

RENMUN VI

Finding Solace in Solidarity



March 6 – 7, 2021

CHAIR REPORT

Commission on the Status of Women

Chair Introduction

Hello everyone, I am Shraddha, your deputy chair for The Commission on the Status of Women this conference. I'm a year 11 from Renaissance College, and I'm glad to be able to facilitate discussion around gender equality and the empowerment of women alongside my fellow schoolmate and head chair Eugenia. I hope that everyone is able to develop their own opinions and learn to resolve problems through negotiation in our increasingly globalised society. For all old and new delegates, this conference can be your next step in your MUN journey, and through this, I look forward to fruitful debates and a generally rewarding experience.

The Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) is a commission within ECOSOC — which is one of the 6 principal organs of the United Nations — dedicated to the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality. We felt that the topics we chose were highly important topics of today that are still majorly hindering the empowerment of women and were further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. As such, delegates should try to engage themselves fully in creating sustainable and adaptable solutions to problems facing the women of our world today. Please read the chair reports carefully and research your countries position in detail, to ensure that the solutions and debate we participate in is relevant and as authentic as possible.

Ultimately, as this is a beginner committee, we understand that many of you may be less experienced in your MUN journey, but we believe that as long as you are prepared and bring your enthusiasm, we can enlighten our worldview and approach the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of women collectively. If you have any lingering questions or concerns, feel free to contact us by email, as we are always willing to help out.

Best of luck,

Head Chair Eugenia Tong (20tongy1@rchk.edu.hk) and

Deputy Chair Shraddha Rajesh (rajess2@rchk.edu.hk)

Eliminating Violence Against Women

Women have endured violence in all parts of the world to different extents, irrespective of their income, race, ethnicity or class. The prevention and elimination of violence against women is one of the important objectives and pledges of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Violence against women is a major hurdle to achieving goals of gender equality and peace and takes away women's enjoyment of their fundamental freedoms and basic human rights.

Violence against women is defined by the UN as being "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." Global estimates from WHO state that approximately 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner or non partner violence. These statistics are not only alarming but concerning, and requires the actions of all parties involved to put an end to this issue.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Gender Based Violence	Harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender.
Violence Against Women	Defined by the UN as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."
Intimate Partner Violence	Behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, mental or psychological harm.
Sexual Assault or Violence	Defined by the UN as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against

	a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object."
Sexual Exploitation	A non consensual act or exploitation of a person's sexuality for purposes that may include financial gain, sexual pleasure etc. (Swarthmore, n.a)
Sexual Harassment	Sexual Harassment is defined as non consensual sexual advances, request of sexual favours and verbal or physical advances of sexual nature.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or cutting	Procedures which may partially or entirely remove female genitalia or any other injury to the female genitalia for non medical purposes.

Background Information

According to CNN, 35% of Women around the world have experienced physical or sexual violence. Moreover, the UN Women estimates that around 120 million girls are forced to have sex or other forms of sexual acts.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) occurs in numerous communities. It is known to be practiced among specific communities in a number of African and Asian countries. More than 200 million women and girls alive today have been cut in countries where the practice is observed. The prevalence of FGM has reduced in the last three decades over the last three decades, according to UNICEF. Data from around 31 countries shows that 1 in 3 girls between the ages of 15-19 have undergone the practice while the numbers dropped to 1 in 2, 30 years ago. Over 155 countries have passed laws to prevent domestic violence and over 140 have laws in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace.

United Nations has created multiple resolutions including the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women and the 1993 UN

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in order uphold the right of women to live free from violence.

The World Health Organization has also played an imperative role in creating a solution to this problem. They have done so by researching the issue to understand the magnitude and intricacies of the issue. WHO also creates guidelines and tools to ensure that countries are well equipped for an effective health response to violence against women. They also work to encourage leadership within health systems and political systems in order to help address the issue of violence against women through advocacy and more.

Potential Clashes

Economically Developed vs Economically Developing Countries

Clashes may potentially arise between economically developed and developing countries due to difference in economic priorities. For example, a nation like Syria who are undergoing tough times in regards to terrorism, the issue of violence against women may not seem like the first priority.

Clashes may arise between countries on the basis of religious and cultural practices. For many people around the world, practices like female genital mutilation (which is considered violence against women) maybe part of their religion or culture. According to WHO, approximately 3 million girls worldwide are at risk of FGM each year.

In Africa, FGM is known to be practiced among certain communities in 29 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

Certain ethnic groups in Asian countries practice FGM, including in communities in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In the Middle East, the practice occurs in Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, as well as in Iraq, Iran and the State of Palestine. In Eastern Europe, recent

info shows that certain communities are practicing FGM in Georgia and the Russian Federation. In South America, certain communities are known to practice FGM in Columbia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru.

And in many western countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom and various European countries, FGM is practiced among diaspora populations from areas where the practice is common.

This raises a question of whether or not the practice can be condemned as it is religious/cultural. According to UNFPA, every child has the right to be protected from harm in whatever setting or time. Statistics also show that affected countries want to stop cutting girls and support for the practice is dying down. However, the ending of FGM requires a large amount of collaboration and intensive contributions from a number of parties.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
Democratic Republic of Congo	DRC is referred to as the rape capital of the world, with an approximate of 48 women being raped every hour. DRC has locked arms with a number of nations to create mixed chambers within their judicial system in order to deal with said issue in court and develop a better legal system for victims.
Pakistan	Violence against women is a major concern in Pakistan with rape, murder, honour killings all remaining extremely prevalent. Another common form of violence that takes place against the women in Pakistan is acid attacks – placing Pakistan in the top 3 nations worldwide for its prevalence, whilst approximately 1000 “honour” killings take place every year. The

	<p>subject of violence is also rather taboo in Pakistan, as in 1999, up to 90% of women had reported experiencing domestic violence, yet only slightly more than half of them reported the violence, which is more often than not condoned by authorities. Pakistan has also been working on tougher anti-rape legislation, though the exact details of it have experienced backlash from Amnesty International.</p>
Syria	<p>Rape, Torture and gender based violence occur on a daily basis and continue to undermine the health, security and autonomy of victims. Gender based violence happens everywhere in the country including homes, camps, public places like markets etc. Due to the severity of the issue in the country, Syria has over 79 partners in the gender based violence sub sector including UN, Syria NGO etc. All of these partners operate across all 14 governorates and 198 sub districts of Syria. This sector works to prevent as well as respond to all forms of GBV. Response includes services for survivors like psychological support and prevention work includes raising of awareness through various forms.</p>
Sweden	<p>Sweden is internationally recognized as a strong leader in this area. Sweden has strong laws and policies and strongly believes in the “yes means yes” approach in relation to the criminal offence of rape. The country constantly works to review its policies in order to ensure that there are no gaps.</p>
Finland	<p>Finland has also consistently topped lists for the safest countries for women to live in the world.</p>

	Despite having the highest percentage of women having experienced violence in their lives in the EU. Finland has taken numerous measures toward prevention and protection of victims. This includes a National Action Plan and funding of many programs like shelters for victims, education on relationship skills, anger management and domestic violence prevention (21,000 participants each year.)
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Possible Solutions

Violence against women was one of 12 critical areas in the Beijing Platform for Action. Despite having a framework to work on eliminating and preventing violence against women, 20+ years from the platform of action, 1 in 3 women still faces physical or sexual violence in their lives. All this being said, the Beijing Plan for Action has been highly looked up to by people globally, delegates could work on improving the plan for action and making the objectives and framework more feasible as a possible solution.

While previous solutions in history have typically addressed ways to respond to survivors of violence, it is important to remember that the only way to eliminate violence is to prevent it from happening in the first place. To do this, countries could develop and fund initiatives that work in partnership with schools in order to provide early education related to the issue, creation of media campaigns to educate the public and conduct frequent research in order to monitor issues. Using this data and other research, countries can develop specialised curriculums similar to the Voices against Violence by UN Women which includes tools which help young people understand the roots of the issue and to help educate communities on prevention of violence against women.

In order to prevent the issue, zero tolerance policies must be adopted by countries along with an easy access legal system and proper civil remedies like restraining orders etc. Police, Doctors etc. should be educated on prevention and Women

being educated must be kept a priority in order to ensure that the cycle of accepting violence is broken.

Past Actions

The Beijing Platform for Action is one of the most prominent solutions developed with the aim of achieving equality between genders. Developed in 1995, the platform for action was adopted unanimously by 189 countries and is split into 12 critical areas. This resolution was a global turning point in regards to the fight for gender equality and has seen improvements in many areas, but 25 years from the making of this resolution, we are still seeing that there are still large amounts of change needed to be made and no nation is close to achieving all the said goals.

The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women was the first international resolution addressing violence against women and providing a framework for improvement at both national and international levels. The popular mantra, “women’s rights are human rights,” came to popularity after the making of this declaration. This resolution was able to bring the issue out of the sidelines and put it on the global human rights agenda. The resolution was the first to define violence against women and create a non exhaustive list of forms of violence against women. Through this resolution a number of procedures were adopted, the most famous being the individual complaint procedure. However, 20 years later, we are still seeing a world where Women and Girls still face violence and on many occasions the consequences have been fatal. The female body is still a battleground for control, females are discriminated even before birth and women are still faced with torture and practices harmful to their health.

Guiding Questions

- What are different forms of violence against women? How does this vary based on geography, economic development and development of modern media such as cyberspace?
- What have been the historical efforts to build a multilateral approach to end violence against women? Which of these efforts have proven to be

successful? What are the ongoing international efforts and collaborations in regards to this issue?

- What are the economic and social consequences of violence against women and girls?
- What are examples of effective strategies to prevent violence against women? What strategies have been only partially effective or ineffective to reduce violence against women?

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