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## COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN BACKGROUND GUIDE 2018

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# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2018 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to welcome you to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This year's staff are: Directors Estefani Morales-Zanoletti (Conference A) and Maya Kazamel (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Nanako Ueda (Conference A) and Caitlin M. Hopper (Conference B). Estefani has a B.A. in International Relations from San Francisco State University and an M.Sc. in Environment, Politics, and Globalization from King's College London. She currently works for a U.S. Member of the House of Representatives near San Francisco, California. Maya has a B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering from the American University in Cairo. She currently works at JLL, a commercial real estate services company in Dubai. Nanako Ueda is completing her studies in International Relations in Japan.. Caitlin has a B.A. in International Studies and currently works at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington DC.

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

1. Promoting the Involvement of Women and Youth in Government
2. Combating Violence against Women Migrant Workers
3. Empowering Women and Girls in Rural Contexts

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal intergovernmental body entirely dedicated to the advancement and advocacy of gender equality and the empowerment of women around the globe. The Commission prepares reports presented to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on the status of women's equality and its progress in furthering this cause. Additionally, the Commission produces Agreed Conclusions on the priority theme discussed at its annual plenary meeting. In order to accurately simulate the Commission, it will be key for delegates to emulate the normative and best practice-setting approaches of the Commission's annual plenary meetings.

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 2018 in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

Two resources, 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 Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Alexander Rudolph (Conference A) and Samantha Winn (Conference B), at [usg.ecosoc@nmun.org](mailto:usg.ecosoc@nmun.org)

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

## Conference A

Estefani Morales-Zanoletti, Director  
Nanako Ueda, Assistant Director

## Conference B

Maya Kazamel, Director  
Caitlin M. Hopper, Assistant Director



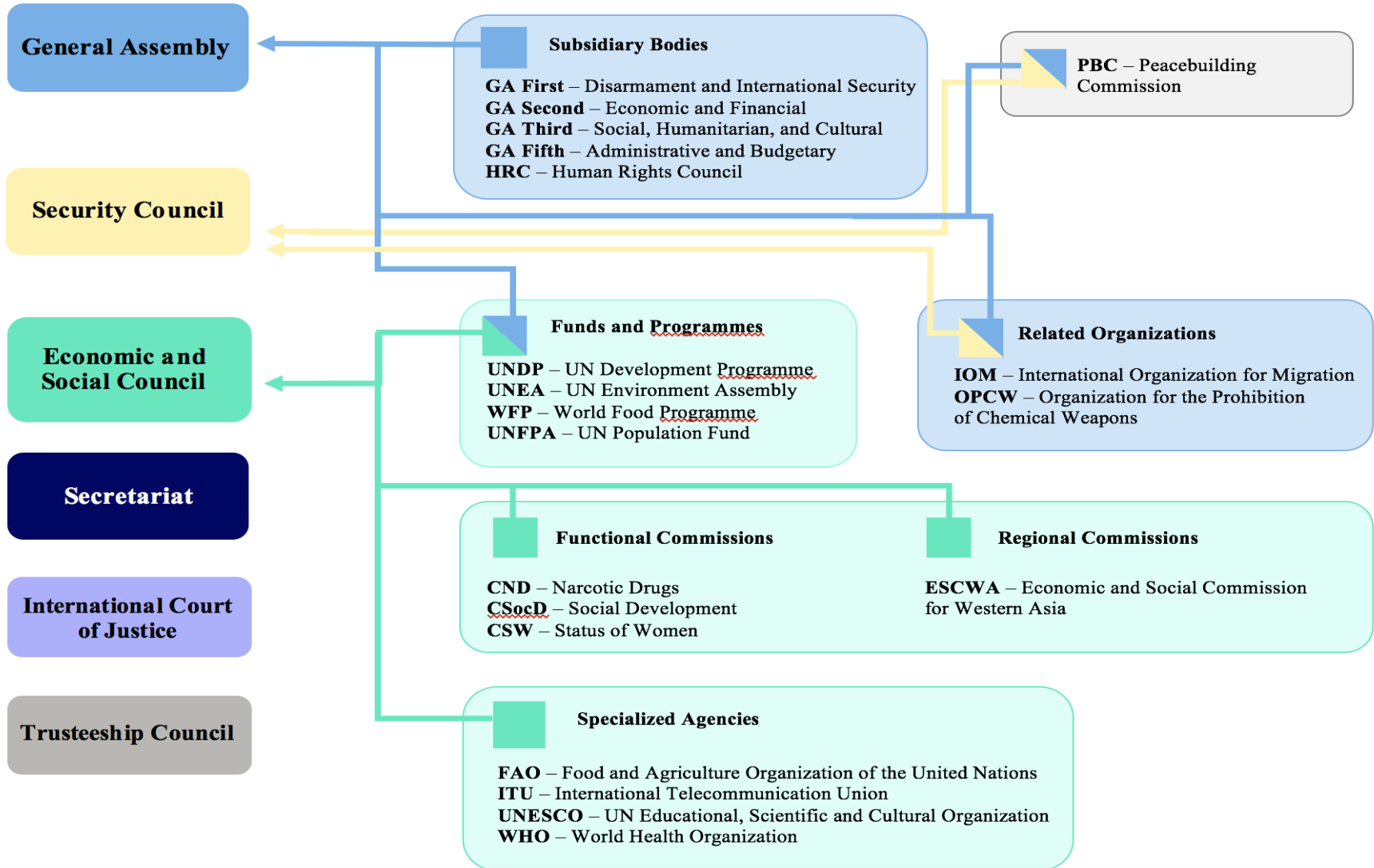
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## United Nations System at NMUN•NY

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.





## Abbreviations

<b>ACHIEVE</b>	Action for Health Initiatives
<b>ACW</b>	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations Committee on Women
<b>ASEAN</b>	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BPfA</b>	<i>Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action</i>
<b>CEDAW</b>	<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>
<b>CLOC</b>	Coordinating Committee of Rural Organizations
<b>CRC</b>	<i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>EGM</b>	Expert group meeting
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCM</b>	Global Compact for Migration
<b>HLPF</b>	High-Level Political Forum
<b>IAEG-SDGs</b>	Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators
<b>ICCPR</b>	<i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</i>
<b>ICESCR</b>	<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>
<b>ICRMW</b>	<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families</i>
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFPRI</b>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<b>IGO</b>	Intergovernmental organization
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Office for Migration
<b>IPU</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>JMDI</b>	Joint Migration and Development Initiative
<b>LAT</b>	Legal Assessment Tool
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>PHAMIT</b>	Prevention of HIV/AIDS Among Migrant Workers in Thailand
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UDHR</b>	<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i>
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UN Trust Fund</b>	United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women
<b>UN-SWAP</b>	United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UN-Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>WAD</b>	Women's Action for Development
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WIEGO</b>	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing
<b>WPAY</b>	<i>World Programme of Action on Youth</i>
<b>Youth4GG</b>	Youth 4 Global Goals

## Committee Overview

*“We now have only 13 years until 2030. Every week and every month counts. So does the scale of the change we achieve, which must also benefit the displaced persons. This Commission on the Status of Women must not be the Commission on the Status Quo.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

More than 20 years after the United Nations (UN) General Assembly’s adoption of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (1993), it is estimated that over than 70% of women have been victims of sexual or physical abuse in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup> In Africa and the Middle East, more than 120 million girls alive today have been subjected to genital mutilation.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), only 22.5% of members in parliaments worldwide are women, one of many challenges for women’s participation in decision-making and within the political system.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the Women’s Major Group, which facilitates the contributions of women’s CSOs in the UN’s work on sustainable development, has stressed the prevailing economic discrimination of women, who take on about 80% of the burden of domestic and unpaid care work.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the informal work sector is the main source of employment for women worldwide, especially in developing countries.<sup>6</sup> Women are estimated to make up to 85% of all home-based workers alone and are often subjected to larger gender pay gaps in this sector, which leads to cycles of poverty and inequality.<sup>7</sup> These figures demonstrate the need for further action by the international community to promote gender equality, especially within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to focus on ending the most pervasive form of discrimination of our times: the discrimination against women and girls.<sup>8</sup>

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the main intergovernmental policymaking body within the UN in the area of women’s empowerment, promotion of women’s rights, and gender equality.<sup>9</sup> It is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), reporting to ECOSOC annually.<sup>10</sup> Its main priority is to mainstream gender equality within the UN system and link women’s empowerment to sustainable development.<sup>11</sup> Together with the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and civil society actors, the Commission worked to guarantee that the SDGs, adopted during the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, not only included a standalone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5), but also mainstreamed a gender perspective within all goals.<sup>12</sup> CSW and its secretariat, UN-Women, are the most significant international actors working with Member States and civil society in order to create a discrimination-free world where women and girls are able to fully participate in the economic, political, and social spheres of their societies.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UN-Women, *Opening statement by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women for the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> UN-Women, *Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women*, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> UN DESA, *The World’s Women 2015, Trends and Statistics*, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments*, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Women’s Major Group, *Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 Presents a Bold Vision for Women and Girls Advocates Gear Up for Work to Come*, 2015; Women’s Major Group, *The Women’s Group Role and Organisation*.

<sup>6</sup> Alter Chen, *Women in the Informal Sector: A Global Picture, the Global Movement*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Established Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 66/288*, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> UN-Women, *Governments Endorse New Roles for Women’s Commission: The UN Commission on the Status of Women revamps working methods to raise the stakes in advancing women’s equality, empowerment and rights*, 2015.

In 1946, the first efforts by the UN to address women's issues were carried out in a sub-commission under the Commission on Human Rights.<sup>14</sup> However, it became clear that the empowerment of women deserved more attention and stronger commitment from Member States.<sup>15</sup> As a result of the debates in 1946, CSW was established as a fully functional commission in the same year under the auspices of ECOSOC through ECOSOC resolution 11(II).<sup>16</sup>

Since its installation as a full commission, CSW has been the driving force behind the ongoing process of creating and implementing international norms related to the advancement of women.<sup>17</sup> CSW's work is mainly guided by the principles of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (1979), the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA) (1995), and the outcome document of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly as a follow-up to BPfA, entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (2000).<sup>18</sup> Additionally, UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women, Peace and Security" has been an influential guiding document.<sup>19</sup> In particular, the BPfA is crucial for CSW's work since it outlined the goals that the international community has set in order to achieve gender equality, such as ensuring the full implementation of women's human rights and promoting women's economic independence.<sup>20</sup>

2015 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the BPfA.<sup>21</sup> Beijing+20 took place at a crucial moment for the UN, during the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the newly adopted SDGs.<sup>22</sup> Beijing+20 drew particular attention to 12 critical areas of concern for the continued empowerment of women including violence against women, women and economy, women and the media, and women and poverty.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Governance, Structure, and Membership***

The Commission consists of 45 Member States, elected for four-year terms.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> The chair and the four vice-chairs of the Commission's Bureau rotate without specific geographical regulations and are elected for two-year terms.<sup>26</sup> The Bureau addresses 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 providing the findings as a summary of the chair.<sup>27</sup> 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 expert group meetings.<sup>28</sup> The Bureau is supported in its actions by UN-Women, which provides the Commission 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.<sup>29</sup> The Commission works together with the General Assembly and ECOSOC in a multi-tiered intergovernmental process to provide normative guidance to achieve of gender equality.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>14</sup> UN CSW, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> UN-Women, *A Brief History of the CSW*.

<sup>18</sup> UN CSW, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, pp. 9-15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> UN General Assembly, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> UN-Women, *Beijing+20: Recommitting for Women and Girls*, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> UN-Women, *Summary Report: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016, p. 156.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-160.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>27</sup> UN CSW, *Report on the 59<sup>th</sup> session (E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10)*, 2015, pp. 11-15.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, pp. 9-11.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

In 2010, the UN's institutional setup and operational framework engaged on women's issues underwent significant restructuring in order to streamline efforts in achieving goals on gender equality.<sup>31</sup> The four major UN agencies that addressed women's issues merged and resulted in the establishment of UN-Women.<sup>32</sup> As of 2010, UN-Women is the secretariat of CSW and provides guidance for operational activities aimed at the advancement of women.<sup>33</sup> Today, UN-Women supports the work of CSW substantively by providing annual documentation on critical areas of concern regarding gender equality and facilitates the interaction between the Commission and CSOs at its annual meeting, which is a key factor in the advancement of women on all levels.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Commission has one Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women, which is in charge of producing a yearly report to CSW identifying "trends and patterns of reliably-attested injustice and discriminatory practices against women."<sup>35</sup>

In June 2015, ECOSOC adopted resolution 2015/6 to define the future organization and methods of work of CSW.<sup>36</sup> ECOSOC determined that the 60<sup>th</sup> session of CSW, held in 2016, had to include a ministerial segment, an interactive dialogue structured in roundtables among Ministers representing the governments of several Member States, in order to "reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to realization of gender equality and the empowerment of Women."<sup>37</sup> The segment included ministerial roundtables focusing on the exchange of experiences and good practice, leading to a general discussion on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, ECOSOC requested the UN Secretary-General to submit a report annually to the UN General Assembly based on the evaluation of the progress made on the issue of the review theme.<sup>39</sup>

### ***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."<sup>40</sup> This mandate has been 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, respectively.<sup>41</sup> As a result of the Fourth World Conference and the adoption of the BPfA, ECOSOC decided that CSW, as its primary responsibility, must take actions to mainstream "a gender perspective in policies and programmes," as well as to assist ECOSOC and Member States in the implementation and achievement of the goals set in the BPfA.<sup>42</sup> This was re-emphasized at the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly in 2000, which set the goal of full gender equality.<sup>43</sup>

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. These methods of work have been examined and expanded several times by ECOSOC within the last 11 years in ECOSOC resolutions 2006/9, 2009/15, and 2013/18 in order to ensure coherence with the work of the Council. 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.<sup>44</sup> At its annual meetings, CSW adopts resolutions that are included in an annual report to ECOSOC.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>31</sup> UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, pp. 8-14.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> UN-Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women (A/RES/2015/6)*, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; UN-Women, *CSW60 (2016)*, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women (A/RES/2015/6)*, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Commission on the Status of Women (Res. 11(II))*, 1946, p. 525.

<sup>41</sup> UN CSW, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, pp. 9-15.

<sup>42</sup> 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.

<sup>43</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



The Commission will continue to meet annually to provide policy guidance to UN Member States and other relevant UN entities in the form of Agreed Conclusions on its priority and review theme and resolutions on emerging issues and trends in gender equality and women’s empowerment.<sup>46</sup> The Commission continues to organize the Beijing reviews and use the momentum therein to recommit Member States and strengthen their political will.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, CSW 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 enhance their work.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Recent Sessions and Current Priorities***

During its 61<sup>st</sup> session, CSW produced a document on its agreed conclusions for how solutions to the theme can be followed through by governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations (CSOs).<sup>49</sup> Among the conclusions are an emphasis on strengthening the rule of law and encouraging Member States to implement policies in the workplace to further women’s equality and access to similar benefits and pay.<sup>50</sup> Some of the policies encouraged for adoption by Member States include requiring women have the same access to pensions and equal pay, encourage fair valuation of pay for domestic workers and caregivers, require that employers grant fair access to good health systems, including maternal care, and improve the safety of women in the workplace.<sup>51</sup> In line with these conclusions, CSW created draft resolution 2017/L.4 (2017), which calls on Member States to adopt policies addressing sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.<sup>52</sup>

During ECOSOC’s 2017 session, CSW presented its report on its 61<sup>st</sup> session to the Council.<sup>53</sup> Chair-elect for CSW David Donohue provided a summary on CSW’s work during the session, emphasizing its findings and the actions recommended by the Commission.<sup>54</sup> Mr. Donohue emphasized the commission’s work on their most recent theme, “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work.”<sup>55</sup> In particular, Mr. Donohue highlighted the recommendations made by the commission to strengthen education, and how to provide better training and education to enhance girls’ skills so that they are better prepared for the changing labor sector.<sup>56</sup> Partnerships were outlined as an important way to achieve real success toward creating better opportunities for women and girls in the workforce and more data gathering would be key to monitoring success that can be repeated in future programs.<sup>57</sup> Lakshmi Puri, Executive-Director of UN-Women, presented a report entitled “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.”<sup>58</sup> The report covered progress made toward the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.<sup>59</sup> While the report notes that political will and investment in gender mainstreaming policies are important to seeing gender parity within the UN system, mechanisms and tools which collected data and created accountability were most important to seeing actual change.<sup>60</sup> The progress showed that with greater use of data gathering and their tools, that accountability can be greatly enhanced in gender mainstreaming initiatives.<sup>61</sup> With help from UN agencies, Member

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<sup>46</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and methods of work of CSW (E/RES/2015/6)*, 2015, pp. 2-3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> UN CSW, *Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work (E/CN.6/2017L.5)*, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Preventing and eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace (E/CN.6/2017/L.4)*, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Adopts Texts on Sustainable Development Goals, Women, Non-communicable Diseases, as Coordination, Management Session Commences (ECOSOC/6846)*, 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system*, 2017, p.

States were able to better track the progress of programs and initiatives that resulted in reports to these agencies and enhanced accountability.<sup>62</sup>

### **Conclusion**

CSW has reached major accomplishments in setting global standards, establishing a legally binding framework for gender equality, and promoting women's rights in all spheres. Furthermore, CSW will continue to follow up on the final implementation of the BPfA and outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly, as well as assess the progress of women's advancement within the framework of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the SDGs.<sup>63</sup> In the past year, there has been increased attention on achieving equality for women in labor in addition to how this can address the SDGs, reduce poverty, malnutrition among children, hunger, and maternal health.<sup>64</sup> Education, training programs, and data gathering are repeatedly cited as important tools in preparing women and girls for the changing world of work and is an area the commission has done a great deal of work in within the last year.<sup>65</sup> With the help of CSOs, expert meetings, and UN-Women reports, CSW can continue to identify prevailing and newly emerging gaps and challenges to gender equality and address them in an effective manner in their annual meetings advising ECOSOC to take action accordingly to empower women on a local, national, regional, and global level. CSW is setting the pace for change by establishing more and more progressive norms and standards, advising Member States how to accomplish full gender equality.<sup>66</sup>

### **Annotated Bibliography**

New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2016). *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*. Retrieved 22 August 2017 from: [https://mfat.govt.nz/assets/securedfiles/Handbooks/United\\_Nations\\_Handbook-2016-2017.pdf](https://mfat.govt.nz/assets/securedfiles/Handbooks/United_Nations_Handbook-2016-2017.pdf)

*The United Nations Handbook, produced by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, offers up-to-date information on membership and Bureau composition of CSW. Furthermore, it clarifies the purpose, evolution, and structure of the Commission in a concise and easily understandable style. It gives reference to the most important ECOSOC and General Assembly resolutions regarding the mandate and structure of the commission. It is an essential, quick, and easy to read summary of what the commission is, how it functions, and what its mandate is. This is highly valuable for delegates to reference as they think of ways the commission could potentially react to issues discussed during committee.*

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2017). *Preventing and eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace (E/CN.6/2017/L.4)* [Draft Resolution]. Retrieved 17 July 2017 from:

<http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2017/L.4>

*This draft resolution, created during CSW's sixty-first session, resolves to address the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. Recommendations are provided to Member States to combat this issue including raising awareness and creating legal mechanisms for women to pursue if a victim of sexual harassment in the workplace, among others. This draft resolution is one of the most recent conversations of CSW and demonstrates its ability to use discussions and turn them into global, concerted, action. Delegates will find this very useful in getting to know the current findings and focus of CSW.*

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<sup>62</sup> UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system*, 2017, p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>64</sup> UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Adopts Texts on Sustainable Development Goals, Women, Non-communicable Diseases, as Coordination, Management Session Commences (ECOSOC/6846)*, 2017; UN CSW, *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work (E/CN.6/2017L.5)*, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Adopts Texts on Sustainable Development Goals, Women, Non-communicable Diseases, as Coordination, Management Session Commences (ECOSOC/6846)*, 2017; UN CSW, *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work (E/CN.6/2017L.5)*, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> UN 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.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2017). *Report on the sixty-first session (E/2017/27)*. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2017/27>

*This report summarizes the overall conclusions taken from the CSW's sixty-first meeting in March 2017. The document highlights what attendees of the session agreed on about their conversations during the session. The final conclusions are agreed on by all Member States and encompass the comprehensive work of all of the discussions held at the meeting. Some of the conclusions reached include strengthening legal frameworks to advance women's empowerment within the workplace, encouragement to implement policies that protect women against sexual harassment in the work place, and calls for the guaranteeing of maternity care for women employees. Delegates will gain insight into the latest themes in focus within CSW and be able to learn what their goals are moving forward from the session.*

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2017). *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work (E/CN.6/2017/L.5)* [Agreed Conclusions]. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2017/L.5>

*This resolution highlights conclusions taken from the sixty-first session and highlights the challenges women face in the workplace. The resolution points out that challenges exist systemically, which affect women in the world of work at all levels, from junior positions, to senior managerial, and ownership positions. Delegates should read these conclusions to gain knowledge on the broad conclusions CSW takes from meetings such as this, and how their conclusions are communicated to external entities.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Beijing+20: Recommitting for Women and Girls* [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved 27 August 2017 from:

[http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/intergovsupport/unw\\_beijing\\_brief\\_v3%20pdf.pdf?v=2&d=20150226T212442](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/intergovsupport/unw_beijing_brief_v3%20pdf.pdf?v=2&d=20150226T212442)

*This source is a useful introduction to Beijing+20 and to the implementation of the BPfA. 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 before the deadline of 2030. This brief overview on Beijing+20 is a useful starting-source for further researches on the issues the Commission is dealing with.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website]. Retrieved 27 August 2017 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 60<sup>th</sup> (2016) and 61<sup>st</sup> (2017) 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.*

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## I. Promoting the Involvement of Women and Youth in Government

### *Introduction*

Involving women and youth in decision-making roles is vital in order to achieve peace, development, human rights, and justice.<sup>67</sup> The involvement of women and youth in government promotes democratic governance, improves political decision-making, and engenders the likelihood of implementing sustainable peace.<sup>68</sup> Past examples have demonstrated that involving women and youth in government gives rise to policies that promote gender equality, eliminate gender-based violence, and improve the social, economic, and political rights of women and children.<sup>69</sup> The United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) works to mainstream gender balance and highlight emerging issues facing women and young people, especially girls, in government.<sup>70</sup>

While the involvement of women and youth in government affairs has steadily increased over the past 20 years, it is still critically lower than the goals set by the international community.<sup>71</sup> Women remain significantly underrepresented in governance, voter participation, and leadership, especially at the highest levels of elected office, civil service, and the private sector.<sup>72</sup> As of 2017, only 16 women were serving as Head of State, and nine as Head of Government.<sup>73</sup> The number of women parliamentarians in lower houses of national parliaments reached 23.4% in 2017, which is only 10% higher than in 2000, and only 18.3% of national government ministers were women as of January 2017.<sup>74</sup> The proportion of women elected to local government is not tracked at the global level, which constitutes a major knowledge gap in women's representation.<sup>75</sup>

The UN defines youth as persons between 15 and 24 years old, although there are some cases in which the term can include individuals up to the age of 35.<sup>76</sup> Despite the fact that youth make up almost half of the world's population, young people are not highly involved in political decision-making.<sup>77</sup> As of 2016, less than two percent of global parliamentarians were under the age of 30.<sup>78</sup> Global voter turnout also continues to be lower for persons aged 18 to 25 than for other age groups, and a majority of Member States do not consult young people in policymaking and decision-making.<sup>79</sup>

There are a variety of political, economic, and social challenges that work against inclusivity in governmental practices.<sup>80</sup> Due to the slow progress in the involvement of women and youth, the international community has affirmed the need to strengthen political commitments and to pursue programs that promote the involvement of

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<sup>67</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, p. 13; UN-Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, 2015, pp. 42, 44; UNDP, *Empowering youth*, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015.

<sup>70</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

<sup>71</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, p. 26; UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 30; UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> UN-Women, *Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation*, 2017; UN-Women, *No more business as usual: UN seeks to raise women's participation in intergovernmental forums*, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5, 2017*; UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 8; UN-Women, *Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation*, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> UN-Women, *Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation*, 2017; Palmieri, *Measuring women's participation in local government*, 2014, p. 8.

<sup>76</sup> UNESCO, *What do we mean by "youth"?*, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> UN Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, *#YouthStats: Public and Civic Participation*, 2017.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013, p. 1.

women and youth through voting, caucuses, and increased representation.<sup>81</sup> Through capacity-building and the sharing of best practices, the international community can work more effectively toward mitigating the challenges facing women and youth in government.<sup>82</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

On the international level, the political rights of women have been highlighted and promoted in a multitude of conventions, declarations, and resolutions.<sup>83</sup> The International Bill of Human Rights, which serves as the cornerstone of the UN system's human rights framework, consists of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966) and its two Optional Protocols, and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966).<sup>84</sup> These instruments not only protect the inalienable rights of women and girls, but ensure equal participation in civil and political matters for all peoples.<sup>85</sup> Soon after its establishment, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* (1952), which established women's basic political rights, including the right to vote, the right to hold public office, and the right to run for office.<sup>86</sup> The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (1979) is considered the first international bill of rights for all women.<sup>87</sup> It urged Member States to eliminate all discrimination against women in the public sphere and promoted the right of women to serve and represent their country on the international stage.<sup>88</sup> The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA) was adopted in 1995, and outlined the importance of involving women, youth, policymakers, and relevant civil society organizations (CSOs) in decision-making processes.<sup>89</sup> The *Beijing Declaration* called upon governments to use specific targets and various measures to achieve gender equality in public office.<sup>90</sup>

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), which established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlights the importance of involving and empowering all vulnerable populations, including women and youth.<sup>91</sup> SDG 5 is dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.<sup>92</sup> SDG 4 centers around access to education and training for all and Target 5.5 focuses on ensuring women's full and effective participation in political and economic decision-making.<sup>93</sup> SDG 16 also considers the importance of ensuring that governmental organizations can effectively implement the SDGs through inclusive institutions.<sup>94</sup> The 2030 Agenda frames the significance of women's empowerment in its 20th clause:

Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality

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<sup>81</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5*, 2017; UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>84</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

<sup>85</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966, p. 50.

<sup>86</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women (A/RES/640 (VII))*, 1953.

<sup>87</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

<sup>89</sup> UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> UNDP, *Goal 5: Gender Equality*, 2017.

<sup>93</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 17; UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5*, 2017.

<sup>94</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 16*, 2017.



education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels.<sup>95</sup>

The rights of children and youth have been on the international agenda since before the establishment of the UN, though the notion of children's political rights did not emerge until the late 20th century.<sup>96</sup> 1989 saw the adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), which established the rights of children and youth to participation in decision-making processes, especially regarding policies that directly affect their lives.<sup>97</sup> The *World Programme of Action on Youth* (WPAY) was adopted by the General Assembly in 1995.<sup>98</sup> The WPAY focused mainly on providing youth with the tools to become involved in government through providing information to young people and strengthening youth caucuses.<sup>99</sup> The international community has since added to the WPAY, bringing further specificity to indicators of the goals outlined in the WPAY as well as calling to improve data collection and the measurement of these indicators.<sup>100</sup> The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that the political, economic, social, and environmental future of the international community lies in the hands of today's youth, and outlines the need for quality education and employment for young people in order to promote their involvement in sustainable development according to SDGs 4, 8, and 13.<sup>101</sup> Regardless of the target population or the need for capacity-building and training, the overall goal of these documents is to strengthen an individual's ability to perform in a public forum.<sup>102</sup>

Regionally, Member States have collaborated to create various frameworks in order to promote the involvement of women and youth in government.<sup>103</sup> The 1948 *Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women*, a document of the Organization of American States (OAS), was one of the first international documents explicitly dedicated to women's involvement in government.<sup>104</sup> The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee on Women (ACW) has adopted the *ACW Work Plan 2016-2020*, which highlights women's leadership and non-gender stereotyping in the public sector.<sup>105</sup> The European Commission has multiple frameworks and reports regarding women's involvement in governance, the most significant and contemporary of which is the *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*, which centers around involving women in the economy and in governance and decision-making.<sup>106</sup> The African Union (AU) recently released the *African Gender Scorecard*, which provides solid data on indicators of women's status in African states, including involvement in government.<sup>107</sup> All of these documents emphasize the importance of placing women in leadership and decision-making roles in order to promote sustainable peace and development in their respective regions.<sup>108</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

CSW is mandated to help implement the BPFA and to assist in mainstreaming a gendered perspective into UN activities.<sup>109</sup> Due to its interest in promoting women's political rights and their empowerment, CSW has taken a

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<sup>95</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> Save the Children, *History of children's human rights*.

<sup>97</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

<sup>98</sup> UN General Assembly, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/50/81)*, 1996, p. 16.

<sup>99</sup> UN DESA DPSD, *Participation WPAY*, 2017.

<sup>100</sup> UN DESA DPSD, *Youth development indicators*, 2017.

<sup>101</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 19-25.

<sup>102</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>103</sup> AU, *Women, Gender & Development*, 2017; OAS, *CIM Mission and Mandate*, 2017; ASEAN, *ASEAN Women unite to promote women's leadership*, 2016; European Commission, *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*, 2016.

<sup>104</sup> OAS, *Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women*, 1948.

<sup>105</sup> ASEAN, *ASEAN Women unite to promote women's leadership*, 2016.

<sup>106</sup> European Commission, *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*, 2016.

<sup>107</sup> AU Commission, *African Gender Scorecard*, 2015; AU, *Women, Gender, & Development*, 2017.

<sup>108</sup> OAS, *CIM Mission and Mandate*, 2017; ASEAN, *ASEAN Women unite to promote women's leadership*, 2016; European Commission, *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019*, 2016; AU, *Women, Gender & Development*, 2003.

<sup>109</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

multitude of actions to promote the involvement of women and youth, particularly girls, in government.<sup>110</sup> In its 60<sup>th</sup> session (CSW60), CSW discussed “strengthening women’s leadership and women’s full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development.”<sup>111</sup> CSW60 also highlighted the importance of training and education programs, as well as the implementation of special measures and affirmative action programs in order to increase the number of women in political leadership.<sup>112</sup> The 61<sup>st</sup> session of CSW (CSW61) centered around women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work.<sup>113</sup> During this session, there were also a large number of side events which brought together young people to strategize and contribute to policies to achieve gender equality and sustainable development.<sup>114</sup> These sessions hosted nearly 1000 youth diplomats and centered around the empowerment of young women.<sup>115</sup> Education, employment, and treatment of young women were highlighted as key aspects of promoting the involvement of youth, especially girls, in decision-making positions, thereby bolstering the future involvement of women in government.<sup>116</sup>

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and other UN entities have released a number of reports which outline specific steps that Member States can take in order to promote gender equity in governance and policymaking; among these are *Achieving Gender Equality: Women’s Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation*, published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and *Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*, published by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women.<sup>117</sup> ECOSOC held a 2017 Youth Forum in order to involve young people in sustainable development.<sup>118</sup> The forum revolved around strategies to engage youth in local, national, regional, and international efforts to achieve the SDGs.<sup>119</sup> In addition, Youth 4 Global Goals (Youth4GG) is a UN initiative that works to actively involve young people in the achievement of the SDGs.<sup>120</sup> Youth4GG engages youth on platforms of awareness, understanding, and action, and attempts to create easily understandable discussion points around issues such as gender equality.<sup>121</sup>

Monitoring and the implementation of the SDGs is key to involving women and youth in government.<sup>122</sup> The SDGs are a set of global goals for which the international community has created monitoring groups such as the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).<sup>123</sup> The IAEG-SDGs is working to implement a global indicator framework to monitor progress toward the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>124</sup> IAEG-SDGs has paired with the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to collect and disseminate metadata on specific SDG targets, including targets 4.1, 4.8, 5.5, and 8.6.<sup>125</sup> The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held a workshop in 2015 regarding the contribution of youth in monitoring the SDGs.<sup>126</sup> The workshop focused on disseminating information, tools, and methods to monitor SDG progress.<sup>127</sup> The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development recently

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<sup>110</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

<sup>111</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report on the sixtieth session (E/2016/27)*, 2016, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14; UN-Women, *Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work: 2017 Commission on the Status of Women: Agreed Conclusions*, 2017, p. 10.

<sup>113</sup> UN-Women, *In Focus: CSW61*, 2017.

<sup>114</sup> UN-Women, *Youth powering gender equality at CSW61*, 2017; UN Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, *Youth-Related Side Events at CSW61: March 13-24*, 2017.

<sup>115</sup> UN-Women, *Youth powering gender equality at CSW61*, 2017.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> UN DESA, *Achieving Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation*, 2010; UN DAW et al., *Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership*, 2005.

<sup>118</sup> UN DESA, *ECOSOC Youth Forum: Working together to make sustainable development a reality*, 2017.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> UN DPI, *Youth for Global Goals*, 2016.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> UN DPI, *Indicators and Monitoring Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017.

<sup>123</sup> UN DESA, *IAEG-SDGs: Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators*, 2017.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> UN IAEG-SDGs, *Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, 2017; UN DESA Statistics Division, *SDG Indicators: Metadata repository*, 2017.

<sup>126</sup> UNESCO, *Youth Contribution in Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

held a thematic review of SDG 5, which indicated the steady but slow progress of all targets within the goal, including involving women in government.<sup>128</sup> UN-Women has highlighted the need for a mechanism to monitor the number of women involved in local governments; no such mechanism currently exists, but such data is vital to understanding barriers to the participation of women in local government.<sup>129</sup>

Gender-responsive public policies and the involvement of women and youth in government are heavily influenced by CSOs and how they engage with decision-makers.<sup>130</sup> Not only can CSOs, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), champion legislation that addresses challenges facing women and youth in government, such as domestic violence and lack of economic resources, but they can also provide effective training programs for political candidates and representatives.<sup>131</sup> CSOs engage directly with governments and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) in order to strengthen advocacy programs, collect data, and share best practices to create the most effective approach to an issue.<sup>132</sup> CSW has worked directly with many CSOs, requesting that they assist governments in implementing international agreements that promote women's rights, provide financial resources to governments and women-led political campaigns, and assist in the efforts of women striving to become involved in governance, particularly in developing countries.<sup>133</sup> This is often facilitated through organizations such as the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, which organizes CSO and NGO participation in the activities of CSW, including an NGO Consultation Day to discuss issues pertaining to women and girls.<sup>134</sup> The NGO Committee on the Status of Women also maintains a professional network to empower young people, especially young women, to help achieve gender equality.<sup>135</sup>

### ***Challenges Facing Women and Youth in Government***

Due to continued discrimination, gender-based violence, biases in the workplace, harassment, and intimidation, the progress of increasing women in government has slowed to near stagnancy.<sup>136</sup> Political, social, and economic difficulties contribute to the low participation of women and youth in government service, and this effect is exacerbated through gender role expectations.<sup>137</sup> Due to insufficient coordination and specific targets for implementation, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making continues to be a problem, even for Member States that have policies supporting gender equality.<sup>138</sup> The specificity of goals, measurements of achievements, coordination, and data collection would provide the international community with the tools it needs to implement effective policies for the inclusion of women in government.<sup>139</sup>

Lack of opportunity is the main challenge facing the involvement of young people in government.<sup>140</sup> Limited opportunities for youth to be effectively involved in decision-making processes cause exclusion and marginalization of young women in governmental institutions.<sup>141</sup> Building trust between youth, their mentors, and policymakers is a key aspect in developing a productive environment.<sup>142</sup> Lack of access to basic development needs also causes strain on youth trying to become involved in government, especially for young girls.<sup>143</sup> Due to intersecting issues of gender, poverty, barriers to education, and lack of access to healthcare, young women are excluded from decision-making or lack the resources to effectively participate.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>128</sup> UN HLPF, *2017 HLPF Thematic review of SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, 2017, p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> UN-Women, *Spotlight on Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, p. 27.

<sup>131</sup> UN-Women, *Take Five: Families are changing, policies impacting them must change too*, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 8; UNDP & UN DESA, *Youth, Political Participation and Decision-Making*, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the fiftieth session (E/2006/27)*, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>134</sup> NGO CSW/NY, *About NGO CSW/NY*, 2017.

<sup>135</sup> NGO CSW/NY, *Meet our Young Professionals*, 2017.

<sup>136</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 30.

<sup>137</sup> UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>138</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the fiftieth session (E/2006/27)*, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> UNDP & UN DESA, *Youth, Political Participation and Decision-Making*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> UNDP, *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 10.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

Although the international community has been working toward gender parity in education and economic empowerment for decades, women and youth continue to experience unequal access to education, training, and other opportunities such as volunteerism that would enable them to more seamlessly transition into public service.<sup>145</sup> As a result of social norms and the traditional division of household responsibilities, women face difficulties leaving the home and serving in government due to childcare needs; some women find their participation hindered by traditional viewpoints that would frame women politicians as neglectful to their family due to their profession.<sup>146</sup> Governance bodies around the world have used parliamentary procedure and institutional tools, such as votes of no-confidence and manipulation of quorum requirements, to exclude women representatives from participating in governmental affairs.<sup>147</sup> Youth are often excluded from political discourse due to gender, class, or location.<sup>148</sup> Governmental bodies may also fail to implement gender mainstreaming policies because of limited political will and resources.<sup>149</sup>

### ***Capacity-Building and Best Practices***

In order for governmental organizations to pass comprehensive and beneficial legislation, women and youth need to be able to engage in all stages of political processes, make informed decisions, and overcome existing biases and practices that negatively impact their ability to participate in governance.<sup>150</sup> Keeping citizens involved on the local level is the first step to ensuring that everyone is capable of genuine and informed participation.<sup>151</sup> The 20-year review of the BPfA revealed that some Member States have taken measured efforts to increase women's participation in government by creating temporary special initiatives and awareness-focused projects to educate concerned parties and their constituents on gender equality in government.<sup>152</sup> Such initiatives include promoting networking opportunities for women and youth and creating annual national reports that monitor women's participation in government.<sup>153</sup> UN-Women has worked directly with governments and regional bodies to implement legislative and constitutional reforms to promote quotas, which have proven to be an effective way for Member States to work toward gender equality in political institutions and decision-making bodies.<sup>154</sup>

As the empowerment of women and girls is one of the key focuses of the international community, streamlining gender perspectives into policymaking can be found in the work of a majority of UN entities.<sup>155</sup> UN-Women engages with youth in advocacy and policymaking surrounding gender and youth-related issues.<sup>156</sup> The UN has also engaged in a System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-SWAP).<sup>157</sup> UN-SWAP provides a framework for accountability within the UN system for actively working toward gender equality in all operations of the UN.<sup>158</sup> Though progress toward achieving equitable representation across the UN remains slow, UN-SWAP has shown that intensified efforts are necessary in order to increase women's participation in government.<sup>159</sup> This can be achieved through investing in human capital, contributing financial resources, and

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<sup>145</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the fiftieth session (E/2006/27)*, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>146</sup> Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 7.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> UNDP & UN DESA, *Youth, Political Participation and Decision-Making*, 2013, pp. 1-2.

<sup>149</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the fiftieth session (E/2006/27)*, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>150</sup> UNDP, *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 12; UN-Women, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 10.

<sup>151</sup> Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>153</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 32; UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 32.

<sup>155</sup> UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 5*, 2017.

<sup>156</sup> UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*



working to change cultural values across the organization, in order to remove barriers facing women within the UN system as well.<sup>160</sup>

In its fiftieth session (CSW50), CSW agreed on actions regarding the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.<sup>161</sup> During this session, CSW outlined 36 specific actions for the international community, Member States, civil society, the private sector, and academia to take in order to promote the inclusion of women in governance.<sup>162</sup> These actions include creating training programs to build human capacity and capital, implementing quotas for representation and employment, and establishing programs in order to open more opportunities to women.<sup>163</sup> Each of these strategies works toward creating an enabling environment for women that is free from gender biases and gendered roadblocks, which represent a barrier to women's economic empowerment and the ability of women to serve in leadership roles.<sup>164</sup> Collection of gender and age-disaggregated data is especially useful in tracking progress toward goals, developing effective policies, and revealing inequalities on specific issues that are especially detrimental to women and youth.<sup>165</sup>

Due to the inherent gender bias of political institutions, redressing socio-economic issues facing women often consists of combating stigma, violence, and threats against women in government.<sup>166</sup> This can be mitigated through programs and policies that promote equal opportunities, provide training, and support women through providing role models.<sup>167</sup> The UN-Women report titled *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016* states that there is evidence, mainly from Scandinavian countries, to show that when women have a greater presence in governance and public administration, it encourages other women to gather in public forums and have their voices heard.<sup>168</sup> This is being reflected on a smaller scale in developing countries as well.<sup>169</sup> According to a 2017 report by UN-Women titled *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, strategies to improve women's participation and representation include establishing "explicit policies and mandated targets, tracking and reporting, training and capacity-building, financial support, advocacy and networking, and communications strategies."<sup>170</sup> Training and educational programs are also vital in order to build the capacity for women political candidates.<sup>171</sup> This builds greater responsiveness and support to the needs of women and youth wishing to participate in government affairs.<sup>172</sup> UN-Women, among other organizations, provides training for women political candidates in order to help them build their capacity to become elected and serve in public positions.<sup>173</sup>

Due to the hardships women face in becoming involved in government, many UN entities have highlighted the importance of temporary special measures to boost equal participation and representation.<sup>174</sup> Proportional representation of women, youth, and vulnerable populations in government is more likely to result in outcomes beneficial to all peoples.<sup>175</sup> This is also true of the involvement of youth-led organizations in governance, as it enables young women and men to contribute and develop their leadership skills for future government service.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the fiftieth session (E/2006/27)*, 2006, p. 28.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-34.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-27.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>165</sup> Zheng, *What are gender statistics*, 2015.

<sup>166</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, p. 92; UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>167</sup> UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, p. 53.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 8.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>173</sup> UN-Women, *Women's Leadership and Political Participation*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>174</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 10.

<sup>175</sup> Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 9.

<sup>176</sup> UNDP & UN DESA, *Youth, Political Participation and Decision-Making*, 2013, p. 4.

The UN Development Programme's (UNDP) *Youth Strategy 2014-2017* has outlined capacity-building as one of its four areas of work to achieve their goals.<sup>177</sup> UNDP has proposed leadership training, educational opportunities, and access to governmental forums as a means to help build capacity for young individuals and youth organizations.<sup>178</sup> Youth also often find that volunteer opportunities through CSOs are an effective way to get involved with governmental organizations, especially on the local level.<sup>179</sup> These opportunities not only strengthen the operational capacity and inclusiveness of governmental institutions, but also provide youth with vital professional experience that will advance their careers.<sup>180</sup> The UN runs a youth volunteer program that was created to directly engage people under the age of 30 in achieving global goals and actively participating in decision-making at the local, national, and international levels.<sup>181</sup> In its summary report of the 20th anniversary of the BPfA, UN-Women stated that diversifying government and facilitating networking and cross-party caucuses is an effective national action to raise awareness and share best practices of involving women and youth in government.<sup>182</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Unless all populations in a society are fairly represented and able to participate actively in legislative bodies, their priorities and rights will not be fulfilled.<sup>183</sup> Inclusive participation of youth in government promotes faster development and prioritizes diversity.<sup>184</sup> Though the international community has worked diligently to achieve gender equality in governmental forums, there are many areas in which it still falls short.<sup>185</sup> The average participation of women and young people in government falls disappointingly below the goals set forth by the international community.<sup>186</sup> Gender and age biases, lack of access, and barriers to quality education all contribute to low and ineffective governmental participation of women and youth.<sup>187</sup> CSW must continue to work toward emphasizing the equal participation of women and youth in government in order to strengthen democracy and achieve the international community's aspirations.<sup>188</sup> Through these efforts, the global voices of women and youth can contribute to effective policymaking and public administration to benefit all populations.<sup>189</sup>

### **Further Research**

Despite major advances toward the empowerment of women and youth, the international community has failed to achieve the full and equitable representation of vulnerable populations. How can CSW and other UN entities work with Member States to achieve equal representation for women and youth in local, national, and international governance bodies? How can governments provide age-appropriate materials to facilitate involving youth in governmental practices? What capacity-building activities should occur within Member States, CSOs, and IGOs to fill implementation gaps? How can the UN remain sensitive to cultural practices while still ensuring the voices of women and youth are heard in decision-making processes? What national and regional practices have been effective in addressing these issues, and how can these be applied on an international level?

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<sup>177</sup> UNDP, *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 35.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>180</sup> UNDP & UN DESA, *Youth, Political Participation and Decision-Making*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup> UN Volunteers, *Become a UN Youth Volunteer*, 2017.

<sup>182</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 32; UNDP, *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 4.

<sup>183</sup> Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 2.

<sup>184</sup> UNDP, *Empowering youth*, 2017; Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 2.

<sup>185</sup> UN-Women & International Gender Champions Geneva, *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums*, 2017, p. 13.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> UN DAW et al., *Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership*, 2005, p. 5.

<sup>189</sup> Jayal, *From representation to participation: Women in Local Government*, 2005, p. 8.

*The 50th session of CSW was one of the most influential sessions on this particular topic. The agreed conclusions on equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels provide delegates with a multitude of goals that the international community should work toward. It not only frames the progress made by the international community regarding this topic, but it also provides excellent material for possible action for delegates to take in committee.*

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development, Youth. (2017). *Youth development indicators* [Website]. Retrieved 24 September 2017 from:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/youth-development-indicators.html>

*This website frames the development issues that face youth in a way that is easily understandable. It lists major documents related to development priorities for youth, such as the World Youth Report, the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), and General Assembly resolution 60/2 of 2005 on “Policies and programmes involving youth.” This website provides information on recent reports, resolutions, events, and UN entities that discuss the involvement of youth in government and decision-making, which delegates will find useful. It also provides links to databases and data concerning youth development indicators such as education and suggests better indicators for youth development, including inclusive politics and decision-making.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2014). *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017: Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future* [Report]. Retrieved 19 July 2017 from:

[http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Youth/UNDP\\_Youth-Strategy-2014-17\\_Web.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Youth/UNDP_Youth-Strategy-2014-17_Web.pdf)

*This is a document from UNDP that outlines specific goals and targets of the international community in regards to engaging youth on the international level. The strategy, which will be refreshed in 2018, analyzes the development challenges facing youth, provides suggestions to solve these challenges, and gives context for monitoring and evaluation of youth involvement. One of the key aspects of achieving the goals of this document is involving youth in decision-making, highlighting the notion of “nothing about us without us.”*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20* [Summary Report]. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: [http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/sg%20report\\_synthesis-en\\_web.pdf?vs=5547](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/sg%20report_synthesis-en_web.pdf?vs=5547)

*This document serves as a review of one of the most influential women’s rights documents ever adopted, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). It provides data regarding the progress of the international community in achieving women’s rights, or lack thereof. Delegates can find lessons learned and proposed solutions within this document to help them frame possible actions within this topic. The report is an excellent resource for the subtopics and peripheral issues of this topic.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016* [Report]. Retrieved 17 July 2017 from:

[http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW\\_progressreport.pdf](http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf)

*Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016 is a report on the various standings of women in government, the private sector, education, as well as the status of women and girls with regards to healthcare, violence, and poverty across the world. This report focuses on the equality of women before the law, equity in achieving human rights for women, and socio-economic equality. It is a comprehensive and contemporary report that will give delegates an in-depth view into the current inclusion of women in governments across the world.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2017). *Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work: 2017 Commission on the Status of Women: Agreed Conclusions* [Report]. Retrieved 19 August 2017 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/61/csw-conclusions-61-web.pdf?la=en&vs=5452>

*Delegates should be aware of the most recent actions of CSW in order to gain a full understanding of this topic. The agreed conclusions from the 61st session represent the most recent standpoints and agreements that Member States have reached within CSW. This document centers around women’s empowerment in the workplace, much of which is directly applicable to women’s roles in*

*public office and public administration. CSW reaffirms the need for women's involvement in political, economic, social, and cultural decision-making, and provides delegates with a practical guide on the proceedings and purview of CSW.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women & International Gender Champions Geneva. (2017). *Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums* [Report]. Retrieved 16 July 2017 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/raising-womens-voices-in-intergovernmental-forums.pdf?vs=2321>

*This report explains the role of various governmental authorities in the promotion of gender equality, gives a summary of the existing framework of the UN system, and provides recommendations that promote the inclusion of women in intergovernmental institutions. It is a useful resource for delegates to understand up-to-date information on women's involvement in intergovernmental institutions. Delegates can find key recommendations to bolster women's involvement in local, state, and international government. It also provides a useful summary of the history of women's involvement in government on the international scale.*

United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved 16 July 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

*The BPfA is one of the foundational documents for this topic. Not only is it one of the most influential UN documents pertaining to gender equality, its implementation is one of the key aims of CSW. The Beijing Declaration and its subsequent documents have formed the UN's gender policy for over two decades. It covers a wide range of topics, including women in power and decision-making, and issues pertaining to youth, especially the girl child. Delegates can look to this document for useful information on women in government, as well as other standing policies and practices of the UN regarding gender equality.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Fiftieth session. (1995). *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/50/81)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/50/728). Retrieved 18 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/a/res/50/81>

*The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) is a cornerstone document on youth involvement in intergovernmental affairs. It provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for Member States and IGOs to improve the situation of young people around the world. It also contextualizes globalization's influence on youth participation in intergovernmental affairs. Delegates can look to this document to provide concrete policy options for the involvement of youth in government.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 19 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

*The 2030 Agenda is the key document delegates need to understand the contemporary goals of the international community. Not only does it frame the SDGs, it provides relevant precedence and justifications for these goals. SDGs 4, 5, and 16 are particularly important within this topic, in relation to women and youth. The 2030 Agenda explicitly states that none of the SDGs are achievable without women in government; therefore, delegates should familiarize themselves with the various areas that this topic impacts.*

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## II. Combating Violence against Women Migrant Workers

### *Introduction*

In 2015 the number of international migrants rose to 244 million, which includes 150 million migrant workers, a number that is 1.4 times larger than 15 years ago and is expected to increase.<sup>190</sup> Migrants are those that “choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons.”<sup>191</sup> Migrants are differentiated from refugees, who are defined in the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* as persons who move because of political circumstances including fleeing war, conflicts, and violations of human rights in their origin countries.<sup>192</sup> The *United Nations (UN) Convention on Migrant’s Rights* defines a migrant worker as a “person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.”<sup>193</sup> Migrant workers fill a shortage in the labor force and raise the birth rate of receiving countries, and their remittances – money sent back to their country of origin – account for a significant proportion of global finance flow.<sup>194</sup>

Women migrants account for almost half of all international migrants, and women migrant workers are seen as one of the most vulnerable groups suffering from violence and human rights abuses.<sup>195</sup> Most are engaged in traditionally-women-filled sectors of work such as domestic work and hospitality work, and are at times subjected to violence and discrimination.<sup>196</sup> Women migrant workers are exposed to sexual violence, trafficking, poor access to health care services, and can be emotionally affected by separation from their children.<sup>197</sup> Thus, at every stage of migration, from pre-departure to post-return, women migrant workers are especially vulnerable to human rights violations, and to both physical and psychological forms of violence.<sup>198</sup> Combating all forms of violence against women migrant workers is an urgent issue for the international community as the number of women migrant workers continues to rise.<sup>199</sup> The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) views the topic of combating violence against women migrant workers as a significant concern for the international community.<sup>200</sup>

### *International and Regional Framework*

Article 13(2) of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) established the right for all human beings to leave a country, including their country of origin, and to return to their home country.<sup>201</sup> Another important document on this issue is the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), adopted by the General Assembly in 1979.<sup>202</sup> The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 produced the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, which stated that women’s human rights are inalienable and called for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>203</sup> In the same year, the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* was the first international instrument to express violence against women as a violation of human rights, and it strongly emphasized the need to address the issue of violence against women.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> UN DESA, *International Migration Report 2015*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>191</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘migrant’ – Which is right?*, 2016.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> UNESCO, *United Nations Convention on Migrants’ Rights*, 2015, p. 19.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> UN-Women, “*Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with International, National Human Rights Mechanisms to Enhance Accountability*”: *Protecting the labour and human rights of women migrant workers in the context of addressing large movements of migrants: Event prior to HLM on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants*, 2017.

<sup>196</sup> CEDAW, *General recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers (CEDAW/C/2009/WP.1/R)*, 2008.

<sup>197</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 82.

<sup>198</sup> UN-Women, *Ending Violence against Women Migrant workers in Asia and the Pacific*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>199</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 10.

<sup>200</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo (A/HRC/26/38)*, 2014.

<sup>201</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/3/217 A (III))*, 1948.

<sup>202</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

<sup>203</sup> UN World Conference on Human Rights, *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, 1993.

<sup>204</sup> UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

Violence against women is also recognized as a critical area of concern in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA) (1995).<sup>205</sup> The *Beijing Declaration* encourages the establishment of linguistically and culturally accessible services for migrant women, and raises awareness of how the media can inform people about why violence against women occurs, in Article 125.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, Article 126 promotes enforcement and the further development of existing legislation for women migrant workers.<sup>207</sup> The UN General Assembly similarly has adopted several resolutions to review and further promote actions for violence against women; for example, General Assembly resolution 62/132 in 2007 emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation among governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to implement initiatives to eliminate violence against women migrant workers.<sup>208</sup> In the same year, General Assembly resolution 68/137 added the perspective of protecting migrant girls and ensuring access to healthcare services including HIV prevention and treatment.<sup>209</sup> Member States are encouraged to further implement national policies in line with existing international instruments such as International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and CEDAW in General Assembly resolution 70/130 (2015).<sup>210</sup>

Several conventions aimed at protecting the rights of workers have been adopted by the ILO, beginning with the *Migration for Employment Convention* of 1949.<sup>211</sup> In 1975, the *Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention* was established as a follow up to the *Migration for Employment Convention*, calling for the protection of the basic human rights of all migrant workers who fit under the decided definition of migrant workers.<sup>212</sup> The *Private Employment Agencies Convention* of 1997 emphasized that workers are to receive equal treatment regardless of race, color, sex, religion, and other factors.<sup>213</sup> These international standards have significant influence on developing national laws, policies, and practices to improve millions of migrant workers' lives and working conditions.<sup>214</sup>

However, only a small number of Member States have ratified international instruments that work to establish international rights for women in the workforce.<sup>215</sup> These include the UN *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (ICRMW) (1990), also called the *UN Convention on Migrants' Rights*, which came into force in 2003, and the ILO *Domestic Workers Convention* (2011).<sup>216</sup> ICRMW is a comprehensive instrument that emphasizes treating migrant workers and their families without discrimination throughout the entire process of migration.<sup>217</sup> ICRMW highlighted the increasing risk of violence against women migrant domestic workers at the international level for the first time.<sup>218</sup> Despite its significance, ICRMW took 13 years to enter into force.<sup>219</sup> The *Domestic Workers Convention* outlines the need to ensure appropriate and decent working conditions for all domestic workers, which many women migrant workers tend to be.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>208</sup> UN General Assembly, *Violence against women migrant workers (A/RES/62/132)*, 2007, p. 4.

<sup>209</sup> UN General Assembly, *Violence against women migrant workers (A/RES/68/137)*, 2013, p. 7.

<sup>210</sup> UN General Assembly, *Violence against women migrant workers (A/RES/70/130)*, 2015, p. 8.

<sup>211</sup> ILO, *C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)*, 1949.

<sup>212</sup> ILO, *C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)*, 1975.

<sup>213</sup> ILO, *C181 - Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)*, 1997.

<sup>214</sup> ILO, *International Labour Standard on Migrant Workers' Rights*, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>215</sup> ILO, *Ratifications of C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011*; Information Platform, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)*, 2015.

<sup>216</sup> ILO, *C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, 2011; UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*, 1990, p. 261.

<sup>217</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*, 1990, p. 261.

<sup>218</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers' Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 28.

<sup>219</sup> International Steering Committee for the Campaign for Ratification of the Migrants Rights Convention, *Guide on Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)*, 2009, p. 17.

<sup>220</sup> ILO, *C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, 2011.

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted in 2015 with the Agenda’s accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is the universal call for action to create a better world for future generations.<sup>221</sup> It aims to achieve development in sustainable ways with the cooperation of all actors including UN organizations, Member State governments, the private sector, and civil society.<sup>222</sup> The SDGs were the first place that migration was mainstreamed into development policies, and they address migration issues from many aspects.<sup>223</sup> For example, SDG 8 outlines the contribution of labor migration for economic development; SDG 10 calls for “reduc[ing] inequality within and among countries,” including the role of remittances; and several goals, including SDG 16, ask for the condemnation of trafficking.<sup>224</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

Ending violence against women and girls is a critical area of concern for the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).<sup>225</sup> UN-Women’s *Strategic Plan 2018-2021* identified five focus areas in the coming years.<sup>226</sup> Two out of the five areas are related to improving the lives of women migrant workers including by ensuring decent income and adequate working conditions through developing legal systems, and preventing violence by increasing women’s knowledge of their rights.<sup>227</sup> In its work, UN-Women works closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and other UN organizations.<sup>228</sup> UN-Women facilitates the work of the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund).<sup>229</sup> The UN Trust Fund has contributed to 463 organizations that work to combat violence against women in 139 Member States, giving a total of more than 129 million dollars reaching 6 million people, including 31,000 women migrant workers.<sup>230</sup> The grantees of the Fund are entrusted to implement projects such as addressing the social stigmas of gender inequality with educational materials and workshops to prevent violence against women.<sup>231</sup> In addition, the Fund provides training for government officials to motivate Member States to enforce laws and national action plans on addressing violence against women, and gives lectures for police, schools, and healthcare facilities on the importance of social services for survivors of violence.<sup>232</sup>

Violence against women has been the priority theme for three of CSW’s sessions: CSW42 in 1998, CSW51 in 2007, and CSW57 in 2013.<sup>233</sup> While the agreed conclusion for CSW51 called for governments to formulate national policies on ending violence against women, CSW57 placed greater emphasis on prevention methods and how to respond to the consequences of violence.<sup>234</sup> Responses can include strengthening data collection abilities to discover the causes of violence against women, building systems for victims to report on their incidents, and creating accessible healthcare services.<sup>235</sup> Following CSW57, a three-year research program called “Promoting and protecting women migrant workers’ labor and human rights” operated by UN-Women and financially aided by the European Union (EU) was launched.<sup>236</sup> The purpose of this program was to encourage Member States to strengthen their policies to protect the human rights of women migrant workers and empower organizations that support

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<sup>221</sup> UN DPI, *17 Goals to Transform Our World*.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> IOM, *Follow-up and Review of Migration in the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> UN-Women, *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, 2017.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> UN-Women, *About the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women*.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> UN-Women, *UN Trust Fund Annual Report 2016: Building Evidence and Results*, 2017, p. 12.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo (A/HRC/26/38)*, 2014.

<sup>234</sup> UN CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women: Report on the fifty-seventh session (4-15 March 2013) (E/2013/27)*, 2013.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> UN-Women, “Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with International, National Human Rights Mechanisms to Enhance Accountability”: ‘Protecting the labour and human rights of women migrant workers in the context of addressing large movements of migrants: Event prior to HLM on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants’, 2017.

women migrant workers.<sup>237</sup> As a result of the program, several policy briefs were published, including *Policy Brief No. 6*, which demonstrates good practices on how to utilize international instruments on human rights such as CEDAW and ICRMW to protect and promote the rights of women migrants.<sup>238</sup>

In addition, UN-Women has provided a recommendation as input for the upcoming Global Compact for Migration (GCM) in 2018.<sup>239</sup> GCM is being developed as one of the actions for achieving Target 10.7 of SDGs.<sup>240</sup> UN-Women's recommendation highlighted the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination, including xenophobia and racial discrimination against women migrants, in order to promote social inclusion, especially in the destination country.<sup>241</sup> Further, GCM highlighted some ways to combat trafficking by strengthening identification systems, developing social protection policies, and providing assistance for migrant workers in irregular status who may be regarded as criminals.<sup>242</sup>

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) that is committed to achieving safe, humane, and beneficial migration for all migrants.<sup>243</sup> Its major policy dialogue forum, the International Dialogue on Migration, was held in April 2017.<sup>244</sup> Representatives discussed the definition and terminology for vulnerability, and the complex causes of vulnerabilities.<sup>245</sup> IOM is conducting various local services for women migrant workers to prevent and protect them from violence and to empower them.<sup>246</sup> In Ukraine, IOM operates a database in partnership with the government and NGOs to record incidents perceived as gendered forms of racism.<sup>247</sup> Additionally, IOM also conducts Migrant Training, which give lessons on life skills and attitudes for migrants to feel comfortable in their new environment before departure.<sup>248</sup> With these programs, which involve different sectors of society including local government agencies, IGOs, and community organizations, IOM bridges governments and migrant workers by incorporating international instruments and frameworks into real action programs that directly and indirectly impact the lives of migrants.<sup>249</sup>

### ***Women and the Migratory Process***

In 2015, it was estimated that women migrant workers accounted for around 45% of the 150 million migrant workers around the world.<sup>250</sup> Despite the higher contributions that women migrant workers provide toward both their destination and origin countries, they are more vulnerable to discrimination, abuse, and exploitation.<sup>251</sup> Violence against women is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”<sup>252</sup> Due to gender biases against women and stereotypes that migrant workers are low-skilled, women migrant workers are often more undervalued than male

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<sup>237</sup> UN-Women, “*Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with International, National Human Rights Mechanisms to Enhance Accountability*”: “*Protecting the labour and human rights of women migrant workers in the context of addressing large movements of migrants: Event prior to HLM on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants*, 2017.

<sup>238</sup> UN-Women, *Using the International Human Rights System to Protect and Promote the Rights of Women Migrant Workers*, 2017.

<sup>239</sup> UN-Women, *Towards a global compact on migration that works for migrant women*, 2017.

<sup>240</sup> IOM, *Global Compact for Migration*, 2017.

<sup>241</sup> UN-Women, *Recommendations for addressing women’s human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*, 2016.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*; UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016.

<sup>243</sup> IOM, *About IOM*, 2017.

<sup>244</sup> IOM, *International Dialogue on Migration 2017: Strengthening international cooperation on and governance of migration towards the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018: Summary of Conclusions*, 2017.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> IOM, *Working to prevent and address violence against women migrant workers*, 2009, p. 10.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>249</sup> IOM, *About IOM*, 2017.

<sup>250</sup> *New ILO figures show 150 million migrants in the global workforce*, ILO, 2015.

<sup>251</sup> Kariyawasam, *Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Workers*, *The Wire*, 2017.

<sup>252</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the elimination of violence against women (A/RES/48/104)*, 1994, p. 3.



migrant workers.<sup>253</sup> While migrants are often exposed to exploitation, women migrant workers face more gendered and specific risks such as labor abuses and forms of violence including physical, psychological, and sexual violence at nearly every stage of migration, which are pre-departure, transit, in country, and post-return.<sup>254</sup>

Although the motivations to migrate are diverse, social and economic reasons are among the largest reasons that individuals decide to migrate.<sup>255</sup> For instance, women workers often struggle more with unemployment and/or unequal treatment in domestic labor markets compared to men through less job availability, difficulty securing promotions, lower wages, and poor working conditions.<sup>256</sup> The preparation for migration itself includes preparing numerous documents, undergoing medical examinations, being recruited by employers, fundraising, and ensuring care for children in their absence.<sup>257</sup> Those who cannot afford these preparations are sometimes forced to move irregularly, and some individuals may resort to the sex industry to make the money needed to move to another country.<sup>258</sup>

When determining the route to host countries, women migrant workers often only have informal information from past migrants to depend upon.<sup>259</sup> This leads to inaccurate information being passed along and makes it difficult for governments and supporting groups to monitor and control the transition process.<sup>260</sup> Sexual violence often happens during this transition, when women migrant workers are not provided sufficient or safe transportation.<sup>261</sup> As a result, women migrant workers often move in large groups or are accompanied by men to avoid abuses.<sup>262</sup> However, there is a risk that those men who are paid to accompany women to work sites may depart prematurely, and women can be in vulnerable situations such as being robbed of their money or being exposed to human traffickers.<sup>263</sup> Undocumented women migrants are especially vulnerable to trafficking because they receive little legal protection and have limited access to reliable information on how to avoid illegal traffickers.<sup>264</sup>

During the stay in the destination country, women migrant workers, especially those engaged in informal work, struggle from exploitive working conditions.<sup>265</sup> Currently, in 30 out of 41 countries where data is available by sex, a higher percentage of women than men work in the informal non-agricultural sector.<sup>266</sup> Informal work is recognized as "unrecognized, unrecorded, unprotected and unregulated" work, which makes it difficult for states to intervene for data collection.<sup>267</sup> Informal work does not typically follow national legislation on labor that outlines baseline working conditions and protections.<sup>268</sup> This can lead employees in this sector to work overtime without payment, access to social protections, care provided for both physical and psychological health, and to be vulnerable to sexual harassment.<sup>269</sup> Women migrant workers in the agricultural sector are especially exposed to dangerous working conditions using harmful chemicals, experiencing poor hygiene facilities, and suffering physical injuries.<sup>270</sup> Some of these injuries can lead to infertility and miscarriages.<sup>271</sup>

Few women migrant workers return to their countries of origin with the successful attainment of sufficient income, and they often experience depression, exhaustion, mental illness, and trauma from exploitive working conditions.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers' Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 10.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> UN-Women Asia and the Pacific, *Migrant Workers*.

<sup>269</sup> Kariyawasam, *Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Workers*, *The Wire*, 2017.

<sup>270</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers' Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 55.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

Even in such severe conditions, women migrant workers are often referred to as “failed” migrants and tend to receive disappointment at home if they could not financially support their family.<sup>273</sup> Moreover, migrant workers who migrated under irregular circumstances may be excluded from receiving pensions and other social benefits after returning, since they may have not have been making contributions to their home country’s pension system while abroad.<sup>274</sup> As a result, returned women migrant workers find themselves detached within their communities and can lose access to medical treatment.<sup>275</sup>

### ***Psychological Forms of Violence***

Women migrant workers are exposed to psychological violence, including discrimination by race, nationality, and/or religion; xenophobia; and trauma after violent experiences.<sup>276</sup> While racial discrimination includes exclusion by appearance such as skin color and facial features, xenophobia is “an attitudinal orientation of hostility against non-natives in a given population.”<sup>277</sup> An increasing rate of racism and xenophobia is seen to be caused by many reasons including the uncooperative attitude of governments toward protecting migrants, the existence of strict immigration policies, and/or rising crime rates.<sup>278</sup> As the negative images of migrants are often promoted by the media and political leaders’ perceptions, passive factors such as biased employers, gendered language, and lack of gender perception in services can be a large cause for discrimination.<sup>279</sup> In addition, there is also an increasing need for Member States to promote multiculturalism and the better integration of diversity in relation to global migration.<sup>280</sup>

Physical and psychological violence often happens simultaneously.<sup>281</sup> For example, women migrant workers often feel embarrassed to report sexual abuse or harassment in their workplace, which limits their access to proper healthcare or HIV testing.<sup>282</sup> The factors that heighten their risks for HIV infection include exposure to sexual violence, especially during transition, and a lack of access to healthcare services.<sup>283</sup> They may suffer from the stigma and discrimination of HIV as “carriers” of infection often due to false knowledge and misunderstanding.<sup>284</sup> A program called Prevention of HIV/AIDS Among Migrant Workers in Thailand (PHAMIT), led by NGOs, has provided educational materials on reproductive healthcare, contraceptive devices, and voluntary HIV counseling and testing.<sup>285</sup> PHAMIT started in 2003 and reached 442,000 migrants with information on reproductive health.<sup>286</sup> Action for Health Initiatives (ACHIEVE) is one of the best known NGOs in the Philippines. ACHIEVE implements “Developing Interventions to Address Stress and Mental Health Problems among Women Migrant Workers,” funded by the European Commission and the UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI).<sup>287</sup> It collected data on mental health issues of women migrant workers through a national survey and held a workshop as an opportunity to discuss the issue with other women migrant workers by disclosing the results of the survey.<sup>288</sup>

### ***Protecting Migrant Domestic Workers from the Increased Risk of Violence***

In 2015, there were 11.5 million migrant domestic workers worldwide, accounting for 17.2% of all domestic workers.<sup>289</sup> Domestic work is defined in the first article of the *Domestic Workers Convention* (2011) as a “work

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<sup>273</sup> UN OHCHR, *Behind closed doors: Protecting and promoting the human rights of migrant domestic workers in an irregular situation*, 2015, p. 32.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 85.

<sup>276</sup> ILO et al., *International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia*, 2001, p. 11.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers’ Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 64.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> Torriente, *Migrant Domestic Workers, Health and HIV*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>285</sup> Pinyosinwat, *PHAMIT: A program on HIV/AIDS prevention among migrant workers*, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> ACHIEVE, *Developing Interventions to Address Stress and Mental Health Problems among Women Migrant Workers*, 2017.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> Gallotti, *Migrant Domestic Workers Across the World: global and regional estimates*, 2016, p. 1.

performed in or for a household or households.<sup>290</sup> However, domestic workers who are not residents of the country they reside in are not included in this definition, even though many of them are non-residents.<sup>291</sup> This population is often not protected by national labor laws, poorly monitored, and are exposed to the discriminatory belief that domestic work belongs to women.<sup>292</sup> Domestic work used to be done within the family, but the global trend of a declining labor population and low fertility rate in high-income countries has led to the emergence of a global care chain.<sup>293</sup> This cycle increases women migrant domestic workers' vulnerability to human rights abuses and exploitation.<sup>294</sup> Furthermore, because of the informality of domestic work, it can be difficult to detect employer violence.<sup>295</sup>

In many cases, employers and recruiting agencies are in different countries and governed by different national laws on labor.<sup>296</sup> Bilateral labor agreements have been a major tool to administer the agreements and/or contracts between governments of origin and destination of migration.<sup>297</sup> However, the difference in the content of each contract can lead to wage gaps and discriminatory treatment among workers with different nationalities.<sup>298</sup> As a result, regional and interregional cooperation has been gaining greater attention.<sup>299</sup> As an example, the Arab Trade Union Confederation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Trade Union Council, and the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council signed a memorandum in 2015 to accelerate the ratification of conventions that address migrant workers and job-related health, safety, and housing issues for women migrant workers.<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, the ILO established the first interregional information-sharing forum with Asian, African, and Arab Member States in 2016.<sup>301</sup> The forum concluded with the creation of eight action plans on how to create better working environments for migrant domestic workers.<sup>302</sup> The action plans include establishing interregional networks to share experiences, promoting the equal human rights protections of migrant domestic workers, and raising transparency of the recruitment process.<sup>303</sup> Among civil society, there is a global research-policy network named Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), which aims to listen to women's voices and raise transparency of the informal economy.<sup>304</sup> Recently, Member States including South Africa, Spain, and Belgium have started to reform their national labor laws to cover undocumented domestic workers or have created new legislation for migrant domestic workers with the same conditions as other workers.<sup>305</sup>

## Conclusion

The number of migrants is expected to rise due to various reasons, including the declining labor population, low fertility rates, the continued rise of globalization, and the increasing economic gap between and within countries.<sup>306</sup> Further, the worldwide flow of labor is seen as beneficial for both sending and receiving countries with appropriate responses at the international and regional levels, and with cooperation with CSOs.<sup>307</sup> However, the current situation is far from ideal in the case of women migrant workers, due to the many forms of violence they may endure.<sup>308</sup> A lack of access to information on safe migration processes, exploitive working conditions, and discrimination from

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<sup>290</sup> ILO, *C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, 2011.

<sup>291</sup> Gallotti, *Migrant Domestic Workers Across the World: global and regional estimates*, 2016, p. 7.

<sup>292</sup> ILO, *Protecting Migrant Domestic Workers: The international legal framework at a glance*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>293</sup> ILO, *Making decent work a reality for migrant domestic workers*, 2016, p. 3.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>296</sup> Tayah, *Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers: Moving the Agenda Forward*, 2016, p. 56.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>304</sup> WIEGO, *What We Do*, 2017.

<sup>305</sup> ILO, *Making decent work a reality for migrant domestic workers*, 2016, p. 6.

<sup>306</sup> UN-Women, *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 61 Priority Theme: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*, 2016, pp. 4-9.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

negative stereotypes of migrant workers all play a role in perpetuating violence toward women migrant workers.<sup>309</sup> There remains a need for the international community to take human-centered approaches to combat various types of violence that women migrant workers experience throughout the migration process.<sup>310</sup>

### **Further Research**

As you continue your research, there are questions to consider in order to deepen understanding of the topic, including: How can Member States provide safe routes free from trafficking and sexual violence for women migrant workers? What is the role of NGOs and civil society in eliminating violence against women migrant workers? What are some possible ways to combat negative images of women migrant workers both in country of origin and at destination? What kinds of services or programs would be effective in combating violence against women? What are the obstacles to bilateral, regional, and interregional cooperation on these issues when each country has different legal systems?

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*This summary report was published in a series called "Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and Their Families," implemented by the ILO. The ILO takes the lead in collecting data on migrant domestic workers around the world and analyzes the data from various aspects. Since this report covers basic information on migrant domestic workers, starting by explaining terms, it will help delegates to understand the problems that migrant domestic workers face and how the ILO has addressed them.*

International Labour Organization, et al. (2001). *International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia*. Retrieved 8 September 2017 from: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/migration/taskforce/docs/wcar.pdf>

*This is a discussion paper focused on how to deal with discrimination and xenophobia against migrants, prepared by three organizations: the ILO, IOM, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR). Delegates can understand the interconnections between each organization and how dynamically the global mobilization has grown and impacted international society by reading this document. The paper suggests some implementations for both governments and civil society to combat hostile attitude against immigrants, migrants, and refugees.*

International Labour Organization, International Labour Office. (2015). *Making decent work a reality for migrant domestic workers*. Retrieved 6 September 2017 from: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms\\_436974.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_436974.pdf)

*This document focuses on recommended actions to address existing issues that migrant domestic workers face. The policy brief highlights the needs and vulnerabilities of migrant domestic workers. It will help delegates understand the problems that migrant domestic workers face. Moreover, it will also assist delegates when brainstorming ideas for building policies. It discusses best practices done in the international community, with their corresponding results. This makes it easier to see concrete action plans and to see which international organizations have helped improve policies in each Member State.*

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*This document lists the projects and services that the IOM has taken to protect and empower women migrant workers against violence. The document categorizes activities into seven areas,*

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<sup>309</sup> UN-Women, *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 61 Priority Theme: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*, 2016, pp. 4-9.

<sup>310</sup> UN-Women, *Women Migrant Workers' Journey Through the Margins: Labour, Migration and Trafficking*, 2016, p. 23.



*including: the promotion of gender-sensitive policies, improving data collection on women, countering trafficking activities, and others. Delegates will find this source useful as it provides ideas and concrete examples for policies that address the needs of women migrant workers.*

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*This document is the report of the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in 2013, which called upon governments and other stakeholders to start taking actions to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The document ensures protections from all forms of violence such as discrimination, exploitation, sexual harassment, and bullying in the workplace. It also encourages Member States to further develop mechanisms to socially and legally include women migrant workers at all stages of the migration journey, and protect fully their rights.*

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*This is an informational kit created by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization consisting of three parts. In the first part, it summarizes the history of how the international community has responded to protecting the rights of international migrants, including the obstacles to the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The second section provides a general overview of the issues that migrants tend to experience. The glossary and resources in the third section will help delegates begin with solid research after reading the Background Guide.*

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*The Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) provides population data and analysis to the UN General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on Population and Development. This report is helpful for delegates to learn about data and statistics regarding the mobilization of people. Most data compare the numbers in 2000 and 2015, which succeeds in visualizing how the number of migrants have changed within 15 years. The document's statistics includes statistics on regions, countries, sexes, and ages. The highlights at the beginning are particularly useful for delegates to grasp the data surrounding this issue at a glance.*

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*UN-Women's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Programme provides comprehensive approaches to empowering women and ending violence. While the document focuses on this issue in the Asian region specifically, it provides a general background for the topic, including the definition of common terms and challenges, an explanation of international frameworks combating this issue, and methodologies for implementing them. It also suggests what next steps governments should take to implement these frameworks, which delegates will find useful as it relates to policies created previously. In addition, the various case studies discussed in the document can help delegates understand the issues facing women migrant workers.*

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*This research paper was published under the UN-Women's project "Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers' Labour and Human Rights: Engaging with international, national human rights mechanisms to enhance accountability," in cooperation with the European Commission. It summarizes various issues specifically related to women migrant workers, categorized by each stage of migration and type of work. Delegates will not only gain an in-depth understanding about the issues from this source, but also about solutions being made to counter them. The data used in the report reflects the current situation of the migration process for women migrant workers and has relatively recent statistics.*

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### III. Empowering Women and Girls in Rural Contexts

*“Rural women are powerful catalysts for sustainable development, as well as agents against poverty and hunger.”<sup>311</sup>*

#### **Introduction**

Women constituted approximately half of the global population in 2016.<sup>312</sup> Similarly, the rural population accounts for about 46% of the population globally.<sup>313</sup> Both women and persons who live in rural areas are disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, and exploitation.<sup>314</sup> Where men and women do the same work, women’s wages are often 70% to 90% of men’s wages.<sup>315</sup> Likewise, working women are more likely to be in vulnerable employment, defined as positions that are informal or unprotected, often involving challenging working conditions and uncertain income streams.<sup>316</sup> Vulnerable employment is also likely to compromise employees’ rights and representations in trade unions.<sup>317</sup> According to a 2016 report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), agricultural and rural livelihoods make up more than 30% of employment globally, and almost 40% in low and middle-income countries.<sup>318</sup> In addition, rural women continue to bear larger responsibilities for domestic and unpaid care work than men, affecting their ability to contribute to paid work and placing additional burdens on them.<sup>319</sup> Women in rural areas are further marginalized in terms of policymaking, education, and access to resources.<sup>320</sup>

In recognition of the significant role that rural women can play in rural development, food security, and ending rural poverty, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has dedicated 15 October of every year as the International Day of Rural Women.<sup>321</sup> Rural women’s rights are enshrined in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* adopted in 2015, which recognizes that gender equality and women’s empowerment are key to ensuring food security and sustainable development in the economic, social, and political spheres.<sup>322</sup> Empowerment is highly contextual, as one may be empowered in one dimension but equally un-empowered in another.<sup>323</sup> The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) defines empowerment as “the process of enabling people to increase control over their lives, to gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives, to increase their resources and qualities and to build capacities to gain access, partners, networks, a voice, in order to gain control.”<sup>324</sup> The international community has pledged its commitment to empowering rural women and girls, as emphasized in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on food security, and in SDG 5, which is dedicated to achieving the empowerment of all women and girls.<sup>325</sup> The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is committed to addressing this issue, having discussed the role of rural women in poverty and hunger eradication as part of the priority theme at its 56th session (CSW56) in 2012.<sup>326</sup> The priority theme for the 62nd session of CSW (CSW62)

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<sup>311</sup> UN DPI, *Rural Women ‘Powerful Catalysts for Sustainable Development’, Agents against Poverty, Hunger, Women’s Commission Told, as General Debate Concludes (WOM/1897)*, 2012.

<sup>312</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, female (% of total)*, 2017.

<sup>313</sup> World Bank Group, *Rural population (% of total population)*, 2017.

<sup>314</sup> UN-Women, *Economic empowerment of women*, p. 1.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>316</sup> ILO, *Global Employment Trends: January 2010*, 2010, p. 18.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*, 2016, p. 22.

<sup>319</sup> UN-Women, *Economic empowerment of women*, p. 2.

<sup>320</sup> UN DPI, *Rural Women ‘Powerful Catalysts for Sustainable Development’, Agents against Poverty, Hunger, Women’s Commission Told, as General Debate Concludes (WOM/1897)*, 2012.

<sup>321</sup> UN DPI, *International Day of Rural Women – 15 October*, 2017.

<sup>322</sup> UN DPI, *Rural Women ‘Powerful Catalysts for Sustainable Development’, Agents against Poverty, Hunger, Women’s Commission Told, as General Debate Concludes (WOM/1897)*, 2012.

<sup>323</sup> World Bank Group, *Women’s Empowerment in Rural Community-Driven Development Projects*, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>324</sup> UN DESA DSPD, *Empowerment: What does it mean to you?*

<sup>325</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 14-18.

<sup>326</sup> UN-Women, *CSW56: Commission on the Status of Women*.

due to be held in 2018 is focused on the empowerment of rural women and girls, highlighting CSW's dedication to this important issue.<sup>327</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

The 1967 *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* was the first international document to recognize that discrimination against women prevents their participation in the “political, social, economic and cultural life” of Member States.<sup>328</sup> Article 10 of the Declaration states that all measures must be made to ensure that women have equal rights to vocational training and work, as well as equal remuneration to men.<sup>329</sup> In addition, the 1953 *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* has long recognized women's right to positions in public office and governance on an equal position with men.<sup>330</sup> With regards to rural women, Article 14 of the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* addresses issues specific to rural women such as the right to access adequate healthcare, training to increase their technical skills, and agricultural credit and loans.<sup>331</sup> The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)* (1995), one of the most important documents with regards to women's rights, emphasizes the importance of implementing policies that support women farmers with regards to land and technology access and prioritizing rural women in poverty assistance initiatives.<sup>332</sup> The *Beijing Declaration* also stresses the importance of training and non-formal education for rural women to “realize their potential with regard to health, micro-enterprise, agriculture and legal rights.”<sup>333</sup> It requests that governments prioritize health programs in rural areas and promote women's economic independence through better access to resources and supporting their involvement in small-scale enterprises.<sup>334</sup>

The 1992 *Geneva Declaration on Rural Women* discusses the importance of improving women's access to resources and creating opportunities for women to promote their own social, political, and economic empowerment.<sup>335</sup> Key strategies include the review of existing land legislation, the improvement of rural women's access to credit and financial services, and the development of infrastructure.<sup>336</sup> General Assembly resolution 50/165 of 1996, titled “Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas,” echoes these actions by encouraging Member States to integrate issues of importance to rural women in national policy development and increase the participation of rural women in decision-making processes.<sup>337</sup> SDG 5 of the 2030 Agenda is dedicated solely to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.<sup>338</sup> While the interests of women, including rural women, are mainstreamed throughout the 2030 Agenda, SDG 5 clearly calls for women to have equal rights in the ownership of economic resources, for Member States to enact fair legislation that promotes gender equality, and for all stakeholders to recognize the unpaid care that women often carry out.<sup>339</sup> Target 1.2 of SDG 1 on poverty aims to reduce the proportion of women living in poverty by half by 2030.<sup>340</sup>

The issue of rural women has also been addressed on a regional level; Article 19 of the African Union's (AU) *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003) emphasizes the importance of including women in decision-making processes and promoting rural women's access to training and credit.<sup>341</sup> In 2013, the AU adopted *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, a document to guide African socio-

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<sup>327</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

<sup>328</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/2263 (XXII))*, 1967, p. 2.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>330</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Political Rights of Women (A/RES/640 (VII))*, 1953, p. 2.

<sup>331</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979, p. 7.

<sup>332</sup> UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995, pp. 22-23.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 47, 70-71.

<sup>335</sup> UN General Assembly, *Letter dated 30 June 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/47/308)*, 1992.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> UN General Assembly, *Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/RES/50/165)*, 1996.

<sup>338</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 18.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-18.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>341</sup> AU, *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*, 2003, p. 18.

economic development for the next 50 years.<sup>342</sup> Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 states the commitment of Member States to women’s empowerment through the rights to own and inherit property, their right to access productive assets, and the elimination of cultural activities such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).<sup>343</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

CSW is strongly committed to the empowerment of rural women, as shown by the priority theme for CSW56 in 2012: “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.”<sup>344</sup> At the 56th session, a high-level roundtable focused on sharing experiences and good practices among Member States.<sup>345</sup> The topics discussed include rural women’s roles in promoting food security and their ability to access finance.<sup>346</sup> In addition, the participants addressed measures to improve rural women’s access to education, participation in public and political life, and better data collection methods to aid in policy development.<sup>347</sup>

The UN Secretary-General published two reports for consideration previous to CSW56.<sup>348</sup> The first report, “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges,” focused on the economic empowerment of women.<sup>349</sup> It proposed recommendations such as land reform policies and microcredit schemes to increase women’s access to finance.<sup>350</sup> The second report, titled “Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions,” addressed the role of governments, institutions, and citizens in promoting the empowerment of rural women.<sup>351</sup> Delegates at CSW56 further discussed these recommendations, which promote the inclusion of rural women in policymaking and decision-making positions, women’s inclusion in skills training and capacity-building, and the strengthening of partnerships to involve men in the empowerment of rural women.<sup>352</sup> CSW’s priority theme for its 62nd session (CSW62) in 2018 is “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.”<sup>353</sup> In 2017, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) was co-convened by the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IFAD, and the World Food Programme (WFP) to discuss current research and propose recommendations.<sup>354</sup> The EGM was held in preparation for CSW62 in March 2018.<sup>355</sup>

UN-Women is dedicated to the empowerment of women worldwide, and particularly women in marginalized situations.<sup>356</sup> UN-Women’s Fund for Gender Equality is a grant-providing mechanism which provides “technical and financial support” for women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the ground to economically and

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<sup>342</sup> The AU Commission, *About Agenda 2063*.

<sup>343</sup> AU, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, 2015, pp. 8-9.

<sup>344</sup> UN-Women, *CSW56: Commission on the Status of Women*.

<sup>345</sup> UN CSW, *High-level round table on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges*, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>348</sup> UN CSW, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/3)*, 2011, p. 2; UN CSW, *Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/4)*, 2011, pp. 1-3.

<sup>349</sup> UN CSW, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/3)*, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>350</sup> UN CSW, *Key policy initiatives and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming: focus on economic empowerment of rural women: Moderator’s summary (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.4)*, 2012, pp. 2-3.

<sup>351</sup> UN CSW, *Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/4)*, 2011, pp. 1-3.

<sup>352</sup> UN CSW, *The role of gender-responsive governance and institutions for the empowerment of rural women: Moderator’s summary (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.5)*, 2012, pp. 2-4.

<sup>353</sup> UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women; UN-Women, CSW62 (2018)*.

<sup>354</sup> UN-Women, *Expert Group Meeting on ‘Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls’: Concept Note*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4; UN-Women, *CSW62 (2018): Preparations: Expert Group Meeting*.

<sup>356</sup> UN-Women, *Women in rural Cambodia cultivate their way out of vulnerability*, 2017.

politically empower marginalized women.<sup>357</sup> One of the programs supported by the Fund for Gender Equality has involved training for women in Cambodia on techniques to improve agricultural productivity and raise animals.<sup>358</sup> Almost a third of the women trained by the program have increased their agricultural incomes by 50%.<sup>359</sup> UN-Women, WFP, IFAD, and FAO set up a joint project in 2012 for the empowerment of rural women in seven countries, titled Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women.<sup>360</sup> The project brings together the collective expertise of each UN agency to improve rural women's food security, increase incomes, and enable economic empowerment through local and national policies.<sup>361</sup> In addition, a 2016 joint program between UN-Women and WFP introduced a mobile platform called "Buy from Women" in rural Rwanda.<sup>362</sup> This application provides smallholder farmers with the exact size of their land, as well as weather and market information, which enables them to forecast agricultural production and provides access to markets from which they were previously excluded.<sup>363</sup> Through providing men and women farmers with equal opportunities to participate in the value chain, this program ensures women's participation and educates farmers on gender equality.<sup>364</sup>

CSOs are also active in approaching this topic within many Member States; one such organization is Women's Action for Development (WAD) in Namibia, which primarily focuses on the empowerment of rural persons, particularly women, in Namibia.<sup>365</sup> WAD's objectives center on the economic and political empowerment of women, providing women with training to enhance self-development and enable their involvement in decision-making at all levels of governance.<sup>366</sup> In 2015, the Latin American Coordinating Committee of Rural Organizations (CLOC) held its sixth congress in Argentina, focusing on feminism and women's empowerment to further rural women's rights to own land and receive education.<sup>367</sup> In addition, the congress discussed risks of domestic violence, the unfair burden of unpaid care work, and the unpaid agricultural or animal-rearing work that women carry out to care for their families.<sup>368</sup>

### *Economic Empowerment*

Most of the world's poor live in rural areas, with the majority of those poor being women due to lower access to decent work, education, assets, and formal credit.<sup>369</sup> As recognized by the roundtable held during CSW56, the unreliable and informal nature of rural employment makes women and girls more vulnerable to poverty.<sup>370</sup> Economic empowerment implies access to resources, well-paying employment, and decent wages.<sup>371</sup> In 2012, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) published a document titled *Women's Empowerment in Agriculture*, measuring various factors, such as agricultural production, over five domains for empowerment of women.<sup>372</sup> The report focused on issues of production, resources, income, leadership, and time.<sup>373</sup> "Resources" is divided into ownership of and access to resources, while "income" refers to control over income and expenses.<sup>374</sup> Membership in economic and social groups is used to measure "leadership," while the use of time for tasks and leisure activities is used to measure "time."<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> UN-Women, *Women in rural Cambodia cultivate their way out of vulnerability*, 2017.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> WFP, *Joint UN initiative to empower rural women*, 2014.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> UN-Women, *Empowering women farmers of Rwanda through mobile technology*, 2016.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> WAD, *Who We Are*, 2012.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Frayssinet, *Rural Women in Latin America Define Their Own Kind of Feminism*, *Inter Press Service News Agency*, 2015.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, pp. 10-11.

<sup>370</sup> UN CSW, *High-level round table on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges*, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>371</sup> World Bank Group, *Women's Empowerment in Rural Community-Driven Development Projects*, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>372</sup> IFPRI, *Women's empowerment in agriculture index*, 2012, pp. 2-3.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.



Data collected from various countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America showed that only 33% of working-age women earned cash income in 2014, compared to 83% of men.<sup>376</sup> In recent years, women’s participation in the formal labor force has increased; however, their responsibilities for unpaid care and domestic work have remained the same, meaning that women have less leisure time than men.<sup>377</sup> This leads to an additional form of time poverty, in addition to the income poverty that many women and girls suffer from.<sup>378</sup> The 2030 Agenda recognizes the impact that this can take on women’s participation in paid employment through Target 5.4, which promotes the recognition and support of women in unpaid and domestic work through providing infrastructure, public services, and policies to protect women who engage in unpaid and domestic work.<sup>379</sup>

Even in situations where both women and men do the same work, women are often paid less than men.<sup>380</sup> A study carried out on women engaged in agricultural activity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region shows the increasing involvement of women in agricultural work and decreasing involvement of men.<sup>381</sup> However, the increasing involvement of women does not equal economic empowerment, as their wages may be paid to the head of the household directly.<sup>382</sup> In other cases, women are involved in unpaid family farms or perform traditional low-paying, less skilled tasks while the higher-paying, typically mechanized, tasks are often given to men.<sup>383</sup>

Land tenure is another issue that rural women face.<sup>384</sup> While women account for 43% of agricultural workers in developing countries, less than 20% of all landholders are women.<sup>385</sup> Women agricultural workers are often discriminated against in existing legislation, which sometime restrict land ownership or access to financial support.<sup>386</sup> Thus, improving the situation of women workers and small landholders through better access to seeds, credit, finance, and technology, and greater participation in decision-making, can have a major impact on agricultural production and food security.<sup>387</sup> Target 2.3 of SDG 2 specifically focuses on “doubl[ing] the agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women...through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs.”<sup>388</sup> This emphasizes the significant role that rural women can play in achieving food security, if they are provided with adequate support.<sup>389</sup>

Education is a crucial factor which affects the type and pay of work available to rural women.<sup>390</sup> While much progress has been made with regards to gender parity in primary education, girls remain disadvantaged in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, Western Asia, and Northern Africa.<sup>391</sup> These same regions also lag in indicators for gender parity in secondary education, where there is much room for progress.<sup>392</sup> The international community has committed to ensuring that all girls and boys have access to technical, vocational, and tertiary education to build up their relevant skills for decent employment and entrepreneurship by 2030 in targets 4.3 and 4.4 of the SDGs.<sup>393</sup> Likewise, Target 4.5 commits to eliminating unequal access to education due to gender.<sup>394</sup> In its

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<sup>376</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 11.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>379</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 18.

<sup>380</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 11.

<sup>381</sup> Abdelali-Martini, *Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*, p. 7.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>383</sup> Abdelali-Martini & Dey de Pryck, *Does the Feminisation of Agricultural Labour Empower Women? Insights from Female Labour Contractors and Workers in Northwest Syria*, 2015, pp. 15-16.

<sup>384</sup> UN-Women, “Changes are on the way for women farmers”—Executive Director, 2016; UN-Women, *In Focus: International Day of Rural Women*.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> UN-Women, “Changes are on the way for women farmers”—Executive Director, 2016.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> UN DESA DSD, *SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture*, 2017.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>390</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, pp. 12-13.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>393</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 17.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

2012 report titled *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, UN-Women commended the progress made toward gender parity in primary education, which has reduced illiteracy levels globally.<sup>395</sup> It also emphasized the importance of continuing this by improving gender parity in secondary education by assisting families in the financial burdens of education, fostering gender-responsive school environments, and providing opportunities for technical and vocation education.<sup>396</sup> Providing rural women with access to literacy, numeracy, access to finance, and vocational training will provide them with the skills they need to succeed in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment.<sup>397</sup>

### ***Social Empowerment***

Social empowerment can be described as creating enabling environments for women to make decisions within their households and communities.<sup>398</sup> Gender norms and cultural traditions can exclude women and other disadvantaged groups, limiting women's opportunities and incomes.<sup>399</sup> Therefore, social empowerment of women is key to their overall empowerment.<sup>400</sup> Community-driven interventions are being increasingly adopted by the international community, as they are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the poor.<sup>401</sup> Through decentralizing power and involving community members in making decisions that directly affect them, women increase skills, confidence, and having their voices heard.<sup>402</sup> This empowers women by challenging existing social structures and negative perceptions of women, enabling them to play larger roles in their communities.<sup>403</sup> According to UN-Women's 2012 report reviewing international progress toward the goals of the *Beijing Declaration*, it was stated that Member States hold much potential to empower women socially.<sup>404</sup> Investment in infrastructure and basic social services is particularly crucial, which enable women to spend less time on domestic labor.<sup>405</sup> Simple social services, such as the provision of daycare facilities, can also assist women.<sup>406</sup>

FGM and child marriage are among the issues that pose the largest risks to rural girls.<sup>407</sup> The effectiveness of legislation against FGM is hindered by limited data on its prevalence, a general lack of awareness around the negative impacts of FGM, and a lack of government capacity and resources to implement legislation in rural areas.<sup>408</sup> Child marriage is of major concern to rural girls, as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that in most Member States, child marriage is more common in rural areas rather than urban areas.<sup>409</sup> According to UNICEF, as of 2014, 700 million women were married before the age of 18; 250 million of those women were married before age 15.<sup>410</sup> Child marriage is prevalent in countries in South Asia, where 56% of women aged between 20 and 49 years were married before age 18, and in West and Central Africa, where 46% of women of the same age were married before they were 18.<sup>411</sup> Across the world, uneducated girls in rural areas and in poverty are at a much higher risk of becoming child brides than girls in urban areas or girls born into wealthier families, placing young

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<sup>395</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 14.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*, 2016, p. 53; Abdelali-Martini, *Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*, pp. 10-16.

<sup>398</sup> World Bank Group, *Women's Empowerment in Rural Community-Driven Development Projects*, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>399</sup> IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*, 2016, p. 68.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> World Bank Group, *Women's Empowerment in Rural Community-Driven Development Projects*, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 12.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> UN CSW, *Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/4)*, 2011, p. 20.

<sup>407</sup> UNICEF, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects*, 2014, p. 3; UN-Women et al., *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Violence against Women and Girls: Strengthening the Policy Linkages between Different Forms of Violence*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>408</sup> UN-Women et al., *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Violence against Women and Girls: Strengthening the Policy Linkages between Different Forms of Violence*, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>409</sup> UNICEF, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects*, 2014, p. 3.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

girls at risk due to early pregnancies.<sup>412</sup> Child marriage further undermines rural women’s empowerment because women and girls who marry earlier are more likely to be subjected to sexual and domestic violence and have often not completed their education, which limits their opportunities later in life.<sup>413</sup> While the MENA region has made significant progress in reducing child marriage, progress in other regions remains slow.<sup>414</sup>

### ***Political Empowerment***

Political empowerment is the representation and participation of women in formal institutions, ranging from local governments, civil society, and national governments.<sup>415</sup> A key element of promoting women’s empowerment is gender-responsive governance, which requires institutional actors to include women in all levels of policymaking and implementation through participatory approaches that consider rural women’s needs.<sup>416</sup> One of the 2011 Reports of the Secretary-General for CSW56 proposes that organizations further involve women in senior positions with sufficient budgets and prioritize the engagement of rural women.<sup>417</sup>

Women are generally underrepresented in governments and public positions; rural women are no exception, being underrepresented in both formal and informal rural institutions and in community-based organizations.<sup>418</sup> In addition, very few statistics are available on rural women’s poverty, making it difficult for governments to address this issue.<sup>419</sup> The Secretary-General has stressed that statistical offices of Member States should prioritize the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data on rural areas to enable governments to formulate gender-responsive policies.<sup>420</sup>

Member States can promote the participation of rural women on the national and local levels by “strengthening accountability mechanisms, providing sufficient financial and human resources, and ensuring the proper delivery of public services.”<sup>421</sup> Rural women should be involved in policymaking and in the shaping of all programs, policies, and budget allocation processes to ensure that these are gender-sensitive and inclusive of rural women’s needs.<sup>422</sup> Member States can utilize quotas to ensure women’s participation and should create fair transparent processes to encourage the inclusion of women in leadership roles.<sup>423</sup>

Women’s un-empowerment in the legal sphere is multi-faceted.<sup>424</sup> In some cases, land laws discriminate against women’s rights to own, control, or inherit property; in others, family or societal norms discriminate against women’s rights to property.<sup>425</sup> A 2016 FAO report established a Legal Assessment Tool (LAT) which identifies areas where laws hinder gender equality or put women at a disadvantage.<sup>426</sup> Based on eight clusters of elements for policy intervention and 30 legal indicators, the LAT addresses issues ranging from recognition of women’s legal capacity to gender equality in property rights and inheritance and women’s participation in institutions that enforce land legislation.<sup>427</sup> Member States can empower women in the legal sphere by ensuring that all laws and policies and their implementation are in compliance with gender equality and do not discriminate against rural women.<sup>428</sup> In

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<sup>412</sup> UNICEF, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects*, 2014, p. 3.

<sup>413</sup> UNFPA, *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>414</sup> UNICEF, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects*, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>415</sup> World Bank Group, *Women’s Empowerment in Rural Community-Driven Development Projects*, 2017, p. 16.

<sup>416</sup> UN CSW, *Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/4)*, 2011, p. 18.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 11.

<sup>420</sup> UN CSW, *Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/4)*, 2011, p. 20.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>425</sup> FAO, *Gender and Land Rights Database*, 2016, p. 12.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-56.

<sup>428</sup> UN CSW, *Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/4)*, 2011, p. 18.

addition, property rights for women can be reinforced by ensuring transparency in management and allocation of resources and ensuring women's participation in policymaking.<sup>429</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Rural women's rights are enshrined in several significant international documents such as CEDAW, the *Beijing Declaration*, and the 2030 Agenda.<sup>430</sup> The international community has committed to many ambitious goals, and while progress has been made in many aspects, there remains much space for empowering women economically and ensuring that they have decent pay and opportunities equal to men.<sup>431</sup> Women and girls living in rural areas face unique life-threatening challenges such as FGM and child marriage.<sup>432</sup> Rural women are held back by lower education levels, face discrimination, and are burdened by unpaid care work and unequal opportunities in the workplace.<sup>433</sup> Intrinsic to economic empowerment is empowering women socially, ensuring that they are visible and that the key roles that they play in their communities are sufficiently acknowledged.<sup>434</sup> Political and legal empowerment are essential to ensuring that rural women's interests and needs are reflected within policymaking and legal frameworks.<sup>435</sup> Given its experience working with and furthering the interests of rural women, CSW is uniquely placed to continue to address these issues.

### **Further Research**

As they research this topic, delegates should consider: How can women's economic empowerment through additional work be guaranteed? How can Member States promote education in rural areas? Additionally, is education alone sufficient to challenge cultural traditions that may limit the rights of women? What are the lessons learned from the implementation of the *Beijing Declaration* in the past 20 years? What actions have been taken following CSW56, and how can Member States build upon past successes? How can the international community utilize existing programs and work through entities focused on the empowerment of rural women and girls? Given CSW's mandate, what actions can it encourage Member States to take, and what actions can the Commission take to further the engagement of rural women in all aspects of rural life? What areas of empowerment of rural women does CSW62 aim to focus on, and how can the international community address these in a holistic manner?

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[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Martini\\_Women\\_Labor\\_WANA.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Martini_Women_Labor_WANA.pdf)

*This paper focuses mainly on empowering rural women participating in the workforce in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. After presenting general trends, the author describes the main features of agricultural labor, highlighting areas where women are playing larger roles. The next section discusses limitations to women's involvement, followed by a section on factors behind the progress of women's empowerment. The author concludes with the lessons learned and suggestions for empowerment of women in agriculture-related activities, which will be helpful to delegates in their research and proposals on this topic.*

Abdelali-Martini, M., & J. Dey de Pryck. (2015). Does the Feminisation of Agricultural Labour Empower Women? Insights from Female Labour Contractors and Workers in Northwest Syria. *Journal of International Development*,

<sup>429</sup> IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*, 2016, p. 68.

<sup>430</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979; UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>431</sup> UN-Women, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>432</sup> UNFPA, *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*, 2012, p. 13.

<sup>433</sup> Abdelali-Martini, *Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)*, pp. 10-16.

<sup>434</sup> IFAD, *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering inclusive rural transformation*, 2016, p. 68.

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27 (7): 898-916. Retrieved 5 November 2017 from:

<http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/315863/Insight%20from%20female%20labour%20contractors%20and%20workers%20in%20northwest%20Syria.pdf>

*Based on case studies of several rural areas in Northwest Syria, this paper studies the linkage between increased participation of rural women in the agricultural workforce and empowerment. Women's participation in rural activities has increased, and although this is not reflected in higher wages, it has impacted women's empowerment in these areas. The question raised by the author here is the possibility of upgrading women's jobs to earn higher wages, without them being taken over by male farmers. This paper will introduce delegates to the dynamics between the availability of work for women, wages, and empowerment.*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2016). *Gender and Land Rights Database* [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/en/>

*Among the most important factors in rural women's empowerment is the right to own land; however, this is not a right that is granted to all women equally across the world. The Gender and Land Rights database developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides information on Member States' legal frameworks and programs that support this right. In addition, the database provides statistics on land ownership, disaggregated by gender, area, and land value. Finally, the Legal Assessment Tool provides scores for Member States against a number of legal indicators supporting women's ownership of land. This will assist delegates identify areas where action is required to gain gender-equitable land ownership.*

International Food Policy Research Institute. (2012). *Women's empowerment in agriculture index*. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>

*This document discusses women's empowerment in agriculture and suggests key criteria to measure women's empowerment by proposing two main sub-indices. The first of these is the five domains of empowerment, which assesses individual women's power in five domains – production, leadership, resources, time, and income. The second sub-index is the Gender Parity Index, which measures empowerment on a household level by comparing women's decision-making abilities in households to men's. This document should help delegates approach the larger topic of women's empowerment in a pragmatic way by breaking it down into issues that can be addressed individually to build up to the goal of women's empowerment.*

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2011). *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2012/3)*. Retrieved 17 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2012/3>

*This report is an excellent discussion of the issues that hinder the economic empowerment of rural women and girls. It discusses the situation of women in rural areas and the importance of agriculture in their lives, highlighting the role that women play in hunger eradication. It also analyzes limited access to resources and markets, the informal nature of the rural employment that women are engaged in, and the large burden of unpaid care work. The report emphasizes the potential role of women in sustainable development and concludes with recommendations for CSW to consider.*

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2012). *Key policy initiatives and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming: focus on economic empowerment of rural women: Moderator's summary (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.4)*. Retrieved 18 August 2017 from:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/panels/panel1-moderators-summary.pdf>

*This document summarizes the key outcomes of the panel on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development, and current challenges, held at CSW56 in 2012. It focuses on the economic empowerment of rural women, suggesting items such as policymaking, credit, and education. Delegates will find this a concise report of actions that can be built upon significantly to address issues facing rural women today.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (n.d.). *CSW 56: Commission on the Status of Women* [Website]. Retrieved 17 August 2017 from:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/56sess.htm#panel1>



*This website gives a detailed overview and record of the CSW56 proceedings. It provides a two-week chart showing the organization of the various sessions, statements of the attending delegations, and records of the keynote presentations. Most important for delegates are the papers and presentations presented by the various experts at the panels on rural women, which will help delegates form a clear idea of the many challenges facing rural women today, as well as actions that they can take. In addition, all outcome documents of the session are also available.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (n.d.). CSW62 (2018) [Website]. Retrieved 20 October 2017 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018>

*This website is the main page to follow for information on the upcoming proceedings for CSW62. Currently, it links to the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) and expert papers published in preparation for CSW62. Information is available in the form of a Concept Note from the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in September and the expert papers that address various issues relevant to rural women and girls, such as land tenure, power, and climate-resilient agriculture. Delegates will find that this is an excellent starting point to guide their proposals for this topic.*

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20* [Summary Report]. Retrieved 16 August 2017 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1776The%20Beijing%20Declaration%20and%20Platform%20for%20Action%20turns%2020.pdf>

*This summary report is a review of the progress, or lack thereof, which the international community has made in the two decades following the Beijing Declaration. Part I discusses trends and progress that the international community has made in the 12 areas of concern agreed upon in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. Part II presents lessons learned and action that the international community must take in order to accelerate the implementation of the Declaration and achieve gender equality in line with the goals and deadline set by the 2030 Agenda. Delegates will benefit from a concise review of action that has been taken, the current situation, and proposed steps to achieve the goals of the Beijing Declaration.*

World Bank Group. (2017). *Women's Empowerment in Rural Community-Driven Development Projects*. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: [https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/lp\\_genderincdd\\_01272017.pdf](https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/lp_genderincdd_01272017.pdf)

*Primarily focused with community-driven development projects, this study analyzes interventions supported by the World Bank and their impact on increasing women's participation and decision-making. Among the key chapters are Chapter 2, which discusses the concept of empowerment, especially of women, and Chapter 3, which discusses challenges faced by rural women. Chapter 4 analyzes the outcomes of 20 interventions in relation to women's empowerment, while Chapter 5 concludes with lessons that can be applied to future interventions. The appendices to this report provide excellent sources for delegates to further investigate the programs carried out, the methodologies they followed, and the indicators used to measure empowerment.*

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