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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN BACKGROUND GUIDE

**Agenda : Reviewing the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Tackling
Challenges to Gender Equality**



CENMUN
One World One Nation

Letter from the Executive Board

Hello Delegates!

Welcome to the CEN Model United Nations 2018 simulation for the Commission for the Status for Women. The topic under our discussion today is regarding the reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and tackling challenges to gender equality. The focus of this agenda will be to discuss the implementation of Beijing platform for action and it's mission statement in the contemporary world with reference to the background, history and expected outcomes of the mission on the status of women in the society. Also the committee would put their heads together about the challenges faced by women now and earlier.

The focus of the committee is to encourage constructive debate through concept-based arguments and not information-heavy ones. MUN committees are famous for being intensely concentrated on international law, UN conventions and resolution documents. While those are important as well, we would like to encourage you to look at arguments and solutions that look at the agenda from a ground- level approach. Look at your surroundings, the people you stay with and who form a part of your community. Start thinking about the questions so that you can think of problems and solutions in real-life scenario. When you propose policies, they will effectively be based on how well they are able to realistically solve problems. What better way to find that out than through your own neighborhood? We would therefore, highly urge you to go out of your house and talk to the women and men you encounter every day. Learn their stories, assess their problems and then think of solutions to those problems. Think small so that you can think big.

Please make sure to also go through the links provided in the guide. Delegates must be prepared to intelligently utilize their knowledge and apply it to their own country's policy. You will find that your state has a unique position on the topics that cannot be substituted by the opinions of another state. Therefore, please come prepared for the conference from the perspective of your country, the topic and the UN system for a truly rewarding experience.

Your contributions to the committee will be assessed on how well you have researched on these levels and if you are able to put forward your argument in a clear and logical manner. We hope to contribute to your growth in the committee and learn more from you as well!

In case of queries, I can be reached on my email id: praveengoelpraveen@gmail.com

Good luck!

Praveen Goel
Chairperson

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal intergovernmental body of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The CSW is a functional commission reporting to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) on an annual basis. The Commission first met in 1947 and has since been holding annual meetings. At its inception, the CSW comprised 15 Member States all which were represented by women; in other words the delegations were composed entirely of women. Non-governmental organizations holding consultative status within the UN ECOSOC have developed a close relationship with the CSW and are invited to participate as observers.

Brief History

The Commission participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) by raising awareness on women's issues as well as introducing more inclusive language addressing men and women. Fighting against discriminatory legislation was also an important role of the CSW. The codification of women's legal rights needed to be supported by thorough analysis of women's situation throughout the world which the CSW achieved by conducting extensive research and painting detailed pictures of women's status in each country.

The CSW began drafting international conventions on women's rights, such as the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953), which was the first document to address women's political rights; the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957), addressing women's rights within marriage; and, finally, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration for Marriage (1962), which also addressed women's rights pertaining to marriage. In 1951, the CSW participated in the drafting of the Labour Organization's Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, bringing about the popularity of the concept of equal pay for equal work.

In 1963, the United Nations General Assembly mandated the CSW to draft a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which the General Assembly adopted in 1967. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) was a legally

binding document produced by the Commission and one of the foremost important document on the topic of discrimination against women. In the subsequent years, the Commission concentrated on women's situation in rural areas as women had been disproportionately affected by poverty.

The 25th anniversary of the Commission was marked by the First World Conference on Women which was held in Mexico City. The following decade became the "UN Decade for Women: Equality Development and Peace." In 1980 another world conference was held in Copenhagen and a third was held in Nairobi in 1985. During the 1980s, the CSW helped bring attention to the issue of violence against women and the General Assembly adopted in 1993, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which the Commission on the Status of Women has since been discussing annually and ensuring the efficient implementation of the suggested measures in all countries.

Finally, in the 2011, the various branches of the United Nations addressing women's issues, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), merged to become UN Women. The CSW operates within UN Women which leads initiatives in leadership and political participation, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, peace and security, humanitarian action, governance and national planning, the sustainable development agenda, and HIV/AIDS.

AGENDA: Reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and tackling challenges to Gender Equality

Background

World Conference on Women, 1995

The **Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace** was the name given for a conference convened by the United Nations during 4–15 September 1995 in Beijing, China.

The founding United Nations charter (1945) included a provision for equality between men and women (chapter III, article 8). Subsequently, from 1945 to 1975 various female officials within the United Nations and leaders of women's movements on the global stage attempted to turn these principles into action. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution (resolution 3010) that 1975 should be International Women's Year. In December 1975, the UN General Assembly passed a further resolution (resolution 31/136) that 1976–1985 should be the "Decade of Women.

Earlier Conferences on Women

- || First World Conference on Women, Mexico City, 1975
- || Second World Conference on Women, Copenhagen, 1980

- || Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi, 1985
- || Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995 or Beijing Platform for Action

MAJOR OUTCOMES

There were two major upshots of the conference; BEIJING DECLARATION and BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION.

BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Platform for action is the base that formed the crux of the women's movement in developing countries and also stood up for the LGBT (lesbians) rights in 1995. For the first time in the world, anything about lesbians was openly spoken of. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. It also reaffirms the fundamental principle set forth in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. It was an initiative to bring all the countries together to working towards women's rights.

BEIJING DECLARATION

The **Beijing Declaration** was a resolution adopted by the UN at the end of the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995. The resolution adopted to promulgate a set of principles concerning the equality of men and women. It charted out 12 key areas for women empowerment and protection.

THE 12 KEY AREAS OF BEIJING DECLARATION

- || Environment
- || Education
- || Economy
- || Poverty
- || Health
- || Girl child
- || Violence
- || Human Rights
- || Armed conflicts
- || Institutional mechanisms
- || Decision making
- || Media

IMPLEMENTATION OF BEIJING DECLARATION

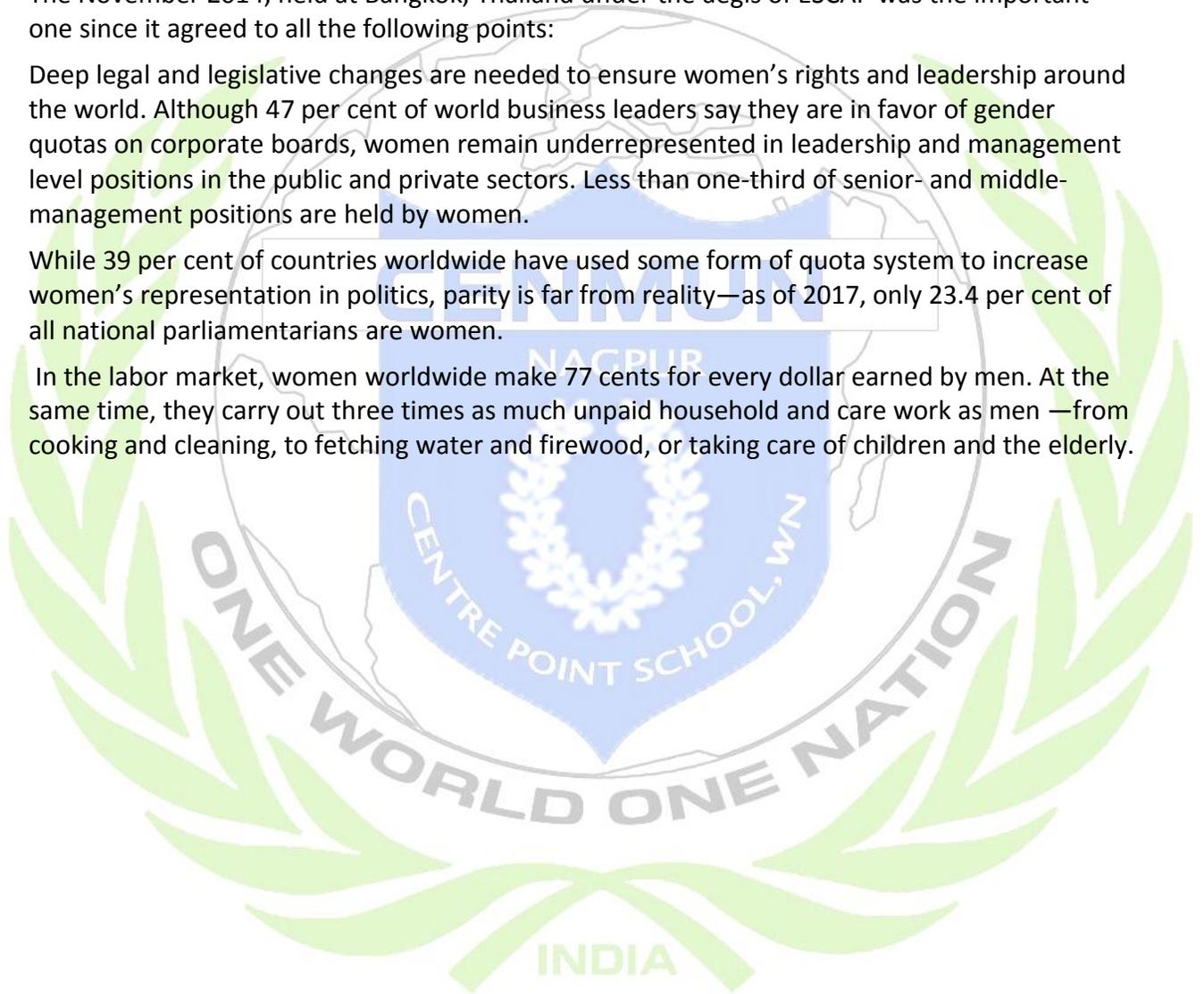
Since 2000 they review progress on 12-Areas in every 5 years. The last was done in 2015 at New York.

The November 2014, held at Bangkok, Thailand under the aegis of ESCAP was the important one since it agreed to all the following points:

Deep legal and legislative changes are needed to ensure women's rights and leadership around the world. Although 47 per cent of world business leaders say they are in favor of gender quotas on corporate boards, women remain underrepresented in leadership and management level positions in the public and private sectors. Less than one-third of senior- and middle-management positions are held by women.

While 39 per cent of countries worldwide have used some form of quota system to increase women's representation in politics, parity is far from reality—as of 2017, only 23.4 per cent of all national parliamentarians are women.

In the labor market, women worldwide make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. At the same time, they carry out three times as much unpaid household and care work as men—from cooking and cleaning, to fetching water and firewood, or taking care of children and the elderly.



THE IRONY.....



No country in the world is untouched by the pandemic of intimate partner violence—1 in 5 women and girls aged 15 to 49 across 87 countries reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner; 49 countries have no laws specifically protecting women from domestic violence.

Harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, continue to rob women and girls of equal opportunities. The numbers are staggering— at least 200 million women and girls have undergone FGM; and over 750 million women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

The challenge

Since gender inequality constitutes one of the history's most persistent and widespread forms of injustice, eliminating it will call for one of history's biggest movements for change. Women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. Gaps in gender equality exist in every sector. In South Asia, only 74 girls were enrolled in primary school

for every 100 boys in 1990. However, by 2012, the enrolment ratios were the same. In 155 countries, at least one law exists which impedes women's economic opportunities. Women in most countries on average earn only 60% to 75% of wages paid to men. Only 22.8% of all national parliamentarians are women. One in three women experience some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes.

CONCLUSION

The Commission on the Status of Women has effectively addressed multiple issues pertaining to women's rights as well as drafting relevant framework which has served to shape international legislation concerning women's rights. Much of the advancement made for women's rights have been supported and spearheaded by the Commission and UN Women which both continue to actively discuss and fight discrimination against women worldwide. Women face multiple challenges, as stated by UN Women Deputy Director and Assistant Secretary-General Lakshmi Puri in a speech delivered at the UN Women National Committees' Meeting in 2011, including the feminization of poverty, stagnation of economic growth and empowerment, and stifling of women's voices, as well as suffering "even more due to natural disasters, climate change, environmental stress, food, fuel, health and economic crises as they bear the burden of care-giving, for example, in the case of HIV/AIDS." In other words, there is still a long way to go in the process of women achieving equal rights and UN Women along with the CSW must play a primordial role in this achievement.

FURTHER LINKS FOR RESEARCH

- || Mrunal.org
- || www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm
- || www.endfgm.eu/resources/international/beijing-declaration-and-platform-for-action/
- || www.who.int/medicines/areas/traditional/congress/beijing_declaration/en/
- || https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/.../13145Netherlands_review_Beijing20.pdf
- || https://www.cepal.org/mujer/noticias/paginas/3/51823/Guidance_note_English.pdf

