

Olivia Hedges-Representing Equatorial Guinea in the Commission on the Status of Women

The current government of Equatorial Guinea does not view the vast majority of the topics presented by this body as issues. Women and sustainability, elimination of gender violence, and women in education and employment either hardly factor into the country's affairs, or have been dealt with prior to this committee's meeting.

Sustainability is not a particular concern of this country. Even though it is not our concern, we are already addressing it. Women serve as 10% of the lower house of parliament and around 145 women serve as judges. Women are thoroughly represented by the government. In addition, women outnumber men in agriculture, proving they have great control over food security. Therefore, sustainability is fully covered, without any input from the United Nations.

Gender violence is slightly more notable. However, Equatorial Guinea is already taking steps to manage gender violence. Currently, multiple laws are being drafted to provide a legal framework for dowry, consent, inheritance, and widowhood. In doing so, these important issues are no longer left up to the husband's family, allowing women greater control over their own lives. Not only are women gaining control over themselves legally, domestic violence is being prevented by raising awareness seminars and holding round tables with the end goal of passing a law condemning it. Once again, the issue is entirely managed, time is the only remaining factor. These ideas are changing years of cultural practices. Therefore, patience and time must be given if the new actions are to take effect.

The final topic of women in education and employment is, once again, not a concern for Equatorial Guinea. Especially due to the fact that 93% of the women are educated, therefore, education is not an issue. A national literacy program has also been instituted to convince more girls to continue through secondary education. The number of women in the workforce is not an issue as women comprise 81.4% of the workforce. More women are joining the workforce, facing years of conflicting cultural tradition, causing the process to go slowly. Time is all that is needed.

In addition to all of these topics being non-issues, I believe that the United Nation's attempt to involve themselves in individual countries affairs is incredibly insulting to the members. In saying that these problems are an issue, you blatantly insinuate that we do not adequately defend or care for our women. That is a lie.

Therefore, while these issues may be discussed and debated, I believe that to take action or even to make recommendations would be unnecessary, insulting, and a waste of the United Nation's valuable time and resources.