



**Committee:** Commission on the Status of Women

**Topic:** Gender Inequality

**Country:** Burkina Faso

**Delegate:** Greger Wells

With concepts such as feminism, womanism and intersectionality growing in popularity with each passing day, the global gender equality movement is being openly discussed at an unprecedented level. Governments struggle to keep up with modern progressive ideological stances on gender and gender disparity, as inequalities worldwide are constantly being found and revealed to the public. In developing countries, these inequalities manifest themselves most blatantly in the form of gender-based violence, such as forced prostitution, arranged marriages from a young age, pregnancies with little to no medical aid, domestic violence, lack of access to contraception and infanticide, a lack of participation in political ongoing within a state, and hugely imbalanced employment rates. It is the duty of the international community to assure that legislation and reform is put into effect to manage and reduce these inequalities as quickly, efficiently, and sustainably as possible.

As a landlocked country frequently overshadowed by its larger and more developed neighbours<sup>1</sup>, Burkina Faso is accustomed to having its complaints ignored by the international community. However, we now face an accumulation of crises far too imposing and demanding for us to resolve without aid. Statistically, the Burkinabe people live with a high risk of disease<sup>2</sup> and low access to education and employment<sup>3</sup>; as well, due to deforestation, desertification and the use of obsolete agricultural methods, Burkina Faso is now being confronted with the

<sup>1</sup> "The World Factbook: BURKINA FASO." Central Intelligence Agency. Accessed November 04, 2016. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uv.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Burkina Faso - Environment." Encyclopedia of the Nations. Accessed November 05, 2016. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Burkina-Faso-ENVIRONMENT.html>.

<sup>5</sup> "Burkina Faso." UNData. Accessed November 06, 2016. <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=burkinafaso>.

<sup>6</sup> "The World Factbook: BURKINA FASO." Central Intelligence Agency. Accessed November 04, 2016. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uv.html>.

<sup>7</sup> "Burkina Faso." Wikigender. Accessed November 04, 2016. <http://www.wikigender.org/countries/sub-saharan-africa/gender-equality-in-burkina-faso/>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Burkina Faso: Elections Cannot Ignore Women's Crisis." Amnesty International. Accessed November 05, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/07/burkina-faso-elections-cannot-ignore-womens-crisis/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Africa for Women's Rights: Burkina Faso." Wikigender. Accessed November 06, 2016. <http://www.wikigender.org/wiki/africa-for-womens-rights-burkina-faso/>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

socioeconomic effects of an environmental catastrophe<sup>4</sup>, and all the effects of these crises are felt most severely by Burkinabe women, who are subject to various social inequalities. Since officially joining the United Nations and the Commission on the Status of Women in 2013<sup>5</sup>, Burkina Faso has adhered to the standards and expectations set forth by the organization to the best of its ability, though a lack of resources has proven to be a major setback in these goals<sup>6</sup>.

In joining the SCW, Burkina Faso hoped not only to stall gender-based inequality, but also to stimulate positive economic, social, political and environmental growth by granting women more opportunities to attain positions of power and influence. Burkina Faso has worked with UN branches such as UNESCO<sup>7</sup> and CEDAW<sup>8</sup>, as well as NGO's such as Amnesty International<sup>9</sup> to promote and facilitate women's access to education, employment, and contraception, as well as to impose stricter punishments for citizens caught orchestrating forced prostitution and human trafficking. Burkina Faso recognizes the imperative need for human rights and economic conservation measures to assure unrelenting national development and progress, and subscribes to the belief that these two issues share a causal relationship. This is why legislation has been introduced mandating each political party's list of candidates for local and national elections to be composed of at least 30% women<sup>10</sup>. The implementation of laws such as this has resulted in a growing number of female participants in national politics: from 2000 to 2009, the number of female Burkinabe MPP's grew from 3 to 17<sup>11</sup>.

Burkina Faso believes that the path to equality starts with the treatment of our youth. This includes access to education for every child, the right to choose whom and when to marry, and access to contraception and sexual health education. However, due to its compromising economic situation, Burkina Faso also believes that such strides can not be accomplished without foreign help from the UN, NGO's, and neighbouring countries. With aid from NGO's in delivering school supplies, Burkina Faso could begin implementing further measures to ensure that every child possible receives a proper education. This would entail a mandated rate of attendance for every child, the construction of schools within proximity of every district, and the improvement of infrastructure for training educators. This would broaden the reach of our public school curriculum, and provide a nearly universal and equitable level of education for every

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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Burkinabe child. These conditions apply equally to sexual education for adolescents and adults. Burkina Faso will add branches to its hospitals dedicated to educating citizens on sexual health, and provide greater care to pregnant women before, during, and after childbirth. Burkina Faso also requests funding and bureaucratic aid from the UN to begin meetings between its neighbouring states- Togo, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Benin, Mali and Niger- to help implement stricter border control to identify and apprehend more criminals involved in prostitution and human trafficking. Once these programs have been put into place and rates of forced marriages, prostitution and human trafficking, and education have reached a suitable level, Burkina Faso plans to introduce legislation which further mandates the inclusion of women in political activity. The new laws would require that Burkinabe political parties be composed of at least 30% women, not just as candidates for elections but as employees, representatives, and politicians within the party. This legislation would also apply to the government currently holding office. This would affect the functioning of the institution itself, allowing women's voices to be heard at the highest level of government, granting them diverse voices and proper media coverage. Burkina Faso would also implement legislation requiring companies from every sector to employ a certain amount of women, both in labour and management positions, as well as more carefully searching for cases of discriminatory gender-based hiring practices. In proposing this solutions, Burkina Faso hopes to make itself safer and more profitable for all of its citizens, especially those who are currently being treated unjustly.

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