



American Model United Nations

**Commission on the Status of
Women**

**Report to the Commission on the Status of
Women on Women's economic empowerment in
the changing world of work**

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1 Executive Summary

2 The Commission on the Status of Women convened from 20 November to 23 November 2021 to discuss the
3 topic of women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work. Topics of education, economic resilience,
4 safe labor practices, minimizing workplace inequalities and aiding women in rural areas specifically were considered
5 by Member States.

6 Chapter One of this report considers a draft resolution entitled “Supporting Rural Women” to be recom-
7 mended to ECOSOC that speaks to issues that impact rural women in the world of work. The draft resolution
8 recognizes the importance of gendered economics, offers reconsiderations for the formal definition of work as offered
9 by the International Labour Organization, suggests sustained investment in agriculture and encourages avenues for
10 women’s economic empowerment by addressing the impacts of climate change.

11 Chapter Two offers insights into the deliberations that took place between Member States as this topic was
12 being discussed. These are records of the discussions that took place and include the results of voting for the draft
13 resolutions being discussed.

14 Matters calling for action

15 CSW II/1

16 *Recalling* the deep enshrinement of gender equality in key United Nations initiatives, including the 2030
17 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

18 *Recognizing* that an attempt to formalize all jobs in the informal economy is met with hurdles such as a lack
19 of available job opportunities and difficulties in navigating bureaucratic policies, which typically add up to additional
20 costs,

21 *Pointing out* that the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICSL 2013) defined work in
22 five, mutually exclusive categories: own-use production work, employment work performed for others in exchange
23 for compensation, unpaid trainee work for the development of skills, non-compulsory volunteer work, and other,
24 undefined work activities,

25 *Recognizing* that policy-makers and Member State leaders play a large role in determining the economic
26 futures of women,

27 *Deeply conscious of* Indigenous women who often live and work in more rural regions and as according to the
28 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), “Women, representing half of the world’s
29 population, as well as indigenous peoples and the vulnerable, continue to be excluded from participating fully in the
30 economy.”,

31 *Understanding* the necessity of statistics which accurately reflect the rapidly changing conditions and indi-
32 vidual needs within states,

33 *Providing* direct access for rural and indigenous women to land security by removing gender-based inequal-
34 ities,

35 *Researching* green technology inclusive to rural and indigenous women engagement to improve agricultural
36 practices and food security in light of negative climate change impacts in the environment,

37 1. Urges the spread of the study of gendered economics, through summits or conferences where policy-makers
38 may convene to internalize gendered understandings of economics;

39 2. Recommends that the International Labour Organization reassess their definitions for work by adding
40 unpaid domestic labor and caretaking to the definitions of “work” determined at ICLS 2013;

41 3. Recommends an expansion of the International Labour Organization Statistics (ILOSTAT) and the United
42 Nations Statistic Division’s resources and encourages further partnership between ILOSTAT and interested nations
43 in the following areas:

44 (a) Expanding data collection to reflect this expanded definition of work for the purposes of devising
45 and implementing action plans to empower female participation in the global economy;

46 (b) Enabling individual countries to conduct and maintain their own data collection programs by
47 increasing the amount of supporting resources for this purpose available to countries;

48 (c) Ensuring that an accurate representation is given to states in the effort of making comprehen-
49 sive and effective national program, given that the changing world of work for women is growing faster rate than
50 actualization is possible;

51 4. Requests sustained investment in agriculture by:

52 (a) Investing in training for agriculture economies including;

53 (i) Provide training and safe handling standards of equipment for female workers;

54 A. Along with training for those who frequently handle dangerous substances such as pesticides,
55 training can also be dedicated to food processing, business management, marketing strategies, record-
56 keeping, packaging and labeling;

- 57 (ii) Providing extensive education on agriculture production, management and processing technolo-
58 gies to rural women who shoulder primary responsibility in rural production and who must adapt
59 to different production and processing technologies to meet global market demands;
- 60 (iii) Forming cooperative groups for women in the rural areas to cater to specific needs of the
61 community;
- 62 (b) Supporting the sale of crops produced by women farmers in local and global;
- 63 (c) Providing equipment and training for livestock production and hunting or fishing similar to
64 actions taken by the UN Women in Zimbabwe, where sales have doubled and women are continuing to advance
65 economically;
- 66 (d) Empowering women to engage in shaping laws, policies, and programs to improve rural liveli-
67 hoods;
- 68 5. Encourages placing a renewed focus on basic access to infrastructure, specifically in areas pertaining to:
- 69 (a) Water and firewood collection, where women spend a disproportionate amount of time in many
70 developing nations collecting water in daily life;
- 71 (b) Providing easy access to water within rural communities can free up valuable time in women's
72 days as well as ensuring safe access to a vital resource;
- 73 (c) Access to the internet and bandwidth;
- 74 (i) As the world continues to rely more and more on technology, access to internet can be a vital
75 mechanism in education, economic development, access to goods and services, and general connec-
76 tivity with the world;
- 77 6. Suggests the promotion of economic empowerment in the face of climate change by supporting en-
78 trepreneurial projects, research and innovation, education and agricultural management practices for women living
79 in rural communities who are the most vulnerable in the face of climate change and most dependent upon natural
80 resources;
- 81 7. Emphasizes the importance of ensuring land security by removing gender barriers to land titles, which
82 would support national economic growth and gender equality by:
- 83 (a) Providing and improving access for rural and indigenous women in direct pathways to land
84 ownership and land title attainment which would enable livelihood security;
- 85 (b) Expanding the UNAID focus of climate change reduction, food security and environmental
86 community engagement beyond 6 regions in Peru and other Member States by assessing the climate change impact
87 needs in different regions, focusing on preventative, treatment and management of natural resources;
- 88 (c) Supporting indigenous and rural women research into developing sustainable green spaces and
89 green technology to support food sustainability and conserve threatened plants which impact biodiversity and the
90 ability for environments to provide supportive natural resources at all trophic levels;
- 91 (d) Ensuring environmental education in efforts to support knowledge about ecosystem services and
92 their the significance regarding generational, local community and national responsibility.

93 **Consideration of the status**

94 **Addressing poverty as a cause of inaccessibility**

95 Member States recognize that poverty plays a significant role in women and girls gaining access to
96 education. Member States that experience higher rates of poverty also tend to see more gender based disparities in
97 access to education. This is due to multiple underlying factors.

98 This commission further acknowledges the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Member
99 States globally. This has created more barriers in attendance for women and girls, thus disrupting the amount of
100 knowledge they gain and widening the education achievement gap between boys and girls worldwide.

101 COVID-19 has also led to a disproportionate number of women being out of work, leading to a
102 majority being unable to pay for the schooling they need to continue their education. Many women held jobs
103 in the service industry prior to COVID-19, which was the primary sector impacted by the pandemic. As women
104 are generally given the role of primary caretaker of the home, those who experienced job loss were met with the
105 expectation of staying home to care further rather than working to try and recover any economic loss they may have
106 suffered. With a lack of substantial childcare in many nation states, women are left to bear the brunt of both: work
107 and home.

108 Member States within the committee stated poverty as a root cause and a consequence of gendered
109 economic imbalances. The commission recognized the interconnected nature of poverty, technological integration,
110 language barriers, gender-based and sexual-based violence, and stigmas of women within educational settings.

111 Member States urge fellow delegates to recognize the economic barriers that women and the girl
112 child face in their access to education. Emphasizing the implementation of the United Nations embracement to the
113 Millennium development goals in 2000, which aims to ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to
114 complete a full course of good quality primary schooling. Specifically, the Millennium Development Goal 3 targets
115 to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

116 **Establishing the root of cultural inequalities in schooling**

117 Member States recognize the way that differing beliefs, norms, and values are held by cultures
118 globally and how that disproportionately affects women. The Commission further recognizes that different identities
119 and backgrounds affect women in the education system to a greater extent than their male peers. Women have to
120 face the cultural expectations of having to be in charge of childcare and domestic care while having to maintain a
121 job and education. Women as a whole are a subject to discrimination in many areas of life; however people who were
122 not assigned female at birth but identify as female are more susceptible to discrimination, specifically in the form of
123 negligence.

124 Marginalized women and girls, including but not limited to indigenous, migrant, and rural women,
125 regardless of age, often face inordinate rates of violence and poverty. In relation to communal and traditional lands,
126 marginalized women and girls are often taken advantage of. The violence they face comes in many forms that
127 are intersecting. The Commission recognizes that all women are subject to gender based violence, but it further
128 recognizes that marginalized women are significantly more likely to be victims of such violence and negligence. These
129 issues keep marginalized women out of school in many instances.

130 In order to reduce these burdens, the Commission recommends initiatives such as Title IX which
131 enforces no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the
132 benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial
133 assistance.

134 Keeping this in mind, the commission recommends the states address these cultural inequalities by
135 providing resources viewed through a gender-centric perspective, such as affordable childcare centers in order for
136 mothers to have the opportunity to attend school and work without the burden of child care.

137 **Verifying school infrastructure as a contributing factor to inaccessibility for women**

138 The commission affirmed the significance of school funding and infrastructure as a barrier to educa-
139 tional accessibility for women. Recognizing the economic inequalities between nations, member states.

140 Additionally, this commission suggests that developed member states assist developing allies or those
141 in their region by creating programs that provide educational resources, technology, and research necessary in the
142 economic improvement of women. This idea led to the Education for All Goal program that the United Nations
143 adopted in 2000. However, the EFA agenda is much broader, encompassing not only universal primary education and
144 gender equality, but also early childhood education, quality lifelong learning and literacy. This holistic approach is
145 vital to ensuring full enjoyment of the human right to education and achieving sustainable and equitable development.

146 Member States recommend Member States provide schools with access to resources, in hopes to
147 address the poverty gap in the access of school material. The commission urges states to reconsider geographic
148 location of educational buildings with context to the populations they serve- keeping in mind the economic disparities
149 in transportation. Reminding the Member States that reducing these accessibility barriers boosts education rates
150 and inspires learning.

151 Opportunities to pursue all academic fields must be highlighted within the community to encourage
152 women to learn how to access the labor market. Member states are encouraged to make women aware of the economic
153 opportunities available to them and ways to achieve employment.

154 Representatives from Cuba, Ghana, Iraq, China, Russian Federation, Republic of Congo, the Re-
155 public of Korea, Colombia, Brazil and Tunisia came together and discussed how it would be important to provide
156 assistance to developing nations that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. After some discussion these Mem-
157 ber States came to the conclusion of microloans for businesses owned by women. These microloans would provide a
158 boost to the economy of these nations, while also empowering women, while not providing long term assistance so
159 that states can remain independent.

160 We also encourage other United Nations organs, such as UNWomen, to help assist with the microloan
161 program, help with educating women, and provide the resources to help them succeed in their prospective areas of
162 need. The commission aims to highlight the impact of microloans in improving the economic level of these women
163 which will consequently stimulate Member State's economies.

164 The representatives listed also discussed the idea of education and decided that a good option would
165 be to provide opportunities for women to include themselves in trade schools and entrepreneurship. This aids women
166 with entrepreneurship and the opportunity of legal safe work.

167 The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative were also
168 brought up by the representative from Ghana. We support the accomplishments of these initiatives and wish for
169 them to continue.

170 The Representatives from Cuba and Iraq also recognize the harm that sanctions have caused their
171 countries, especially to the women of their countries. These representatives encourage states to lift these sanctions
172 in order to help empower women across the globe.

173 The delegations of Estonia, Turkmenistan, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Canada discussed the impor-
174 tance of encouraging safe labor practices for women in promoting women's economic empowerment across the globe.
175 Specifically, those delegations emphasized the critical role of several mechanisms for keeping women safe in the work-
176 place: increasing COVID-19 safety measures for the service sector and frontline workers, sexual harassment, rape,
177 and homicide prevention measures in workplaces, and funding for labor programs, tools, and safety equipment.

178 Women are overrepresented in frontline and service positions that center around face-to-face contact.
179 For example, 90% of the world's nurses are women. In these roles, women have long suffered from the consequences of
180 gender inequality. COVID-19 has exacerbated these issues and brought new problems to light. Stress and overwork
181 can cause increases in workplace accidents and adverse health outcomes. In these essential service and healthcare
182 positions, women's concerns about safety and work are often overlooked and ignored.

183 In other fields, however, women are severely underrepresented. These male dominated positions are
184 economically beneficial, offering greater employment stability and higher wages than traditional fields for women.
185 Additionally, they are less likely to have repeated contact with the public. Gender harassment often discourages
186 women from seeking jobs in these fields. Additionally, 108 economies worldwide have laws that prevent women from

187 working in specific jobs. Thus, women continue to lack full access to the job market, forcing them into unsafe and
188 unfair jobs.

189 The Commission recommends that increased COVID-19 safety measures be implemented for frontline
190 workers in the healthcare and service sectors. The establishment of health safety standards, such as that limiting
191 interaction and increasing cleaning protocols, will aid in the creation of a safer workplace for women and the broader
192 workforce.

193 The Commission also recommends that prohibitive laws restricting women's access to specific fields
194 be considered for repeal. Encouraging women's participation in sectors in which they are underrepresented will
195 diversify the experience of women in the workplace and give women opportunities to seek safer and more stable
196 employment, lessening the disproportionate degree in which women are subjected to workplace stress.

197 Currently, homicide is the leading cause of injury death for women in the workplace. Women often
198 hold jobs that require them to interact directly with clientele with no way to protect themselves from malevolent
199 individuals. This lack of adequate protection for frontline workers has led to egregious harm. Without intervention,
200 women will continue to be targeted and harmed.

201 The present delegations explored several preventative measures to ensure the safety of all workers.
202 Protective barriers could be implemented to separate workers from harm and alleviate the stress that working in an
203 unsafe environment causes. Furthermore, our committee recommends that countries ensure workplaces have access
204 to security cameras and trained guards would deter criminal activity, and serve as evidence if crime occurs.

205 It is important to the present countries that funding is made available for labor programs, tools and
206 safety equipment, especially for underdeveloped countries. While recognizing that all countries have an individual
207 responsibility to provide an adequate amount of labor programs, tools and safety equipment, this committee also
208 understands that underdeveloped countries often lack the resources, infrastructure and knowledge to effectively
209 ensure safe working conditions for women. Supporting underdeveloped countries in their efforts to improve workplace
210 conditions for women would allow women in those countries to have more opportunities for economic independence
211 along with lessening the number of workplace safety incidents in those countries.

212 This commission recommends that willing member states fund local and intrastate organizations
213 that work to provide safe workplace environments in underdeveloped nations. These funds could be used in under-
214 developed countries to support workplace safety education programs, new safety equipment and tools and workers
215 rights organizations. Because underdeveloped countries often lack the resources and infrastructure to provide for safe
216 working conditions, our committee believes that focusing United Nations funding in underdeveloped regions would
217 be the most impactful way of improving working conditions for women around the globe.

218 Representatives from Australia, Estonia, Chile, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Niger, Philippines, Republic
219 of Korea, Turkmenistan, Bahrain, Ghana, and Congo discussed the topic of minimizing workforce inequalities.
220 This was divided into three main sections, Parental leave and expansion of sick leave, sex and gender based work
221 discriminations, and encouraging countries to enforce their sex and gender based anti-discrimination laws.

222 **Parental Leave; Emergency Expansion of Sick Leave**

223 Current universal implementation of maternity or paternity leave is nonexistent. This time is es-
224 sential to allowing women to fully heal postpartum without feeling rushed to getting back to work. Establishing
225 paternity leave would allow for non-birth giving parents to stay home as well- alleviating burden from birth giving
226 parents. Paternity leave could also be utilized to allow the birth giving parent to return to work, while the non-birth
227 giving parent stays home with the newborn child. Furthermore, lack of paternity leave for both parents does not
228 allow for both parental figures to bond with their newborn child, this would also alleviate the stress of one parent
229 solely taking care of the child on their own while the other is working.

230 Following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that there is a necessity for paid sick leave for care-
231 givers. This would be useful in situations of parents needing to take time off of work for their sick children, but also
232 useful for caregivers needing to quarantine if they have a sick family member or have come in contact with someone
233 who is ill. Ensuring pay during this time is crucial, as if someone is a sole caregiver it is an undue burden for them
234 to take time off from work to assist sick family members.

235 Member States with already established parental leave are encouraged to lengthen maternity leave
236 time and provide relevant benefits, such as pay and continuation of healthcare benefits. If able, countries with

237 sufficient means should consider extending time off for the non-birth giving parent; in order to provide better
238 conditions to recuperate post-partum and return to the workforce more rapidly. Consideration of paternity leave for
239 non-birth giving parents, in countries where maternity leave is already available, should be implemented into general
240 practice.

241 Member States suggest the expansion of emergency paid sick leave for caregivers in the event of a
242 sick family member. Establishment of emergency leave for caregivers would promote the continued compensation
243 of workers during times of necessary leave. An example of this would be taking off of work if a family member has
244 contracted COVID-19 in order to properly quarantine prior to returning to work.

245 **Sex and gender-based discrimination and violence in the workplace**

246 The workplace is an essential element to individual economic empowerment. “Everyone,” as stated
247 in Article 23, 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “has the right to work, to free choice of employment,
248 to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.” Discrimination in the work place
249 is in direct violation of a person’s human rights in the eyes of the United Nations. Therefore, it is the suggestion of
250 this commission that Member States ensure that women have the right to work, with an equal opportunity to men.
251 Thus, Member States should consider regulations that protect women from unjust termination.

252 Additionally, women face discrimination in regards to their wages. It is far too common that women
253 earn less than their male counterparts for the same work. Until women have economic equality with their male
254 coworkers, women will continue to be overworked and exploited. Hence, this commission encourages Member States
255 to advocate for equal pay among genders.

256 It is only natural, if we recommend the right to work, that Member States work towards closing the
257 gender wage gap by advocating for the equal pay of women in the workforce to their male counterparts, as well as
258 equal opportunity. One way Member States can ensure equal pay is by conducting equal pay audits so companies
259 can clearly see how much their employees make in relation to each other. To ensure equal opportunity, we encourage
260 employers to fully consider qualified women in positions of power.

261 The simple right to work should not be enough. We as a global community should encourage not
262 only that women are working, but that they are safe doing so. The committee then recommends that Member States
263 create rules and regulations within the workplace that protect women against violence. This would include laws that
264 prohibit violence in the workplace, as well as protection orders for those directly affected by or faced with the threat
265 of violence in the workplace. It is important to note that these rules and regulations will make no impact if they are
266 not adequately followed and enforced. We encourage government and workplace actors to implement, follow, and
267 enforce laws and regulations in the workplace that protect women from violence.

268 It is crucial to monitor the payment status of female employees to ensure that women do not fall
269 victim to the gender wage gap. One way this can be accomplished is through conducting equal pay audits within
270 companies. By doing this, companies can clearly see what each employee is earning and ultimately bridge the wage
271 gap between their male and female employees. If companies lack transparency regarding wages then women will
272 continue to be exploited by their employers so it is important for member states to emphasize this to their business
273 populations as a relatively simple way to combat this wage discrimination.

274 **Encouraging countries to enforce their existing sex discrimination acts**

275 There is currently an issue regarding the enforcement of sexual discrimination acts in the workplace.
276 Many Member States have laws in their countries that prohibit sexual discrimination and harassment in the workplace,
277 however they will often lack the infrastructure to enforce these laws and regulations. Furthermore, some Member
278 States lack even the basic outline for sexual discrimination laws. Many women face unequal pay rates in the workforce
279 as well and don’t have the resources to combat this inequality. Another issue that women face in the workforce is
280 the unequal distribution of jobs. Many men are hired at greater rates than women worldwide.

281 We encourage employers to pay men and women equally and equitably based on job type and
282 personal skills. We recommend that governments encourage businesses to have transparency in wage rate decisions
283 for new and existing employees, and further recommend that governments implement fines on businesses that do not
284 comply with transparency initiatives to ensure businesses will be held accountable.

285 We further suggest that governments implement hiring quotas based on the ratio of men to women
286 applicants in companies applicant pools.

287 We recommend that governments implement a system that holds workplaces accountable for their
288 sexual harassment laws, as many Member States that already have these laws in place lack the necessary tools to
289 ensure the enforcement of these laws, rendering them ineffective.

290 Member States raised concerns that the existing frameworks do not adequately address empowering
291 rural women as it pertains to opportunities for economic independence and empowerment.

292 As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Member States have recognized the struggling economies
293 of many countries. Because of the pandemic, women have been the most vulnerable to job loss and have faced
294 significant setbacks pertaining to economic empowerment. COVID-19 has also contributed to the changing world of
295 work, and Member States acknowledge the need to recognize the importance of women's work in informal economies
296 and in unpaid labor work.

297 Women in rural environments are the backbone of the agricultural sector and need proper support,
298 resources and training in order to support their families, communities and economies.

299 Representatives acknowledged the success of initiatives that allow for the formal recognition of work
300 done in informal economies. Especially admirable was the change seen in the case of waste-pickers in Colombia who
301 were recognized as public service providers and paid fixed rates of pay. By adopting a similar mindset in the task of
302 supporting women in a changing economy, the burden and responsibility of attempting to enter the formal economy
303 through their own volition will be lifted.

304 Member States called for the expansion of the current definitions of labour as established by the
305 International Labour Organization (ILO) to include unpaid domestic work and caretaking. Such acknowledgement
306 by international organizations will be the first step towards legitimizing unrecognized female labor, which will open
307 the door for legal protections and support at the national level for this type of work. Having accomplished this,
308 delegations recommended an expansion of ILO statistics's resources to gather data which reflects these changes. The
309 modern world of work is evolving faster than actualization is possible, making it crucial that countries have access
310 to the latest data. Member States also emphasized the importance of using these resources to enable countries to
311 establish self-directed and eventually self-sufficient data collection.

312 The agricultural sector is occupied mostly by men. The manual labor aspect of agriculture was
313 addressed as women are often unaware of and not taught how to use farming equipment that men are often familiar
314 with. Training and safe handling standards are important to avoid hazards and incidents involving women in the
315 workplace. Equipment should be assessed for quality before use and women should utilize the same equipment as
316 men. Training is not limited to operating machinery. It also includes understanding the best agricultural practices,
317 business and marketing strategies, labeling and record-keeping. Historically, these leadership practices have not
318 been accessible to women, so this commission works to support women in their empowerment to occupy these roles.
319 Providing women with training allows them to stay safe but also practice company policies and gain skills that will
320 allow them to move up in the workplace.

321 Member States mentioned concern for global climate change and how rural communities, especially
322 women will be increasingly affected by these changes. Climate change has the capacity to exacerbate many of the
323 disadvantages that women face in pursuance of economic empowerment.

324 Member States expressed their concern with inadequate research capacities for developing nations.
325 Inadequate research capacities limit the amount of knowledge that necessary actors have to write relevant and
326 comprehensive policies that directly impact women in rural communities. The realities of living as a rural woman
327 are not well understood and assessed, meaning that helpful and effective policies are unable to be written. The
328 Commission would like to suggest that more effort is made to adequately fund and pursue research initiatives as it
329 pertains to economic development, specifically of rural women.

330 **Adoption of the report of the Commission**

331 At its meeting on 23 November 2021 the draft report of the Commission on the Status of Women
332 was made available for consideration. The Commission on the considered the report, and with no amendments,
333 adopted the report by consensus.

Passed by consensus, with 0 abstentions