



General Assembly

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Second Committee – Economic and Financial

This committee wants to improve the world economy to help the poor. They discuss how national, regional and international economies affect the world. They also focus on countries that have special needs. Some examples are the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) or the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

This group believes people in poverty do not have to be poor forever. For this reason, they focus on how developing nations can improve their economies. They also find ways to directly help people in poverty. They might talk about how to help countries get access to money. Or, they might find ways that technology can help countries develop faster.

This committee works closely with the UN Economic and Social Council. Some of the resolutions they have passed deal with sustainable development, harmony with nature, and migration.

Agenda Item 23.B – Women in development

Focus Questions

Women in development means looking at how women are affected by financial, environmental and social problems. Women have the same human rights as men. But, the rights of women are not always protected. Also, many women are at a disadvantage because of gender inequality, stereotypes and social norms. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making the following goals a reality.

- How can countries work together in order to protect the rights of women?
- What can states do to empower women?
- Culture, stereotypes and social norms play a role in treating women differently than men. What can states do to change how women are viewed in society?

Background

The Charter of the UN affirms the equal rights of women. But, in many places there is not gender equality. In Saudi Arabia women only got the right to drive in 2018. In India, some women are harassed by their husband's families. They ask for a dowry (money) because the women have married into the family. Some of these women are murdered. Often, their deaths are called 'accidents'. In the US the average woman earns 82¢ for every 1\$ a man earns. There is a lot that needs to be done.

In 1947 the UN created the Commission on the Status of Women. This group helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They worked to include more equal language that represented women. The group spent a lot of time researching the problems women faced. They published reports so states would know where there was discrimination against women.

Background

1995 was the Fourth World Conference on Women. It was held in Beijing. This was an important meeting because states agreed to the Beijing Declaration. This declaration said states would improve the rights of women. Every five years there is a review. The next review will take place in 2020.

In 2010 the UN created UN Women. It brought four UN organizations working to help women into one group. This organization works to help women achieve equality. They also publish statistics on women.

Research since the 1960s shows women are at risk of poverty. The UN made the advancement of women a priority. Technology can help women at risk of poverty in rural areas. Rural women can have their lives improved if investments are made in farming. Family planning information can help women. This means women learn how to have the number of children they want. Many women keep having children because they do not have access to family planning information.

Rural women have an important role to play when it comes to ending poverty. 70% of women with jobs in South Asia work in farming. It is 60% in sub-Saharan Africa. These women have a role to play in food security. However, they are not usually involved in decision-making even though they might have the best knowledge. Young children in rural areas are twice as likely to not attend school which helps contribute to the cycle of poverty. As well, education for mothers is important for the health of children. Children of uneducated mothers in Latin America and the Caribbean are 3.1 times more likely to die than those whose mothers have secondary education.

Every year 2 million girls under 15 give birth to children. They are at risk of dying because their bodies are not prepared for childbirth. Furthermore, they must often stop going to school. This can have long lasting consequences since children with an educated mother are more likely to survive than one with none. Nicaragua is the country with the highest rates of teenage pregnancy. What can be done in order to help countries with this problem?

Women and girls can be more affected by a disaster than men or boys. This is because violence against women can keep women from getting access to help and resources during a disaster. Furthermore, in a disaster situation women and girls are at an increased risk of violence. In fact, women and girls are 14 times more likely to die in a disaster than men. After a cyclone in Bangladesh in 1991, 90% of the dead were women. In Sri Lanka, climbing trees and swimming is mainly taught to boys. This puts them at an advantage to survive during a tsunami. Women are at a disadvantage when it comes to disasters and we need to find solutions to this problem.

In some countries it is more common for girls not to go to school than boys. Some of the reasons are cultural. Some cultures think boys have more of a right to education. Other reasons are not enough female teachers or women are afraid of being victims of violence in school.

Have you ever heard of the gender wage gap? Often, women make less money than men. There are a lot of reasons for this such as discrimination, women choosing to work part-time, or lack of education. When women make less money than men everybody suffers. If a woman has a family they could be living better. It also means there is less money for that woman to use to buy things to help the economy. Also, a woman over her life will save less and the government might need to take care of her as she gets older. One of the solutions to this problem is microfinance. It gives poor people, especially women, small loans to start businesses.

Recent Developments

Sustainable Development Goals

This movement began in 2016 to replace the Millennium Development Goals. These goals are much broader and tackle the causes of poverty. The first goal is to end poverty in all its forms. This is a very ambitious goal. Many of the goals relate to ending poverty. Goal 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Countries will work together to reach the goals by 2030.

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women

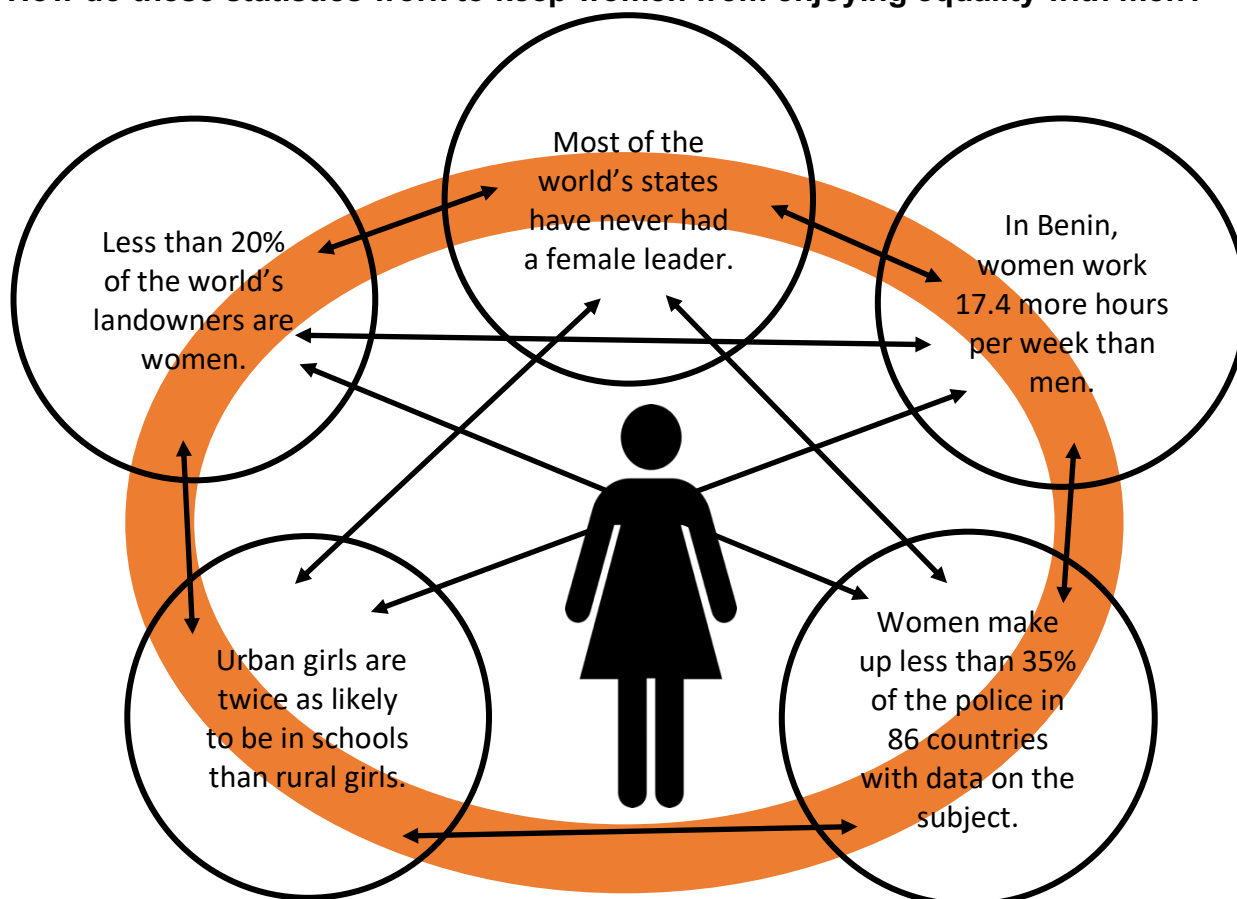
This convention was adopted by the UN in 1979. It is often called a bill of rights for women. Because women are often discriminated against it is important to list the rights of women. This document also defines what is discrimination against women and asks states to work to end it. It has been ratified by 189 states.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

This declaration was made during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It says women should be active and equal to men in all aspects of public and private life. It also acknowledges women and girls from all states, cultures, class, and incomes are victims of violence because of their gender. 2015 was the 20th anniversary of the declaration.

Statistics: Women and Girls

How do these statistics work to keep women from enjoying equality with men?



Research Questions

1. How can gender equality improve the experience of all people living in the world?
2. How can women and girls be better protected during a disaster? How can countries be convinced to make these changes?
3. How can agriculture development help women young girls?
4. Marginalized groups are more at risk in refugee camps. Marginalized groups include women, children, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, and people from the LGBTIQ community. How can these women and girls be supported? Why might they need special supports in a refugee situation?
5. Women are 3% of UN Peacekeeping military personnel. They are 10% of UN Peacekeeping police personnel. Why are women Peacekeepers important? Should they increase the number? How?
6. How can men and boys be encouraged to support the goal of women's equality?
7. Why are women important to fixing the problem of desertification?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. Who is working on it? NGOs, not for profits, other groups or individuals?
10. Knowing about this problem, how does it impact your world view?
11. How could you make an impact on this issue through your life choices?

Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<i>UN Women</i>	http://www.unwomen.org/en	United Nations official site about supporting gender equality.
<i>UN Stats</i>	https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Infographics.html	Infographics about women's issues.
<i>Peace Women</i>	http://www.peacewomen.org/	An NGO that has a lot of information about how violence affects women
<i>CNN Money</i>	http://money.cnn.com/2017/04/04/pf/equal-pay-day-gender-pay-gap/index.html	Easy to read article about the gender wage gap.
<i>World Economic Forum</i>	https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/women-leaders-key-to-workplace-equality	Discusses some of the solutions to reduce the gender wage gap.
<i>Plan International</i>	https://plan-international.org/because-i-am-a-girl/child-mothers	Information on the problem of child mothers.
<i>Impatient Optimists</i>	https://www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2014/01/5-Reasons-Why-Muhammad-Yunus-Focuses-on-Lending-to-Women#.Wwsraqm-kWo	Information on Muhammad Yunus and his microlending plan to help raise women out of poverty.
<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>	https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/	Information on what the UN wants to accomplish by 2030.
<i>UN Women: Learn the Facts</i>	http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2018/2/infographic-rural-women	Information on the struggles rural women and girls face.