



SOCHUM

"EVERYTHING WE SEE IN THE WORLD IS THE WORK
OF WOMAN"



SKY MUN

AIM FOR THE SKY



GA-3 SOCHUM

Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues Committee

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Letter From Under-Secretary-General

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I extend my warmest welcome to each and every one of you as delegates of the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) at SKYMUN. My name is Alara Kiraz and I am currently a second-year medical student. As the Under-Secretary-General, I am honored to have the opportunity to guide you through this significant committee and address the pressing issues at hand.

The study guide I have prepared serves as a valuable resource for you as you delve into the intricacies of this agenda item. It offers a comprehensive overview of the background information, key issues and challenges, possible solutions and recommendations. I encourage you to use it as a foundation for your research, analysis, and resolution drafting, as it will aid in facilitating substantive and productive committee sessions.

On behalf of the Secretariat and the organizing team, I extend my best wishes for a successful and rewarding conference experience. May this conference provide you with an opportunity to expand your knowledge, develop your skills, and foster lifelong connections with fellow delegates. I am confident that your deliberations will yield concrete outcomes that contribute to a more inclusive and equitable world.

I look forward to meeting each one of you and witnessing the impactful work that will emerge from our discussions in the SOCHUM committee. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Welcome to the committee, and let us embark on this meaningful journey together!

Sincerely,
Alara Kiraz

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues (SOCHUM) committee, which is the third committee of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, aims to address and find solutions to global humanitarian issues that are currently occurring or may arise in the future. Since its establishment in 1948 and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10th, SOCHUM has become a crucial division within the United Nations. It recognises that almost every global issue has social, cultural, or humanitarian implications that must be taken into account. The annual SOCHUM committee meetings take place in early October and strive to successfully conclude by the end of November. Every member state of the United Nations has the right to participate in the convention.

In line with the procedures outlined by the Human Rights Council in 2006, SOCHUM focuses on safeguarding the rights of all individuals, regardless of gender. The topics discussed under the purview of the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee encompass gender equality, the advancement of women, social development of youth, refugee protection, indigenous issues, the right to self-determination, elimination of racial discrimination, and more.

Article 2 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that "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." This statement unequivocally emphasizes that all individuals, irrespective of any factors, should be treated equally and without discrimination. Therefore, in each session, SOCHUM prioritizes the preservation and promotion of human rights while working towards improving and fostering sustainable living conditions for people worldwide.



Introduction to the Agenda Item:

"Taking Measures to Diminish Gender Inequality in the Educational Sphere Considering Women's Rights"

Gender inequality remains a significant global challenge that hinders the progress of societies and economies alike. Women's rights and gender equality are fundamental pillars of a just and equitable society, requiring comprehensive efforts to address the disparities that exist in both the economic and educational spheres. In recognition of the urgency to tackle these intersecting issues, the agenda item for this Model United Nations conference's study guide is "Taking Measures to Diminish Gender Inequality in the Economic and Educational Sphere Considering Women's Rights."

The economic sphere plays a crucial role in shaping opportunities, livelihoods, and overall social progress. Yet, women face numerous obstacles, including unequal pay, limited access to formal employment, occupational segregation, and a lack of representation in decision-making positions. These disparities hinder women's economic empowerment and contribute to the persistence of gender inequality. Simultaneously, the educational sphere acts as a foundation for personal growth, empowerment, and professional development. However, gender-based barriers, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices limit girls' access to education and hinder their ability to pursue careers and leadership roles.

The educational sphere serves as a vital platform for empowering individuals, fostering social mobility, and nurturing inclusive societies. However, gender-based barriers, discriminatory practices, cultural norms, and stereotypes persist, hindering women and girls from fully realizing their right to education. This agenda item invites delegates to analyze the root causes of gender inequality in education, assess its impact on individuals and societies, and develop comprehensive strategies to address these challenges effectively.

The committee's discussion will centre on the intersection of two Sustainable Development Goals regarding the educational sphere of the item, namely Goal 4: Quality Education and Goal 5: Gender Equality. The right to education is safeguarded under Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with various other resolutions. Given the interconnected nature of the SDGs, progress in addressing educational challenges can positively impact other goals too. Over the period from 1998 to 2014, the global number of out-of-school children decreased from 381 million to 263 million. While this signifies an improvement, there remains a significant disparity between boys and girls. This discrepancy poses a significant problem, particularly considering the findings by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which highlights that ensuring girls' education is crucial not only for their personal health and well-being but also for the prosperity of the entire community.

It is observed that girls who complete secondary education are less likely to face issues such as child marriage, domestic abuse, and long-term health complications. Consequently, educated girls tend to have fewer and healthier children, increasing the likelihood of these children receiving an education and escaping poverty. Therefore, investing in the education of girls not only benefits the current generation but also has a positive ripple effect on future generations. It is evident that promoting equal access to education holds paramount importance.

Key Terms

Gender equality: "the state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender." Gender equality is a fundamental human right that all individuals, regardless of their gender, should have equal opportunities, treatment, and rights in all aspects of life. It is one of the core principles enshrined in the UN Charter and is essential for the promotion of human rights, development, and peace worldwide.

Gender pay gap: "The percentage difference between average hourly earnings for men and women."

Wage Inequality

Wage inequality is a pressing issue that has a profound impact on women's rights, particularly in the educational sphere. Despite significant progress in recent decades,

women continue to face disparities in wages and job opportunities, hindering their empowerment and advancement in various fields, including education.

As per the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the gender wage gap in various countries can be categorized as follows:

1. Countries with the least wage gap (3.4% to 10%):

Luxemburg, Belgium, Greece, Italy, France, Denmark, and Norway fall under this category, with a gender wage gap ranging from 3.4% to 10%.

2. Countries with moderate wage gap (11% to 20%):

Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, Portugal, Australia, Ireland, Germany, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Canada have a gender wage gap between 11% to 20%.

3. Countries with relatively higher wage gap (25% to 35%):

Japan and North Korea fall into this category, with a gender wage gap ranging from 25% to 35%.

4. Countries with the highest wage gap (20% to 40%):

North Africa and Middle East countries have the highest gender wage gap rates, ranging from 20% to 40%.

One of the contributing factors to wage inequality is the educational level. This wage disparity is observable even among men and women with the same level of education, be it high school, professional, doctoral, etc. For instance, high school graduates, both men and women, experience unequal pay. On average, a high school graduate woman earns around \$20,499 per year, while a high school graduate man earns approximately \$26,789 per year. These statistics are based on the International Standard Classification of Occupation.

In conclusion, the gender wage gap persists in different countries and is affected by various factors, including educational levels. Wage inequality is evident even among individuals with the same educational background.

1. The Gender Pay Gap in Education:

According to a global study by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2020, women's average annual earnings are significantly lower than their male counterparts across all sectors, including education. The gender pay gap persists even in the education sector, where women often outnumber men in teaching positions. Statistics indicate that in many countries, female educators earn approximately 10-25% less than their male colleagues. Several factors contribute to the gender pay gap in the educational sphere.

Firstly, there is a prevalence of gender stereotypes that associate certain roles, such as administration and leadership positions, with men, leading to a biased distribution of opportunities and pay scales. Additionally, women tend to be overrepresented in lower-paying educational roles, such as early childhood education, while men are more likely to occupy higher-paying STEM-related positions.

2. Wage Inequality's Impact on Female Teachers:

A 2019 UNESCO report highlighted that women comprise the majority of the global teaching workforce, accounting for approximately 70% of all educators. Despite their critical role in shaping future generations, female teachers often face unequal pay and limited career advancement opportunities.

Wage inequality not only demotivates female teachers but also discourages other women from pursuing a career in education. The lack of financial recognition for their dedication and hard work can lead to high turnover rates among female teachers, adversely affecting the stability and quality of education in schools and institutions.

3. Hindrance to Women's Empowerment:

The World Bank's Gender Data Portal reveals that gender inequality in wages contributes significantly to overall gender inequality in societies. When women earn less than men, it perpetuates a cycle of economic dependency and marginalization. Wage inequality hampers women's empowerment by limiting their financial independence and decision-making capabilities. This disparity affects not only women themselves but also their families and communities. Financial insecurity can lead to reduced access to education and healthcare for women and their children, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and hindering progress in achieving gender equality.

Wage inequality remains a significant barrier to women's empowerment in the educational sphere and beyond. Addressing this issue requires concerted efforts from governments, educational institutions, and society as a whole. By implementing measures such as pay transparency, equal pay for equal work, and combating gender biases in hiring and promotion practices, we can take essential steps toward diminishing gender inequality in the educational sphere and advancing women's rights worldwide.

Unemployment

Globally, women face greater challenges in securing employment compared to men. Currently, the worldwide participation rate of women in the workforce stands at around 49%, while the rate for men is higher at 75%. One of the primary reasons cited

by women for this discrepancy is the burden of family responsibilities, including childcare, household chores, and cooking.

As family responsibilities increase, many women find themselves compelled to leave their jobs or are unable to enter the workforce in the first place. In 2019, a staggering 11 million 741 thousand women reported that they could not participate in business life due to family responsibilities. Moreover, this number has been steadily rising over the years. The total number of women unable to participate in the workforce for various reasons increased from 20 million 160 thousand in 2014 to 20 million 691 thousand in 2019.

The economic crisis also directly impacts female unemployment. During economic downturns, female employees often face a disproportionate impact and are more vulnerable to job losses. One of the contributing factors is the observation that female employees tend to hold lower positions and have less job security during times of crisis. For instance, in Greece, the female unemployment rate reached 24.2% during an economic crisis, while Italy experienced an 11.8% rate, and South Africa saw a staggering 29% rate. Across European Union countries, there was an average increase of 7.1% in female unemployment during such periods.

In conclusion, the unemployment of women is a significant global issue, and family responsibilities and economic crises are key factors that hinder women's participation in the workforce and contribute to the gender gap in employment.

Background Information on Educational Aspect

During the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) era, progress was made in improving equal access to primary education, with enrollment rates for girls and boys approaching parity. However, regional disparities persisted, such as in Central Asia, where more girls than boys were not attending school. Similarly, in countries like China and India, the education gap was more pronounced among poor and rural children.



Several factors hindered girls and women from accessing or completing their education, including:

1. Poverty and child labor: Girls from impoverished families often faced child labor and domestic work, leading to unequal opportunities for education. In some cases, families prioritized educating boys over girls due to financial constraints.
2. Early pregnancy and adolescent births: Limited access to education, information, and healthcare in developing countries contributed to high rates of early pregnancy among girls, affecting their educational opportunities.
3. Early marriage: In many developing countries, child marriage became a significant barrier to girls continuing their education, with many getting married before the age of 18.
4. Lack of safe and inclusive educational spaces: Discriminatory curricula, sexist school regulations, and inadequate female representation among teachers hindered girls' education. Poor sanitation facilities in schools also disproportionately affected girls' attendance.

Religious and conservative influences on educational policy in some regions resulted in prioritizing boys' education over girls', further perpetuating gender disparities. This approach limits women's economic potential and participation in civil society.

The historical lack of access to education for girls has led to a higher number of illiterate women worldwide, hindering their full participation in society. Combating illiteracy is crucial for empowering women, enabling them to pursue better job opportunities, advocate for their rights, and engage actively in civil society.

Even in developed countries where access to education is nearly equal, gender equality challenges persist, particularly in male-dominated fields like STEM subjects. Gender stereotypes, lack of role models, and inadequate support hinder girls' participation in these fields, necessitating further efforts to promote inclusivity.

In conclusion, achieving gender equality in education requires addressing various barriers, including regional disparities, cultural influences, early pregnancies, child marriages, and stereotypes. Empowering women through education is a key step toward creating more inclusive and equitable societies worldwide.

Past United Nations Actions and Initiatives

The timeline provided outlines key milestones and initiatives related to women's empowerment and gender equality over the years:

1979 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): This international treaty was the result of decades of work by the UN Commission on the Status of Women. It emphasized women's rights to non-discrimination in education, employment, and economic and social activities. It also highlighted the importance of addressing the specific challenges faced by rural women.

1995 - Beijing Platform for Action: This agenda aimed at women's empowerment and active participation in all spheres of public and private life. It emphasized promoting women's economic rights, access to resources, employment, and markets. The agenda also called for eliminating employment discrimination, harmonizing work and family responsibilities, and enhancing women's economic capacity.



Resolution 64/289 of the General Assembly: This resolution gave UN Women the mandate to lead, coordinate, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment within the UN system. UN

Women works to embed gender equality principles consistently in development, peace, and human rights agendas.

2015 - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: This agenda consists of 17 goals and 169 targets, aiming to end gender inequality. It recognizes that achieving full human potential and sustainable development requires ensuring gender equality, empowering women and girls, and providing them with equal opportunities in education, economic resources, and decision-making.

2017 - 61st session of Commission on the Status of Women: This session focused on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. It addressed

various areas, including strengthening legal frameworks to ensure equality and non-discrimination in labor markets, promoting education and skills development, and reducing unpaid care and domestic work burdens on women. The session also targeted formalizing informal work, managing technological change, and increasing women's leadership and decision-making roles.

These milestones represent significant steps towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment on a global scale. Each initiative highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by women in various aspects of their lives, from education and employment to leadership and decision-making. It also emphasizes the need for concerted efforts to create a more inclusive and equal society for all.

Past initiatives have played a crucial role in promoting equality in education and addressing gender disparities. Some of these initiatives are:

Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE) 1960: This international agreement emphasizes the equal right to education for all individuals without discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion, political opinion, or economic condition. It commits parties to provide free and compulsory primary education and accessible secondary education. While 104 states have ratified the convention, major countries like the USA, China, and India are still missing.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Article 10 of CEDAW is particularly significant in promoting equal education access for girls. The convention calls for immediate action to ensure girls have the same educational opportunities as boys. Almost all countries have ratified CEDAW, with only a few exceptions.



United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI): UNGEI advocates for accelerated action on girls' education and works to focus on marginalized and excluded groups, reduce school-related gender-based violence, improve learning outcomes for girls, and increase girls' transition to secondary education and post-primary opportunities.

Right to Education Initiative: Supported by five NGOs, this initiative promotes equal access to education based on the principles of Universal Human Rights. It conducts research, monitoring, advocacy, policy development, and information sharing to advance the right to education.

Global Partnership for Education (GPE): GPE supports developing countries in strengthening their educational sectors by providing necessary knowledge and resources. It focuses on countries with high numbers of out-of-school children and low completion rates, especially those affected by violent conflicts. GPE has successfully improved the quality of education in several countries and reduced the educational gender gap.

Questions To Consider:

Consider the following questions as you conduct your research and develop your country's stance on this matter. It is not necessary to address all of these questions in your paper, or any of them for that matter. They simply serve as initial discussion points for committee debates and the formation of your position and agenda.

- How can we ensure complete gender equality in accessing primary education?
- How can we promote women's participation in male-dominated academic fields, such as STEM?

- What initiatives could encourage girls to explore subjects like management, technology, or financial literacy?
- How can we address and lower illiteracy rates specifically among women?
- How can countries be motivated to implement laws protecting women's rights in education?
- What strategies should be employed to design campaigns for equal access to education that reach a wide audience?
- Is there a gender pay gap issue in your country, and if so, how is your country working to reduce it?

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