Economic and Social Council - The Commission on the Status of Women

Topic: Women and Sustainability

Country: United States

The role that women play in the stability of our environment is very prominent and women offer a significant amount to environmentally related issues. Women are absolutely essential in sustaining our environment in order to take under account all aspects which may have detrimental effects on our environment. Some of the most common issues include inavailability to water and improper disposal methods for menstrual and feminine waste.

Each day women have to make a choice for certain death without water, or possible death from illness, and the effects of it have constantly spiraling off into creating more issues. For women, the water crisis is personal. Collecting water has been seen as women’s work and they often walk 5 miles a day to get water and walk five miles back with up to 44 pounds on their head. Women have to leave their children alone for hours to get water, depriving them of the education and support given from a mother. Nearly one billion people lack access to safe water and the United States has taken past action and plans to take action in the future to solve the water crisis in order to help give women independence and the time to give priority to their children and their education. 150 U.S. institutions, along with the president, donated more than $5 billion to improve water accessibility and quality globally. The money was put towards funding water pumps and filters in Sub-Saharan African nations and India. Along with this, the United States Brookings Institution initiated an ongoing project to deliver water to homes, schools, and public institutions in developing nations. The United States has taken several plans of action to help women in dealing with the water crisis and we will continue to take action until the issue is resolved. In order to do so the United States proposes the introduction of the SlingShot for water purification so that we can at least help women fulfil the responsibilities that are placed on them. The project was funded by Coca Cola to help impoverished nations to deal with natural disasters like this. In this system, the dirty water gets sucked in, where it warms to its boiling point where it enters an evaporator to drain out chemicals, bacteria, viruses, and eggs. Although this system an amazing initiative, the U.S. does recognize the issues that come with it, and we propose solutions to deal with issues such as providing a generator to rural areas. The nations that need the SlingShot would find it hard to have electricity, so we would like to create an alternative in which the machine can be plugged into a diesel generator, which is what hospitals in mobile clinics use to power equipment in rural places. The diesel generator is a low cost alternative and will reach many regions around the world because it does not require electricity. With this in mind, the United States also realizes that diesel is not always available either. To resolve this, we would like to have the Stirling Generator as an option as well. This is a generator which requires a slight amount of electricity, which might seem to contradict unavailability of electricity to rural regions, however the generator is one of the greatest ways to provide energy in rural regions. The machine is powered by methane gas from cow dung which is one of the most common animals used in many regions of the world. Overall, the Slingshot is a great option for women to provide sanitary water to their families in a convenient and cost efficient way.

In addition, menstrual waste is one of the most crucial issues relating to women’s role in environmental sustainability. The process of menstruation is as common as eating and stigmas that prevent women from dealing with menstrual waste in the proper ways should be completely abolished. Social stigmas have been prevalent in countries like India and girls have not been given the right products or methods of disposal to deal with. In the past, the United States has worked with Ecofemme to help spread awareness with the issue and fund pads for women, however significant action has not particularly been taken, and we hope to change this through a three step plan known as DCD, or Distribute-Clean-Dispose. The distribute part of this plan would work with Arunachalam Muruganantham’s creation of a special biodegradable cloth pad which can last up to seven years. The pad is very absorbent, however it must be cleaned between uses, and this is where the Clean portion of the project would come into place. Swati Bedekar, a scientist from Gujarat, India invented a small machine the size of a pot which cleans used pads within 6 and half minute just by pumping it with a pedal. Although providing women with sanitary napkins is very important, Disposal is also very important to the issue. We propose the creation of a simple latrine chute through which that soiled napkins directly fell in a deep pit. In this pit, chemical agent of minimal expense is added five times in a month which ensured fast and safe decomposition. This reduces the risk of contamination in water and air, which ultimately preserves the environment. The United States believes that the DCD initiative covers all issues involved with menstruation for women in impoverished nations, and it will help women live a healthy lifestyle and improve their role in the environment.

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Topic: Gender-Based Violence

Country: United States

Gender based violence has become an issue in need a immediate attention and action. In many nations, women are sent into child marriage, undergo domestic violence and abuse, and suffer from female infanticide. Child marriage is a clear violation of girl’s rights to have independence, opportunity, safety, and most importantly, an education. It shows them violence at an extremely young age and these girls are scarred for life. Their experiences affect decisions made about their children and cycle of poverty and gender based violence is constantly recurring.

Domestic abuse comes in many forms and often originates from just verbal violence and threatening statements. It has psychological effects on a women which they carry on for the rest of their lives as well. These violent relationships are fueled by anger, drugs, and alcohol abuse in several cases and women are not given justice. In Afghanistan, a woman needs the consent of her husband in order to file for a divorce because marital abuse is often a common occurrence in nations with Islam as the main religion. People have not evolved with the religion and husbands have abused their wives, and we need to give women an opportunity to escape this violence.

Finally, female infanticide is one of the most heart-wrenching topics of gender-based violence. Female babies are often killed for financial reasons. Men are seen as income earners because they are supposedly able to do labor work in the agricultural field, which lays along with the stereotype that women are not strong enough to do work and earn money through labor based jobs. In several instances, parents put all their money into their basic necessities that they can only afford to have a boy because they will eventually support the family in the future. Also when sons marry, it is customary in countries like India and Pakistan for a female to pay a dowry to the male’s family. This dowry can often be in the form of money, jewelry and animals such as cows and chickens. On the other hand, a couples kill their females so they do not bear the financial burden of paying their future son-in-law’s family a “price” for their daughter. If dowry is not paid and a man agrees to marry the woman anyways, the woman is also more vulnerable to abuse and marital violence and the man may still demand the money which recycles the process of gender-based violence.

Men have always been viewed as the gender which will bring money into a family, however this is a very contradictory statement. Since women are not given education and opportunity, they are forced to marry and this is why they cannot bring an income into their family. Due to this, the United States believes it is necessary to let women know that they have other options to turn to if they feel pressured or undergo any sort of abuse through the Heifer-Spark Plan. The Heifer plan is the distribution of farm animals to women in rural regions as a form of a micro loan. The byproducts of animals, which may include chickens and cows, can be used in several ways, seeing that they could be sold to make profits for the female, or they could be used personally to feed themselves and their children. Spark schools is an organization which uses the Malala fund to educate girls in rural regions about self-empowerment, the importance of education, public speaking, and leadership skills. If this plan is put in place, women will not only have training and skills to run a business, but they will also be given the resources and tools to manage the business successfully.

In addition to this, the United States finds it absolutely necessary that we use the rapeX condom as a preventative measure against rape and sexual abuse. The rapeX condom is a condom worn by women which is lined with teeth on the inside. If the girl is raped the teeth, the teeth will clasp around the male’s genitals and cause an excruciating amount of pain to the male which would give the woman enough time to escape. If the person then moves, the trap will become tighter and cause more pain. The rapeX condom can only be removed by a doctor, which will then lead to the male to either be injured for life so that they can never commit sexual abuse again, or they will be arrested and the necessary repercussions will be taken if they go to a hospital. The United States recognizes that this may draw perpetrators to take revenge against the woman, however we also believe that in an instance like this, the biggest priority is getting the woman out of that situation and to a safe environment where they can then seek help for themselves. With the rapeX condom, rapists will be punished for their actions, even if a legal court of justice will not help a victim take action against the rapist’s crimes.

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Topic: Women in Education and Employment

Country: United States

Women have never been given the education that is actually a fundamental human right. Due to cultural and societal norms, women have always been told by their parents and family that they do not need schooling because they will end up getting married, having children, and cooking and cleaning for their future family. Even though education is guaranteed to all people by international law, girls and women are continually discriminated against having education in their childhood and employment in their future. 31 millions girls are not in school and two thirds of women above the age of 18 are illiterate. Due to pressure to get married or work for the family in agriculture, adolescent girls are much more likely to drop of of school than boys in rural areas particularly.

School fees are also another reason that children do not get an education. Although public education is technically free, there are many more fees that go along with schooling. These fees include payments for uniforms, transportation, and most importantly, writing materials, including pencils and papers. Children in countries and regions where school is not a common part of childhood often walk up to 11 miles which will take them three hours to travel along with carrying a backpack on their shoulders. These conditions can often prevent a child from having a proper schooling

Finally, child labor is also a reason that parents do not send their children to school. In impoverished villages and rural regions people usually own agricultural land to farm on and feed their family with the crops it produces. If parents do not have time to tend the land they may restrict their children from going to school so that they can work in the fields and maintain it because land is a valued asset for these families. If a child does not receive an education at this time, they are 93% less likely to go back to school later on, which once again forces them into poverty and abusive relations

In order to do this, the United States would like to introduce the Crash Course Catapult. In rural regions, many teachers are not trained and are not given gender mutual curriculums. In the process, the U.S. would like to use Catapult’s Action for Equality initiative. This program would work with women who have missed the opportunity to childhood education because they had to do child labor, were involved in a child marriage, or escaped an abusive relationship. The Crash Course Catapult Program is essentially a program which travels to regions greatly affected by these issues,  and train the women to become to become teachers within a three week span of time. This would not only provide them with an opportunity to become independent, but to also teach other young children of their experiences so they grow up to avoid these cultural and societal norms. Through this, we hope to tell women that it is never too late to gain an education and start a career independently.

In addition, the United States would like to recognize that, even though public schools technically provide a free education, poor families must also provide supplies for their children and this is possible with an organization known as Chalk for Children. Chalk for Children will focus on providing chalk and chalkboards for children because they are reusable and a great alternative to paper. Chalk is a substance that only requires plastic powder and a tablespoon of water. This program would work with large corporations within the U.S. such as McDonalds to fund these packages of plastic power and chalkboards to children in rural regions. Chalkboards are a great alternative to paper and notebooks seeing that they are reusable for a long span of time. Chalk for Children will help impoverished families overcome obstacles stopping their children from having the education they deserve.