

UN WOMEN - GBS MUN VIII

# **UN Women**

**GBSMUN VIII**

**April 2, 2022**



**Chair: Bella DeRosa**

**Vice Chairs:**

**Angelo Karadimas and Hannah Sawyer**

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Dear Delegates,

Hey y'all! My name is Bella DeRosa and I am thrilled to be your chair for GBSMUN VIII's UN Women. As a senior, I am more than grateful to be ending my fourth and final year of MUN with all of you. The rights of women throughout the world are extremely important to me; I cannot wait to hear debate on either of the two topics below.

Outside of Model UN, I participate in a variety of activities at Glenbrook South and in the Glenview community. My biggest passion is service work; I spend time every weekend volunteering on the Interact and Key Club executive boards. Likewise, I tutor in Glenbrook South's Titan Learning Center and lead a freshmen group as a Peer Group Leader. Besides that, I also love my time in debate, serving as Congressional Debate Secretary. Throughout high school, I was also a cheerleader and involved in the Variety Show. When I am not at school, I work two jobs: managing Glenview Dairy Bar and nannying. In my free time, I love to lift, go on walks with my Pitbull, listen to 90's grunge music, and hike with friends.

This committee is absolutely perfect for those who are interested in the rights of women all over the world, not just the United States. The biggest aspiration I have for the committee, in these two incredibly divisive topics, is to maintain policy, even if your views don't align with those of your country. Please make sure your speeches and position paper accurately demonstrate that by staying on policy. All position papers should be brought via hard copy to the conference on April 2nd. Don't hesitate to reach out via email ([226239@glenbrook225.org](mailto:226239@glenbrook225.org)) if you have any questions about our committee, UN Women, or just MUN in general!

Counting down the days until April 2nd,

Bella DeRosa

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## History of the Committee

UN Women is a United Nations committee that was made to protect, further, and empower women all over the world. In July of 2010, it was created as a General Assembly committee as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. This committee combined four other parts of the UN focused on gender equality: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). These committees combined to form UN Women as it is known today have four main objectives outlined in their website. Firstly, women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems. Secondly, women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy. Thirdly, all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence. Fourth and finally, women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. The stress of this committee is to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These seventeen new goals, outlined by the United Nations on August 2, 2015, partly regard the rights and freedoms of women and girls all over the globe. Throughout its time, the

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United Nations has made countless acts of progress in advancing gender equality. Two significant examples of these advancements are the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Though some, usually more developed, nations have almost complete equality and others have virtually none, United Nations Women fights hard for the equal rights of women in all countries.

# Topic A: Female Reproductive Rights

(Abortion, Contraception, and Reproductive Health)



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### History of the Topic

For much of human history, reproduction and childbirth were considered one of the most dangerous things for a woman to endure, but only recently has women's reproductive safety and rights been a more discussed topic. For millennia, women were seen as tools to grow societies and maintain family lines and regimes at any cost. Little regard was given to women's pre- and post-natal care, as the primary concern was the well-being of the child. With the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain in the mid 1700's, many families began to have fewer children, decreasing the mortality rate for women who lived in urban, industrialized areas. Women began entering the workforce as the expanding social and economic revolution required them to work in the growing factories. While women were still getting married young, they would often delay having children or would begin "family planning" in order to prioritize industrialization.

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Around the 1700's and 1800's, physicians began to take a more prevalent role in childbirth. Before this time, childbirth was often conducted by a midwife or was done without any trained help. Midwives often had little training in female anatomy and could often do little for complications that could arise during childbirth. With the expansion of knowledge of human anatomy following the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods, doctors began to get much more training, but they were still generally uneducated when it came to the female reproductive system. In 1826, German naturalist Karl Ernst von Baer discovered the female egg and in 1827, he published his findings on reproduction and female anatomy. Beginning in the late 1880's, female sanitary products began to hit the market in many countries as a result of women's extended work days in the factories. Absorbent materials were needed for bandages in hospitals as medical practices advanced, and the same absorbent materials were then applied to the needs of women. In 1916, the first birth control clinic was opened in New York City by Margaret Sanger, who also founded the American Birth Control League, known today as Planned



Parenthood. Though the clinic was shut down nine days later, it sparked the fight for access to reproductive products for women. With protests for women's reproductive rights continuing for the next few decades, the Vatican officially spoke out against any kind of contraceptive or “artificial method” of preventing or ending pregnancy in 1930.

Following the end of WWII in 1945, women worldwide began flooding the workforce and getting a college education in larger numbers than ever before. With women exploring job and educational opportunities farther in their twenties and thirties, most began to delay getting married and having children. With the birth control pill hitting the market in 1960 and the Sexual



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Revolution continuing in western countries through the 1960's and 70's, attitudes toward reproduction began to drastically change. However, a new opposition began to emerge and the fight for access to contraception continued. Despite FDA approval for the first birth control pill, it faced heavy opposition from the Catholic Church and other religious organizations. In 1973, the Supreme Court took on Roe v. Wade case, where an unmarried mother sued the state of Texas for violating her constitutional rights by banning abortion. The court ruled in favor of the mother, and the case has since drawn the line between pro-choose supporters and pro-choice opponents through the world.

## Current Status of the Topic

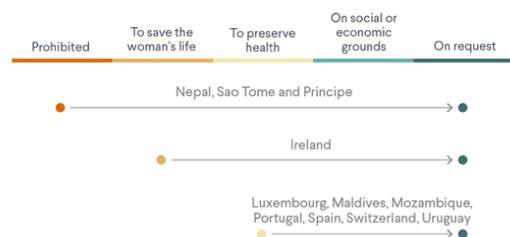
As of 2021, 56 million abortions are performed annually, with almost half considered



unsafe. The death rate for unsafe abortions is incredibly high, and that rate has almost doubled in African countries. Many of these unsafe abortions occur in developing nations, where abortion laws are often the strictest. While some nations have begun referendums to discuss legalizing or easing restrictions on abortions and access to contraceptives, some

nations, like the United States, have found themselves discussing the reversal of key abortion cases and laws. As of today, 72 countries have legalized abortion upon request, but most developing nations still maintain strict bans on abortion and contraceptive use. 40% of women worldwide of reproductive age live in a nation

**Access to Abortion Has Increased Since 2000**  
Changes in abortion law from 2000 to 2019



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where abortion and access to contraception is illegal or is almost impossible to obtain.

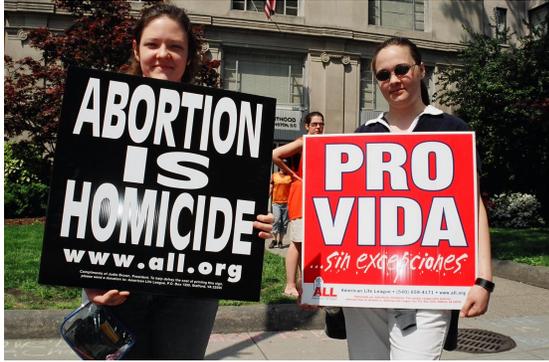
Recently, many countries have seen changes in abortions laws and reproductive rights. Since 2000, 28 countries expanded the legal grounds on which women had the right to access abortion. Even in countries where abortion still remains illegal, access to the abortion pill are easy to transport, making abortion more accesible and safer then alterative methods used in the past.

### Possible Solutions

An effective solution to the issue of female reproductive rights should address all three major topics within this subject: abortion, contraception, and access to reproductive health services. If your country has a pro-choice stance, you can consider advocating the legalization of abortion throughout the world to protect a woman's reproductive right to choosing what to do with their baby and free them from discrimination based on their decision. However, if your country has a pro-life stance, you can argue for a ban on abortion throughout the world on the grounds of ethical concerns unless it is medically necessary. The same applies for contraception; a pro-choice country would likely propose an increase in available birth control devices and a decrease in their prices to make them more affordable. One may also consider strengthening family planning programs to uphold artificial contraception. Contrastingly, a more conservative country might call for a ban on contraceptives due to ethical concerns except for extreme cases where it may be medically necessary. Finally, a delegate's solution to reproductive health service accessibility should focus on a woman's right to obtain a gynecologist for reproductive health services such as abortion, contraception, health screenings, or female sterilization. Possible

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solutions include free healthcare or less expensive doctor visits and medical procedures.



### Current Solutions

Throughout the world, there have been mixed solutions to address the issue of female reproductive rights. These solutions tend to be reflective of progressive or conservative ideologies. For example, conservative regions such as North Africa and the Middle East have enacted bans on abortion and contraception due to Islam's opposition of these practices. More progressive countries in the West, specifically the United States, Canada, and western European



nations, have legalized abortion and contraception. Nonetheless, the complex politics of American states has resulted in different policies throughout the United States. For example, Texas recently passed a controversial ban on abortion after six weeks of pregnancy in late May of 2021. This law, known as Senate Bill 8, went into effect on September 1, 2021, and it faced vast

opposition and protest from Texan women and women of other states. As for the issue of access to female reproductive health services, many progressive countries in the West, such as Sweden and Canada, have established free, universal



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healthcare systems controlled by the government. These systems have had great success, and have ensured women reproductive health services for no cost at all. However, concerns for the socialist nature of these policies and the increased power that the government obtains from them has led to opposition. While many of the well known solutions are utilized within developed nations, it is important to investigate the nature of current solutions and methods used in less developed nations.

### Questions to Consider

1. What is the legality of contraception, abortion, and birth control in your country?
2. How do the majority religious and cultural beliefs play a role in your nation's stance on women's reproductive rights?
3. What is the history of women's rights and their access to contraception in your country and how has it changed over the years?
4. What opposition has arisen towards your country's stance on contraception? Has it caused any major and/or controversial events?
5. What is the state of access to healthcare in your nation? How does it make it easier or harder for women to access contraception and other family planning resources?

### Resources to Consider

1. [UN Women Website](#)

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2. [Planned Parenthood Website](#)
3. [Center for Reproductive Rights](#)
4. [World Health Organization](#)
5. [United Nations Population Fund](#)
6. [Guttmacher Institute - Sexual and Reproductive Health Profile by Country](#)
7. [Heartbeat International](#)

# Topic B: Female Workers' Equality in Developing Nations

(Wages, Harrassment/Discrimination, Maternity Leave)

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### History of the Topic

Throughout the development of organized labor in history, workers equality has been a topic that is ever changing. Before an influx of individuals in developing countries engaged in organized labor, many enveloped themselves in farming. Since the beginning of time,

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agricultural practices have been a main part of society, especially as the country grows. From the turn of the 20th century, there was a gradual decline in the proportion of workers in developing nations engaged in agriculture. That being said, until World War II, fully three-quarters of the population able to work was engaged in farming in some way. Manufacturing workers increased from 26 million to 46 million from 1900 and 1960. Contrarily, as a proportion of the labor force, they represented only 8% of workers. Similarly, service-sector employment increased threefold between 1900 and 1960. In this case, it embraced a considerable 18 percent of the workforce with 92 million workers. While there was an increasing number of jobs offered in developing nations, many of these jobs were not fulfilled by women. Some of the jobs offered were in dangerous factories, building railroads in harsh conditions, and backbreaking manual labor in

mines to find ore. In most societies, especially developing ones, men are seen as the caretakers of society, making sure to provide for their families. The jobs that were mainly offered reflected that. With the feminist movement of the 1960s along

with growing industrialization, women began to enter the workforce in great numbers. Besides that, during World War II, the labor forces needed more jobs to be filled. Thus, women took over many of the men's roles. Women's participation in the workforce varies between countries, so the most accurate data uses the global labor force. Over the last two decades, the global female labor force participation rate has remained fairly stable, though it has had its slight instabilities. The total female working-age population, fifteen and older, declined from 52.2% in 1992 to 51.4% in 2012. In 2019, 57.4 % of women participated in the labor force. This was up from



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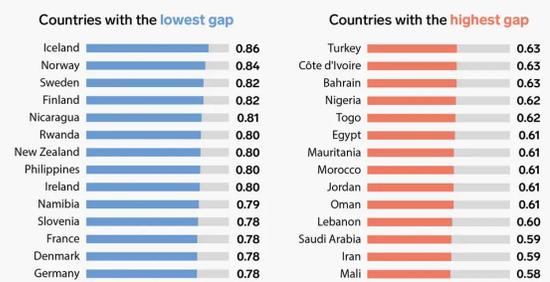
57.1% who worked in 2018, but 2.6% points below the peak. 60% of all women working was a number the world once had in 1999. Since then, the statistics have not been as promising. That being said, the good news is that 370.5 million women have joined the labor market in the past 20 years! In addition, the gap in workforce participation rates of men and women has narrowed only slightly. The exact numbers are 27.8 percentage points in 1992 to 26.0 percentage points in 2012. Though progress is still emerging, it is extremely slow progress, with even some fallbacks. It is the goal of United Nations (UN) Women to minimize those fallbacks and push more women to be in the overall workforce.

## Current Status of the Problem

The equality of female workers in developing nations is a very relevant issue in the modern world, and it continues to plague second and third world countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For example, the wage gap between men and women in Ukraine is 20%, which is 4% higher than the EU average. This disparity is even more noticeable in Africa, with

### Countries with the highest and lowest gender gap

The Global Gender Gap Index examines the gap between men and women in four categories: Economic participation/opportunity, educational attainment, health/survival and political empowerment



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women in Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mauritania earn over 60% less than their male counterparts for the same job.

Compared to Africa, Asia is much less severe, with the Philippines possessing a wage gap of nearly 30%. The wage gap has a potent connection to the economic status of a country along with its democratic values or lack thereof, as countries like Algeria with limited freedom and human rights tend to have larger disparities in the salaries of men and women. For that reason, the economic and political situation of each developing nation must be taken into account in order to better understand the root of the problem and weed it out. Female workers' inequality relative to men manifests itself in other ways as well, namely sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and insufficient maternity leave benefits.

In countless developing nations, many females are subject to sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. However, the patriarchal structure of many of these countries prevents women from being able to report these incidents and obtain closure. Maternity leave benefits are often scarce or inadequate for numerous developing nations, especially African ones. The International Labor Organization (ILO) concluded that 80% of women who are deprived of adequate maternity leave are found in Asia and Africa, two continents with significant numbers of developing nations. In Africa, only 4 countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 183, which requires a nation to provide sufficient maternity leave to female workers. As a result, many



female workers in the developing countries of Africa and the rest of the world are unable to obtain sufficient maternity leave to care for their newborn children, which results in neglect, guilt, and sadness. The ILO launched an investigation of the workplace conditions for African

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women in 52 different countries to bring attention to this female human rights issue, and discovered that only 35% of the nations studied gave a maternity leave of 12 to 13 weeks to pregnant women. The data is very similar in other developing regions and nations, making inequality for female workers a serious global issue that is in urgent need of an effective solution.

### Possible Solutions

There are a plethora of solutions that the United Nations could try to implement to increase the overall participation of women in the workforce, without infringing on the rights of the country or their national sovereignty. One of these solutions could be to incentivize the governments developing nations to include more women and girls over fifteen in the workforce. Each developing country could receive the funding to make more programs that broaden the amount of work available. That being said, the conditions of that work are of the utmost priority

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to the United Nations. Countries must reinforce the notion of safe labor and working hours. The labor must not be extremely dangerous, with a larger fatality or injury rate. Furthermore, the employees of this labor force must not be overworked to the point of exhaustion. On that same note, there also should not be child labor because of these new programs implemented, especially



regarding young women and girls. Regardless, the pay gap is also an issue. In many nations, especially developing ones, the wage gap is far more prevalent. Globally, women earn 68% of what men are paid for the same work.

Even worse, they earn just 40% on average in countries with the least gender parity. In the status quo, it'll take an estimated 257 years to close the gap and achieve pay equity worldwide. There are many ways to add more women to the workforce, the issue is how to do it safely. The challenge is that the solution the committee must come up with has to be both safe and efficient. In doing so, the lives of women all around the globe will be wholeheartedly changed for the better.

### Current Solutions

Solutions to gender inequality in the developing workforce have been thrown out everywhere, from individual countries themselves to the United Nations in general. A solution brought up was to bring more women into the formal labor force, as it is said to be critical for economic development and the overall development of women. Across the world, this has already been done. By integrating female-intensive industries, like apparel or clothing, into international trade, it has helped increase female labor force participation. Even so, there is still

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so much more to be done. Because many higher paying jobs require a larger level of educational training, some countries are implementing more programs for women in schooling. Secondly, many women (and men as well) are not able to have jobs because there is not a need for them. Due to industrialization and newer technologies, there is little demand for service related industry jobs. When there are jobs, the workers are paid an incredibly small amount, not drawing enough women to even want to work in the first place. Some nations are increasing the amount of service-industry jobs and even paying workers more money to be doing them. Gender norms also reinforce the fact that women should not be working. In most developing nations, some laws, like hiring and mobility restrictions, inhibit the ability of women to take on certain occupations, earn and move between occupations equally as men, or lack protections to limit discrimination in the workplace. A few countries are combating this by mandating equal pay, adding protection on women's freedoms in the workplace, and adopting campaigns that destigmatize working women. Though these were just three main problems countries are trying to combat with solutions, there are many more. Resolutions are discussed all over the world, though, keep in mind, they do not always work the way the government or organization intends them to.

### Questions to Consider

1. Is your country more industrial or agriculture based and how does this affect gender roles in the workplace?
2. What role in your country's society do women play? Are they more home-based or do they actively contribute to the economy?
3. How large is the wage gap between men and women in your country? How has it grown or shrunk over the years?

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4. What factors have contributed to the degree of workers' gender inequality in your country?
5. What steps has your country taken to eliminate gender inequality in the workplace? Have these actions been successful?

### Resources to Consider

1. [UN Women](#)
2. [Global Citizen](#)
3. [Council on Foreign Relations - Female Workers' Equality Index](#)
4. [Catalyst - Global Women in the Workforce](#)
5. [Gender at Work](#)
6. [International Labor Organization - Gender Gap in Employment](#)
7. [Frontiers](#)
8. [International Labor Rights Forum - Women's Rights in the Workforce](#)
9. [Cornell University Library - Women at Work: Organizations & Agencies](#)

### List of Participating Nations

Canada
United States
France
United Kingdom

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China
Australia
Russia
Saudi Arabia
Greece
Honduras
Venezuela
Turkey
DRC
Germany
Mexico
Mongolia
Ireland
Sweden
Philippines
Poland
South Africa
Iraq
Japan
South Korea
North Korea
New Zealand
Morocco
Tunisia
Nigeria
Brazil
Argentina
Yemen
Syria
Qatar

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Bahrain
Kuwait
Colombia
Austria
Spain
Zambia

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13. [About UN Women](#)
14. [Female labor force participation in developing countries](#)
15. [The history of women's work and wages and how it has created success for us all](#)
16. [What Is the Gender Pay Gap and How Do We Close It?](#)
17. [Helping women in developing countries transition from jobs to careers](#)