

Committee Guide

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on promoting the Importance of Self-determination of Women

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Personal introduction

Dear Delegates,

My name is Marlene Möller and I'm very happy to introduce myself as one of the Chairs of this year's UN Women committee.

I study medicine in Rostock, a city in the north of Germany with a twenty minute train ride to the beach. Right now I'm mostly spending my time with quarantine stuff like reading, painting, podcasts, going out for walks on the beach and playing board games with friends, but I miss the beloved concerts, festivals and travelings so much.

I participated in a few MEPs, OLMUN as a delegate and chaired at last year's OLMUN@home conference. Now, I am thrilled to chair the UN Women committee with Pia! We consider this committee incredibly important and I am very happy to welcome you here. I'm sure each and everyone of us will learn so much about oneself and others, resulting in spreading awareness about this topic which is long overdue.

Can't wait to meet you all,
wash your hands,
Marlene

Dear Delegates, Hi!

My name is Pia Niederhoff and I am 19 years old. I am currently in my third semester of studying social sciences in Bochum, a city in the West of Germany. I enjoy reading, cooking, thinking of puns, having long conversations and a lot of other things that am not able to do at the moment. Also, I am curious to find out how many social skills I still have when we all see each other...

I have never taken part in any MEPs or OLMUN events, so I am very excited to see how all of this will play out, and I am very happy to have Marlene by my side! I believe that the topics we have selected are extremely relevant and I have loved learning more about them while doing research for the committee guide! I am looking forward to hearing many different viewpoints on the topics themselves and the respective solutions. I am also curious to see the group dynamics and debating style I will be able to observe.

See you all soon!

Pia

General Introduction

At this point, we want to highlight the importance of participating in conferences like OLMUN and therefore meeting new inspiring people and truly broadening your horizons during the ongoing pandemic. A lot of you might be annoyed of Corona being the one and only topic in politics for the past year, but many of you are hopefully excited to talk and learn about many different important issues. However, Corona touches upon all of them in some way as we can see how countries deal with pandemics, how societies act and how much of an impact globalization really has. As much as covid restricts us from living the way we are used to, it teaches us so much more.

Most importantly we should never forget that the pandemic only fans the flames of the already ongoing crisis and discussions. Now, we need to recognize them and spread awareness more than ever.

Word from the chairs

Even though in not all, but many countries, men and women have judicial and constitutional equality, factually, men and women experience the world very differently. Patriarchal structures are still engrained in culture and society and women face discrimination in different sectors of life and in many different ways. We have come a long way in acknowledging and counteracting gender inequalities, but the path ahead of us is still long. One part of the journey is realising that everybody profits from a society that does not award privileges, denounce rights or ascribe traits on the basis of sex.

We have come to the realization that you cannot discuss other topics like the gender pay gap without coming back to the fundamental problems and inequities, such as the biological stigmatization of women. Inequalities in the fundamental areas of health and medical self-determination are often the base and reason for inequalities in the areas of wages and the public sector.

By picking a few topics from these areas we try to steer the debates into a direction where we all truly understand the roots of gender inequality and why self-determination of women is so important. We have to learn how to process the past and bring change for the future. Of course we are open to your individual research and ideas: you are not limited to the topics that we propose. If you have any comments, don't hesitate to contact us.

About United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to accelerate progress on meeting the needs of girls and women worldwide.

In 2015 the UN set itself a list of "Sustainable Development Goals. They are designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". They are a part of the Agenda 2030, meaning it is the goal to achieve these goals by 2030. Goal Nr. 5 is: "Gender equality", Goal Nr. 10 is: "Reduce inequality".

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- 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

Working for the empowerment and rights of women and girls globally, UN Women's main roles are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality, as well as promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Research:

Begin your research in time:

As our committee can only function if every delegate is acquainted with the initial situation, you need to dive into the topic and understand all of its facets properly. Take your time and start early enough with your research. While doing so, you will need to:

Use a variety of sources

- Do not use only one single source. Diversification is important to find out useful and debatable points. Also, the more sources you use, the more you broaden your horizon on our topic. If your country has specific relations to other countries, which are also involved in this conflict, dive into their opinions too. Of course, not as deep as in your own country's opinion, but it is important to stay on top of everything.
- We hope this committee guide provides you with all important information. We are excited to meet you and wish you a successful preparation. If you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to email us: mollerleni@gmail.com, pia.niederhoff@olmun.org

In order to prepare for the conference you will need to find out about

- Your countries' current law and perspective on abortion, female genital mutilation, menstrual stigma, male and female contraception and the gender pay gap. This is our focus, but you are always welcomed to extend your research and give your committee new input.
- It is very fruitful for the debates to understand a lot of different countries' perspectives on how these problems are dealt with. We will find many ideas and approaches for solutions and turn national solutions to international ones.

And develop a comprehensible, realistic position of your country

- deadline for common positions?

Gender data gap

When investigating the following topics, you will be confronted with a common denominator: Many topics concerning female health lack a great amount of knowledge, data and funding. This phenomenon is known as the Gender Data Gap, which describes that the vast majority of information is collected on men, who are considered to be the norm. This refers to nearly all areas, such as economic data, urban planning data and research projects, but not limited to medical research and statistics. The UN WOMEN committee considers tackling this problem to be one of the most important aspects concerning gender equality in the sustainable development goals.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation, also known under names such as “Circumcision”, “Infibulation”, “Cutting” and many others, is a practice performed worldwide, during which the female genitals are cut off in varying degrees.

Female Genital Mutilation, FGM for short, is typically performed on girls between the ages of a week and around 15 years (a small number of women are mutilated beyond this age).

According to estimations there are about 200 million girls and women worldwide that are already mutilated and 3 Million girls at risk anew every year.

The World Health Organisation differentiates between 4 different types of Mutilation. FGM is often practised by older women or midwives, who use often non-disinfected razor blades or any handy sharp objects.

FGM has no medical purpose whatsoever and is entirely harmful for the victim! Short term consequences are, among others, extensive bleeding, excruciating pain and infections, which can lead to death. Long term consequences are of physical and psychological nature, such as chronic pain, recurring infections, infertility and more complications during pregnancy, pain during sex and reduced (or no) sexual desire, the inability to orgasm and post traumatic stress disorder.

FGM has existed for over 5000 years and is spread across the globe. Therefore, there is no monocausal explanation for this practise. There are, however, common patterns to be found. FGM is a way of monitoring a girl's sexuality and virginity. Economically speaking, a guaranteed virginity may entail benefits. FGM is also tied to ideas about femininity, chastity, beauty and cleanliness. There is nothing in the Q'uran prescribing FGM, nevertheless, FGM is religiously and spritually motivated in some regions of the world. All of these causes are combined with the social pressure of following norms.

There are at least 92 countries where FGM is being practiced. It is most prevalent on the African continent. In Sudan, Mali, Somalia and Egypt around 80%-98% of women have been or are being subjected to it. There are also some countries in the middle east and Asia that have a significant percentage of mutilated women. Even in countries where FGM is not a significant part of the dominant/ majority “national culture”, like the U.S. or European countries, FGM is still being performed in some diaspora communities. Therefore, working against FGM is relevant for every country.

There are 28 African countries with anti FGM-laws.

By 2013 FGM was criminalized by all the member states of the EU. In the US, FGM is only federally regulated (as opposed to regulated by the state) since January 2021. Canada, Australia and New Zealand all have anti-FGM legislation.

In Asia and Latin America there are no specific laws or legal provisions against FGM. In the Middle East only Iraq and Oman have anti-FGM laws.

Of course, just because there is law against FGM in a country, that does not mean that it is not taking place!

Helpful Links

[The girl who said no to FGM - YouTube](#) , [Born a girl in the wrong place | Khadija Gbla | TEDxCanberra - YouTube](#) [Female Genital Mutation Survivors In The U.S. Are Fighting Back - YouTube](#), [WHO | Female genital mutilation](#), [World FGM Map – National FGM Centre](#), [TERRE DES FEMMES - Menschenrechte für die Frau e.V. - FGM in Europa \(frauenrechte.de\)](#), [End FGM - Equality Now](#) , FGM bei 15-50 Jährigen: [Data Warehouse - UNICEF DATA](#), FGM bei 0-14 Jährigen: [Data Warehouse - UNICEF DATA](#)

Contraception

Birth control for men might be one of the most important steps towards female self-determination as this responsibility is not only shifted to the women's side. Women do not only manage all instances of contraceptive use but are also suffering the uncomfortable and also dangerous side effects. For example, the vein thrombosis risk is up to six times higher for women who take the pill.

The pill was permitted in the 1960s without a lot of safety criteria, today all these risks and side effects are treated more seriously, which makes research and clinical studies concerning contraception for people with a penis a lot more complex and expensive. The problem is that pharma industries don't push the research, because of low demands and misprofit. A single injection with Vasalgel that lasts for a decade doesn't seem as profitable as selling pills in masses.

Unfortunately, society still sees the male procreative capacity as a symbol for power and potency. A change in our system and in society that leaves toxic masculinity and obsolete stereotypes behind depends on more awareness and education on male contraception and vice versa. There have already been very promising tests on the RISUG (Reversible inhibition of sperm under guidance) method, hormonal injections and oral birth control pills. This was mostly pushed by non-profit organizations. Therefore we need to spread awareness of the disproportionate burden that women take and conduct more international research to revolutionize contraception with a low pearl-index, risks and side effects. The prerequisite for this is funding. We will have to discuss the origin of this funding.

Abortions

In 2019 Alabama banned all abortions and abortions-funding except when the mother is at a serious health risk in the Alabama Life Protection Act Protection Act. More US-States like Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, Mississippi and Louisiana prohibit abortion after about six weeks. Most people don't even realize that they're pregnant by that time.

Abortion in Poland is only allowed when the pregnancy resulted in a criminal act or when the pregnancy would lead to serious health issues. This new law is effective since January 27, 2021 and led to a lot of protests in the country.

The problem is that the outlaw of abortions does not stop or reduce them; Abortions just get more dangerous, because they're practiced in new and unsafe ways. As Amnesty International says: These new laws are the recipes for the disaster of women's health. Five million women are hospitalized and about 47 000 women die each year due to abortion related complications. Obviously different anti-abortion laws are never limited to the country they were published in, as women often undertake the procedure in other countries.

Talking about this topic, the two different sides of the debate can be called Pro-Life and Pro-Choice. Pro-Life-activists want to ban abortions entirely and Pro-Choicers want abortions to be legalized as they see it as an act of (sexual) self-determination.

Menstruation

All over the world menstruation is heavily stigmatised and a topic of taboo. This negatively impacts women in varying degrees across the globe and limits their self-determination.

In some countries worldwide, it is quite obvious that menstruation and a lack of knowledge and menstrual hygiene products become a clear disadvantage. In Kenya, a girl will miss up to four days a month of school due to her period. In certain areas of several countries like Nepal or Venezuela, girls and women are banned into huts for the duration of their period, where they might be subject to wild animals or extreme weather conditions. In some countries, menstruating women and girls are not allowed to enter certain rooms, touch food or certain animals or use the same water facilities. A lack of menstrual products can also lead to unhygienic substitutes that can cause infections.

Even if the discrimination is not as blatant, a general taboo around the topic of menstruation and feminine health in general can have negative consequences. Sabrina Rubli, cofounder of Femme International states: "It's been overlooked for a long time, it's not always been included in foreign aid interventions, humanitarian interventions, international development programs because people don't think about it and because women don't talk about it, because it's, because you don't talk about your period in public."

Even in countries where menstruating women go about their usual day when they menstruate, the period can have limiting and harmful effects. There are many jokes regarding menstruating women and menstrual blood is often viewed as something disgusting, much more disgusting than blood from other areas of the body.

For many years, and still now, menstruating is and was a source of shame, causing many women to conceal the fact that they are menstruating, hiding menstrual products in their bags or fists when going to the bathroom or being ashamed to ask for menstrual products in the presence of men. Even pad commercials do not show blood or red substitute substances to prove pad absorbency, but ominous blue liquid.

Apart from being a psychological burden, menstruating is also a financial burden: In many countries there are still high taxes on menstrual products. In Germany, Panty liners are classified as non-essential products and therefore taxed with 19%. The same applied for tampons and pads: Until January 1st, 2020, tampons and pads were taxed with 19%, the same amount truffles and oil paintings are taxed with. They are now taxed with 7%.

By normalising period pain, certain harmful illnesses, like endometriosis, are often not found or diagnosed. Here, we can refer to the Gender Data Gap.

Since there are different problems in different countries, different measures need to be taken. Destigmatising periods is complicated: Do you unconditionally celebrate women and their

bodies? Do we need to celebrate menstruation as something special, magical and possibly even spiritual? Or does this just once again limit women to their bodies? Should we rather treat the period as something completely normal? Or is the extreme celebration, and “exaggeration” maybe a necessary step towards normalisation?

There are many NGOs, organizations and individuals, working on educating on the topic and distributing menstrual products. One of them we would like to introduce to you in the interview below.

Here's a little fun and controversial article for you:

<http://ww3.haverford.edu/psychology/ddavis/p109g/steinem.menstruate.html>

Helpful Links

[Why Breaking The Taboo Surrounding Menstruation Is So Important - YouTube](#), [The menstruation taboo | Diana Fabianova | TEDxBratislava - YouTube](#), [Menstruation Taboo in Nepal - YouTube](#), [CHAUPADI: Banished for Bleeding \(Full Movie\) - YouTube](#), [Testimonials – Radha Paudel Foundation](#), [Femme International – Empowering young women and girls, every day of the month](#), [The Challenge – Femme International](#), <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/06/22/style/menstruation-survey-finds-it-s-still-uneasy-subject.html>


Attachment



Does this make you uncomfortable?

Does this picture make you uncomfortable? It got taken down by instagram due to community guidelines.

rupikaur_ 4.2 Mio. Abonnenten [Profil ansehen](#)



[Mehr auf Instagram ansehen](#)

♥ 💬 ↗ 📌

Gefällt 111,340 Mal
rupikaur_

thank you @instagram for providing me with the exact response my work was created to critique. you deleted a photo of a woman who is fully covered and menstruating stating that it goes against community guidelines when your guidelines outline that it is nothing but acceptable, the girl is fully clothed, the photo is mine. it is not attacking a certain group, nor is it spam, and because it does not break those guidelines i will repost it again. i will not apologize for not feeding the ego and pride of misogynist society that will have my body in an underwear but not be okay with a small leak. when your pages are filled with countless photos/accounts where women (so many who are underage) are objectified, pornified, and treated less than human. thank you.

this image is a part of my photoseries project for my visual rhetoric course. you can view the full series at rupikaur.com the photos were shot by myself and @prabhkaur1

And what about these?

soupyeahsoup

The roof of my mouth after
shoving another salt and vinegar
chip in it

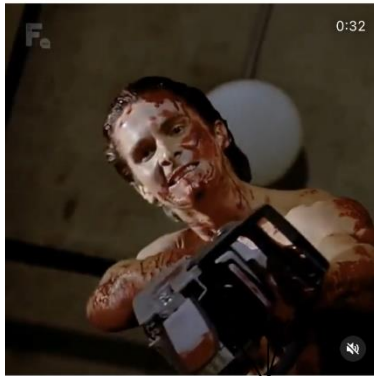


4.919 likes

soupyeahsoup 🤔

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1.521 views

movieenthu Movie Psychopaths 🗡️

Video credit @thefilmzone... more



All of these pictures depict blood. Why do you think you feel differently about these pictures?