

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
PRESIDENT'S LETTER

St. Bonaventure University Model United Nations
SBU High School Conference
March 2016

Welcome delegates to SBU's High School Conference '16! My name is Rachel Mercredi and I will serve as the president of the Commission on the Status of Women. I have participated in Model UN conferences for three years now and in every conference I learned something new from my delegates and chairs. My purpose as the chair is to both evaluate your performance as well as moderate debate. Questions about policy, history, or factual information will not be answered; however, questions regarding procedure will be welcome. I am rather a laid-back and easygoing chair who strives to make this an enjoyable and enlightening experience. I do, however, expect rigorous, informed debates and meaningful participation. I have no doubt that you will accomplish great things during the conference. To these ends, the following will be expected:

Knowledge of procedure is critical for committee to run smoothly. You are expected to know the basic SBUMUN Rules of Procedure and main motions pertaining to how committees operate

Knowledge of policy makes the committee more enjoyable for everyone. Look into the past and present news and history of your country, and look at how your country is reacting to events on the world stage.

Diplomacy and courtesy are not only helpful, but also necessary and indispensable. Treat other delegates with courtesy and respect, and it will be noticed.

Our committee has an open agenda, and the topics below are useful suggestions from some relevant issues in today's society. Feel free to research other topics that your country feels would be important and within the Human Rights Council's realm of responsibility.

THE TOPICS

Prevention of Crime and Brutality against Women and Girls

The UN System continues to give particular attention to the issue of violence against women. The 1993 General Assembly *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* contained "a clear and comprehensive definition of violence against women [and] a clear statement of the rights to be applied to ensure the elimination of violence against women in all its forms." It represented "a commitment by States in respect of their responsibilities, and a commitment by the international community at large to the elimination of violence against women". Violence against women is still rampant, even in more advanced countries like the U.S. and Western Europe. In third world countries, the issue is even much worse, with honor killings, forced marriages, prohibitions against employment, etc....The implications of violence against

women are very grave and affect how families are raised, how future generations treat women, etc...This is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed.

Questions:

What is your country's law on violence against women?

How affective are these laws in your country?

What is your country doing to improve these laws?

How can NGO's help abused women and girls?

Do you think the UN needs to do more to deal with this question?

Do you have specific proposals?

Increasing Female Empowerment, Involvement and Leadership

Women empowerment and economic development are closely related. Development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; empowering women will definitely improve development. Gender inequality and female empowerment are core development objectives, fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes. No society can develop successfully without providing equitable opportunities, resources, and life prospects for male and females so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to their families and communities. This issue is still relevant and urgent. Just look at wage inequalities between men and women in advanced countries such as the U.S. and think of how the situation is in less developed countries! Also, consider the weak representation of women in political office in different countries, including the U.S.! Think of what societies and states need to do to empower women.

Questions:

What is the importance of female empowerment in your country?

How are women treated in your country?

Does your country have any female empowerment programs?

Is there a role for the UN in dealing with this question?

Advancing Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

Women continue to be under-represented in the STEM professions. Recruiting, retaining and advancing women has well documented benefits including improved financial performance and greater innovation. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the percent of women employed in the STEM professions in 2014: Technology 22%, Engineering 12%, and Math 25%.

If this is the case in the U.S. how could it be in less developed countries? This is a very urgent question—especially nowadays when technology (internet, social media) has become an integral part of our daily lives. Depriving women of equal opportunities in the STEM professions must have a very negative impact on societies and on economic and social development.

Questions:

What is the literacy rate for women in your country?

How are programs helping increase the involvement of women in the field of science?

Does your country have any programs to encourage female participation in STEM?

Do you think the UN has any role to play in this issue? If so, what kind of role and how?

Do you have any specific proposals?