁸² Furthermore, in 2000, Security Council resolution 1325, an influential landmark document on the topic of women, peace, and security, stressed the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in politics, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.¹⁸³

In 1990, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted resolution 1990/4, which also highlighted the importance of equality in political participation and decision-making, urging the advancement of women be considered a priority in national decision-making, as well as called for women to be active agents in those decisions.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, ECOSOC resolution 1990/15 emphasized that governments, political parties, trade unions, and professional and other representative groups must aim to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 1995 to achieve a more equal representation between men and women.¹⁸⁵ Over the last decade, progress was made to reach this goal; however, no country reached the 30% goal across all institutions.¹⁸⁶ The UN General Assembly adopted two landmark resolutions in 2003 and 2011 that highlighted the importance of women's political

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ UN DGC, *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*, 2020.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women (A/RES/640 (VII))*, 1953.

¹⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

¹⁸¹ UN-Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, 2014.

¹⁸² UN-Women, *Summary Report: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015.

¹⁸³ UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.

¹⁸⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Equality in political participation and decision-making (E/RES/1990/4)*, 1990, pp. 8-9.

¹⁸⁵ 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 (E/RES/1990/15)*, 1990, pp. 14-18.

¹⁸⁶ UN-Women, *Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation*, 2019; Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament: 20 years in review*, 2015.

participation.¹⁸⁷ In the 2003 resolution 58/142, the UN General Assembly urges Member States to protect the right of women to participate in their government at all levels and to eliminate laws that prevent or restrict women's participation in the political process.¹⁸⁸ Similarly the UN General Assembly's 2011 resolution 66/130 asks Member States to respect women's right to participate in public office and to review the impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women.¹⁸⁹

Most recently in 2015, the UN adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, establishing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to reduce poverty, protect human rights, ensure greater gender equality and inclusive societies, and enhance access to basic services.¹⁹⁰ Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to achieve the SDGs and are integrated across the 2030 Agenda.¹⁹¹ However, there is also the stand-alone SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in all areas.¹⁹² SDG target 5.5 strives to ensure women's full participation and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making in economic, political, and public life.¹⁹³ Based on the 2019 report of the UN Secretary-General on the progress of the SDGs, low levels of political participation and the underrepresentation of women at all levels of political leadership undermine the ability to achieve SDG 5.¹⁹⁴

Role of the International System

Many UN entities are involved in promoting political participation of women, including the Security Council, UN-Women, CSW, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). CSW's role in promoting the involvement of women in political participation is to review the progress made and problems persisting in the area of women in power and decision-making outlined in the BPfA.¹⁹⁵ CSW also writes policy recommendations and agreed upon standards for the international community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), which help advance women's participation in political processes.¹⁹⁶

UN-Women plays a more direct role in assisting the implementation of programs and initiatives, such as providing training for women political candidates to build their capacities, and to run more efficient political campaigns.¹⁹⁷ UN-Women also advocates for legislative reforms to guarantee women's fair access to the political sphere and facilitates meetings with CSOs to initiate programs that ensure elections uphold women's rights and are free from electoral violence.¹⁹⁸ For instance, in the 2013 elections in Kenya, UN-Women provided training to nearly 900 female candidates, increasing the number of women legislators by more than 20%.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, UN-Women integrates gender equality in governance and national planning (GNP) by establishing gender-responsive capacities, systems, and resources that reflect an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses their issues.²⁰⁰ A corporate evaluation of the UN-Women GNP portfolio showed that UN-Women expanded policy or political spaces for gender responsiveness and enabled government stakeholders, CSOs, and women machineries, a form of

¹⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/58/142)*, 2003, pp. 1-5.; UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, pp. 1-5.

¹⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/58/142)*, 2003, pp. 1-5.

¹⁸⁹ UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011, pp. 1-5.

¹⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, 2019.

¹⁹³ UNDP, *Goal 5 Targets*.

¹⁹⁴ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, 2019.

¹⁹⁵ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ UN-Women, *Gender Equality: A Governance Matter*, 2013, p. 1.

institutionalized or bureaucratic representation of women, to capitalize on those spaces.²⁰¹ For example, one area that has benefitted from this is healthcare for women with regards to HIV/AIDS and how a gender perspective is now being included in national healthcare planning.²⁰² UN-Women cooperates with national women's machineries established as formal government structures of Member States to advocate for and support policies that promote the advancement of women.²⁰³ UNDP also encourages gender responsiveness of political institutions and supports women's access to opportunities to exercise their political rights through the training of female candidates, awareness campaigns, and promoting gender parity in electoral management bodies.²⁰⁴

In 2016, ECOSOC adopted resolution 2016/2, which urged the UN system, its agencies, funds, and programs, to mainstream a gender perspective into all UN policies.²⁰⁵ In 2017, the General Assembly called upon the entities of the UN, Member States, and NGOs to accelerate the effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its resolution 72/234.²⁰⁶ The 2018 UN Secretary-General report on mainstreaming gender in the UN system reviewed country programs to monitor and track the implementation of gender mainstreaming.²⁰⁷ The report showed that progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women in country programs better support Member States in removing the legal, economic, and political structural barriers that discriminate against women.²⁰⁸

On a regional level, the European Union (EU) developed the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, which looks at enhancing women's political participation in national parliaments and subnational elected offices and supporting the political participation of the indigenous population.²⁰⁹ For its Gender Equality and Women's Rights Worldwide 2021-2025 Action Plan, the EU is focusing on gender equality and women's rights worldwide, with an initiative that reaffirms gender equality and women's rights as a main feature of the EU foreign policy.²¹⁰ Other regional organizations, like the Arab Women Organization, prioritize the enhancement of women's political participation by collecting data regarding the status of women in the region, coordinating local and national efforts pertaining to women's issues, and organizing seminars and workshops to coordinate joint regional action regarding women's issues.²¹¹

Additionally, NGOs and CSOs are often involved in empowering women to participate in politics. The Femmes Africa Solidarité is an NGO that promotes women's equal access and opportunity to participate in decision-making and politics, where its conceptual framework is based on Security Council resolution 1325.²¹² The International Women's Democracy Center (IWDC) is another NGO established to strengthen women's global leadership by focusing on increasing the participation of women in policy and decision-making within their own governments; and is granted consultative status to ECOSOC.²¹³ IWDC achieves

²⁰¹ UN-Women, *Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN-Women's Contribution to Governance and National Planning*, 2019.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.; UN-Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, 2014.

²⁰⁴ UNDP, *Women's equal political participation*.

²⁰⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/RES/2016/2)*, 2016.

²⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Women in Development (A/RES/72/234)*, 2017.

²⁰⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, Report of the Secretary-General (E/2018/53)*, 2018.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ European Commission, *EU Gender Action Plan II Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020*, 2018.

²¹⁰ European Commission, *Gender Equality and Women's Rights Worldwide – 2021-2025 Action Plan*, 2020.

²¹¹ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, & UNDP, *Advancing Women's Political Participation: Middle East and North Africa Consultation on Gender Equality & Political Empowerment*, 2017.

²¹² Femmes Africa Solidarité, *Origin of FAS*; UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.

²¹³ IWDC, *About*.

its objectives by setting up training programs and workshops such as the Campaign Management Workshop, which trains women leaders and equips them with the skills and tools to stand as candidates for elected office.²¹⁴ Other regional NGOs, like the Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics, are similarly involved in promoting equal participation of women in politics by organizing and hosting global conferences on women in politics.²¹⁵ In 2017, as part of a joint program between the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the Community of Democracies, and UNDP, regional consultations took place in Africa, America, the Arab Region, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe to analyze the main policies in place to advance the political empowerment of women.²¹⁶

In 2020, CSW adopted a draft Political Declaration on the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which serves as the primary outcome document of CSW64 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.²¹⁷ This declaration highlights new measures to promote the political participation of women.²¹⁸ Some of these include mainstreaming a gender perspective into environmental, climate change, and disaster risk reduction policies.²¹⁹ This basis for this special attention is the disproportionate effects of natural disasters and climate change on women and girls, compared to men.²²⁰ At the end of its virtual meeting in July 2020, Member States agreed on a multi-year program of work for CSW for 2021 through 2024, with each year's theme serving as a subsequent phase of focus and implementation.²²¹ For its 65th session in year 2021, CSW will look at "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieve it gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls."²²²

Political Exclusion of Women from Marginalized Groups

While Member States reaffirmed the BPfA in 2015 and 2020, progress has been slow and uneven, where no country has fully achieved equality and empowerment for women.²²³ Many women experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, vulnerability, and marginalization throughout their life.²²⁴ Gender inequalities intersect with other forms of inequality, which leads to uneven progress in the lives of women.²²⁵ Women often make up the most disadvantaged group within marginalized groups with limited access to land, credit, and decision-making processes.²²⁶ Major gaps exist for poor women and girls living in rural areas and in poor urban settlements, women with HIV/AIDS infections, and women with disabilities.²²⁷ Further, indigenous women, migrant women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

²¹⁴ IWDC, *Programs*.

²¹⁵ Center for Asia-Pacific Women, *About CAPWIP*.

²¹⁶ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Permanent Secretariat of the Community Democracies, & UNDP, *Regional Organizations, Gender Equality and the Political Empowerment of Women*, 2017.

²¹⁷ CSW, *Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2020/L.1)*, 2020.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ UN-Women, *UN Member States announce next year's CSW themes as its 64th session concludes*, 2020.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ UNDP, *Progress in the implementation of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021*, 2019; UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²²⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report on the Fourteenth session (E/3360-E/CN.6/367)*, 1960.

²²⁷ UNDP, *Women's equal political participation*; UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011.

women, domestic female workers, and women from ethnic, cultural, or religious minorities face additional barriers in accessing and participating in politics and decision-making.²²⁸

Statistics collected to monitor progress and shortcomings on gender equality are usually only disaggregated by sex, thus overlooking differences and inequalities among women based on other factors.²²⁹ Research disaggregated across a range of demographic characteristics to account for inter- and intra-group differences is important to assess and analyze gender issues and to reveal multidimensional deprivations that are hidden by averages and aggregations.²³⁰ Furthermore, laws, policies, and efforts are needed to ensure that the needs, interests, and perspectives of marginalized groups of women and girls are integrated across all policy areas and that such groups of women participate in the shaping of policies.²³¹ It is also important to equip women with the necessary tools such as education, training, and personal resources to strengthen the role of all women in political and public life.²³²

Many Member States have made efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making, but there still exists a stark gap in regards to ensuring the participation of particularly marginalized women in political decision-making forums.²³³ A number of actions illustrating how to overcome political exclusion of marginalized women include: for example, the introduction of constitutional and legislative reforms paired with community education initiatives as piloted in Uganda.²³⁴ This effort tackles the political exclusion of people with disabilities and promotes attitudinal and behavioral change to overcome systemic obstacles to the inclusion of marginalized groups of women.²³⁵ In Kenya, for example, Wajir women overcame political and social exclusion by organizing themselves into the Wajir Women Association for Peace, where they worked with local governments to achieve greater democratic inclusion, promote peace-building, and secure future attitudinal changes towards women in decision-making positions.²³⁶ Strengthening civil society's support for marginalized groups through formal organization into coordinated structures assists campaigns and promotes women's political participation.²³⁷ Lastly, in Kosovo, shuttle services to and from courts and court liaison officers for ethnic groups facilitate access to courts addressing female minorities being excluded from accessing the judiciary system.²³⁸

Challenges to Women's Political Participation

Women face disproportionate challenges to actively participate at all levels of politics and decision-making relative to their male counterparts.²³⁹ Challenges include discriminatory socio-cultural and religious practices that keep women in a subordinate position and disregard their decision-making power.²⁴⁰ According to UNDP, in many countries, traditions continue to portray women's primary roles as

²²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*, 2011.

²²⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²³⁰ Equal Measures 2030, *Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index*, 2019.

²³¹ UN General Assembly, *Women and Political Participation (A/RES/58/142)*, 2003, pp. 1-5.

²³² UN-Women, *Women in power and decision-making: Strengthening voices for democracy*, 2014.

²³³ UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²³⁴ IDEA, *Overcoming political exclusion*, 2013, p. 28.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²³⁶ IDEA, *Journeys from Exclusion to Inclusion: Marginalized women's successes in overcoming political exclusion*, 2013, p. 16.

²³⁷ IDEA, *Overcoming political exclusion*, 2013, p. 32.

²³⁸ UNDP, *Marginalized minorities in development programming*, p. 48, 2010.

²³⁹ UN General Assembly, *Women's Participation in Exercise of Political Power Cannot Be Disputed, General Assembly President Stresses as She Opens High-Level Event (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2019.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

mothers and housewives, restricting them to those roles which are often unrecognized as work and unpaid.²⁴¹ This, for instance, hinders women from entering politics themselves and can influence their voting decisions on election day, if the male head of household tells them how to vote.²⁴² Furthermore, women on average are financially poorer than men, lacking access to and ownership of land, bearing disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, and being paid less or more likely being unemployed.²⁴³ The poorer financial disposition of women is a critical challenge for their participation in politics since seeking elective positions is expensive, requiring large financial involvement that many cannot afford.²⁴⁴ Not only do women consider the costs of running a campaign, but they also consider the costs in the domestic sphere to cover their absence such as childcare costs.²⁴⁵ Canada, for instance, adopted legislation at the electoral level that places childcare expenses as part of the expenses of a candidate for election because childcare costs impose an unequal burden on many women seeking elected office.²⁴⁶

According to OHCHR, risky political environments where women could face violence, assassinations, threats, and blackmail are another challenge to women's participation in politics because they scare away women from active participation in politics.²⁴⁷ The lack of prosecution of violent attacks against women in politics also discourages the participation of women in politics.²⁴⁸ Additionally, political party discrimination against women occurs deliberately to humiliate and frustrate women into losing focus and excluding them from active participation.²⁴⁹ Since many women are vulnerable to political violence, they are unlikely to attend frequent political meetings that occur late in the night.²⁵⁰ Results from IPU's 2016 study on violence against women (VAW) in parliament of 39 countries showed that 44.4% of women received threats of death, rape, beatings, or kidnapping, 25.5% experienced physical violence in the parliament, and 46.7% feared for their security and that of their family.²⁵¹ Efforts by Member States to end VAW in politics include parliamentary response and organized campaigns that call attention to widespread sexual and physical harassment of women in politics.²⁵² Amongst others, challenges faced by women also include the negative social perceptions about the leadership ability of women and the lack of support from families and the media.²⁵³ Repeated exposure to female elected officials improves perceptions of women's ability and effectiveness in politics and leads to future electoral gains and support for women.²⁵⁴

Legislative, electoral, and constitutional laws also challenge the representation of women and their political participation.²⁵⁵ Legislation governing political parties can discriminate against women by placing

²⁴¹ UNDP, *Public perceptions on gender equality in politics and business*, 2013; UN-Women, *Redistribute unpaid work*.

²⁴² Kunovich et al., *Gender in politics*, 2007.

²⁴³ UN-Women, *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*, 2019.

²⁴⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²⁴⁵ Women's Environment & Development Organization, *Women Candidates and Campaign Finance*, 2007.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ OHCHR, *Violence against Women in Politics*, 2018; UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²⁴⁸ OHCHR, *Gender based violence against women in politics and during elections must be eradicated, warns UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women*, 2019.

²⁴⁹ Kunovich et al., *Gender in politics*, 2007; Shames, *Barriers and Solutions to Increasing Women's Political Power*, 2015.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*, 2016.

²⁵² OHCHR, *Violence against Women in Politics*, 2018.

²⁵³ UN ECOSOC, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2015.

²⁵⁴ Women Deliver, *Strengthen Girls' and Women's Political Participation and Decision-Making Power*, 2019; UNDP, *Women's equal political participation*.

²⁵⁵ UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013.

provisions on candidate registration.²⁵⁶ Those include high candidate deposit costs or requirements that are difficult to fulfill because of women's unequal political and socio-economic power in comparison to men.²⁵⁷ However, as of 2016, over 120 countries have established quota policies to ensure more women have leadership roles in government, where the range targeted in quotas varies across countries.²⁵⁸ For instance, in Niger, the goal is 10% of female representation in parliament, while in Panama, the target is 50%.²⁵⁹ While some Member States implement quota systems to increase the women's participation in government, quotas still do not ensure enough women are elected in political parties.²⁶⁰ For voting and elections, women may face obstacles in casting their vote, for instance, as polling stations are located in remote or unsafe areas, which makes women reluctant to use them.²⁶¹

One path to change has been through the social, economic, and political transformations that have offered greater opportunities for women to assume different roles and opened way for new political institutions.²⁶² More specific strategies of change can be seen in Senegal in 2012, where CSOs and UN-Women launched an awareness campaign and a training program on the electoral process to educate and encourage female candidates.²⁶³ The outcome of the elections resulted in a near balance between men and women in the National Assembly.²⁶⁴ Similarly, in 2013, increased access of women to the political decision-making process in Cameroon was gained through placing participatory neighborhood structures that worked with local government and other state actors.²⁶⁵ Moreover, in 2015, the National Council for Women in Egypt developed a website for women candidates to provide a platform for all women candidates to promote their electoral campaigns, which increased their reach to voters and decreased their campaign costs.²⁶⁶

Conclusion

All women need to be given an equal opportunity to participate in political processes of their countries to ensure a democratic and inclusive national society.²⁶⁷ Inclusive participation of women in government influences the extent of emphasis on gender equality in policy and practice.²⁶⁸ Since CSW is a policy making body, it partnered with UN-Women to establish, support, and finance many initiatives to work towards equal participation, to facilitate implementation of the BPfA by Member States, and to achieve SDG 5.²⁶⁹ While measures have been taken to empower women politically, many barriers still exist that prevent women from full and equal participation in the political life.²⁷⁰ Working towards achieving equal political participation of women will remain one of the priorities for CSW in order to ensure gender equality.²⁷¹

Further Research

While researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How can CSW and other UN entities work with Member States to achieve equal representation for women in local, national, and

²⁵⁶ OSCE, *Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties*, 2014.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender inequality persists in leadership positions*, 2017.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ UNSD, *Power and decision-making*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Women's Participation in Exercise of Political Power Cannot Be Disputed, General Assembly President Stresses as She Opens High-Level Event (A/61/122/Add.1)*, 2019.

²⁶¹ UN-Women, *Elections*.

²⁶² Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament: 20 years in review*, 2015.

²⁶³ Women Deliver, *Strengthen Girls' and Women's Political Participation and Decision-Making Power*, 2019.

²⁶⁴ Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament: 20 years in review*, 2015.

²⁶⁵ IDEA, *Overcoming political exclusion*, 2013, p. 32.

²⁶⁶ OECD, *Women's political participation in Egypt*, 2018.

²⁶⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Equality in political participation and decision-making (E/1990/4)*, 1990.

²⁶⁸ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender inequality persists in leadership positions*, 2017.

²⁶⁹ UN-Women, *Progress 20 years on: Beijing+20 reviews are underway*, 2014.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

international governance bodies? How can CSW shape norms and policies that address the causes of low political participation of women such as poverty, gender-based violence, lack of access to education, and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work? What role can men play as advocates in empowering women? How can governments provide resources to facilitate involving marginalized groups in governmental practices? How can the UN remain sensitive to cultural practices while ensuring the voices of women are heard in decision-making processes? How can CSW shape policies to encourage the implementation of a gender-sensitive political structure? What capacity-building activities should occur within Member States, CSOs, and intergovernmental organizations to fill implementation gaps?

Annotated Bibliography

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2020). *Women in parliament: 1995–2020 - 25 years in review*. Retrieved 17 September 2020 from: <https://www.ipu.org/file/8993/download>

The IPU report shows statistics of women's participation in parliament and other domains of government. The report highlights that the overall involvement of women in parliamentary positions has more than doubled in the last 25 years. The data shows that gender parity can be achieved. It also shows that electoral quotas for women have spread to all regions and that well-designed quotas increase gender equality. However, the report elaborates that country-level experiences with quotas have shown that not all quotas are equally effective. This report is important for delegates as a source for statistics and for information on electoral law and quotas.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, & United Nations Development Programme. (2017). *Regional Organizations, Gender Equality and the Political Empowerment of Women*. Retrieved 19 August 2020 from: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Inclusive%20Political%20Processes/regional-organizations-gender-equality-and-the-political-empowerment-of-women.pdf>

This publication gives an in-depth analysis of various global and regional organizations involved in the political empowerment of women. With several examples, delegates will see the work that has been done in promoting the political empowerment, and participation of women across every continent. It also discusses the roles these organizations play in enhancing the political participation of women in their various regions, their objectives, and what has been achieved so far. Delegates will find this useful when seeking multilateral partnerships in furthering the advancement of women in politics, and policy-making.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2015). *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*. Retrieved 18 August 2020 from: <http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2015/3>

This is a summary of the report that was made to provide a review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on its 20th anniversary. It highlights matters such as violence against women, access to employment and education, and women in power and decision-making. The BPfA continues to act as the main framework for women's empowerment and it presents the priorities for future action and for accelerated implementation. It is also a great resource for the peripheral issues of this topic including the political exclusion of marginalized groups, electoral quotas, and the political violence against women.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2013). *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*. Retrieved 17 August 2020 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20women%20thembriefuswebrev2%20pdf.pdf?la=en>

This website presents how women are underrepresented as voters as well as in leading positions in politics. It offers an overview of the role of UN-Women in relation to the

restriction in the political participation of women. Several obstacles to participating in political life including structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions are mentioned as well as several solutions that could be implemented to tackle the issue. The website also shows examples of Member States with facts and figures that demonstrate improvements in political participation. The source is useful for delegates since UN-Women and CSW constantly work together to achieve common goals, including encouraging the involvement of women in politics.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session. (2011). *Women and political participation (A/RES/66/130)*. Adopted on the report of the Third Committee (A/66/455 and Corr. 1). Retrieved 16 August 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/66/130>

This UN resolution is the latest one that fully tackles the issue of women in political participation. It provides several clauses about the importance of addressing the topic and the reason it is a threat to democracy. Furthermore, it offers operative clauses that encourage Member States to take certain steps to promote the involvement of women in the political sphere. Most importantly, it also tackles concepts of conflict resolution, gender quotas, and minority groups. This resolution is helpful for delegates since it presents the acts that constitute political participation and it offers recommendations that the delegates should keep in mind when stipulating further measures for addressing the topic.

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III. Protecting Women in Migration from Human Trafficking, Sexual Slavery, and Sexual Exploitation

Introduction

Migration describes the movement of people, often for the purpose of cultural exchange or improvement of quality of life, but can also refer to displacement due to political and economic crises, resource scarcity, or organized crime.²⁷² Globally, there are approximately 272 million migrants, making up 3.5% of the population.²⁷³ By the end of 2019, there were 79.5 million people forcibly displaced, of which 26 million were refugees and 45.7 million were internally displaced.²⁷⁴ Displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), human trafficking, and sexual exploitation.²⁷⁵ Migration often exacerbates discrimination that women and girls face within their cultural and socio-economic status while decreasing personal security and protections.²⁷⁶ Women and girls often migrate alone or with children and are also less likely to exercise their rights.²⁷⁷ Frequently, female migrants travel long distances on foot or through unsafe methods of transportation via human smugglers.²⁷⁸ In regions with high numbers of forcibly displaced people, criminal groups often gather near borders, blocking migrants from fleeing.²⁷⁹ These groups commonly conduct sexual violence and trafficking against female migrants, as well as theft, leaving surviving women injured and without resources or assets.²⁸⁰ Traffickers and smugglers lure migrant women and girls into sex trafficking and slavery by promising safety, food security, and shelter.²⁸¹

Human trafficking consists of the recruitment, transportation, harboring, receipt, and commerce of persons for the purpose of exploitation.²⁸² Sexual exploitation includes prostitution, commercial surrogacy, and forced or servile marriage, where a particular person or organization benefits financially from these activities.²⁸³ Globally, women account for 71% of trafficking victims.²⁸⁴ Females make up 96% of trafficking victims used for sexual crimes, while girls make up 72%.²⁸⁵ COVID-19 has increased the vulnerability of people to be trafficked and made the situation worse for trafficking victims in the captivity of their traffickers.²⁸⁶ It has also placed trafficking victims in greater danger due to the increased sophistication and concealment of trafficking activities by criminals.²⁸⁷ Restrictions during the pandemic reduced some crime rates due to increased police presence, but it is expected that organized crime such as trafficking will adapt.²⁸⁸

In 2013 at the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the priority theme was the “Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls,” where the UN Special

²⁷² IOM, *Report Overview: Making Sense of Migration in an Increasingly Interconnected World*, 2018.

²⁷³ UN DESA, *The Number of International Migrants Reaches 272 Million, Continuing an Upward Trend in All World Regions*, Says UN, 2019.

²⁷⁴ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2020.

²⁷⁵ UNHCR, *Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls*, 2006.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ UNFPA, *Five Reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*, 2018.

²⁷⁹ Joint Internally Displaced Persons Profiling Service, *Honduras*, 2019.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² UNODC, *Human Trafficking*, 2019.

²⁸³ UNODC, *The International Legal Definition of Trafficking in Persons: Consolidation of Research Findings and Reflection on Issues Raised*, 2018, p. 16.

²⁸⁴ UNFPA, *Five Reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*, 2018.

²⁸⁵ ICAT, *The Gender Dimensions of Human Trafficking*, 2017, pp. 1-2; UNFPA, *Five Reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*, 2018.

²⁸⁶ UNODC, *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons*, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children gave a statement outlining trafficking as an act of violence against women.²⁸⁹ CSW is committed to identifying the gaps and measures necessary to protect women migrants from GBV, human trafficking, sexual slavery, and sexual exploitation, and discussing solutions with Member States and other stakeholders on this issue.²⁹⁰

International and Regional Framework

In 1949, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution 62 (I) titled “Refugees and Displaced Persons” outlining the rights of migrants and displaced persons, with no distinctions based on sex, gender, and nationality.²⁹¹ The document also called for the formation of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, established in 1950, to report on forced migratory flows and the challenges they face.²⁹² In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), which recognized the equal rights of movement for men and women.²⁹³ In 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 48/104, the “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women” which recognizes that violence against women may be physical, sexual, or psychological violence.²⁹⁴ In 1995, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action* was adopted to address gender inequality.²⁹⁵ The Beijing Declaration outlines the challenges that migrant women face, exacerbated by gender inequality, such as sexual violence and human trafficking.²⁹⁶ The implementation of the Beijing Declaration is the primary responsibility of CSW, which calls attention to gaps in gender equality outlined in the declaration, and encourages its stakeholders and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to implement change.²⁹⁷ During the official statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at CSW’s 57th session, the special rapporteur Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo discussed the “long standing failure to protect women from gender based violence” particularly when discussing the factors making women particularly vulnerable to trafficking such as migration.²⁹⁸ The statement notes that restrictive immigration policies have created trafficking and sexual exploitation channels that could be minimized by implementing safe migration policies.²⁹⁹

In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and its *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* (UN TIP Protocol).³⁰⁰ The Protocol outlines the role that Member States have in combatting and preventing the trafficking of women and girls.³⁰¹ The document also ensures that victims are not prosecuted for any activities derived from their captivity, and provides State parties with guidelines for the criminalization and prosecution of traffickers.³⁰² In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 64/293, the “United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons,” to promote a comprehensive international response to human trafficking.³⁰³ The resolution supported the

²⁸⁹ CSW, *Speech by UN Special Rapporteur Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 11 March 2013, in New York, 2013.*

²⁹⁰ CSW, *Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session (E/CN.6/2013/11)*, 2013.

²⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Displaced Persons (A/RES/62 (I))*, 1946.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

²⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104)*, 1993.

²⁹⁵ UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

²⁹⁸ CSW, *Speech by UN Special Rapporteur Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 11 March 2013, in New York, 2013.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ UN General Assembly, *Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (A/RES/64/293)*, 2010.

creation of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, which supports survivors of human trafficking with humanitarian and legal aid.³⁰⁴ In 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* and the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework* where it reinforced the importance of protecting women in migration from trafficking and related crimes.³⁰⁵ In 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration* and the *Global Compact on Refugees* further recognizing the urgency to fight against trafficking and to protect migrant girls and women.³⁰⁶ Most recently, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 73/146, titled “Trafficking in Women and Girls,” urging Member States to take further action to implement gender and age-sensitive measures to prevent underlying causes of trafficking such as poverty, gender-based violence, discrimination, unemployment, and limited socioeconomic opportunities.³⁰⁷ The resolution also encourages Member States to work together with the international community to build awareness about the dangers of human trafficking, specifically affecting migrants, and to provide support to victims.³⁰⁸ It also encourages Member States to improve legal frameworks by incorporating measures to protect migrants from human trafficking and human rights violations by incorporating a gender-perspective into their national policies.³⁰⁹

In 2015, the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) highlighted the urgency to promote gender equality and it reaffirmed CSW’s commitment to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its efforts to protect and empower women and girls.³¹⁰ Female empowerment is mainstreamed throughout the 2030 Agenda with particular focus on SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduce inequalities), SDG 16 (peace and justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnership for the goals).³¹¹ SDG 16 target 16.1 focuses on the reduction of violence and death.³¹² SDG 16.2 calls on a stop to trafficking, exploitation, and abuse.³¹³ In order to achieve justice for victims, rule of law is encouraged at national and international levels in SDG 16.3.³¹⁴ These goals are paramount in promoting gender equality and human rights and protecting women from GBV to facilitate orderly and safe international migration.³¹⁵

Role of the International System

In 2007, the UN General Assembly created the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) to facilitate the coordination and cooperation between UN agencies and other international organizations.³¹⁶ ICAT’s primary mandate is to prevent trafficking and protect victims.³¹⁷ Some of the ICAT members are, among other agencies, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN-Women, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Children’s Fund, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).³¹⁸ In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons* (PoA), which is the main international framework for an international response to human trafficking.³¹⁹ The PoA recognizes the need to prevent, suppress, and punish human trafficking, and it gives emphasis on the importance of protection measures for women and

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016.

³⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—Part II: Global Compact for Refugees (A/73/12 (Part II))*, 2018.

³⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *Trafficking in Women and Girls (A/RES/73/146)*, 2019, p. 4.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p.13.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p.13.

³¹⁰ CSW, *Women’s Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development: Agreed Conclusions*, 2016, p. 4.

³¹¹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

³¹² UN SDG, *Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies*.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ IOM, *Migration in the 2030 Agenda*, 2017, pp. 60-62.

³¹⁶ ICAT, *The Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons*, 2019.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (A/RES/64/293)*, 2010.

children.³²⁰ The relevance of the PoA was reiterated by the Economic and Social Council in 2015 in its resolution 2015/23, titled “Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons,” where it requested CSW and members of the ICAT to work towards the effective implementation of the plan.³²¹

UN-Women is one of the leading entities in the fight against trafficking of girls and women in migration and is advocating for the improvement of international migration governance mechanisms to protect them.³²² For example, at CSW’s 61st session, representatives of UN-Women and the European Union (EU) presented a set of expert recommendations derived from the application of the joint program Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ Labor and Human Rights.³²³ One recommendation is that women can access justice through due process throughout the migration process.³²⁴ Another recommendation is that gender-responsive research is used in data collection and analysis to ensure accountability.³²⁵

In its 63rd session’s, CSW recognized that women and girls are vulnerable to human trafficking in scenarios, such as poverty, unemployment, lack of social opportunities, inequality, and violence.³²⁶ These are the same underlying causes that motivate migration in the first place and, consequently, migrant girls and women are vulnerable to become victims of trafficking networks.³²⁷ CSW calls on Member States to work towards the enhancement of public awareness of the issue and design public policy programs to reduce the vulnerability of girls and women, strengthen cooperation amongst all relevant actors, track illicit financial flows used for trafficking purposes, and protect victims at all stages of their migratory status.³²⁸ In addition, CSW emphasized the importance of migrant women to the achievement of sustainable development in countries of origin, transit, and destination.³²⁹ However, CSW also identified that migrant girls and women are vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and experiencing different forms of gender-based violence, and it recognized the importance of social and economic inclusion to protect migrant women from these threats.³³⁰ The Beijing Declaration provides actions to secure the rights of women and is being reviewed by CSW every 5 years to address the challenges in implementation.³³¹ For the upcoming 65th session that is to take place in March 2021, CSW’s theme will continue to focus on “women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”³³²

Other agencies also contribute to the fight against trafficking, particularly of migrant women and girls, such as IOM that provides protection and assistance to victims and supports governments by enhancing their capacity to prevent human trafficking.³³³ UNHCR works to prevent trafficking of refugees, to identify victims’ needs, and to assist Member States in ensuring that victims receive identification documentation and legal protection.³³⁴ Both agencies work together in regions currently affected by large migratory flows,

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ UN ECOSOC, *Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (E/RES/2015/23)*, 2015.

³²² UN-Women, *Towards a Global Compact on Migration That Works For Migrant Women*, 2017.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ UN-Women, *Recommendations for addressing women’s human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*, 2016.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ CSW, *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*, 2019, p. 4.

³²⁷ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

³³⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

³³¹ UN DGC, *Gender Equality*.

³³² UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

³³³ IOM, *Counter-Trafficking*, 2019.

³³⁴ UNHCR, *Human Trafficking*, 2019.

such as Latin America, Eastern Europe, and South East and Pacific Asia.³³⁵ In 2017, the Regional Ministerial Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa produced the *Khartoum Declaration* focusing on increased capacity, technological knowledge sharing, and improved cooperation.³³⁶ IOM has worked with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.Gift) to research best practices for businesses to prevent human trafficking.³³⁷

The EU considers human trafficking a form of “structural violence” that affects women and girls in particular.³³⁸ To build awareness and increase targeted financial resources and support to combat violence against women and girls, the EU, in cooperation with the UN, established the Spotlight Initiative.³³⁹ Based on the principles of the 2030 Agenda, the Spotlight Initiative encourages Member States to commit to recognizing SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (rule of law and peaceful societies) in their efforts to address trafficking of women and girls.³⁴⁰ Furthermore, the EU fights against human trafficking and provides protection to victims through its main binding legislation EU Anti-trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU).³⁴¹ The directive aims to provide support to victims of human trafficking by identifying and reducing the causes of trafficking and working in collaboration with Member States to develop anti-trafficking legislation.³⁴² The directive promotes gender-specific assistance and legislation to protect and assist women and girls since they may face different challenges such as sex and gendered labor exploitation.³⁴³

The African Union (AU) works in cooperation with the EU through different actions such as the *Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings Especially Women and Children* (2006) to prevent illicit migration and trafficking in Africa.³⁴⁴ The Ouagadougou Action Plan recognizes that poverty and challenging socioeconomic conditions are drivers of human trafficking and any actions taken should recognize the gender-perspective.³⁴⁵ In addition, the Action Plan advocates for Member States to adopt prevention measures to improve the lives of individuals vulnerable to human trafficking, provide support to victims, and enforce criminal justice mechanisms.³⁴⁶ To encourage the adoption and implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan, the AU created the Commission Initiative Against Trafficking (AU.COMMIT).³⁴⁷ To further strengthen these efforts, the AU launched the AU Horn of Africa Initiative in 2014 with the goal of promoting the important objectives of the Ouagadougou Action Plan and AU.COMMIT while also gathering data, shared experiences, and proved mechanisms to protect migrants and combat human trafficking.³⁴⁸

There are numerous non-governmental organizations that focus on protecting women in migration from human trafficking, sexual slavery, and sexual exploitation, such as the Women in Migration Network, Free the Girl, 3 Strands Global, Free the Slaves, Global Modern Slavery Directory, International Justice

³³⁵ UNHCR, *Refugees and migrants from Venezuela top 4 million: UNHCR and IOM*, 2019.

³³⁶ UN General Assembly, *Trafficking in Women and Girls (A/RES/73/146)*, 2019, p. 7.

³³⁷ UN.Gift, *Human Trafficking and Business: Good Practices to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking*, 2010, p. 5.

³³⁸ European Commission, *EU Legislation: Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2019.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² EU, *Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims, and Replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA (2011/36/EU)*, 2011, p. 1.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁴⁴ AU, *AU.COMMIT Campaign: When the Fight Against Trafficking Becomes a Priority for Africa*, 2018.

³⁴⁵ AU, *Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children as Adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, Tripoli, 22-23 November 2006*, 2006, pp. 2-4.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.

³⁴⁷ AU, *Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030)*, 2018, p. 51.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Mission, Not for Sale, and Plan International.³⁴⁹ For instance, the Women in Migration Network works for the promotion of women's rights during migration and is a part of the Global Coalition on Migration.³⁵⁰ The Global Coalition on Migration provides space for the discussion and information sharing of best methods, strategies, and tools for regional and international networks.³⁵¹ The Women in Migration Network is a participant at CSW to promote the development of policies on the rights of women during migration.³⁵²

Protecting Migrant Women through Sustainable Development and Progress Tracking

UN-Women recognizes the impactful contributions of female migrants in achieving sustainable development.³⁵³ Given that migration profoundly impacts development, consideration of the 2030 Agenda can bring coherence among efforts to provide safe migratory solutions and long-term protections and opportunities for migrants, especially for women.³⁵⁴ For instance, SDG target 5.2 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including sexual exploitation and human trafficking.³⁵⁵ According to UNODC, women trying to leave volatile socio-economic conditions can be easily contacted and deceived into smuggling and trafficking, accepting fraudulent job offers in neighboring countries or fraudulent marriage proposals for exploitation purposes.³⁵⁶ Adoption of a gender-based approach to national migratory policies can help reduce discriminatory and exploitative practices.³⁵⁷ Migrant women are provided sustainable long-term inclusive socio-economic opportunities by mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into national migratory policies.³⁵⁸ These policies are designed to protect migrant women from human trafficking and sexual exploitation.³⁵⁹ Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into national migratory policies also creates policies with greater human rights protection.³⁶⁰ Data collection and monitoring systems also serve to ensure sustainability.³⁶¹

While over the last ten years detection of trafficking victims has significantly increased worldwide, UNODC in 2016 received national reports on human trafficking advancements from 97 Member States.³⁶² These reports reflected that almost 30,000 migrants were victims of trafficking organizations, of which the majority are women.³⁶³ Today, many countries have notably improved their capabilities for identifying victims and tracking traffickers and they are able to report more accurate data to relevant UN organizations and partnerships.³⁶⁴ By 2018, 65 countries reported to have anti-trafficking and data-collecting institutions.³⁶⁵

Collection of data is of utmost importance for a comprehensive understanding of the different dimensions of human trafficking since it allows Member States and relevant organizations to identify measures to better protect rescued victims and, based on testimonies, track potential new trafficking victims.³⁶⁶ The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela is a current example of how sharing information can facilitate cooperation and coordination amongst relevant actors

³⁴⁹ *How to help: Anti-trafficking organizations around the world*, CNN, 2018.

³⁵⁰ Women in Migration Network, *About Us*, 2020.

³⁵¹ GCM, *About*, 2020.

³⁵² Women in Migration Network, *About Us*, 2020.

³⁵³ UN-Women, *Recommendations for addressing women's human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*, 2016.

³⁵⁴ IOM, *Migration and the 2030 Agenda: A Guide for Practitioners*, 2018, pp. 11-12.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24.

³⁵⁶ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, p. 12.

³⁵⁷ IOM, *Migration in the 2030 Agenda*, 2017, p. 61.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁶² UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, p. 7.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

of 16 countries to prevent human trafficking, sexual slavery, and sexual exploitation of migrant women.³⁶⁷ In this particular case, collecting and sharing data also permits relevant actors to identify people living under exploitation and transnational criminal human trafficking organizations, particularly girls and women.³⁶⁸

Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution

The UN TIP Protocol called on Member States to enhance their national capabilities in order to prevent trafficking, protect victims and witnesses, and prosecute perpetrators.³⁶⁹ These measures represent an international political framework for the protection of victims and vulnerable persons such as girls and women in migration.³⁷⁰ Statistics and data should be used to build prevention, protection, and prosecution policies.³⁷¹ Women and girls in migration are victims of discrimination simply based on their migratory status and this represents a major barrier for their inclusion in host communities and labor markets.³⁷² In addition, women also suffer abuse, sexual harassment, and stigma, which may facilitate trafficker's recruitment of victims and the confinement of victims for sexual slavery and exploitation.³⁷³ Protection of migrants, especially girls and women, requires response efforts focusing on the creation of an improved social, political, and legal environment for social and economic inclusion of migrants in transit and hosting countries.³⁷⁴

It is important to use a gendered perspective in the creation of national legal policies and frameworks.³⁷⁵ A gendered perspective is having women's and men's concerns involved in policy forming and monitoring.³⁷⁶ UN General Assembly resolution 73/146 recommends that Member States implement gender-sensitive measures in prevention of trafficking and the protection of victims.³⁷⁷ One way to attain this is by strengthening the participation of civil society organizations representing victims.³⁷⁸ This can also be achieved through empowering female victims.³⁷⁹ The legal policies and frameworks need to be people focused.³⁸⁰ The use and consideration of a gendered perspective assists both female and male victims.³⁸¹ Migration policies and workers' rights need be gender-sensitive to ensure that women are not exploited in migration or the workforce.³⁸²

Cooperation among relevant institutions plays a key role in the identification of trafficking patterns, routes, and organizations with the ultimate goal to prevent and take systematic action against trafficking in persons.³⁸³ For instance, ICAT serves as a platform for members such as UN-Women, IOM, and UNHCR to assist Member States in their efforts to improve the international response and combat human trafficking by focusing on the objectives put forth by the UN TIP Protocol.³⁸⁴ UN agencies and Member

³⁶⁷ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela*, 2019, p. 108.

³⁶⁸ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, p. 15.

³⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000; UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104)*, 1993, Article 4.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² UNFPA, *Five reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*, 2018.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela*, 2019, pp. 108-109.

³⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Trafficking in Women and Girls (A/RES/73/146)*, 2019, p. 4.

³⁷⁶ EIGE, *Gendered Perspective*, 2020.

³⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Trafficking in Women and Girls (A/RES/73/146)*, 2019, p. 4.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁸⁰ Women in Migration Network, *About Us*, 2020.

³⁸¹ ICAT, *The Gender Dimension on Human Trafficking*, 2017, p. 1.

³⁸² Women in Migration Network, *About Us*, 2020.

³⁸³ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, p. 8.

³⁸⁴ ICAT, *The Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons*, 2019.

States work together to effectively strengthen their national capabilities to combat human trafficking, especially by protecting migrant girls and women, through the advance of early-detection mechanisms, the creation of specialized anti-trafficking institutions, the reduction of impunity on identified cases, and fostering the cooperation with other national or international relevant actors working with persons in migration.³⁸⁵

Furthermore, measures to protect migrant women necessitate that national efforts also include protections for victims of trafficking by ensuring and respecting their human rights.³⁸⁶ Instead of criminalizing victims, Member States are called to act according to international instruments in order to facilitate return or the effective integration of victims within host communities and economies.³⁸⁷ For instance, easy process to obtain identification documents is an imperative to protect victims.³⁸⁸ Witness protection is also important for data collection and accelerating the detention of traffickers and prosecuting them for criminal actions.³⁸⁹ Prosecution and conviction of traffickers is another essential element to prevent trafficking and protect victims.³⁹⁰ Prosecution and convictions of trafficking cases are still low and not all Member States have incorporated all the provisions of the UN TIP Protocol into their national legal frameworks.³⁹¹ There is a need for stronger legal frameworks that uphold the objectives of the UN TIP Protocol to help close the gaps in the judicial process for the criminalization of trafficking-related crimes by ensuring that enforcement of anti-trafficking laws and prosecution of criminals and by providing protection and social welfare support to victims, including migrants.³⁹² The Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal hosts a case law database, which contains documented court cases and legislation regarding trafficking of persons to help build criminal cases against traffickers.³⁹³

To provide a comprehensive response for the protection of migrant women, CSW encourages the adoption of stronger social and legal systems for the empowerment of women.³⁹⁴ To achieve this, CSW has recommended that Member States strengthen their normative, legal, and policy frameworks through the implementation of comprehensive anti-trafficking and law enforcement strategies based on a human rights, sustainable development, gender-based, age-based, and migratory-status perspective.³⁹⁵ CSW has further encouraged Member States to adopt, increase, or improve policies related to criminal offences, frameworks for extradition, foster legal and technical cooperation with other Member States, and to increase the training for capacity building of national authorities working on this matter.³⁹⁶

Conclusion

Even though human trafficking is a crime that affects both men and women, it particularly affects girls and women in migration.³⁹⁷ Today's world is facing an unprecedented migration flow due to the multiple and diverse conflicts taking place globally.³⁹⁸ Human trafficking has increased parallel to migratory trends and

³⁸⁵ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, pp. 7-9.

³⁸⁶ OHCHR, *Human Rights and Human Trafficking Fact Sheet 36*, 2014, p. 17.

³⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000.

³⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Human Trafficking*, 2019.

³⁸⁹ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, p. 15.

³⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000.

³⁹¹ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, pp. 8-10.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

³⁹³ UNODC, *UNODC on trafficking in person and smuggling of migrants*.

³⁹⁴ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018*, 2018, pp. 8-10.

³⁹⁵ CSW, *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*, 2019.

³⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000.

³⁹⁷ UNFPA, *Five Reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*, 2018.

³⁹⁸ UNODC, *UNODC on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants*, 2019.

more girls and women are being recruited or abducted by criminal organizations.³⁹⁹ This reality demands more effective action from international organizations, governments, and other relevant actors to widen the effective implementation of the UN TIP Protocol and other mechanisms for the prevention of trafficking of migrant girls and women; the protection of identified and rescued victims; and the prosecution and conviction of traffickers, sexual enslavers, and exploiters.⁴⁰⁰ In addition, cooperation and coordination can lead to a strong response and victim protection from trafficking, sexual slavery, and sexual exploitation of migrant girls and women.⁴⁰¹

Further Research

As delegates consider the different needs of women and girls that are victims of human trafficking and related crimes, they should consider questions such as: What recommendations in relation to the prevention of the trafficking in migrant girls and women, can CSW make to strengthen international cooperation? How can Member States improve the implementation of the UN TIP Protocol, in particular the protection, prevention, and prosecution measures? What kind of actions would facilitate the cooperation amongst Member States for the identification of transnational migrants' trafficking networks? How can Member States improve their mechanisms of data collection? What kind of recommendations can CSW make to Member States to improve their law enforcement and prosecution of traffickers? How can Member States respond to large migratory movements where girls and women are particularly vulnerable? How can Member States improve or enhance their mechanisms of protection to victims?

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International Organization for Migration. (2019). *Migration and the 2030 Agenda: A Guide for Practitioners*. Retrieved 29 October 2020 from: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/sdg_en.pdf

This extensive guide provides an overview on how migration affects development and vice versa. The guide emphasizes that improved migration policies can have a positive effect in development while overarching development policies can improve the socio-economic situation for migrants. This guide connects the SDGs with challenges faced by migrants, including human trafficking and sexual violence and provides recommendations on how to overcome those challenges. Delegates will find this source useful as they determine how sustainable development can aid in the prevention and protection of migrant women and girls from human trafficking and sexual violence.

United Nations, General Assembly, Fifty-fifth session. (2000). *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*. Retrieved 25 August 2020 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/55/25>

This Protocol is the core international binding instrument on the matter. It includes all the legal definitions, prescriptions, and obligations that State parties should follow in order to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute criminals. In addition, it highlights the importance of cooperation and support among Member States to achieve these objectives. Delegates can use this document to have a deep understanding of this approach and the implications of the current mechanisms that exist for the international response to human trafficking and related crimes such as sexual slavery and exploitation.

³⁹⁹ UNFPA, *Five Reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*, 2018.

⁴⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000.

⁴⁰¹ CSW, *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*, 2019.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth-third session. (2019). *Trafficking in Women and Girls* (). Adopted on the report of the Third Committee (A/73/582). Retrieved 19 July 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/146>

This resolution provides important information related to the UN's efforts towards the prevention and sanction of the trafficking in women and girls. It addresses the relation that exists between high migratory flows and the increase of human trafficking activities globally. It also makes further recommendations to Member States regarding prevention and protection of women and girls from transnational organized crime. These recommendations include mainstreaming the issue of human trafficking into their national policies and programs, and warranting victims the right to effective remedy. It also requests CSW to address the needs of women and girls subjected to human trafficking. Delegates can use this source in order to understand the current political significance of this topic.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2018). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. Retrieved 20 July 2020 from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GLOTiP_2018_BOOK_web_small.pdf

This report presents technical, quantitative, and qualitative information that reveals the current status of crimes related to trafficking in persons, including women and girls. This report includes relevant data regarding migration and its links with trafficking. This information was developed by IOM's Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative. Delegates will find this report insightful as it provides a deep understanding on how migration is correlated to the increase of trafficking, especially in those regions with high levels of conflict, impunity, and migration outflows. In this report, delegates can find updated human trafficking information about all regions of the world.

United Nations Population Fund. (2018, April 9). *Five Reasons Migration is a Feminist Issue*. Retrieved 27 August 2020 from: <https://www.unfpa.org/news/five-reasons-migration-feminist-issue>

This article contains relevant data related to how women are vulnerable when they are in migration. This source contributes with up-to-date information and provides a socio-economic insight to the female migratory reality. This document explains five main reasons why migration should be handled from a gender-perspective. Delegates can see updated information and facts that reflect the conditions and threats that women have to face during the migratory process. This source contains synthesized information that can provide delegates with a broad understanding of the topic.

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