

RYCMUN 24'
CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND GUIDE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN (CSW)



RAJASTHAN
YOUTH
CONFERENCE



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings Delegates,

It is with great honour and responsibility that I address you as the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at this year's Rajasthan Youth Conference. Our agenda for this session, "Accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective," is a very basic necessity that needs to be addressed.

Gender equality is the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Gender disparities remain in many areas. Despite significant progress over the past decades, gender disparities persist in many areas, obstructing the social and economic development of communities worldwide. As delegates, you are tasked with the critical mission of devising comprehensive strategies to eliminate these disparities and foster an environment where women and girls can thrive.

We look forward to seeing all of you represent your countries with utmost diplomacy and your impactful deliberations.

Sincerely,

Gayatri Bharadwaj

Chairperson- UNCSW

INTRODUCTION

Agenda: "Accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective."

Regarding the working of the committee, the simulation shall follow the UN Rules of Procedure but with slight modifications. However, the will of the committee shall be of paramount importance. No decision shall be taken arbitrarily by the Executive Board and complete transparency and accountability will be maintained throughout the committee proceedings.

Proof/Evidence in the committee:

Evidence or proof is acceptable from sources, with regards to establishing veracity of facts including through points of order. However, that in no way,



should deter you from referring to a broad spectrum of resources for your research.

1. News Sources

- Reuters: Any Reuters' article that unambiguously makes mention of the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in the council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee. (<https://in.reuters.com/news/world>)
- State-operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in support of or against the State that owns the News Agency.
- Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a report being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information.
- Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Report: [https://protocol.un.org/dgacm/pls/site.nsf/files/HoM/\\$FILE/HeadsofMissions.pdf](https://protocol.un.org/dgacm/pls/site.nsf/files/HoM/$FILE/HeadsofMissions.pdf)
- Multilateral Organizations:
 - NATO (<http://www.natolibguides.info/nato-russia/reports>)
 - ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/0>)
 - OPEC (https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/publications/336.htm)

2. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered are credible information for this simulation.

- UN Bodies:
 - UNSC (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>)
 - UNGA (<https://www.un.org/en/sections/general/documents/index.html>)
- UN Affiliated bodies:
 - International Atomic Energy Agency (<https://www.iaea.org/>)
 - World Bank (<https://www.worldbank.org/>)
 - International Monetary Fund (<https://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>)
 - International Committee of the Red Cross (<https://www.icrc.org/en>).
- Treaty Based Bodies:
 - Antarctic Treaty System (<https://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>)
 - International Criminal Court (<https://www.icc-cpi.int/>)

3. Subsidiary Organs of the UN

- Peacebuilding-Commission ([https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/peacebuilding commission](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/peacebuilding%20commission))
- International Law Commission: (<http://legal.un.org/ilc/>)



ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) is a principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Established in 1946, the UNCSW plays a crucial role in setting global standards and policies to promote gender equality, address women's issues, and advocate for women's rights. The Commission meets annually to evaluate progress, identify challenges, and formulate policies to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

Mandate of the UNCSW

According to its mandate, the UNCSW is tasked with:

- Promoting women's rights in political, economic, social, and educational fields.
- Making recommendations to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights.
- Reviewing and appraising progress achieved in the implementation of international agreements on women's rights and gender equality.
- Ensuring that gender perspectives are integrated into all UN programs and activities.

Introduction to the Agenda of the Committee

Agenda: Accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

Gender inequality and women's empowerment remain critical issues in achieving sustainable development and equitable societies. This agenda focuses on the intersection of gender equality with poverty alleviation, institutional strengthening, and gender-responsive financing. Addressing these interconnected areas is essential for creating an environment where women can thrive and contribute equally to economic, social, and political life.

Breaking down the agenda

The agenda can be broken down into 3 major parts for research.

Addressing Poverty: Poverty disproportionately affects women and girls, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. It is imperative that we develop targeted interventions to alleviate poverty with a gender lens. This includes creating policies that support women's economic participation, ensuring equal pay for equal work, and providing social safety nets for the most



vulnerable. Additionally, we must promote women's entrepreneurship and access to microfinance, enabling them to become key economic actors in their communities.

Strengthening Institutions: Strong, gender-sensitive institutions are essential for the implementation and enforcement of laws and policies that promote gender equality. We must advocate for institutional reforms that prioritize gender parity in leadership positions, support gender-responsive budgeting, and enhance the capacity of institutions to address gender-based violence.

Collaboration with civil society organizations and grassroots movements is also crucial in holding institutions accountable and ensuring that women's voices are heard and acted upon.

Financing with a Gender Perspective: Adequate and sustained financing is critical to achieving gender equality. We must push for increased investments in gender-responsive programs and ensure that financial resources are allocated effectively to address the specific needs of women and girls. This includes advocating for international financial institutions to integrate gender perspectives into their funding criteria and encouraging public-private partnerships that prioritize women's empowerment. Furthermore, transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of funds are paramount to maximizing their impact.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948:

ARTICLE 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

ARTICLE 23:



- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

UN Charter

The concept of gender equality has been established within the core guiding principles of the United Nations, and unequivocally reflects a commitment to the equality of men and women in all aspects of the human endeavour. More specifically, the Charter of the United Nations (Articles 8 and 101) stipulates that there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in every capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.

Beijing Platform for Action

Strategic Objective G.1 (in the section on “Women in power and decision-making”), presented at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, states that the United Nations must take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

The UN-specific objective states the following:

- Implement existing and adopt new employment policies and measures in order to achieve overall gender equality, particularly at the Professional level and above, by the year 2000, with due regard to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations;
- Develop mechanisms to nominate women candidates for appointment to senior posts in the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system;
- Continue to collect and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data on women and men in decision-making and analyse their differential impact on decision-making and monitor progress towards achieving the Secretary-General's target of having women hold 50 per cent of managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000.



Action must be taken by the United Nations and other international organizations to eliminate barriers to the advancement of women within their organizations in accordance with the Platform for Action.

The Secretary-General is requested to assume responsibility for coordination of policy within the United Nations for the implementation of the Platform for Action and for the mainstreaming of a system-wide gender perspective in all activities of the United Nations, taking into account the mandates of the bodies concerned. The Secretary-General should consider specific measures for ensuring effective coordination in the implementation of these objectives. To this end, the Secretary-General is invited to establish a high-level post in the office of the Secretary-General, using existing human and financial resources, to act as the Secretary-General's adviser on gender issues and to help ensure system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action in close cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women.

See a summary of the [12 critical areas of action in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action](#).

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – UN Women

on System-wide Coherence created a new UN entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women. It states:

Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

53. Further decides that the mandate and functions of the Entity (UN Women) shall consist of the consolidated mandates and functions of the [former] Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and that any new mandates shall be subject to approval by intergovernmental process (page 9 of A/RES/289).

[Report of the Secretary-General A/64/588](#) : Comprehensive proposal for the Composite Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The functions of the entity with regard to the improvement of the status of women are described in the Secretary-General's Report A/64/588, on which the Resolution A/RES/64/289 relied in creating the new entity. It states:

III. Functions and structure

6. The composite entity, as outlined in the Deputy Secretary-General's papers of August 2007 and July 2008, shall have the following functions:



(h) Monitor and report on system-wide compliance with intergovernmental mandates on gender balance, including at the senior and decision-making levels (page 6 of A/64/588).

C. Headquarters-level functions

11. At Headquarters, the composite entity will provide substantive support to inter-governmental processes. In addition to other global functions, it will support regional and country-level activities. For its key Headquarters functions, the composite entity will:

(e) Monitor and report on United Nations system compliance and efforts to develop and apply internal United Nations gender equality policies, including achieving gender balance, eliminating harassment and promoting work-life balance (page 10 of A/64/588).

DISCUSSION ON THE 68TH CSW

The 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) focused on the theme of "Accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the COVID-19 recovery and beyond." The session highlighted the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and girls and the need for gender-responsive recovery measures.

Key themes included:

- **Economic Empowerment:** Addressing the economic challenges faced by women, including job losses, increased unpaid care work, and lack of access to social protection. Emphasis was placed on creating economic opportunities and supporting women's entrepreneurship.
- **Gender-Based Violence:** Recognizing the surge in domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence during the pandemic, CSW68 called for strengthened measures to protect women and girls and ensure their safety.
- **Health and Education:** Highlighting the importance of access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services, and education for women and girls, particularly in the context of disruptions caused by the pandemic.
- **Leadership and Participation:** Promoting women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels, including political, economic, and social spheres, to ensure inclusive and equitable recovery strategies.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Addressing the digital divide and promoting women's access to technology and digital literacy as essential for economic and social empowerment in a post-pandemic world.

Outcomes and Recommendations



The 68th CSW session resulted in a series of outcomes and recommendations aimed at advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Economic Recovery Plans: Governments were urged to incorporate gender perspectives into economic recovery plans, ensuring that women benefit equally from economic opportunities and support measures. This includes investing in women's entrepreneurship, providing social protection, and addressing the gender pay gap.

Health and Education Services: Recommendations emphasized the need to ensure continuity and accessibility of health and education services for women and girls. This includes prioritizing sexual and reproductive health services, addressing educational disruptions, and supporting digital learning initiatives.

Inclusive Decision-Making: CSW68 called for increased representation of women in decision-making processes, including in political leadership, corporate boards, and other key areas. Governments were encouraged to implement measures such as gender quotas and mentorship programs to promote women's leadership.

Digital Empowerment: Recognizing the importance of digital inclusion, the session recommended initiatives to bridge the digital divide and promote women's access to technology. This includes investing in digital infrastructure, providing digital literacy training, and supporting women's participation in the tech industry.

Global Cooperation: The importance of international cooperation and solidarity was underscored, with calls for countries to work together to address global challenges affecting women and girls. This includes sharing best practices, providing financial support to developing countries, and fostering partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector.

These outcomes and recommendations from the 68th CSW session provide a comprehensive framework for accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. By implementing these strategies, member states can ensure that women and girls are not left behind and that gender equality remains a central goal in building a more equitable and resilient world.

Policy Recommendations

The 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) produced several actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing gender equality efforts globally. These recommendations focused on strengthening legal frameworks, increasing investment in women's programs, and fostering cross-sector collaboration.

Strengthening Legal Frameworks:



- Member states were urged to review and reform existing laws and policies to ensure they promote gender equality and protect women's rights. This includes enacting and enforcing legislation against gender-based violence, discrimination, and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Governments were encouraged to implement gender quotas in political and public spheres to increase women's representation and participation in decision-making processes.
- It was recommended that countries adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that cover all aspects of gender inequality, including workplace discrimination, unequal pay, and barriers to education and healthcare.

Increasing Investment in Women's Programs:

- The CSW68 emphasized the need for increased financial resources dedicated to programs that support women's empowerment and gender equality. This includes funding for women's education, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and leadership development.
- Member states were encouraged to allocate a specific percentage of their national budgets to gender equality initiatives, ensuring sustained and adequate funding.
- The importance of investing in social protection systems was highlighted, including measures such as paid parental leave, affordable childcare, and social security benefits for women.

Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration:

- The session called for enhanced collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations to address gender inequality. This includes forming partnerships to implement gender-responsive policies and programs.
- It was recommended that member states establish multi-stakeholder platforms to facilitate dialogue and cooperation on gender equality issues. These platforms should include representatives from women's organizations, academia, businesses, and other relevant sectors.
- The CSW68 also emphasized the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality and called for initiatives to engage them as allies in the fight against gender-based violence and discrimination.

Global Commitments

The 68th CSW session resulted in renewed commitments from member states to prioritize gender equality in their national development agendas and international cooperation frameworks. These commitments are crucial for advancing the global agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment.



CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1- Rwanda's Gender Parity in Parliament

Rwanda stands out globally for its remarkable achievement in gender parity in parliament. As of recent years, Rwanda has consistently had the highest percentage of women in its national legislature, with women occupying over 60% of the seats in the lower house of parliament. This success is largely attributed to the implementation of gender quotas and supportive policies aimed at empowering women in political and public life.

Key factors contributing to Rwanda's success include:

Gender Quotas: Rwanda's constitution mandates that at least 30% of parliamentary seats be reserved for women. This quota has been instrumental in ensuring women's representation and participation in the political process.

Supportive Legal Framework: The government has enacted various laws and policies that promote gender equality and protect women's rights. These include laws against gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as policies that encourage women's economic empowerment and access to education.

Political Will and Leadership: Rwanda's leadership, particularly under President Paul Kagame, has shown strong commitment to gender equality. The government has actively promoted women's participation in all sectors of society, setting a positive example for other nations.

Civil Society and Advocacy: Women's organizations and civil society groups in Rwanda have played a crucial role in advocating for gender equality and supporting women's political participation. These groups provide training, resources, and support to women candidates and elected officials.

The impact of gender parity in Rwanda's parliament has been profound. Women parliamentarians have been influential in shaping legislation and policies that address issues such as healthcare, education, and social welfare. Rwanda's experience demonstrates the effectiveness of gender quotas and supportive policies in achieving gender equality in political representation.

Case Study 2- Sweden's Gender Equality Policies

Sweden is widely regarded as a global leader in gender equality, with comprehensive policies and practices that promote equal opportunities for women and men. Sweden's approach to gender equality is characterized by its focus on parental leave, childcare, and gender-responsive budgeting.

Key components of Sweden's gender equality policies include:



Parental Leave: Sweden offers one of the most generous parental leave systems in the world. Parents are entitled to a total of 480 days of paid leave, which can be shared between both parents. This policy encourages shared responsibility for childcare and promotes gender equality in both the workplace and the home. Additionally, a portion of the leave is reserved specifically for fathers, further promoting their involvement in childcare.

Childcare: Sweden provides high-quality, affordable childcare services to all families. Access to childcare is a critical component of gender equality, as it enables both parents to participate in the workforce and pursue career opportunities. The availability of subsidized childcare also reduces the burden of unpaid care work, which disproportionately falls on women.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Sweden has integrated gender perspectives into its budgeting processes, ensuring that public resources are allocated in ways that promote gender equality. This involves analyzing the impact of budget decisions on women and men and making adjustments to address disparities. Gender-responsive budgeting helps to ensure that government policies and programs benefit all members of society equally.

Legislative and Policy Framework: Sweden has enacted a robust legislative framework to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination. This includes laws on gender equality, anti-discrimination, and equal pay. The government also implements policies and action plans to address specific gender equality issues, such as combating gender-based violence and promoting women's economic empowerment.

Institutional Support: Sweden has established institutions and agencies dedicated to advancing gender equality. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency, for example, is responsible for coordinating and implementing gender equality policies and initiatives. These institutions play a key role in monitoring progress, providing expertise, and supporting gender equality efforts across various sectors.

Sweden's comprehensive approach to gender equality has resulted in significant progress in various areas. The country consistently ranks high on global gender equality indices, reflecting its commitment to promoting equal opportunities for all citizens. Sweden's policies serve as a model for other countries seeking to achieve gender equality and empower women.

Both Rwanda and Sweden provide valuable lessons on the importance of targeted policies, strong political will, and institutional support in achieving gender equality. By examining these case studies, delegates can gain insights into effective strategies and best practices that can be adapted to different contexts and used to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment globally.



NOTE: *These case studies on Rwanda and Sweden are provided as illustrative examples. Delegates are encouraged to conduct their own research to explore additional case studies and gather comprehensive information relevant to the agenda.*

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Current Scenario

Gender equality and women's empowerment remain critical global challenges in contemporary society. Despite significant progress in many areas, substantial gaps persist, and women continue to face discrimination and inequality in various forms. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, disproportionately affecting women and highlighting existing inequalities. In many regions, women have experienced increased rates of unemployment, gender-based violence, and barriers to accessing essential services such as healthcare and education. Furthermore, women are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles, both in the public and private sectors. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes legal reforms, policy interventions, and cultural shifts.

Recent Events and Issues

Several recent events and issues have underscored the ongoing struggles for gender equality and the need for accelerated action:

COVID-19 Pandemic: The pandemic has had a profound impact on women globally. Women have been on the frontlines as healthcare workers, caregivers, and essential workers, while also bearing the brunt of job losses and increased unpaid care work at home. The pandemic has also led to a surge in domestic violence, with many women trapped at home with their abusers during lockdowns.

Economic Disparities: Women continue to face significant economic disparities, including the gender pay gap, lack of access to financial resources, and underrepresentation in high-paying industries and leadership positions. Efforts to promote women's economic empowerment are critical for achieving gender equality.



Political Participation: Despite some progress, women remain underrepresented in political leadership and decision-making roles. Recent elections in various countries have highlighted the ongoing challenges women face in gaining equal representation in government.

Education and Health: Access to education and healthcare remains unequal for women and girls in many parts of the world. Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys, and women often face barriers to accessing quality healthcare, including reproductive health services.

Gender-Based Violence: Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and human trafficking, continues to be a pervasive issue. Efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence are crucial for ensuring women's safety and well-being.

Statistical Data

Economic Participation: Globally, women earn approximately 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, with the gender pay gap being even wider in some regions. Women are also less likely to participate in the labor force, with a global labor force participation rate for women of about 47%, compared to 74% for men.

Political Representation: As of 2021, women held 25.5% of parliamentary seats worldwide, up from 11.3% in 1995. However, this still falls short of equal representation, and progress has been uneven across regions.

Education: Despite improvements, there are still significant gender disparities in education. According to UNESCO, 129 million girls worldwide were out of school in 2020, including 32 million of primary school age, 30 million of lower-secondary school age, and 67 million of upper-secondary school age.

Health: Women's access to healthcare varies widely across regions. Maternal mortality remains a significant issue, particularly in low-income countries. In 2017, approximately 295,000 women died during and following pregnancy and childbirth, with 94% of these deaths occurring in low-resource settings.

Gender-Based Violence: According to UN Women, 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. During the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of domestic violence have increased by 30% in some countries.

These statistics and recent events highlight the urgent need for continued efforts to address gender inequality and promote women's empowerment. By understanding the contemporary context, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to tackle these issues and achieve meaningful progress toward gender equality.





PARTING NOTE

This background guide is designed to provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the critical issues surrounding gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of poverty alleviation, institutional strengthening, and gender-responsive financing. While this guide covers key aspects and provides illustrative examples, it is by no means exhaustive. Delegates are encouraged to conduct thorough research, engage with diverse perspectives, and develop innovative solutions to address the complex and multifaceted challenges discussed. The success of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) in this simulation relies on your active participation, critical thinking, and collaborative efforts to create impactful and sustainable change.





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