

# ILM NC India

THE IVY LEAGUE MODEL UNITED NATIONS INDIA 2016



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Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to The Ivy League Model United Nations Conference India 2016 hosted by the International Affairs Association of the University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy League institution.

The Ivy League Model United Nations Conference is one of the most reputed high school conferences in the United States bringing together over 3000 delegates from across the globe in an unique academic, social and cultural experience. We are incredibly excited to bring this experience to India this year in what will be one of the largest and most academically, professionally and socially enriching Model United Nations symposiums.

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A large part of what makes ILMUNC India so incredible is the commitment of its amazing staff, as well as the immense preparation that goes into making this conference the phenomenal experience that it is. Our staffers are all leaders at the prestigious University of Pennsylvania, who come from a diverse range of majors, interests, classes, and schools – from Finance at the Wharton School of Business to Computer Science and Nanotechnology at the School of Engineering. At ILMUNC India, this academic excellence and personal passions that chairs bring truly bring a professional collegiate environment and distinct enriching experience to our high school delegates, both within and outside the committee room.

The Secretariat is working hard to ensure that the quality of the conference is unparalleled. This year will bring together close to 1000 delegates in 8 distinct committees. The topics we are discussing are pertinent issues in today's world and we are excited to witness the unique and diverse solutions that our delegates will bring to the table. The ILMUNC India team is continuously searching for ways to make the conference better and more engaging for our delegates. We are proud to announce technological advancement in the Model United Nations circuit including a groundbreaking mobile application that will soon be released.

Our delegates' experiences outside of committee are just as vital as their experiences within committee. At ILMUNC India we ensure that our delegates take away memories and experiences that will better them personally and professionally. Outside of the invaluable Model United Nations experience, we host numerous college and career fairs, personal mentoring sessions with current students and alumni, keynote speeches from prominent members of society and, of course, enthralling social events.

Our delegates are the most integral part of our story and I'd like to once again thank you for choosing to be a part of our next chapter of ILMUNC India 2016. We are certain that you will walk away from this conference with memories that you will cherish for a long time to come. Welcome to ILMUNC India 2016!

Sincerely,

Ana Rancic  
Secretary-General  
ILMUNC India 2016



# INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

## TOPIC A: CHILDHOOD LABOR

### Statement of the Issue

According to the Human Development Report 2015, there are 168 million children worldwide trapped in childhood labor, accounting for over 11% of the overall child population.<sup>1</sup> Childhood labor is “work performed by children who are under the minimum age legally specified for that kind of work, or work which, because of its detrimental nature or conditions, is considered unacceptable for children and is prohibited.”<sup>2</sup> Not only is childhood labor dangerous and inhumane, it deprives children of the opportunity for education and fulfillment. No child, regardless of country of origin, religion, sex, or socio-economic status, should be forced to participate in child labor.

### History

Children became a vital asset to companies during the Industrial Revolution because of their advantageous size, malleable minds, and work ethic. In colonial America, children worked in an agricultural capacity on family farms, and boys often began apprenticeships between age ten and fourteen.<sup>3</sup> Soon thereafter, factory employment and textile mills became the prime locations for child labor. Indeed, “they (children) could be paid lower wages, were more tractable and easily managed than adults, and were very difficult for unions to

organize.”<sup>4</sup> Calls for mandatory education in the mid-nineteenth century spawned minimum wage and school attendance standards, but these cries for justice were silenced through 1880 because of Southern and Eastern European immigrants whose labor proved too alluring to prevent companies from employing them.<sup>5</sup>

Though industrialized countries are home to relatively fewer child laborers, the elimination of child labor has been a cornerstone of social reform since the early 1900s. The National Child Labor Committee, founded in 1904, “pioneered the techniques of mass political action, including investigations by experts, the widespread use of photography to dramatize the poor conditions of children at work, pamphlets, leaflets, and mass mailings to reach the public, and sophisticated lobbying.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, state and national legislatures in the United States began to take up the cause; indeed, between the years 1902 and 1915 Congress passed numerous laws seeking to limit child labor. However, much of these efforts were futile, as the Supreme Court ruled them unconstitutional shortly thereafter.<sup>7</sup> The creation of the National Industrial Recovery Act and Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 made strides in the mitigation of child labor in the United States, “setting national minimum wage and maximum hour standards for workers in interstate commerce,” thereby lowering child labor rates.<sup>8</sup>

In the United States, legislation was not the only factor that minimized child labor. The development

of new machinery eliminated the need for children to perform many low-skilled tasks, and adults experiencing the harsh realities of unemployment pressed companies to forgo child labor in an effort to minimize unemployment. However despite these technological advances, mass abuses of child labor still persist around the world today. Namely, “employers in the garment industry...have turned to children of illegal immigrants in an effort to compete with imports from low-wage nations.”<sup>9</sup> Children working in developing countries are often forced to endure harsher working conditions and greater health and safety hazards with little to no legal coverage in the event of an accident.. A report by the firm Maplecroft, “identifies Eritrea, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and Yemen as the ten places where child labor is most prevalent.”<sup>10</sup> There is often pressure for children to supplement family income in impoverished countries, leading to increases in the number of children who leave school to begin working at younger ages.

*“The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that which is harmful to physical and mental development.”<sup>11</sup>*

Childhood laborers are predominantly found working in the agricultural sector (58.6%) or service sector (25.4%). Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182 characterizes and seeks to mitigate the most detrimental forms of childhood labor such as:

*“(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour; including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;*

*(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;*

*(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;*

*(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.”<sup>12</sup>*

## Relevant International Action

The international community has increasingly realized that fixing child labor, and more importantly, the social and economic conditions that catalyze it, needs to be a top priority moving forward. It has therefore engaged in active dialogue to share perspectives and raise awareness about the dangers of child labor. Major powers from around the world have also passed important frameworks to which the international community can look for guidance. Some of these such frameworks are as follows:

- 1) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138): This is the predominant internationally-accepted framework outlining a commitment to end child

labor. This framework, “establishes that the general minimum age for admission to employment should not be less than the age of completing compulsory schooling and in no event less than 15 years of age (or 14 for developing countries for whom it may initially be difficult to enforce a minimum age of 15). Countries that ratify it must “pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age...to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons.”<sup>13</sup>

2) Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182): This Convention seeks to identify a minimum standard to which all countries, regardless of their levels of development, are held liable.

3) ILO’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998: Designates certain rights, such as “the right to freedom of association and to collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labour, non-discrimination in employment and occupation, and the effective abolition of child labour.”<sup>14</sup> All ILO member states must take part in this obligation.

4) Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), 1989: The Convention on the Rights of the Child “defines a child as every person under the age of 18.”<sup>15</sup> Many of the provisions in this convention parallel the aforementioned ILO child labor

requirements. CRC’s Article 32 extols the virtue of education and thus seeks to protect children from “economic exploitation” or work that distracts children from the fundamental goal of achieving education.<sup>16</sup> Articles in this convention also shed light on some of the most deplorable forms of childhood labor, such as drug trafficking, sexual exploitation, child trafficking and abduction, and child soldiers during armed conflict.

5) The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC): One can think of the Conventions as the “assembly manuals,” while IPEC corresponds with the raw materials, technical assistance, and manpower to make the goals asserted in the Conventions a reality. IPEC serves as a liaison between governments, employees, workers’ organizations, NGOs, governments, and other invested parties. Launched in 1992, IPEC drives the movement to eliminate child labor. Put simply, “IPEC operates a phased and multi-sectoral strategy which motivates a broad alliance of partners to acknowledge and act against child labor, the basis of which action is the political will and commitment of individual governments to address the problem.”<sup>17</sup> Multifaceted, innovative solutions must be employed to address the problem of child labor. IPEC has leveraged social media and strategic corporate partnerships to broaden awareness about child labor and inspire positive change. For example, there now exists a “World Day Against Child Labour” to bring attention to the issues of child labor. IPEC also joined forces

with the African Football Confederation to launch a “Red Card to Child Labor” campaign, which sought to visually identify violators of child labor practices. In fact, “activities were carried out in 21 African nations...it is estimated that 12 million people received the message in Kenya and 5 million in Zambia alone.”<sup>18</sup>

## Current Situation

Governments, along with NGOs and local institutions, have the responsibility to establish and implement systems that nurture children, provide them with proper education and living conditions, and protect them from workplace abuse.

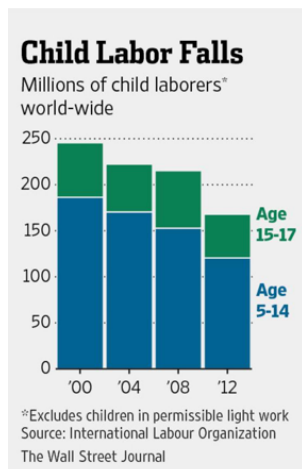


Figure 1: Child labor rates have fallen in recent years.<sup>19</sup>

The United States recently ratified a “National Program of Action” that works on:

- “preventing the criminal exploitation of children; reducing workplace injuries and fatalities of young workers;
- assuring that workloads are not so heavy that they adversely affect educational achievement;

- assuring that there is adequate information to make informed and appropriate decisions about the issues arising from youth employment.”<sup>20</sup>

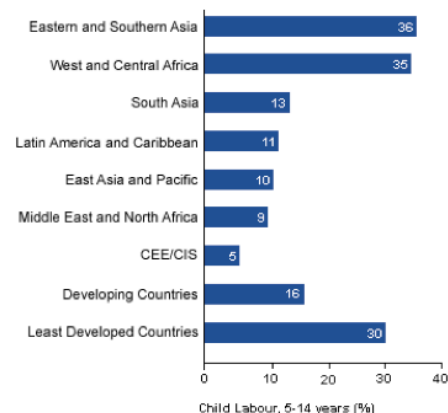
Not only does it identify overarching goals with regards to containing and eliminating child labor, it also contains international standards that national and local governments can utilize to ensure progress is made. Another accountability structure that many countries have adopted is the “Time-Bound Programme” (TBPs), which, similar to the binding clauses found in international negotiations, frames the eradication of child labor with strategic, country-specific development goals. Thus, countries are given specific time frames to eliminate deplorable forms of child labor, using tactics which often align with “poverty reduction, education, and employment protection.”<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, these initiatives demonstrate that, “without political commitment and without collaboration with other social actors, few or none of these government initiatives will bear much fruit; they will remain good intentions on paper.”<sup>22</sup>

Yet, it is vital that countries, international institutions, and employers strike not only at the symptoms of the problem, but also the roots. A confluence of specific factors often serves as the catalyst for escalations in prevalence of childhood labor:

- 1) Childhood Labor and Economic Sectors
- 2) Childhood Labor and Poverty
- 3) Childhood Labor and Human Rights

### One in six children in developing countries is engaged in child labour

Children aged 5–14 engaged in child labour (%), by region (1999–2007)



\*Excludes children in permissible light work  
Source: International Labour Organization  
The Wall Street Journal

Figure 2: Child labor rates compared by geographic region.<sup>23</sup>

Countries inflicted with poverty, resulting from either conflict or industry development, have higher levels of children workers; for instance, “as many as a third of children are working in the poorest economies, such as Tanzania and Ethiopia. That compares with zero to 5% in countries with a GDP per capita above \$10,000.”<sup>24</sup> However, solutions must be tailored to specific countries and understand the complexities of family finances and social structures. Take India’s 1986 legislation against child labor in factories for example;

*“Economists Prashant Bharadwaj and Leah Lakdawala studied child labor rates and payments before and after the ban was implemented across different industries. They found the result of the law was to drive wages for children down and the number of hours they worked up. The effect*

*was largest among poor families. They needed the child income: If kids could earn less in a given time, they would just have to earn longer. One further result was that fewer kids enrolled in school because they were too busy working.”<sup>25</sup>*

## Analysis

Despite steps that have been taken to establish regulations and create guidelines for fair labor practices, the threat of defection, lack of commitment devices, and minimum penalties for violations fail to change how companies and countries frequently operate. Indeed, “putting the legal framework into place is only a first step, and raising awareness a second. The next challenge is how to effectively enforce legislation.”<sup>26</sup> Success depends on the effective cooperation of both material resources as well as political and human capital.

## Possible Solutions:

1) Labor Inspection: Legally-binding frameworks that outline standards and restrictions could give legitimacy and specificity to the broad goals often spoken about in international conferences. Furthermore, “labour inspection is a public responsibility of government, which should best be organized as a system within the context of a larger state system”.<sup>27</sup> While “The ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No 81) sets out the basic international standards, supplemented by the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No 129), which takes into account



the special characteristics of the agricultural sector,” local inspectors must be accountable and knowledgeable enough to be able to conform to rigorous international standards. Particularly in rural, agriculturally-based developing economies, inspectors must receive proper training, resources, and transportation to fulfill their duties.

2) Child Labor Monitoring: There should be a system of monitoring countries, industries, or companies that have not complied with standards in the past to ensure conforming behavior. For example, “in Bangladesh (garments) and Pakistan (footballs)...in India, Nepal, and Pakistan, carpet producers’ loom sheds have been monitored.”<sup>28</sup> This monitoring, executed by independent auditors or private consulting firms, would increase workplace transparency and accountability, as frequent negative reports could be ruinous to a company.

3) Monetary Support for Families who Support Schooling: Governments can monetarily support families who enable their children to receive an education. For example, “Mexico’s Oportunidades program gives mothers as much for keeping the girl in the ninth grade as two-thirds the amount a girl would earn in the labor force. The program has reduced child labor rates by as much as a quarter.”<sup>29</sup>

4) The Role of International Institutions:

Institutions can be powerful catalysts for raising awareness of and providing information about a situation, holding actors accountable, and providing funding, programs, or ideas to governments, NGOs, and international leaders alike. Specifically, international institutions can “sensitize international public opinion about child labor, including its most reprehensible forms; elaborate research methodologies to help countries examine child labor; and promulgate international legal standards which countries can promote and ratify, and encourage countries to implement and conform by them by offering technical cooperation and assistance.”<sup>30</sup>

a) International Labor Standards: These standards are instruments, articulated and agreed on by ILO member states to “provide benchmarks for formulating national objectives, and establish expectations.”<sup>31</sup>

b) Work with UNESCO’s “Education for All” (EFA) initiative to provide fair educational opportunities to all children and create synergies with other organizations, such as how, “the The World Bank, ILO and UNICEF recently teamed up together to the project “Understanding Children’s Work”, “in order to harmonize the conceptual framework and research methodologies used by the three agencies and to strengthen the research capabilities of many countries in the area of child labour data collection and research.”<sup>32</sup>



## Bloc Positions

### *Questions A Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)*

- How can international organizations, governments, and individual actors collaborate to create a comprehensive and sustainable framework for combatting child labor?
- How can social media influence the accountability of those who violate child labor standards?
- What measures can be taken to assist countries in rectifying some of the problems that go hand in hand with the proliferation of child labor? (e.g. education, economic equality, poverty)
- In what capacity can the United Nations influence individual nations and companies to comply with international standards and sanctions?
- How can non-state actors align their goals and resources to positively influence child labor standards?
- How can future generations of children be proactively protected from the negative social factors associated with child labor?
- How can these solutions be ubiquitous enough to cover all nations, yet specific enough to be most effective in those locations with the most drastic abuses?

## Conclusion

Children should be focused on expanding their

minds and becoming the next generation of leaders, not working in hazardous jobs that threaten their health, education, and social livelihood. Through the perpetuation of a global tradition of child labor, the world continues to damage its potential, along with the lives of countless children, for unethical economic gains in the short run. It is the duty of this organization to craft innovative, substantive and realistic solutions to combat this problem; it is the ILO's duty to bear the torch for justice, fair working conditions, and educational opportunities for children around the world.

## TOPIC B: THE LATIN AMERICAN GENDER WAGE GAP

### Statement of the Issue



*Figure 3: ILO Regional Director of Latin America and the Caribbean, Elizabeth Tinoco.<sup>33</sup>*

In 2014 Elizabeth Tinoco, the director of the ILO in Latin American countries, wrote an article commemorating the 100 million women in the

Latin American workforce. For the first time, more than half of women had joined the workforce, but these women still face many issues, one of the most pertinent of which is the expansive gender wage gap present in many Latin American countries. The gender pay gap is defined as:

*“the difference between the amounts of money paid to women and men, often for doing the same work.”<sup>34</sup>*

In 2000, women on average made 60 cents for every dollar made by a man (this statistic is known as the earnings ratio). Though the number had improved to 68 cents for every dollar by 2010, a massive disparity persisted.<sup>35</sup> Although this issue exists all over the world, in Latin America it is particularly prevalent; even in the highest paid positions, women are still not compensated equally for their work.

## History

Female schoolteachers in Latin America formed the first group to push for social justice for women in the early 20th century. They protested the inequality between men and women in legal status, political/economic power, and access to education. They fought alongside men for social change unrelated to gender in their individual countries. They realized in the 1920s that female equality was a secondary concern to those pushing for social change throughout the area. Many of the greatest and most radical documents, such as the Sanz-Pena Law of 1912, did not include women, and the Mexican Constitution of 1917 did not recognize

women as citizens.<sup>36</sup>

The lack of respect for Women’s Rights in the early 20th century continued, if less obviously, throughout the whole century. One of the main ways this inequality has shown is through unequal education for women. The unequal education of genders in Latin American countries has been a major factor in the difference between earning rates. In the 1970’s studies found that 30% of females in Latin America and the Caribbean were illiterate, while only around 22% of males were illiterate.<sup>37</sup> The low priority placed on women’s education has made it more difficult for women who have tried to obtain jobs to receive the same pay as their better-educated male counterparts.

Not only do women have less access to education than their male peers, but they also need to have completed more education to receive the same wage. In 1998 Elizabeth Salguero gave a seminar on gender inequality and stated that, in Latin America, “a woman needs to study for 15 years in order to get the same salary of a man that has studied for 11 years.”<sup>38</sup> In addition, Salguero noted that many girls who showed promise in math and science from an early age quickly shied away from pursuing it further because of the strict gender roles of many cultures in Latin America.

## Relevant International Action

Much of the action that the international community has taken has been through attempts to

make the world aware of the issues that women face in the work force. Mentioned in both the Millennium and Sustainable Development goals, it is clear that improving the wage gap is a priority throughout the entire world.

In July of 2010, the UN voted to create a single UN body to accelerate women's equality throughout the world. They entitled it the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN Women for short. They combined four existing groups into one in order to create this body. They have been working since to reduce violence and empower women.<sup>39</sup> One of their main focuses is the economic empowerment of women.

UN Women has come up with several flagship programs that will hopefully improve the status of women throughout the world. One of their programs that may assist in lowering the wage gap is the Income Generation for Women: Decent Work and Social Protection, which works towards:

- “Creating political consensus for macroeconomic policies that support employment creation for women.”
- “Promoting decent work for women through collective action, labour laws review and improved government and corporate policies.”
- “Recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work.”
- “Increasing women's access to social protection.”<sup>40</sup>

Ideally this program will help women find jobs that are higher paying than the ones they have currently been forced to take because of the lack of options.

Other ways that international bodies have tried to support the economic growth of women have been through the:

1) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979):

*“By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:”*

- a. to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- b. to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- c. to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.<sup>41</sup>

2) Millennium Development Goals (“Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women”) (2000):

*“Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015”*

- a. “Women make up 41 per cent of paid workers

*outside of agriculture, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.”*

*b. “Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to half of working-age women.”*

**3) Sustainable Development Goals (“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”) (2015):**

*a. “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate”*

*b. “Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels”<sup>43</sup>*



Figure 4: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>42</sup>

## Current Situation

According to the International Labor Organization’s “Wages and Income Inequality Report” (2015), there are 6 main factors that cause the gender wage gap. They are:

- 1) an undervaluation of women’s work;
- 2) workplace characteristics (e.g. how substitutable workers are for each other, the value of face time, etc.);
- 3) ex-segregation channeling women into low value added jobs;
- 4) the overall wage structure in a country – which may be shaped by wage setting mechanisms that may have been designed with a focus on workers in male dominated sectors);
- 5) the view of women as economic dependents;
- 6) the likelihood that women are in unorganized sectors or not represented in unions.<sup>44</sup>

Improvements in education over the last 50 years may be part of the reason the wage gap has closed, despite not having done so significantly. In 2010, a new survey found that while there were still more illiterate women than men, the gap was much closer than in the 1970s - 8% of males and 9% of females were illiterate. In addition to rising literacy rates, the number of women enrolled in primary, secondary and even tertiary education has grown by thousands since the mid-20th century. This change is reflected in the number of women who participate in the labor force. The percentage of women employed grew from 40% to 50% between the years 1990 and 2008. Although this is still much less than the percentage of men in the labor force (78%) it shows that Latin American countries are moving in the right direction in terms of participation in the work force.<sup>45</sup>



Despite the improvement, a paper published in 2009 entitled “New Century, Old Disparities” states that “The World Economic Forum currently ranks the region as the third most unequal (among nine) in economic participation and opportunity of women in relation to men.”<sup>46</sup> Although researchers have found it hard to pinpoint the exact cause of the disparity in this particular region, they have found several potential confounding factors. For example, even though women are paid less in both the private and public sector, studies show that the gap in the private sector is much larger than that of the public sector; this may indicate that it is employers rather than governments who act as the primary perpetrators of the issue.

A report recently published by the World Bank Group entitled “Women, Business and the Law 2016” outlines the different laws throughout the world that prevent women from advancing in the workforce, as well as the ways in which laws have improved. Detailed in the report are countries that have laws requiring equal pay for men and women who provide the same service. The list of countries in Latin America that do not have these laws is staggering: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela all fail to maintain some form of equal pay legislation. There are only ten countries that do have any such law.<sup>47</sup>

The report looks at different laws that may affect whether women choose to enter the workforce. For example, Suriname is the only Latin American country that does not currently entitle parents to leave from a job of any kind, paid or unpaid.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the clear inequality, there is hope for the Latin American countries, many of which have elected females into high positions of power. “In 1998, leftist Hugo Chavez won his first term as democratically elected president. Brazil elected Worker Party founder Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2002. In Bolivia, the poorest republic in South America, unionist Evo Morales was elected in 2005 after mass rebellions forced out three presidents in two years. Daniel Ortega, who led the Nicaraguan Sandinista revolution in the 1970s and ’80s, was democratically voted back into office in 2006. Progressive governments have been voted into office in Ecuador, Paraguay, Chile and Argentina. A female Socialist Party member, Michele Bachelet, now heads Chile, the country once ruled by the fascist regime of Augusto Pinochet. The government of Argentina is also headed by a woman, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner.”<sup>49</sup> Perhaps this power can be used in the future to effect real change for the women of these nations.

## Possible Solutions

Going forward, much remains unresolved on the issue of the gender wage gap. The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report in

2015 noted that the first time women and men earned an equal amount was not until 2006<sup>50</sup>. Further, the WEF states that women earn what men did a decade ago and that closing the gender gap may take over 100 years.<sup>51</sup> If this is the case, solutions cannot be short sighted, short term, or be expected to have immediate effects. Instead, delegates must work on laying an infrastructure to progressively improve the position of women in the labor force over time.

In many cases, the gender gap is seen as a national issue to be addressed by each government. However, the international community must also take action to incite a worldwide movement to focus on this issue. In the case of Brazil, this issue comes at an interesting time. In May of this year, President Dilma Rousseff was indicted and impeached over charges of corruption. As her trial unfolds, Brazil also prepared for the 2016 Summer Olympics. During the Olympics, tourists and spectators cause a surge in seasonal population and thus consumption. As such, an increase in the demand for labor should follow, so women should be able to find more working opportunities. In the months following the Olympics, delegates will have to consider how the games impacted the local population, and should come prepared to discuss both the short and long term consequences the 2016 summer Olympics will have on its host nation.

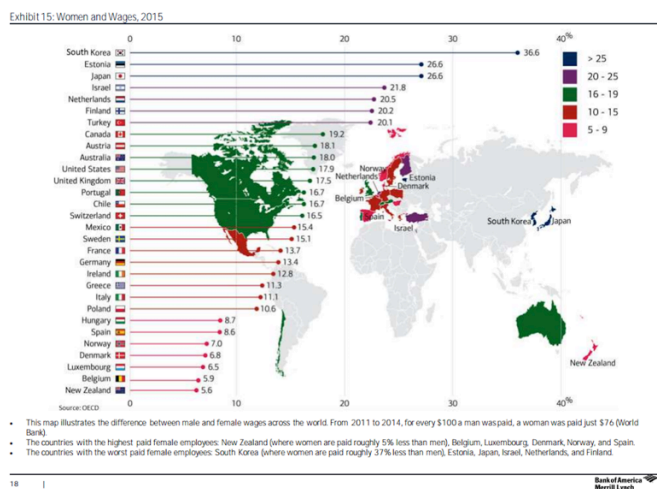


Figure 5: The gender wage gap by nation.<sup>52</sup>

On one hand, enrollment of women in universities and higher education is at an all time high, but that does not directly lead to greater workforce participation. One possible solution to consider is trying to find a way to help ease women's entry into the working world. For some women, childcare and a need for a flexible schedule are preventative factors. For others, it is simply a lack of opportunity of jobs to even apply for or to get interviewed. For others, it is simply a dearth of employment opportunities that has restricted their ability to join the workforce.

While the focus of this topic will be Brazil, the case study should also serve as a springboard for looking at this issue with a wider lens. As the World Economic Forum has noted, the issue is not fixable overnight. Instead of permitting regional or ideological differences to dictate the course of action, it is important to consider what measures a UN organization can take to promote gender equality through pay. Conventions and declarations that states can sign onto pledging to devote resources or pass laws to promote women in the workforce are important first steps. Trying to force the hand of any

nation - big, small, developed or developing - will not lead to effective or long lasting change.

The next step would be to implement protocols that give countries targets to meet every few years. The committee should focus on both short term and long term solutions. Additionally, last fall, the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals, in part, focus on empowering women and reducing inequality. As such, the ILO must take into account that the UN general body established these goals with an expectation to reach them by 2030, and as a result must be a priority when considering this issue.

## **Bloc Positions**

Bloc positions in this topic are unique because this case focuses directly on one country, but the issue of wage gaps is very prevalent on an international scale. In fact, Brazil is ranked 18th on the list of countries with the largest wage gaps. On the same list, the United States is ranked 15th.<sup>53</sup>

In choosing bloc positions, it is a matter of going beyond sticking with your regional allies. In some cases, like in the U.S., the wage gap is a prominent issue, especially given that this is an election year. The US also has ample resources to potentially combat this issue, but other countries may not. When creating blocs, it is important to consider factors like religious ideas indoctrinated into laws, level of development, and demand constraints on labor. While these factors are most important

in considering blocs, long standing rivalries or alliances are also important to keep in mind.

## ***Latin America***

The Latin American bloc is in some ways the most relevant to this issue. In Latin America, the gender wage gap sits at 17%. In 1992, the gap was closer to 25% - overall, progress has been made.<sup>54</sup> The case study of Brazil affords the country and its neighbors the chance to closely examine the issues they face and how they perpetuate this systematic inequality. This gap exists at all levels, even at the very top, where women in high level positions in countries all around Latin and South America make hundreds of dollars less than their male contemporaries.<sup>55</sup> In fact, the ILO's report in 2014 revealed that the highest earning women actually face the largest wage discrimination.<sup>56</sup> In Latin America, women are highly educated, yet they continue to make much less money than men. Many women hold teaching and nursing positions, which tend to have lower salaries.<sup>57</sup> In this bloc, challenges will include agreeing on tangible, mutual goals while maintaining individual nations' desires.

## ***Middle East***

Saudi Arabia is notorious for its heavy restrictions on women, such as banning them from driving or going out in public without a male relative. This correlates to a harsh political climate for women in the country; fighting for the right to work is difficult let alone ensuring equal pay. In recent years, Saudi women have started working



in retail and several other industries, though gender segregation remains a continuous problem. Further, women face many impediments to working, such as the lack of daycare facilities for their children.

In the United Arab Emirates, which is ostensibly more progressive, women in universities almost equal their male counterparts, yet in the workforce, the number of women diminishes significantly. However, the UAE has just passed a law that requires all public companies to have at least 20% of their corporate positions held by women, and if not, then they must explain why, indicating a trend that focuses more on women's rights to work.

In considering a lot of Middle Eastern countries, it is important to be able to discern between religious conservatism and policies hindering women. While countries such as Iran have policies strictly dictating how women must dress in public, these laws do not necessarily directly translate to outright sexism in relation to pay distribution.

## ***BRICS***

The BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) represent an economic bloc; their mutual situation as rapidly developing nations may be indicative of common goals pertaining to women in the work force. In addition, BRICS nations do have some similar facets of their economies and governments - both India and Brazil are considered democracies of varying degrees, and all five have burgeoning populations. As these countries continue

to industrialize, it is important to consider the unique path of each. China is infamously known for manufacturing virtually all goods available on stores shelves in the US and around the world. In India, industrialization has been focused on more complex sectors, such as technology and energy, for which higher education is important. In Brazil, there is a large focus on natural resources. In regard to the gender wage gap, India is ranked fifth with 24.8% wage gap between men and women, and China is sixteenth with 17.5%.

It's clear that just as much of the rest of the world, these nations have continued to maintain a significant economic disparity between genders into the 21st century. They have a mutual interest in bolstering the number of women successfully participating in the labor force however, as this surge will boost economic growth (Note that 20th century wars nudged US women into the workforce, which had a long run benefit in expanding the US economy. This is an effect to keep in mind in coming up with multilateral solutions, particularly in the wake of projections of falling oil prices, the EU's existential crises, and the potential of another financial crash. A surge in economic growth protections could have a vastly positive impact, which would appeal to governments not as focused on women's issues and work towards ending the gender gap simultaneously).

## ***United States and Allies***

The United States and other western world





powers often tout issues of human rights and push their views on developing nations. However, in this case, the US is ranked 15th on the list of countries with the greatest gender wage gaps.<sup>58</sup> In addition, other well-developed countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Japan, are also on this list. These countries consider the diminution of the wage gap highly important, and have placed a high priority on seeing to it that this occurs. However, their presence on the list of nations with the largest gender gap in wages indicates that the problem is not necessarily one that can be tackled financially; instead it may be necessary to mitigate through cultural means. The financial resources of these nations may become useful in ameliorating this problem in Latin America and worldwide, but it is often the culture and nature of a specific society that causes a greater portion of the issue.

varying amounts of government intervention, expenditure and time; as such, it is paramount that the ILO sift through these possibilities and come to a strong conclusion with efficiency.

## Conclusion

Domestically, countries must consider the realities - are female workers more concentrated in traditionally lower paying industries? If so, what solutions are there to ameliorate this gap? Delegates should consider the controls and benefits governments have at their beckoning. Creating quotas of women in the work force, providing tax benefits or childcare assistance and employing more women in bureaucratic positions or in public sectors are all ways in which governments can participate in the labor force market and help women close the gap. There are many possible paths that this committee can take to address this issue – all of which require



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