

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

STATE MEMBERS

Algeria	Cuba	Iran, Islamic Republic of	Russian Federation
Armenia	Dominican Republic	Japan	South Africa
Belgium	El Salvador	Kazakhstan	Sudan
Belize	Gabon	Mali	Suriname
Bolivia	Germany	Mauritius	Thailand
Botswana	Ghana	Morocco	Turkey
Burkina Faso	Guatemala	Netherlands	United Arab Emirates
Canada	Hungary	Nicaragua	United Kingdom
China	Iceland	Peru	United Republic of Tanzania
Congo	India	Qatar	United States of America
Croatia	Indonesia	Republic of Korea	

This year, AMUN is simulating the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Participation is open to one or two Representatives from any country currently seated on the Commission. The CSW will meet all four days of the Conference, and will present a report to ECOSOC on the final day. While the range of subject matter before the CSW may seem overwhelming, significant work on the topics of discussion is nonetheless achievable with thoughtful preparation.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The CSW was established in June 1946 to promote implementation of the principle that men and women shall have equal rights. The Commission has forty-five members elected by ECOSOC for four year terms with broad regional representation. It meets annually for a period of ten working days to prepare recommendations and reports to the Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The CSW also makes recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights.

In 2000, as part of a comprehensive review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Platform for Action (Beijing +5), the General Assembly adopted a "Political Declaration" and "Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (the Outcome Document). The CSW's multi-year programme of work 2002-2006 is closely related to both the Platform for Action and the Outcome Document in an effort to ensure their effective implementation. At its forty-ninth session in February and March 2005, the CSW convened a high-level session to review the implementation of the Platform for Action and the Outcome Document with a focus on implementation at the national level and with the goal of identifying achievements, gaps and challenges.

THE SIMULATION

During the 2005 AMUN Conference, to allow for more detailed substantive debate the CSW simulation will be limited to two topics: The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality and Eradicating poverty, including Through the Empowerment of Women Throughout their Life Cycle in a Globalizing World. The Commission will be able to write both reports on the subjects, as well as resolutions when appropriate to recommend actions.

PREPARATION

As a foundation for subsequent research, Representatives are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Outcome Document from Beijing +5. In addition, documents from past sessions that considered the topics under discussion will be an extremely helpful starting point. Careful review of the following topic overviews and the related bibliographies will provide some assistance in this regard. It should be noted however that the topic overviews should not serve as the terminal point for research efforts but only as the beginning.



THE ROLE OF MEN AND BOYS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

In places throughout the world, women and girls are treated as lesser citizens; in some cases they are not even afforded the rights of basic citizenship. Gender inequalities not only affect women's and girls' daily lives, but also affect the health, peace, and stability of the societies in which they live. While often seen strictly as a women's issue, the place of men and boys in achieving the goal of gender equality is tantamount.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, goals for attaining gender equality were set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action. Beyond establishing actions to be taken by and on behalf of women directly, the Platform for Action also discusses the roles that men and boys play in the gender issue. As the political and social leaders in most societies, as well as their direct links to the education of women and girls and their accountability in the health and safety of women, the Platform for Action calls upon the international community to help educate men and boys regarding their responsibilities in achieving gender equality.

As part of its mandate from the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women regularly reviews the progress of the Platform for Action. In its 2003 session, and continuing through the current session, the CSW has held expert discussion on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality. The conclusions drawn from this discussion focus on the imbalances of power between women and men and suggest steps that should be taken to eliminate gender inequalities. The CSW points to men as decision-makers, care-givers, educators, partners, and protectors, and how each of the roles can be used to drive out stereotypes and move toward gender equality. The Commission calls upon those in power – largely men – to develop social and economic programs, as well as create and enforce legislation, to empower women through partnership and outreach.

The trafficking and exploitation of women in their lives and through the media has prompted the international community to continually call for steps to be taken to correct areas in which the rights, health and safety of women and girls are compromised. For example, the education of girls and women is often a lower priority than the education of boys. Basic education is not the only goal. In the conclusions of the CSW's expert meetings, the Commission urges education of men and boys about their contributions and responsibilities in gender equality. Specifically, the commission continues to call for the development of training and education programs for parents and care-givers to help raise children in a manner oriented towards gender equality. The development of programs for youth is also part of the call for education. Through schools, community, sports and other activities involving children, the Commission encourages the promotion of gender equality and mutual respect for individuals and the human rights of all.

Violence against women is also a major problem faced in the pursuit of gender equality, and one for which men and boys hold direct responsibility. Violence by soldiers and partners, often committed in societies in which women and girls have no redress against their attackers, strengthens inequalities. Not only does this harm societies and women on a broad social scale, but it also perpetuates critical health problems like HIV/AIDS and other STDs, and can increase unplanned pregnancies. Through education, advocacy, treatment, local legislation, and international aid, the CSW holds that these gender-based violations of women's and girl's rights can be curtailed. As the threat of the HIV/AIDS

pandemic spreads and as war and violence continue to be a daily factor in many lives, this issue is on the forefront of work to attain gender equality.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What role should the Commission on the Status of Women play in pursuing gender equality? What are other UN organs and outside organizations doing to address the problem?
- What is the legal status of women and girls in your country and region?
- How do the educational, legislative, economic, and social conditions in your country affect how men and boys understand gender equality?
- How can men and boys be encouraged to better support gender equality, particularly in those countries with cultures that include male dominance?

Bibliography:

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- "Getting men on board in sexual health debate," *UN Wire*, 2 Sep 2004.
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- "World Bank Links Growth to Reduced Gender Gap," *UN Wire*, 25 Feb 2005.

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- A/Res/59/168
A/Res/59/165
A/Res/58/148
E/2004/11
E/2003/37

Additional Web Resources:

- home.developmentgateway.org/
www.awid.org/
www.mercyworld.org/main.asp
www.prb.org
www.un.org/issues/m-women.asp
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/experts.html
www.womenaid.org/ukat/links.htm



ERADICATING POVERTY, INCLUDING THROUGH THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE CYCLE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

The challenge of poverty eradication is a high priority on both international and national agendas in the new millennium. Within the context of the recent emphasis on eradicating poverty throughout the UN system, including the current UN decade dedicated to that topic, the empowerment of women has gained additional prominence. Through global United Nations conferences and summits, a set of interconnected and mutually reinforcing goals, targets and strategies on combating poverty have been agreed upon by Governments. These events also highlighted the different causes and impacts of poverty on women and men, as well as their respective capacities to cope with it. This consequently emphasized the importance of directly addressing gender differences in poverty eradication efforts.

In the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the international community recognized that women and men experience poverty differently. This led to agreement that these differences need to be taken into account in order to adequately understand and deal with the causes of poverty. The Platform highlighted the empowerment of women as a critical factor in the eradication of poverty. Emphasizing the multidimensional nature of poverty, the Platform recommended that poverty eradication strategies should address such factors as autonomy, dignity and participation in decision-making. Furthermore, Governments agreed to promote the gender mainstreaming strategy in all policies and programmes, including those aimed at poverty eradication.

In preparation for the Commission's discussion of eradicating poverty through the empowerment of women in 2002, the Division on the Advancement of Women convened an expert group meeting in New Delhi in 2001. The group emphasized that the concept of human poverty includes not only the condition of economic insufficiency, but also social and political exclusion, so that discussions should take into account more than material well-being and acknowledge its gender dimension. The group's final report made a number of recommendations that centered around liberalizing the economy, creating better social services concerning education, health, and social security, and opening more doors for female participation in traditionally male dominated institutions.

At the Commission's 46th session in 2002, discussions centered on a distinction between the concerns of developed and developing countries, as well as the fulfillment of women's human rights as an important strategy to eradicate poverty. Other issues addressed included land and property rights of women and allocating funds for gender mainstreaming in UN conferences. The importance of guaranteeing reproductive and sexual health services and rights as a tool to eradicate poverty was debated, but not accepted into the final conclusions of the session. With the decade on the eradication of poverty coming to a close in 2006, now is an important time to evaluate the success of past actions and consider how to move forward to ensure the empowerment of women and the eradication of poverty.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- How have states responded to the Beijing Platform for Action and the CSW's conclusions? How can further action be best encouraged?
- Are there different concerns regarding the empowerment of women for countries at varying levels of development?

- If so, how do they differ? How is trade liberalization affecting impoverished and near-impoverished women?
- How can the UN mainstream a gender perspective into its other major conferences and commissions?

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A/Res/55/2
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A/Res/48/183
E/CN.4/2005/NGO/146
E/CN.4/2005/43
E/CN.6/2002/13
E/CN.6/2002/9
ECOSOC 2000/26

Additional Web Resources:

- www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/ -- Commission on the Status of Women
- www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/ -- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ -- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- www.un.org/Conferences/Women/ -- Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW)
- www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/inequal/gender/ -- Global Policy Project

