



UNCSW

United Nations Commission on the
Status of Women
Background Guide

Agenda: *Empowering Women and
Girls in rural areas.*

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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates!

We, the Executive Board of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), welcome you to our committee session. As we gather, we recognize the significance of empowering women worldwide and promoting gender equality.

We encourage you to engage in meaningful debate, share country experiences, and propose innovative solutions to address the challenges facing women globally. Your contributions will help shape the future of gender equality and women's empowerment.

We invite you to submit working papers and resolutions that address the critical issues facing women today. Your input will be invaluable in shaping our collective efforts to promote gender equality.

Together, let us work towards a future where women have equal opportunities to participate, lead, and thrive.

Executive Board, UNCSW

Chair

Vihaa Khobragade

Vice-Chair

Sagarika Das

Research Guidelines

- Read the background guide, at least **15 days before** the conference and make a note of everything that needs to be understood.
- Google everything and find related documents (UN news articles, scholarly articles) for whatever you didn't get.
- **After completely understanding (subject to how in-depth you wish to go for the research), try understanding your allotted country's perspective on the agenda.**
- Make the stance by the country's perspective on the agenda which shall also define your **foreign policy** (history, past actions etc.)
- Understand the cues and hints that are given minutely in the background guide that may come in handy during the presentation of contentions in committee.
- Ask questions regarding the procedure to speak something etc., if you have any, on the day of the conference.
- **Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India, etc. be accepted.** However, notwithstanding the criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to **cite** from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.

1. Procedure: The purpose of putting procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organized and efficient debate. The committee will follow the **UNA-USA Rules of Procedure**. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of the agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding the procedure.

2. Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

3. Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of the debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their stances on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points in time to further debate and test participants.

4. Nature of Source/Evidence: This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:

a. **United Nations:** Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body are held as credible proof to support a claim or argument. Multilateral Organizations: Documents from international organizations like OIC, NATO, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, the International Court of Justice, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.

b. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.

COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)

Role and Structure:

- **Purpose:** The UNCSW is a global body dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It works to improve the status of women and girls worldwide through policy recommendations and advocacy.
- **Establishment:** It was established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946.
- **Membership:** The Commission consists of 45 member states elected by ECOSOC. Members are elected for a four-year term and are chosen based on geographical representation.

Functions:

- **Policy Development:** UNCSW develops global policies and guidelines to advance gender equality and address issues affecting women and girls.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** It reviews and reports on the progress of implementing international commitments related to gender equality and women's rights.
- **Sessions:** The Commission holds an annual session in New York where member states discuss progress, challenges,

and strategies to address gender issues. These sessions often involve negotiations and the adoption of resolutions.

Mandates:

- **Advocacy and Recommendations:** UNCSW provides policy recommendations to the UN General Assembly and other bodies to promote gender equality and women's rights.
- **Monitoring Implementation:** It monitors the implementation of international agreements like the Beijing Platform for Action, which outlines strategic objectives for achieving gender equality.
- **Special Themes:** Each session of UNCSW often focuses on a specific theme related to gender equality. For instance, themes can include women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, or women's participation in decision-making.

1. Introduction

Overview:

Empowering women and girls in rural areas is crucial for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. Rural women and girls face unique challenges that hinder their access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and legal rights. This guide provides an overview of these challenges, explores key issues, and highlights previous cases and resolutions relevant to the agenda.

Objectives:

- Understand the specific challenges faced by women and girls in rural areas.
- Explore existing initiatives and their effectiveness.
- Develop actionable solutions and recommendations for empowering women and girls in these communities.

2. Background Information

Historical Context:

Historically, rural women and girls have been marginalized and faced systemic barriers.

Traditional gender roles, limited infrastructure, and cultural norms have restricted their access to essential services and opportunities. Over time, efforts have been made to address these issues, but significant gaps remain.

Current Situation:

Despite progress in gender equality globally, women and girls in rural areas continue to face:

- **Educational Disparities:** Lower enrollment and completion rates in primary and secondary education compared to their urban counterparts.
- **Healthcare Inequities:** Limited access to healthcare services, including maternal and reproductive health care.
- **Economic Exclusion:** Lower participation in formal employment and limited access to financial resources and markets.
- **Legal and Social Barriers:** Insufficient legal protection and pervasive cultural practices that inhibit their rights and freedoms.

Key Concepts:

- **Empowerment:** The process of increasing the capacity of individuals to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.
- **Gender Equality:** The state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender.
- **Rural Development:** Initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas.

3. Stakeholders and Key Players

Countries:

- **India:** Significant rural population with ongoing challenges in education and healthcare.
- **Nigeria:** High rates of maternal mortality and educational disparities in rural regions.
- **Brazil:** Rural areas face challenges related to land rights and economic opportunities for women.

Organizations:

- **UN Women:** Provides support and advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment globally.
- **World Bank:** Funds projects aimed at improving education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in rural areas.
- **Grameen Foundation:** Focuses on microfinance and social development programs to empower rural women.

Important Figures:

- **Muhammad Yunus:** Founder of the Grameen Bank, known for pioneering microfinance as a tool for economic empowerment.
- **Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka:** Former UN Women Executive Director, known for her advocacy on gender equality.

4. Key Issues

Main Issues:

- **Educational Access:** Rural girls face barriers such as distance to schools, cultural norms, and economic constraints that limit educational opportunities.

- **Healthcare Access:** Rural women often lack access to essential healthcare services, including maternal and reproductive health care.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Limited access to financial services and markets hampers economic growth and independence for rural women.
- **Legal Rights:** Legal frameworks and protections may be insufficient or poorly enforced, leaving rural women vulnerable to discrimination and violence.

Challenges and Barriers:

- **Geographic Isolation:** Difficulties in reaching rural areas due to poor infrastructure.
- **Cultural Norms:** Deep-rooted traditions and norms that hinder women's participation in education and the workforce.
- **Resource Limitations:** Insufficient funding and resources for effective implementation of programs.

5. Previous Actions and Resolutions

UN Resolutions:

- UN Resolution 62/137 (2007): Focused on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication.
- UN Resolution 68/204 (2013): Emphasized the need for gender-sensitive approaches in rural development and the importance of improving access to education and health services for rural women.

Implementation and Impact:

- The Women's Empowerment Fund: Established by the UN, this fund supports initiatives aimed at improving the lives of women and girls in rural areas. The fund has financed various projects, including education programs and health services.

Case Studies:

- Grameen Bank (Bangladesh): Successfully used microfinance to empower rural women by providing small loans to start businesses. This

model has been replicated in various countries with notable success.

- Barefoot College (India): Provides rural women with training in solar energy technology, enabling them to become solar engineers and improve energy access in their communities.

6. Possible Solutions and Proposals

Proposed Solutions:

- Educational Initiatives: Implement mobile schools and community learning centers to increase educational access.
- Healthcare Programs: Expand telemedicine services and mobile health clinics to improve healthcare delivery.
- Economic Development: Enhance access to microfinance and create cooperatives to support rural women entrepreneurs.
- Legal Reforms: Strengthen legal protections for women and improve the enforcement of existing laws.

7. Research and Resources

Suggested Reading:

- Agricultural Extension and Rural Women Empowerment: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa
- Gender and Rural Development: An Overview
- Empowering Rural Women: The Role of Microfinance

Data and Statistics:

- Educational Attainment: Check out graphs showing disparities in educational attainment between rural and urban girls.
- Healthcare Access: Check out charts illustrating differences in healthcare access and outcomes between rural and urban women.

8. Conclusion

Summary:

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities related to empowering women and girls in rural areas. By understanding the key issues and examining previous actions and resolutions, delegates can engage in meaningful discussions and develop effective solutions.

Call to Action:

Delegates are encouraged to come prepared with innovative solutions and proposals to address the specific needs of rural women and girls, ensuring that discussions lead to actionable recommendations and impactful outcomes.

QARMA

Questions A Resolution(DR) Must Answer:

1. What are the main barriers that women and girls in rural areas face in accessing education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods?
2. How can the representation and participation of women in political and economic decision-making in rural areas be increased?
3. What measures can be implemented to address the digital divide and improve access to technology and connectivity for women and girls in rural areas?
4. How can the security and protection of women and girls in rural areas against gender-based violence and other abuses be strengthened?
5. What strategies can be developed to promote the economic empowerment of women in rural areas through economic empowerment and equal opportunities?
6. How can access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and energy be improved for women and girls in rural areas?

7. What policies can be implemented to address inequalities in land and natural resource distribution that affect women in rural areas?
8. How can women's participation in sustainable natural resource management and environmental protection in rural areas be encouraged?
9. What programs can be developed to support the leadership and capacity of women in rural areas to address local challenges?
10. How can coordination and cooperation between governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations be ensured to empower women and girls in rural areas?

Moderated Caucus Topics:

1. **Access to Education:** Discuss strategies to improve educational opportunities for women and girls in rural areas, including the role of community-based programs and technology.
2. **Healthcare and Reproductive Rights:** Explore ways to enhance access to healthcare services, including reproductive health, maternal care, and mental health support, in rural communities.
3. **Economic Empowerment:** Examine initiatives that support women's economic participation, such as microfinance programs, vocational training, and entrepreneurship opportunities in rural areas.
4. **Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Address the need for improved infrastructure, such as transportation and digital connectivity, to support the integration of rural women into broader economic and social systems.
5. **Cultural and Social Norms:** Analyze the impact of cultural and social norms on gender equality in rural

areas and explore ways to challenge and transform harmful practices.

6. Role of NGOs and International Organizations: Evaluate the contributions of non-governmental organizations and international bodies in supporting rural women and girls, and identify ways to enhance collaboration and impact.

BASIC MUN TERMS:

1. **Rules of Procedure (RoP):** The rules that dictate how to run a Model United Nations committee.
2. **Decorum:** A call to order. The chair will call for decorum if delegates get too loud or disrespectful.
3. **Motion:** How you ask for something in MUN in the official request form. You can motion for many different actions to guide the debate forward in a specific way.
4. **Simple Majority:** A vote that requires at least one over 50% of the vote to pass. Most procedural votes require a simple majority.
5. **Blocs:** Groups of delegates who agree on certain principles. These blocs will work together to write draft resolutions, which they later introduce and vote on.

Points & Inquiries

1. **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry:** A question from a delegate to the chair about the Rules of Procedure (RoP) or anything else they don't understand in the committee.
2. **Point of Information:** When a delegate asks a question of another delegate. These will take place after a delegate completes a speech on the Speaker's List when approved by the chair.
3. **Follow-Ups:** A request to ask a second question after having already asked one as a point of information.
4. **Point of Personal Privilege:** Can be called for when a delegate feels hindered by something outside of the debate, that is not covered by the RoP. Examples can be going to the bathroom, room temperature and inability to hear another speaker.
5. **Point of Order:** Called by a delegate on another delegate, when the Rules of Procedure are not being followed.
6. **Right of Reply:** When a delegate feels their country was insulted during another delegate's GSL speech, they can ask for the Right of Reply.

Start of Session

1. **Roll Call:** A procedure performed by the chairs at the beginning of each committee session to know how many delegates are present in the room (for a

simple majority and 2/3rds majority voting) and to know who is ‘present’ and who is ‘present and voting’.

2. **Present:** What a delegate says when they are present in the committee and want to reserve the right to abstain on the final vote.
3. **Present and Voting:** What a delegate stays during roll call when they forgo their right to abstain. This means they can only vote for or against the draft resolution. This is usually done when they feel strongly about the topic.

Debate

1. **Speaker’s List:** The Speaker’s List, or General Speaker’s List, is the default format of the committee. The Speaker’s List is suspended when a motion for something else is passed by the committee.
2. **Yield:** Used in MUN for when a delegate finishes their speech with the extra time that needs to choose what to do with it. The delegate can yield, or give up, their time to:
 - a. The Chair: Meaning they give up the rest of their time.
 - b. Another Delegate: Another delegate gets to use the remaining time in their speech.
 - c. Question: The speaker will take questions and answer them with the remainder of their time.
3. **Informal Debate:** When delegates motion to leave the Speaker’s List for a specific purpose. That can be speaking about a specific topic, speaking in a format moderated by delegates or lobbying and writing the draft resolutions. This is done through a Moderated Caucus, Unmoderated Caucus and Consultation.
4. **Moderated Caucus:** A less formal discussion on a subtopic within the general topic, chosen by a delegate and passed by a majority. Delegates raise their placards to offer Moderated Caucuses when the chair opens the floor to motions. Moderated Caucuses need to offer overall time, individual speakers' time and topic of discussion. **Unmoderated Caucus:** Lobbying time. When motioning for an Unmoderated Caucus usually no topic is needed, only the general time requested for the unmoderated caucus. Once passed, delegates get out of their seat and move freely around the room. During this time they can lobby, negotiate with other delegates and blocs and write draft resolutions.
5. **Consultation:** An informal discussion where the delegate who is speaking chooses the next speaker. When motioning for a Consultation, you only ask for a

general time. The delegate who motioned for the CotW speaks first for as long as they like.

6. **Table:** To suspend action or discussion until later.

Resolution Writing

1. **Clause:** A MUN clause is written instruction detailing the practical policy you want to implement if the resolution passes.
2. **Draft Resolution:** The final draft of a working paper where the blocs combined policy ideas are properly formatted and approved by the chair for both content and format. Once approved by the chair they can be discussed and, after the debate is closed, voted upon.
3. **Sponsors:** Delegates who were major contributors to the draft resolution. They are the ones who wrote the majority of the document. The number of sponsors is limited to two for this MUN.
4. **Signatories:** Delegates who support a draft resolution, or at least want to see it discussed. There is no limit on the number of signatories.
5. **Preambulatory Clause:** Clauses that explain why you are implementing the policies described in the Operative Clauses. Preambulatory Clauses are usually italicized and not numbered.
6. **Operative Clause:** Clauses that detail the policies / explain what the draft resolution is going to do. Operative clauses can go into detailed sub-clauses to properly convey the idea. The first words are italicized and each clause is numbered.
7. **Amendment:** A written change made to an operative clause. Amendments can change an existing clause, add a new one or delete a section, or an entire clause.
8. **Friendly Amendment:** A change to a clause approved by all the sponsors.
9. **Unfriendly Amendment:** A change to a clause that at least one sponsor does not agree to. These go to vote and are only added to the draft resolution that is passed with a majority in favor of the amendment.
10. **Merging:** When two or more draft resolutions are combined. This usually results in the blocs merging as well to give themselves more voting power.

Voting:

Vote by Roll Call: A Motion to have each country declare verbally if they are “For”, “Against”, “Pass” or “Abstain.”

- For: When a delegate casts their vote in favor of the draft resolution.
- Against: When a delegate casts their vote against the draft resolution.
- Abstain: When a delegate formally declines to vote either for or against the draft resolution.

Adjourn: A motion to completely end the committee session until the next conference.

ENDNOTE:

We request you not hesitate to reach out to the EB members before, during and after the MUN sessions. We, the Chair and Vice-Chair are there to address any queries. Please do not end your research here. Question every bit of this document. Understand why these sub-topics have been chosen. You are the representative of your country, no matter how big or small. Please do justice to your role.

Thank you!