

Committee guide: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

by Anna Siebels and Christopher Hoyer

Table of Contents:

- Personal introduction: 1
- A: General introduction: 2
- B: The Conference: 2
 - I: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: 2
 - II: Research for the Conference: 3
 - 1): How to research: 3
 - 2): Where to start: 4
 - 3): What to prepare: 4
 - III: Information about the subject at hand: 4
 - 1): Gender Data Gap: 4
 - 2): Developing Countries: 4
 - 3): Gender Data Gap: 5
 - 4): Women’s challenges in developing countries: 5
- C: Addendum: 6

Personal introduction:

Hey,

my name is Anna, and I would like to welcome you to this 21st international session of UN Women at OLMUN. I'm 19 years old and I have just now finished my 13th year of school here in Oldenburg and now I'm preparing for my final exams. Besides all the studying I like to watch movies and series and try to read a book from time to time. Apart from that I like to listen to music a lot.

In 2018, I participated in my first OLMUN as a Staff and now this year I will be Chair for the first time. Therefore, I am looking forward even more to the time with you and my co-Chair Christopher and will try to make the time as pleasant as possible, especially for those who have not yet gained so much experience at OLMUN.

Esteemed delegates,

My name is Christopher Hoyer, currently 21 years old, and I am delighted to be acting as one of your chairs during this year’s sitting of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). I study law, with special emphasis on international criminal- and tax law, in my sixth semester at the University of Passau in Bavaria. In my free time I enjoy cooking, reading, playing several instruments, writing and, if time permits it, a nice drink with my friends. I participated in OLMUN multiple times as a delegate in the past and had the opportunity to chair a smaller conference before. But being able to chair the UN Women

committee with my dear colleague Anna this year, is simply amazing. I am looking forward to meeting you all in person for our conference and wish you all the best for your research. Have fun!

Yours very truly,

Christopher Hoyer

A: General introduction:

„Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.“¹ So it is written on the United Nations official website, affirming the initial reasoning behind the 5th SDG (Sustainable Development Goal), gender equality. There have been great efforts made towards reaching true gender equality over the past decades, however, the simple truth remains, that reaching the goal of achieving gender equality is still a long way away.² To make reaching this goal significantly easier and sustainable, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was created.

B: The Conference:

I: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women:

UN-Women was created in 2010 to address the problem of ever growing gender equality issues in the world. As such, it united the previously existing United Nation’s entities into one overarching organisation under the supervision of the United Nations and its member states. Its creation aimed at distributing resources and personnel to where they are needed, to ultimately achieve a faster and more coordinated response to persisting gender equality issues.³ In 2015 UN-Women was bestowed with new and important tasks through the implementation of the SDGs through the General Assembly of the UN. Especially goals No. 5 and 10, being “Gender Equality” and “Reducing Inequality” respectively, fall under the responsibility of UN-Women. To achieve them, UN Women has set itself the following subgoals:

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>, accessed the 3rd of April 2022, 6:58pm.

² Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UNW/2021/2, p.2.

³ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>, accessed the 3rd of April 2022, 7:29pm.

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

5.C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels⁴

Said goals are part of the "Agenda 2030", meaning, they are to be achieved by 2030.⁵

II: Research for the Conference:

Your roll as a delegate at OLMUN consists mainly of recognizing problems, debating solutions and finally drafting up resolutions. Thus, it is not surprising, that you should be prepared, when entering the conference, as only through adequate preparation can you sufficiently fulfil your roll.

This means, you must bring a draft resolution to the table, which you have to send to us before the conference begins.

As such, you should (and are expected to) research the topic at hand. Do not be frightened however, as we have all started somewhere and every beginning is difficult. In the following paragraphs, we will have some valuable advice for your research, we hope helps you, in drafting your resolutions.

1): How to research:

"When two people argue, the third one rejoices," so goes a common proverb in German, which not only describes the futility of human conflict but also, in extent, the idea of scientific research perfectly. If you consider multiple sources in your research, the picture you are given, becomes ever clearer and you get given a great array of colours, with which to paint another great picture for the world.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>, accessed the 3rd of April 2022, 7:30pm.

⁵ A/RES/70/1

What does that mean? Easy! Have an open mind and look at multiple sources during your work. You can only gain something from it. If you do so, drafting a resolution will be a lot easier for you and you avoid being confronted with problems, you are not familiar with.

Begin your research in time! This way you ensure, that you can conduct your research stress free and, most importantly, thoroughly.

2): Where to start:

The topic of this year's committee session of UN-Women is "Ensuring women's rights in developing countries." As you might already know, your country probably possesses legislation to ensure, that men and women are treated equally. It would be wise, to start your research by looking at your countries legislation and measures, which serve to ensure the equal treatment of men and women. From there, you might want to start researching, what your countries position was during past UN sessions on the topic and if they maybe submitted a resolution regarding the topic at hand.

3): What to prepare:

Prepare your countries position on the question at hand. Since you are a delegate of your country, you will want to represent its position. You, however, do not have to stick fully to this position, as even countries may be able to compromise with other countries. Make sure you know, which lines you can cross, and which ones are indisputable for you.

You might want to do a little research about the other countries in your committee too, since by doing this, you might find out, with which countries you could submit a resolution together.

III: Information about the subject at hand:

1): Gender Data Gap:

Our dear colleagues, who chaired this committee before us put it quite well, when they write: "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,[...]. The UN WOMEN committee considers tackling this problem to be one of the most important aspects concerning gender equality in the sustainable development goals."⁶ As such researching any of the following topics, you might find it to be a little more difficult than with any other topic. Do not worry, we are aware of the problem. You will find a way.

2): Developing Countries:

Developing countries as those countries, in which the general standard of living, income, industrial and economic development remains below the world average. According to the IMF there are currently 152 developing countries, together with around 6.6 bn inhabitants, in the world, making up around 85.22% of the worlds current population.⁷ These countries are mainly concentrated in or around the southern hemisphere, in turn making up all of Africa, Central- or South America and most of Asia. To determine, what a developing country actually is, the UN uses a tool called the "Human Development Index". This index ranges from a score of 0.0,

⁶ Möller/Niederhoff, in: UN-Women Committee Guide 2021, OLMUN e.V., Oldenburg 2021.

⁷ <https://www.worlddata.info/developing-countries.php>, accessed the 3rd of April 2022, 8:09pm.

being the lowest, to a total score of 1.0, being the highest achievable. Any country, which does not score at least a 0.8 on the Human Development Index is considered a “developing” country. Any country, which scores higher than 0.8 on the Human Development Index is considered a “developed” country. One source writes, quite fittingly: “Many developing countries encounter similar challenges, including income inequality and/or widespread poverty, low education and literacy levels, inadequate infrastructure, and government corruption. Their energy production can be inadequate and they may experience higher rates of violence against women. They may even struggle with health risks such as decreased access to safe water and sanitation, high levels of pollution, and an increased percentage of people with infectious diseases. The United Nations and many other aid organizations have established programs to help developing countries overcome these and other social, political, economic, and environmental challenges they face.”⁸

3): Gender Data Gap:

Our dear colleagues, who chaired this committee before us put it quite well, when they write: “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,[...]. The UN WOMEN committee considers tackling this problem to be one of the most important aspects concerning gender equality in the sustainable development goals.”⁹ As such researching any of the following topics, you might find it to be a little more difficult than with any other topic. Do not worry, we are aware of the problem. You will find a way.

4): Women’s challenges in developing countries:

While, during the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, the condition of women’s rights has improved drastically, it has not yet reached an extensive and uniform level around the world.¹⁰ Women did face, and still go on to face, discrimination in multiple areas of everyday life. This is especially prevalent in developing countries, where women’s rights are not as developed as they are in developed countries. The aforementioned areas include but are not limited to:

Property rights: Women residing in developing countries often face discrimination pertaining to the possession of property, the inheritance of property and the trade of property, oftentimes through discriminating legislation. This has the potential to escalate into economic problems, since women are missing the means of using the land they own, to run a business or by renting it out. In agricultural communities, women could face problems with conducting agriculture, because they lack access to clean water.¹¹

Dowry related subjugation: While the dowry system is largely in disuse in developed countries, it remains in effect in many developing countries, leading to a “sale” of women and girls for

⁸ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/developing-countries>, accessed the 3rd of April 2022, 8:12pm.

⁹ *Möller/Niederhoff*, in: UN-Women Committee Guide 2021, OLMUN e.V., Oldenburg 2021.

¹⁰ *Cohen, Michelle Fram*, The Condition of Women in Developing Countries, in: The Independent Review, Fall 2006 Vol.11 No.2 (Fall 2006), p261.

¹¹ See above, p.262

the sole purpose to obtain their dowry, thus depriving of the affected women of their basic human right to a self-determined life.¹²

Honour-killings: In some developing countries with an established honour system, especially those belonging to the Islamic cultural circle, women and girls might be subjected to honour-killings, if they are perceived to have dishonoured their families.¹³

Lack of adequate legal protection: All of the issues, listed above, pertain to a lack of adequate legal protection, normally provided through a country's constitution and simple procedural law. However, in many developing countries, women may face discrimination through disbelief towards, or even outright refusal of, claims made in civil- as well as, criminal litigation. Thus, even if the country's legislation in question should provide adequate protection of a person's legal assets and interests, women in developing countries might have no way to exercise said rights.

C: Addendum:

Here, we would like to provide you with some helpful links, which you might, along the ones provided in the annotations, use to conduct your research:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/dime/brief/dime-gender-program>

<https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/womens-rights-and-development>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en>

<https://www.frauenrechte.de/unsere-arbeit/themen/gewalt-im-namen-der-ehre>

<https://www.frauenrechte.de/index.php>

If you have any questions at all, do not hesitate to contact us at:

anna.siebels@olmun.org and christopher.hoyer@olmun.org

We hope you have fun and wish you all the best!

Yours,

Anna Siebels and Christopher Hoyer

¹² See above, p.263.

¹³ See above, p.264.

