



UNWOMEN

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1. Welcoming Letters

a. Letter from the Secretary-General

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome to each delegate that has taken a piece of their time apart to participate in AKA Model United Nations 2024. As the Secretary General of this conference I am utmost excited to witness your debates concerning global issues that plague the foundation of our world.

As you gather to begin your journey, I advise you approach this agenda with great interest and an open mind to allow for ease of communication. Over many years of evolution humanity has improved their methods of communication in many ways. As a result of that organizations such as the United Nations were able to be created. Here we gather to represent and celebrate these things by trying to help with such problems.

Aka Model United Nations is a place where you will be able to enhance your communication and critical thinking skills so never shy away from taking a place upfront. Voice your ideas, discuss with others and help the only world we have be greater.

I wish you a rewarding and prosperous Model United Nations Experience.

Best Regards
HÜSEYİN CAN ÇETİNTAŞ
Secretary General

b.Letter from the USG

As the Under Secretary General of the UNWOMEN Committee, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you.

Your role in the committee is integral, and I am confident that your perspectives will significantly enhance our discussions. UNWOMEN's mission to advocate for gender equality, empower women and girls, and ensure their full participation in all aspects of society provides a platform for engaging with complex humanitarian challenges, and your active participation is crucial to our collective success.

Throughout the conference, our goal is to foster a dynamic and collaborative environment. Engage in discussions, negotiate resolutions, and work collaboratively towards effective solutions on addressing “Gender-Based Violation and Legal Discrimination”. I encourage you to approach these discussions with creativity and innovation.

I have full confidence that the UNWOMEN Committee will demonstrate determination, compassion, and collaboration in our pursuit of lasting solutions. Your insights, experience, and dedication will play a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of this conference. Together, we can contribute to a future where women find safety, dignity, and hope.

Thank you for your tireless commitment to advancing gender equality, and I look forward to meeting you and witnessing the valuable contributions you will bring to the UNWOMEN Committee

Best Regards,

Masal Naz Çalışkan

2. Introduction to the Committee

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls around the world. Their mission is to promote and protect the rights of women and girls, working to create a

world where every woman and girl can live free from violence, discrimination, and inequality. UN Women leads global efforts to make gender equality a reality and to achieve women's empowerment in all spheres of life.

Formally known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women was established in 2010 to strengthen the UN's work in advancing gender equality. This consolidation of efforts arose from the recognition that gender equality is crucial to the achievement of sustainable development and peace.

Today, UN Women works in over 90 countries, partnering with governments, civil society, and other UN agencies to drive policies and programs that make a tangible difference in the lives of women and girls. Their work spans a wide range of areas, including economic empowerment, ending violence against women, leadership and political participation, and women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. UN Women provides essential support for legal reforms, policy advocacy, and programs that directly benefit women and girls, empowering them to lead change in their communities and societies.

At the heart of UN Women's approach is the belief that gender equality is not just a matter of justice, but a powerful driver of progress for entire societies. UN Women puts women and girls at the center of their efforts, ensuring that their voices and experiences inform decisions, actions, and solutions at every level.

By promoting a world where women and girls have equal opportunities to thrive, UN Women works to create a more just, peaceful, and prosperous world for all.

3.Introduction to the Agenda Item

a. Understanding Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Definition of Gender-Based Violence GBV refers to harmful acts directed at individuals based on their gender. In most contexts, GBV disproportionately affects women and girls, but it can also affect people of all genders. GBV includes a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, and economic violence, such as:

- Domestic violence (physical, emotional, or sexual violence within the home)
- Sexual violence (including rape, harassment, and trafficking)
- Early and forced marriage
- Human trafficking
- Sexual exploitation
- Psychological abuse (e.g., emotional manipulation, threats)

i. Global Impact of GBV

- Prevalence: According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 3 women globally has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly by an intimate partner.
- Impact on Health: GBV has severe physical, psychological, and emotional consequences. It can lead to injuries, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

- Economic Consequences: GBV often limits women's ability to participate fully in economic and social life, leading to lost productivity, economic dependency, and poverty.

ii. Key Areas to Address GBV

- Prevention: Raising awareness, challenging harmful gender norms, and promoting gender equality.
- Protection: Ensuring access to shelters, legal aid, and medical care for survivors.
- Legal and Policy Reform: Strengthening laws and policies to prevent and respond to GBV.
- Support Services: Providing counseling, social reintegration, and economic empowerment for survivors.

ii. Understanding Legal Discrimination

Legal discrimination refers to laws, policies, and practices that disadvantage women and girls in areas such as marriage, inheritance, property rights, and access to justice. These laws and discriminatory practices limit the rights of women and perpetuate gender inequality.

i. Common Forms of Legal Discrimination

- Inheritance and Property Rights: In many countries, women are denied equal rights to inherit property or land.
- Marriage Laws: Some countries still allow child marriage or have laws that limit women's ability to freely marry or divorce.

- Reproductive Rights: Laws restricting women's access to contraception, abortion, and other reproductive health services.
- Labor Rights: Legal discrimination in the workplace, including unequal pay, lack of maternity leave, and employment discrimination.
- Nationality and Citizenship: In some countries, women are not allowed to pass on their nationality to children or spouses, unlike men.

ii. Global Impact of Legal Discrimination

- Economic Inequality: Legal discrimination often results in women having less access to land, credit, education, and jobs, reinforcing cycles of poverty.
- Political Participation: In many countries, discriminatory laws limit women's participation in public life and decision-making processes.
- Violations of Human Rights: Legal discrimination contradicts the fundamental human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination outlined in international human rights law.

iii. Examples of Legal Discrimination

- Saudi Arabia: Women were not allowed to drive until 2018 and face numerous restrictions on their legal rights and personal freedoms.
- India: In some states, personal laws (based on religion) do not provide women with the same inheritance rights as men.
- Egypt: While progress has been made in legal reforms, certain laws still allow for child marriage and limit women's participation in political life.

b. Addressing the Root Causes of Gender-Based Violence and Legal Inequality

Gender-based violence (GBV) and legal inequality do not emerge in isolation but are deeply rooted in a complex interplay of social, economic, cultural, and political factors. In many countries, the root causes stem from patriarchal structures, gender stereotypes, and power imbalances, compounded by limited access to education and economic resources for women and marginalized groups. These systemic barriers perpetuate violence and discrimination, undermining the fundamental human rights of women and girls.

i. Key Factors Contributing to GBV

Patriarchal Norms: Societal norms that reinforce male dominance often place women in subordinate positions, with power and authority being concentrated in the hands of men. These norms are often codified into social, cultural, and legal practices that normalize and justify gender-based violence.

Socialization of Gender Roles: From an early age, individuals are socialized into traditional gender roles, which dictate that women must be passive, obedient, and dependent. These roles often contribute to the marginalization of women in both the private and public spheres, including in workplaces, politics, and family structures.

Economic Dependence: In many societies, women's limited access to economic resources and opportunities for empowerment often results in their dependence on male relatives or partners. This economic

vulnerability can trap women in abusive relationships, making it harder to leave abusive environments and access support services.

Weak Legal Systems: Inadequate or poorly enforced legal frameworks allow GBV to persist. In some cases, laws designed to protect women may be absent, while in others, existing laws may not be enforced due to corruption, lack of resources, or cultural attitudes that dismiss violence against women as acceptable.

ii. Strategies to Address Root Causes

Educational Programs: Raising awareness about gender equality and human rights is critical to challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes. Programs that focus on gender sensitivity in schools, universities, and community settings can help foster a culture of respect and equality. Educational campaigns must also emphasize the rights of women to live free from violence and discrimination.

Empowerment Initiatives: Economic empowerment programs are vital to providing women with the tools to gain financial independence. By promoting women's participation in the workforce, providing access to training, and ensuring women's rights to own and control property, these initiatives can help reduce women's vulnerability to violence and increase their autonomy in decision-making.

Community Engagement: Engaging communities in efforts to end GBV is key to addressing its root causes. Community-based approaches that involve local leaders, youth groups, and religious institutions can challenge entrenched patriarchal norms, promote

gender equality, and raise awareness about the importance of legal protections for women.

Relevant Articles and Resources

- World Bank – Gender and Development: [World Bank Gender Resources](#)

d. Psychology

The psychological impacts of gender-based violence (GBV) and legal discrimination are profound and long-lasting. Both GBV and discrimination affect women's mental, emotional, and social well-being, contributing to a cycle of trauma and marginalization. Understanding the psychological effects is crucial in addressing these issues effectively and in shaping policies and legal reforms. UN Women works to highlight the psychological dimensions of these forms of violence and discrimination, advocating for a holistic approach that integrates psychological support into legal and social interventions.

i. Psychological Effects of Gender-Based Violence

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Women who experience physical, emotional, or sexual violence are at high risk of developing PTSD. Symptoms may include flashbacks, anxiety, hyper-vigilance, and emotional numbness. PTSD can disrupt a woman's ability to function daily, impairing her mental and emotional health.

Depression and Anxiety: GBV survivors frequently experience chronic feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety. The trauma of abuse can lead to depression, which often worsens over time, especially in

environments where the abuse continues or is not addressed. The fear of further violence or retaliation can prevent women from seeking help.

Low Self-Esteem and Shame: Victims of GBV may internalize the abuse, leading to feelings of shame, guilt, and worthlessness. This is particularly true when societal norms blame the victim rather than the perpetrator. These feelings can trap women in abusive relationships, making it harder for them to escape or seek help.

Social Isolation: Victims often experience a breakdown in social connections due to stigma, fear of being judged, or the abuser's manipulation. This isolation can further entrench the psychological impact of violence, leaving women without support networks and resources.

Long-Term Psychological Effects on Children: Children who witness or experience GBV are also deeply affected. Research shows that children in such environments may develop emotional issues, such as attachment disorders, behavioral problems, and an increased risk of engaging in violent behavior in adulthood.

ii. Psychological Impact of Legal Discrimination

Feeling of Powerlessness: Legal discrimination often leaves women feeling powerless and marginalized. When legal systems fail to protect women's rights or when laws themselves are biased, it creates a sense of hopelessness and a belief that their voices and experiences don't matter. This can lead to learned helplessness, where women feel they cannot change their circumstances.

Stress and Anxiety Due to Legal Injustice: Legal discrimination can cause women ongoing stress and anxiety. For example, when women

cannot access legal redress for violence or discrimination due to biased laws or a lack of legal support, it can result in chronic emotional strain and frustration. Women who are denied access to equal employment opportunities or educational resources may experience feelings of inferiority or anxiety about their future.

Erosion of Trust in Legal Systems: Discriminatory laws or inadequate legal protection can erode women's trust in the legal system. This lack of faith in legal institutions can prevent women from seeking justice and exacerbate feelings of alienation and disempowerment.

e. Current Situation and Case Studies

Current Global Situation:

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and legal discrimination continue to be widespread issues affecting millions of women and girls globally. These issues are deeply entrenched in cultural, legal, and social structures. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately one in three women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime. Legal systems often fail to adequately protect survivors, with patriarchal norms and cultural attitudes contributing to the normalization of violence against women.

In many parts of the world, domestic violence, sexual assault, child marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM) are still prevalent. Legal discrimination also persists, with women having limited access to economic opportunities, education, and legal redress. In conflict zones, such as the Syrian refugee crisis or the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, with devastating long-term effects on women and girls.

Recent Developments:

In recent years, there have been both positive strides and setbacks in addressing gender-based violence and legal discrimination.

- **#MeToo Movement:** The #MeToo movement that gained momentum in 2017 has brought global attention to the pervasive nature of sexual harassment and assault, particularly in workplaces and entertainment industries. This has led to a growing number of legal cases, higher public awareness, and the introduction of stronger workplace policies around harassment in countries like the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.
- **Increased Focus on Legal Protections:** Several countries have made efforts to enhance legal frameworks to address GBV. For example, in Mexico, the Femicidal Law (2012) was created to address the alarming rates of femicide. In France, new laws have been implemented to combat domestic violence, including restraining orders and better access to legal support for survivors. However, enforcement of these laws remains a challenge.
- **Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated gender-based violence globally. Lockdowns and restrictions increased domestic violence cases, as survivors were trapped in their homes with their abusers. In some regions, domestic

violence hotlines saw record numbers of calls, yet the closure of services, shelters, and courts hindered access to legal remedies.

- #EndFGM Campaigns: In the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM), recent years have seen growing efforts, particularly in African countries and among immigrant communities in Europe and the United States. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme aims to reduce FGM by 30% globally by 2030, and countries like Kenya have seen a drop in FGM prevalence due to legal reforms and community engagement.
- UNiTE Campaign: The UN Women "Unite Campaign" is a global movement aimed at ending violence against women and girls. It seeks to raise awareness, foster solidarity, and encourage collective action to tackle gender-based violence in all its forms. Through advocacy, education, and community mobilization, the campaign empowers individuals and communities to stand up against violence. The campaign emphasizes the importance of holding perpetrators accountable and supporting survivors. By uniting people

around the world, UN Women hopes to create a safer, more equitable future for all women and girls.

Relevant Articles and Resources

<https://metoomvmt.org/>

<https://endfgm.eu/what-we-do/>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/16-days-of-activism>

Global Initiatives and Agreements

Several international initiatives and agreements have been established to address gender-based violence and legal discrimination, aiming to create a comprehensive framework for action and global cooperation.

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, CEDAW remains the most comprehensive international treaty addressing gender equality and discrimination. It requires countries to take steps to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices and to take measures to prevent gender-based violence.

2. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

The Beijing Platform for Action remains a landmark global policy framework that advocates for the advancement of women's rights, including ending violence against women. It calls for comprehensive strategies to address GBV, provide justice for survivors, and eliminate legal discrimination in all areas of life.

3. UN Women HeForShe Campaign:

The HeForShe campaign, launched by UN Women in 2014, seeks to engage men and boys as advocates for gender equality. The campaign encourages men to become allies in the fight against gender-based violence, emphasizing that gender equality benefits everyone. This campaign has gained global attention, with over 1.2 billion people pledging support.

4. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Goal 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Target 5.2 specifically addresses eliminating all forms of violence against women in both public and private spheres, as well as trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

5. International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25)

Established by the UN General Assembly, this day aims to raise awareness of the scale of gender-based violence globally. It is part of the

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign to highlight the issue and promote actions to prevent violence and protect survivors.

6. The Istanbul Convention (2011):

The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention is the first legally binding treaty in Europe specifically designed to address violence against women and domestic violence. It sets out measures for prevention, protection, prosecution, and integrated policies to combat GBV and legal discrimination. Despite being a groundbreaking agreement, some countries, like Turkey, have withdrawn from it in recent years, sparking debates over its impact.

Questions to Ponder

- How can legal systems be reformed to better protect survivors of gender-based violence and provide them with effective access to justice?
- What can be done to raise awareness about legal equality and the importance of protecting women from violence?
- How can the international community work together to address the root causes of legal discrimination and GBV?

- In what ways can the international community enhance cooperation to ensure a more equal world for both genders?
- What kind of education can be given to teach people living in rural areas about gender equality?

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https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/shaping-the-law-for-women-and-girls>