Council: Economic and Social Committee

Representing: Colombia

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Topic (3): Women in Education and Employment

“Let us pick up our books and pencils. They are our most powerful weapon” – Malala Yousafzai

1644 was the year that Sweden enrolled its first two female students. 1786, Russia got primary and high schools for females. 1847, the first high school for girls was opened as well as teaching positions being open to women. 1907, Sudan opens its first school for Muslim women. 2008-2009, in the US, for the first time women earned more doctoral degrees then women.

Slowly, but surely the process of equality in regards to education and employment evolved globally through the centuries. Yet, even in the modern age and era we live in, there is still injustice when it comes to a women wishing to achieve higher education, seeking higher job positions, deserving to be treated the same as men.

The Millennium Development Goals are important to the global community for several reasons including the fact they are set with the sole purpose of improving the lives of each individual being. What we as a committee should highlight is MDG #3 which states “to promote gender equality and empower women”. If we fail to achieve this, we are not only failing the UN (who set these goals) but our countries with the unfair discrimination and unwillingness to change, to grow, to prosper.

Even Colombia who has been portrayed as a macho, testosterone filled country in the past has now managed to achieve MDG #2: basic education for all including opportunities for both male and **female** children to attend pre-school, elementary school and high school. This begs the question to why there are still countries unable to achieve the same, struggling to get their voices heard and fighting for what should be their right: desire to learn something to one day be somebody.

The fault does not merely lie upon the government who over the centuries have ensured that their countries try to provide free basic public education. It lies within certain individuals not ready to accept that a woman is allowed to be in a position of power simply because she earned it. Yes, it is true that in some countries, a huge factor contributing to inequality is culture and religion. It can be seen as improper or peculiar if in a marriage, the woman is more highly educated or earns a higher income due to their more prestigious and skillful profession.

As of 2013, in Colombia women represented 43% of the total labor force. This goes to show how introducing new laws and implementing methods to encourage and make equality possible can have a positive outcome in a country. Colombia took the first step by recognizing that gender inequality is a serious problem. By taking this initiative alone, we are already on the right path to minimize but ideally eradicate this severe problem which more countries should aim to do. One of the most significant laws that Colombia has established which other countries should try and follow is law 1475 which entails a 30 percent quota of women candidates in all elections. Even well-developed and pro gender equality countries like Canada do not have such quota to inspire a rise of the number of women in politics.

Colombia’s stance on women in education and employment is clear, we are here to promote the rights of women and certainly care to maintain the work previously done to solve this dilemma. However, it is not possible for a country to tackle such a large issue by relying only on itself. Therefore, Colombia calls to all countries to use this common goal and shared interest to work together on this serious matter. First and foremost, by admitting that there is problem. Then by coming together to discuss all the possible measures we can take in order to improve the lives of the women in the world who want and are worthy of more. Some solutions may be as simple as raising awareness through media such as television, radio, newspapers and posters in local communities. Colombia understands that this isn’t the most cost effective method therefore are open to any better ways to draw attention to the pressing matter at hand. Another more challenging solution could be for governments to approve laws with the intent of ensuring the protection of women in regards to equality in education and the workforce. Colombia understands this will be difficult and time consuming to implement but looking at the bigger picture - the future - if time guarantees better rights and lives for women, then we should abide. Colombia is willing to accept alternatives and arrive to compromises if the other solutions also have the aim to improve women’s place in education and position in employment.

Without a doubt, the solutions we take are important but the only way we can even reach that step is by respecting and supporting women all around the world who have been patient enough for the world and its habitants to change their views, defy stereotypes and fight for what is right.

Speaking for Colombia in the present, we look forward to offering support, counsel and provide solutions to eliminate inequality and hope through fruitful debate and discussion, the committee will be able to produce successful results and positive outcomes.