# NMUN • NY

# COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
## BACKGROUND GUIDE 2013

Written By: Rubai Aurora, Jordan Drevdahl,
Camille Le Baron, Dinah Douglas

# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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17 - 21 March - Conference A
24 - 28 March - Conference B

## POSITION PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

### *Two copies of each position paper should be sent via e-mail by 1 MARCH 2013*

### 1. TO COMMITTEE STAFF

A file of the position paper (.doc or .pdf) for each assigned committee should be sent to the committee e-mail address listed here. Mail papers by 1 March to the e-mail address listed for your particular venue. Delegates should carbon copy (cc:) themselves as confirmation of receipt. Please use the committee name, your assignment, Conference A or B, and delegation/school name in both the e-mail subject line and in the filename (example: GA1st_Cuba_ConfA_MarsCollege).

### 2. TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

• Each delegation should send one set of all position papers for each assignment to the e-mail designated for their venue: positionpapers.nya@nmun.org or positionpapers.nyb@nmun.org. This set (held by each Director-General) will serve as a back-up copy in case individual committee directors cannot open attachments.
*Note*: This e-mail should only be used as a repository for position papers.

• The head delegate or faculty member sending this message should cc: him/herself as confirmation of receipt. (Free programs like Adobe Acrobat or WinZip may need to be used to compress files if they are not plain text.)

• Because of the potential volume of e-mail, only one e-mail from the Head Delegate or Faculty Advisor containing all attached position papers will be accepted.

Please use the committee name, your assignment, Conference A or B, and delegation/school name in both the e-mail subject line and in the filename (example: GA1st_Cuba_Conf A_Mars College).

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| General Assembly Fourth Committee | ga4.nya@nmun.org |
| Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations | c34.nya@nmun.org |
| ECOSOC Plenary | ecosoc.nya@nmun.org |
| Commission on the Status of Women | csw.nya@nmun.org |
| Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice | ccpcj.nya@nmun.org |
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| Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia | escwa.nya@nmun.org |
| United Nations Children's Fund | unicef.nya@nmun.org |
| United Nations Development Programme | undp.nya@nmun.org |
| United Nations Settlements Programme | unhabitat.nya@nmun.org |
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| United Nations Population Fund | unfpa.nya@nmun.org |
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### OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Entire Set of Delegation Position Papers | positionpapers.nya@nmun.org |
| (send only to e-mail for your assigned venue) | positionpapers.nyb@nmun.org |
| Secretary-General, Conference A | secgen.nya@nmun.org |
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# THE 2013 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

## SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION

17–21 March (Conference A) & 24–28 March (Conference B)    •    http://www.nmun.org

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2012 National Model United Nations New York Conference! As the volunteer staff for the Commission on the Status of Women, we welcome you. Our aim is to make this year's conference an educational and rewarding experience. The Directors for this year's Commission are Rubai Aurora (Conference A) and Jordan Drevdahl (Conference B). Camille Le Baron (Conference A) and Dinah Douglas (Conference B) will be serving as your Assistant Directors. Rubai graduated from The University of Washington-Seattle with a degree in Political Science, and is currently working on women's empowerment in sustainable development with Development Alternatives in New Delhi, India. Jordan is a graduate student in Educational Theory at the University of California, Riverside. Her areas of study include cooperative learning techniques and educational leadership. Camille is currently in her third year of a double Master's degree with Science Po Lille, France, and the University of Kent, England. Her studies are focused on Politics and International Relations, with an emphasis on foreign policy analysis and economics. Dinah graduated with a BA in Political Science from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in 2011. She is in her second year of a Master's program in Political Communication at American University in Washington, D.C.

This year's topics under discussion for the Commission on the Status of Women are:

1.  Economic, Social and Political Empowerment of Women in the Context of Political Transition
2.  Fostering a Gender-Sensitive Perspective in Sustainable Development
3.  Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality through Empowerment of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women is the core body for addressing matters related to the progress of women's empowerment and gender equality in the international system. As such, we hope the spirit of the Committee is clearly represented in your position papers and continues into your working papers and any adopted resolutions at the Conference.

This background guide will give you an overview of the topics at hand and the work of the Committee; however, it should only serve as an introduction to your research and preparation for the Conference, not your sole source of information. The references listed for each topic provide you with a good starting point for research, but we highly encourage you to further your knowledge, specifically on the position of the country you are representing. We request that each delegation submit a position paper that reflects your research on the topics. Please take note of the NMUN policies on the website and in the delegate preparation guide regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct/dress code/sexual harassment, awards philosophy/evaluation method, etc.  Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory.

If you have any questions regarding preparation for the committee and the Conference itself, please feel free to contact any of the substantive staff of the Commission on the Status of Women or the Under-Secretaries-General for the Economic and Social Council Department, Yvonne Jeffery (Conference A) and Harald Eisenhauer (Conference B). We wish you all the best in your preparation for the Conference and look forward to seeing you in March!

*Conference A*
Rubai Aurora
Director

Camille Le Baron
Assistant Director

*Conference B*
Jordan Drevdahl
Director

Dinah Douglas
Assistant Director

## Message from the Directors-General Regarding Position Papers for the 2013 NMUN Conference

For NMUN-New York 2013, each delegation submits one position paper for each assigned committee. A delegate's role as a Member State, Observer State, Non-Governmental Organization, etc. should affect the way a position paper is written. To understand these differences, please refer to the Delegate Preparation Guide.

Position papers should review each delegation's policy regarding the topics of the committee. International and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions, and programs of action of relevance to the policy of your State should be identified and addressed. Making recommendations for action by your committee should also be considered. Position papers also serve as a blueprint for individual delegates to remember their country's position throughout the course of the Conference. NGO position papers should be constructed in the same fashion as position papers of countries. Each topic should be addressed briefly in a succinct policy statement representing the relevant views of your assigned NGO. You should also include recommendations for action to be taken by your committee. It will be judged using the same criteria as all country position papers, and is held to the same standard of timeliness.

Please be forewarned, delegates must turn in entirely original material. *The NMUN Conference will not tolerate the occurrence of plagiarism*. In this regard, the NMUN Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to remind delegates that although United Nations documentation is considered within the public domain, the Conference does not allow the verbatim re-creation of these documents. This plagiarism policy also extends to the written work of the Secretariat contained within the Committee Background Guides. Violation of this policy will be immediately reported and may result in dismissal from Conference participation. Delegates should report any incident of plagiarism to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Delegation's position papers may be given an award as recognition of outstanding pre-Conference preparation. In order to be considered for a Position Paper Award, however, delegations must have met the formal requirements listed below and be of high substantive standard, using adequate language and showing in-depth research. While we encourage innovative proposals, we would like to remind delegates to stay within the mandate of their respective committee and keep a neutral and respectful tone. Similarly to the minus point-policy implemented at the conference to discourage disruptive behavior, position papers that use offensive language may entail negative grading when being considered for awards. Please refer to the sample paper following this message for a visual example of what your work should look like at its completion. The following format specifications are **required** for all papers:

- All papers must be typed and formatted according to the example in the Background Guides
- Length must **not** exceed two single-sided pages (one double-sided paper, if printed)
- Font must be Times New Roman sized between 10 pt. and 12 pt.
- Margins must be set at one inch for the whole paper
- Country/NGO name, school name and committee name must be clearly labeled on the first page,
- National symbols (headers, flags, etc.) are deemed inappropriate for NMUN position papers
- Agenda topics must be clearly labeled in separate sections

To be considered timely for awards, please read and follow these directions:

1.   **A file of the position paper** (.doc or .pdf format <u>required</u>) **for each assigned committee** should be sent to the committee email address listed in the Background Guide. These e-mail addresses will be active after November 15, 2012. Delegates should carbon copy (cc:) themselves as confirmation of receipt.

2.   Each delegation should also send **one set of all position papers** to the e-mail designated for their venue, Conference A: positionpapers.nya@nmun.org or Conference B: positionpapers.nyb@nmun.org. This set will serve as a back-up copy in case individual committee directors cannot open attachments. These copies will also be made available in Home Government during the week of the NMUN Conference.

Each of the above listed tasks needs to be completed no later than **March 1, 2013 (GMT-5)**.

**Please use the committee name, your assignment, Conference A or B, and delegation/school name in both the e-mail subject line and in the filename (example: GA1st_Cuba_ConfA_Mars College).**

*A matrix of received papers will be posted online for delegations to check prior to the Conference. If you need to make other arrangements for submission, please contact Hannah Birkenkötter, Director-General (Conference A), or Nicholas Warino, Director-General (Conference B), at dirgen@nmun.org. There is an option for delegations to submit physical copies via regular mail if needed.*

Once the formal requirements outlined above are met, Conference staff use the following criteria to evaluate Position Papers:

- Overall quality of writing, proper style, grammar, etc.
- Citation of relevant resolutions/documents
- General consistency with bloc/geopolitical constraints
- Consistency with the constraints of the United Nations
- Analysis of issues, rather than reiteration of the Committee Background Guide
- Outline of (official) policy aims within the committee's mandate

Each delegation can submit a copy of their position paper to the permanent mission of the country being represented, along with an explanation of the Conference. Those delegations representing NGOs do not have to send their position paper to their NGO headquarters, although it is encouraged. This will assist them in preparation for the mission briefing in New York.

Finally, please consider that over 2,000 papers will be handled and read by the Secretariat for the Conference. Your patience and cooperation in strictly adhering to the above guidelines will make this process more efficient and it is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact the Conference staff, though as we do not operate out of a central office or location, your consideration for time zone differences is appreciated.

Sincerely,

| | |
|---|---|
| *Conference A* | *Conference B* |
| Hannah Birkenkötter | Nicholas Warino |
| Director-General | Director-General |
| hannah@nmun.org | nick@nmun.org |

*Position Paper for the General Assembly Plenary*

The issues before the General Assembly Plenary are: The Use of Economic Sanctions for Political and Economic Compulsion; Democracy and Human Rights in Post-Conflict Regions; as well as The Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. The Mexican Delegation first would like to convey its gratitude being elected and pride to serve as vice-president of the current General Assembly Plenary session.

**I. The Use of Economic Sanctions for Political and Economic Compulsion**

The principles of equal sovereignty of states and non-interference, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, have always been cornerstones of Mexican foreign policy. The legitimate right to interfere by the use of coercive measures, such as economic sanctions, is laid down in Article 41 of the UN-charter and reserves the right to the Security Council.

Concerning the violation of this principle by the application of unilateral measures outside the framework of the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador to the United Nations Enrique Berruga Filloy underlined in 2005 that the Mexico strongly rejects "the application of unilateral laws and measures of economic blockade against any State, as well as the implementation of coercive measures without the authorization enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations." That is the reason, why the United Mexican States supported – for the 14th consecutive time – Resolution (A/RES/60/12) of 2006 regarding the *Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba*.

In the 1990s, comprehensive economic sanctions found several applications with very mixed results, which made a critical reassessment indispensable. The United Mexican States fully supported and actively participated in the "Stockholm Process" that focused on increasing the effectiveness in the implementation of targeted sanctions. As sanctions and especially economic sanctions, pose a tool for action "between words and war" they must be regarded as a mean of last resort before war and fulfill highest requirements for their legitimate use. The United Mexican States and their partners of the "Group of Friends of the U.N. Reform" have already addressed and formulated recommendations for that take former criticism into account. Regarding the design of economic sanctions it is indispensable for the success to have the constant support by all member states and public opinion, which is to a large degree dependent on the humanitarian effects of economic sanctions. Sanctions must be tailor-made, designed to effectively target the government, while sparing to the largest degree possible the civil population. Sanction regimes must be constantly monitored and evaluated to enable the world-community to adjust their actions to the needs of the unforeseeably changing situation. Additionally, the United Mexican States propose to increase communication between the existing sanction committees and thus their effectiveness by convening regular meetings of the chairs of the sanction committees on questions of common interest.

**II. Democracy and Human Rights in Post-Conflict Regions**

As a founding member of the United Nations, Mexico is highly engaged in the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights all over the world, as laid down in the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)* in 1948. Especially since the democratic transition of Mexico in 2000 it is one of the most urgent topics to stand for Democratization and Human Rights, and Mexico implements this vision on many different fronts.

In the Convoking Group of the intergovernmental Community of Democracies (GC), the United Mexican States uphold an approach that fosters international cooperation to promote democratic values and institution-building at the national and international level. To emphasize the strong interrelation between human rights and the building of democracy and to fortify democratic developments are further challenges Mexico deals with in this committee. A key-factor for the sustainable development of a post-conflict-region is to hold free and fair election and thus creating a democratic system. Being aware of the need of post-conflict countries for support in the preparation of democratic elections, the United Mexican States contribute since 2001 to the work of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an intergovernmental organization operating at international, regional and national level in partnership with a range of institutions. Mexico's foreign policy regarding human rights is substantially

based on cooperation with international organizations. The Inter American Commission of Human Rights is one of the bodies, Mexico is participating, working on the promotion of Human Rights in the Americas. Furthermore, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is the regional judicial institution for the application and interpretation of the *American Convention of Human Rights*.

The objectives Mexico pursues are to improve human rights in the country through structural changes and to fortify the legal and institutional frame for the protection of human rights on the international level. Underlining the connection between democracy, development and Human Rights, stresses the importance of cooperation with and the role of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and the reform of the Human Rights Commission to a Human rights Council.

Having in mind the diversity of challenges in enforcing democracy and Human Rights, Mexico considers regional and national approaches vital for their endorsement, as Mexico exemplifies with its *National Program for Human Rights* or the *Plan Puebla Panama*. On the global level, Mexico is encouraged in working on a greater coordination and interoperability among the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as the development of common strategies and operational policies and the sharing of best practices in civilian crisis management should be encouraged, including clear frameworks for joint operations, when applicable.

### III. The Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

The United Mexican States welcome the leadership role the African Union has taken regarding the security problems of the continent. Our delegation is furthermore convinced that The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) can become the foundation for Africa's economic, social and democratic development as the basis for sustainable peace. Therefore it deserves the full support of the international community.

The development of the United Mexican States in the last two decades is characterized by the transition to a full democracy, the national and regional promotion of human rights and sustainable, economic growth. Mexico's development is characterized by free trade and its regional integration in the North American Free Trade Agreement. Having in mind that sustainable development is based not only on economic, but as well on social and environmental development, President Vicente Fox has made sustainable development a guiding principle in the Mexican Development Plan that includes sustainability targets for all major policy areas.

The United Nations Security Council has established not less than seven peace-keeping missions on the African continent, underlining the need for full support by the international community. In post-conflict situations, we regard national reconciliation as a precondition for a peaceful development, which is the reason why Mexico supported such committees, i.e. in the case of Sierra Leone. The United Mexican States are convinced that an other to enhance durable peace in Africa is the institutional reform of the United Nations. We therefore want to reaffirm our full support to both the establishment of the peace-building commission and the Human Rights Council. Both topics are highly interrelated and, having in mind that the breach of peace is most often linked with severest human rights' abuses, thus need to be seen as two sides of one problem and be approached in this understanding.

As most conflicts have their roots in conflicts about economic resources and development chances, human development and the eradication of poverty must be at the heart of a successful, preventive approach. Lifting people out of poverty must be seen as a precondition not only for peace, but for social development and environmental sustainability.

The United Mexican States want to express their esteem for the decision taken by the G-8 countries for a complete debt-relief for many African Highly-Indebted-Poor-Countries. Nevertheless, many commitments made by the international community that are crucial for Africa's sustainable development are unfulfilled. The developed countries agreed in the *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development* (A/CONF.198/11) to increase their Official Development Aid (ODA) "towards the target of 0,7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0,15 to 0,20 per cent of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries". Furthermore, the United Mexican States are disappointed by the result of the Hong Kong Ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization, which once more failed to meet the needs of those, to whom the round was devoted: developing countries and especially African countries, who today, more than ever, are cut off from global trade and prosperity by protectionism.

# Committee History

## *Introduction*

Since 1946, when the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was formally established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it has devoted its attention to promoting rights and equality for women and girls within the United Nations (UN) and throughout the world.[1] Prior to June 1946, the UN housed the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women as a part of the Commission on Human Rights.[2] Thanks to the work of feminists who were amongst the first delegates to the UN in 1945, this Sub-Commission was established to address concerns of equality for men and women.[3] These early UN feminists also worked to include gender equality in the *UN Charter*.[4] It appears in the Preamble, stating "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."[5] The following year, ECOSOC *Resolution 11 (II)* granted the CSW its status as a full commission directly reporting to ECOSOC.[6] Gender equality was incorporated into the UN Charter in 1945, and the establishment of the CSW (which was composed primarily of women) meant that such issues had a clear place for discussion and action.[7] Originally, the CSW was composed of 15 members but was expanded several times, most recently through ECOSOC *Resolution 1989/45*, which increased membership to 45 States.[8] Each Member State sends one representative early each year for a 10-day meeting at UN headquarters in New York City.[9] Member States are elected for four year terms from regional groups: 13 from Africa, 9 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 11 from Asia, 4 from the Eastern European region, and 8 from Western Europe and other States.[10] Priority themes are set for the annual meeting of the CSW and the goal of the Commission is to compile a report of agreed upon conclusions.[11] These conclusions are presented to ECOSOC for consideration and adoption.[12] They are evaluations of progress on CSW mandate-related issues and address faults in implementation of the CSW's policies or recommendations.[13]

## *Mandate*

The original mandate of the Commission, set forth in 1946 in ECOSOC *Resolution 11 (II) (1946)*, called upon the CSW to focus on the rights and issues of women in political, economic, educational, and other civil systems.[14] This earliest version of the CSW mandate also directed the Commission to bring issues of women's rights requiring immediate attention to ECOSOC.[15] Since then, the mandate of the CSW has been expanded to accommodate the changing nature of women's issues. Upon adoption of ECOSOC *Resolution 1987/22*, the CSW mandate was modified to include "the functions of promoting the objectives of equality, development and peace, monitoring the implementation of measures for the advancement of women, and reviewing and appraising progress made at the national, subregional, regional and global levels."[16] In 1996, following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, the mandate was updated to reflect the outcomes of this conference.[17] The General Assembly (GA) requested the CSW through *Resolution 50/203 (1995)* to play a major role in monitoring the implementation of the

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[1] United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006.
[2] United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006.
[3] De Haan, *A Brief Survey of Women's Rights from 1945 to 2009*, 2009, p. 56.
[4] De Haan, *A Brief Survey of Women's Rights from 1945 to 2009*, 2009, p. 56.
[5] United Nations Department of Public Information, *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*, 2008.
[6] United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Resolution 11(II) (1946)*, 1946, p. 525.
[7] Skard, *Gender in the Malestream – Acceptance of Women and Gender Equality in Different United Nations Organizations*, 2009, pp. 157-159.
[8] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.
[9] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.
[10] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.
[11] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Agreed Conclusions of the CSW on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (1996-2011)*, 2011.
[12] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.
[13] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.
[14] United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Resolution 11(II) (1946)*, 1946, p. 525.
[15] United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Resolution 11(II) (1946)*, 1946, p. 525.
[16] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.
[17] United Nations *Commission on the Status of Women, Overview*, 2012.

*Beijing Platform for Action*, which had been adopted as a comprehensive framework for action on women's issues at the Fourth World Conference.[18] The *Platform* put forth a specific agenda to address precise measurements of women's empowerment and ability to abide as equal participants in global civil society, and the CSW was to help implement these commitments.[19] ECOSOC further tasked the CSW with developing regular reviews of the *Platform* as well as a role for itself to mainstream a gender perspective in the UN system.[20] Then *Resolution E/1996/6* further elaborated how the CSW should follow-up on the action taken at the Beijing Conference of the previous year; this resolution called upon the CSW to: (1) advise and assist ECOSOC with the evaluation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, (2) keep up with its duty to mainstream a gender perspective in UN activity, (3) identify and make recommendations on how to approach issues that threaten progress toward gender equality, (4) direct the public eye toward and conjure support for the implementation of the *Platform for Action*.[21]

### UN Women

At the 104th General Assembly in July 2010, *A/RES/64/289* established the entity known as UN Women.[22] This entity, formally named UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, incorporated previously separate parts of the UN system into one body that supports the formulation and implementation of the work and output of the CSW.[23] UN Women brought together the duties and directives of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.[24] The founding resolution states, "the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women shall constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the normative support functions and shall provide normative policy guidance to the Entity."[25] The GA, ECOSOC, and the Executive Board of UN Women, determined by the guidelines in *A/RES/64/289*, are to provide the structure for "operational policy guidance to the Entity."[26] UN Women supports the policy-making work of the CSW as well as aiding Member States when it comes to realizing the policies and standards put on paper by the Commission.[27] Finally, UN Women is responsible for helping the UN system be mindful of the mission to achieve gender equality in its work.[28]

### Prevailing Issues

The mandate of the CSW has expanded to include a range of issues pertaining to the rights and opportunities of women, particularly responding to holes in the international record on women's issues.[29] The year 1975 was designated by the UN as International Women's Year (IWY), which helped transform the landscape of women's issues within the UN.[30] This year was also the occasion for the First World Conference of the IWY in Mexico, which led to the designation of 1976 to 1985 as the UN Decade of Women, which heightened awareness of global women's issues that brought on subsequent international conferences on women.[31] One of these prominent women's conferences, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, continues to influence the CSW's work today.[32] The *Beijing Platform for Action*, and by extension the CSW, concerns itself with prescribing world governments to address persisting violence against women and girls, the effects of conflict on women, health care and poverty-

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[18] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 50/203*, 1996.

[19] Charlesworth, *Not Waving But Drowning: Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights in the United Nations*, 2005.

[20] Charlesworth, *Not Waving But Drowning: Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights in the United Nations*, 2005.

[21] United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Resolution 1987/22*, 1987.

[22] UN Women, *Governance*, 2011.

[23] UN Women, *About UN Women*, 2011.

[24] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 64/289*, 2010.

[25] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 64/289*, 2010.

[26] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 64/289*, 2010.

[27] UN Women, *About UN Women*, 2011.

[28] UN Women, *About UN Women*, 2011.

[29] UN Women, *About UN Women*, 2011.

[30] Skard, *Gender in the Malestream – Acceptance of Women and Gender Equality in Different United Nations Organisations*, 2009, p. 162.

[31] Skard, *Gender in the Malestream – Acceptance of Women and Gender Equality in Different United Nations Organisations*, 2009, p. 162.

[32] United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, *Follow-up to Beijing*, 2010.

related issues, and inequities in education that hold women and girls behind their male peers in society.[33] In addition to periodic formal reviews of the *Beijing Conference and Platform for Action*, this document helps dictate issues undertaken as priority themes in the yearly meeting of the CSW.[34]

While the historical record of the UN contains broad pronouncements of rights such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that should have guaranteed the inclusion of issues specific to women, the CSW noted that women's rights were still being left behind in the international dialog on human rights.[35] The landmark International Women's Year in 1975 spurred the UN to tackle in earnest the specific rights of women.[36] As a result, the Commission sponsored two working groups that developed the text of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* in 1976, creating "a single, comprehensive and internationally binding instrument to eliminate discrimination against women."[37] This was followed by an extensive debate and deliberations by the General Assembly Third Committee in sessions from 1977 to 1979.[38] With the adoption of *A/RES/34/180* with 130 votes in favor, none in dissention, and 10 abstentions, *CEDAW* was opened for signature and entered into force in September of 1981; 30 days after the 20th state had ratified it.[39]

Over the past decade, the CSW's work has been marked by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000 and set to be achieved by the target date of 2015.[40] MDGs 3 and 5 specifically cite issues that relate directly to women; Goal 3 is to promote gender equality and empower women and Goal 5 is to improve maternal health.[41] While these MDGs are gender-specific, the CSW has taken it upon itself to incorporate a gender perspective into all the MDGs as its priority theme for the meeting in 2014.[42] The CSW establishes multi-year programs of work to set priority themes for its meetings, doing so most recently with the adoption of the 2010 to 2014 meeting priority themes in ECOSOC *Resolution 2009/15*.[43] The themes for 2010 and 2014 specifically reference work on gender in the context of the MDGs.[44]

*Conclusion*

The Commission on the Status of Women has seen its mandate broaden since its entry into the UN system as a full commission in 1946, due especially to the global awakening to issues that plague women to different degrees around the globe. As the nature of international relations becomes more and more complex, so does the nature of the problems that face women and girls. There is now as much need as ever for diligent work on the behalf of women and girls who are perhaps unable to advocate for themselves. With the work and consultation of the CSW and ECOSOC, the UN is more easily able to consider how their actions and attempts at shaping a more peaceful and equitable world affect the experiences and livelihoods of women and girls globally.

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[33] United Nations *Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

[34] United Nations *Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

[35] United Nations Department of Public Information, *Short History of CEDAW Convention*, 2009.

[36] Skard, *Gender in the Malestream – Acceptance of Women and Gender Equality in Different United Nations Organisations*, 2009, p. 162.

[37] United Nations Department of Public Information, *Short History of CEDAW Convention*, 2009.

[38] United Nations Department of Public Information, *Short History of CEDAW Convention*, 2009.

[39] United Nations Department of Public Information, *Short History of CEDAW Convention*, 2009.

[40] United Nations Department of Public Information, *UN Millennium Development Goals: Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*, 2010.

[41] United Nations Department of Public Information, *UN Millennium Development Goals: Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health*, 2010.

[42] United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, *Follow-up to Beijing*, 2010.

[43] United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Resolution 2009/15*, 2009.

[44] United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Resolution 2009/15*, 2009.

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http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/CSW60YRS/CSWbriefhistory.pdf.

> *Entering its 67th year, the Commission on the Status of Women has seen in its time as a committee changes to its mandate and work as the state of women's rights around the globe evolves. This 20-page history of the committee goes in depth regarding the original intent of the Commission and the need for such a fully functioning body on the status of women's issues to give a useful perspective on the work it has produced. The document reads as a timeline of the most prominent issues addressed by the Commission and the milestones it has achieved over the years.*

United Nations Department of Public Information. (2009). *Short History of CEDAW Convention.* Retrieved on August 4, 2012, from:
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm.

> *An understanding of the history of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women helps to give context to the purpose and mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women. As CEDAW holds as its central tenet the importance of establishing and upholding women's rights around the world, delegates should familiarize themselves with the Convention as well as the documents that led to the Convention's creation and adoption by the UN General Assembly, as well as the challenges that full adherence to CEDAW faces around the world. This history of the Convention gives succinct yet clear explanation of the need for such a document.*

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (1946). Resolution 11 (II) (1946), *Journal of the Economic and Social Council* (1): 525-526.

> *The founding document of the Commission on the Status of Women gives the reader an excellent idea of the ECOSOC's decision to grant the CSW the status of a full commission. This document includes the original mandate of the CSW, focusing on women's rights in political, economic, and educational realms. Along with the mandate, the guidelines for governance and membership in the Commission has changed since the founding, but this resolution provides the groundwork for the building of the CSW into an essential part of introducing issues that affect women into the greater dialog in the UN system.*

United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Retrieved on July 31, 2012, from: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf.

> *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action guide the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, which is tasked with a comprehensive review every five years. In this document, the participants in the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 acknowledge the disadvantages and challenges women face in contemporary society. The Platform for Action, as its name suggests, puts forth recommendations and encouragement for world governments to take proactive part in eliminating discrimination against women and girls, promoting women's economic independence, and establishing definitions of the specific rights of women.*

United Nations General Assembly. (2010, July 21). *Resolution 64/289 (2010).* Retrieved on September 1, 2012, from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/289.

> *This General Assembly resolution (specifically paragraphs 49 to 90) establishes UN Women, which is the body that brings together UN activities pertaining to issues of women and girls and seeks to prioritize mainstreaming a gender perspective in the proceedings of the greater UN system. The resolution calls for an intergovernmental structure of the GA, ECOSOC, and CSW to "provide normative policy guidance" to UN Women. Guidelines for selection of an Executive Board and for the flow of recommending and making policy among these closely tied organizations (including how the CSW functions as a part of UN Women) are set forth.*

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United Nations General Assembly. (2010, July 21). *Resolution 64/289 (2010)*. Retrieved on September 1, 2012, from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/289.

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# I. Economic, Social and Political Empowerment of Women in the Context of Political Transition

*"With rising demands for justice, upcoming elections in many countries, and political transition, we have an opportunity to open doors wider for women."[45]*

### Introduction

Political transition, whether resulting from war or an institutional change, provides an excellent opportunity to advance women's rights.[46] This specific context concerns states that have recently undergone a political upheaval or transformation, such as in the context of a revolution or a democratization process. Political transition can be defined as the evolution of a country's political background towards the creation of durable and sustainable political and economic institutions as well as the promotion of good governance through elections and the rule of law.[47] The recent revolutions that have affected the Middle East and North Africa are a perfect illustration of transition.[48] Women who had until then been marginalized from society's key institutions became deeply involved in these uprisings by leading the protests, setting media campaigns in motion and advocating political changes, at times putting their own safety at risk.[49] However, the women that were at the forefront of these movements are now being excluded from the reconstruction process, igniting concern in the international community.[50] For instance, a parliamentary law passed in January 2012 in Egypt caused the number of women parliamentarians to drop from 12% to 2%, as it called for a specific quota of women within political parties but did not specify the need to put them in winning slots.[51]

Clearly, while political transition can boost women's empowerment and foster gender equality, it is not an inevitable consequence of political transition, and it can weaken the status of women in society. Considering changes in politics translate themselves onto the economic and social institutions of a country, it is necessary to strengthen women's civil, political, but also social and economic rights.[52] The focus of this topic is thus to ensure the presence and participation of women during the process of political transition, as actors and agents in elections, in the decision-making processes of constitutional and economic reforms, and in society itself. With the creation of new constitutions and on-going cultural shifts, there is a huge opportunity for women to enhance their participation by paying close attention to certain aspects of the reconstruction process and by ensuring that government officials enforce effective gender equality policies, which will contribute to building stable gender-sensitive governance.[53]

### The International Approach to Promoting Women's Rights

Several cornerstone agreements form an international legal framework on women's rights, which is essential to the debate on political transition. The *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination (CEDAW)*, adopted in 1976 by the General Assembly, commits states to ending all forms of discrimination against women and ensuring equal access to opportunities in political, economic and public life.[54] Two particular resolutions that the General Assembly adopted focusing on women and political participation are resolution *58/142* of 2004 and resolution *66/130* of 2012.[55] Both documents aspire to promote and protect the political rights of women by preventing any form of discrimination or prejudice, developing women's access to education, training, and information technology, as well as increasing women's political, business and economic opportunities through gender sensitive policies.[56] In addition, the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in 1995 in Beijing, led to the adoption of the

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[45] Bachelet, M, *UN Women to focus on boosting economic empowerment and political roles*, 2012.

[46] Bachelet, M, *Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and Worldwide,* 2012.

[47] UN Department of Political Affairs, *Promoting peaceful, political solutions to conflict*, 2011.

[48] Bachelet, M, *Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and Worldwide*, 2012.

[49] Bachelet, M, *Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and Worldwide*, 2012.

[50] Derich, C, *Tools Increasing and strengthening women's political participation in the Arab Spring,* 2012, p. 12.

[51] Bachelet, M, *Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and Worldwide*, 2012.

[52] Bachelet, M, *UN Women to focus on boosting economic empowerment and political roles*, 2012.

[53] UN, *Democratic Governance,* 2012.

[54] UN, *The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women,* 1976.

[55] UN General Assembly, *Resolution A/Res/66/130, Women and Political Participation,* 2012.

[56] UN General Assembly, *Resolution A/Res/58/142, Women and political Participation,* 2004.

*Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.[57] This document calls for women's empowerment and sets up an agenda for the advancement of women by focusing specifically on twelve key issues including, but not limited to, education, violence, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, power and decision-making.[58] Since 1995, three follow-up reviews have been held in order to assess the progress that has been made, identify new challenges if necessary as well as share past experiences on effective or unproductive policies.

Lastly, the Security Council has paid close attention to issues relating to gender, conflict, peace and security. Resolution 1325 (2000) acknowledges the role women can hold in conflict, not only as victims of violence, but also as key actors, and calls for their involvement in post-conflict reconstruction, political transition, and reintegration processes.[59] Moreover, the issue of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in armed conflicts was addressed in resolution 1820 (2008), while resolution 1888 (2009) emphasizes the need to bring perpetrators of SGBV to justice and calls for the protection of women during peacekeeping missions.[60] Finally, resolution 1889 (2009) focuses on the need to include women in the peacebuilding and decision-making processes to achieve sustainable peace.[61]

### Enhancing Women's Political Participation

Constitutional and institutional reform is a crucial step during political transition because it represents an opportunity for women's rights to be explicitly guaranteed by promoting gender equality and ruling out any form of discrimination.[62] There are multiple approaches to securing women's participation in the decision-making process but there is no single solution, considering strategies can change according to the culture and the political climate of the country.[63] Drafting the constitution needs to be a transparent process so as to ensure that the resulting document is representative and that women have contributed to it.[64] This can be done by creating an inclusive legislative commission and increasing talks with civil societies.[65] Constitution builders should also consider women's rights by including in the constitution non-discrimination policies such as affirmative action or positive discrimination.[66]

Furthermore, the electoral system that is chosen may also influence women's leadership opportunities.[67] Out of the two electoral systems that are used worldwide, research has shown that women achieve better representation under proportional representation systems, in which parties have to provide a list of members and consequently strive to have a list including an important amount of women.[68] Quotas can also ensure the equal participation of women.[69] They can take various forms at the national or local level and be solicited by constitutions, by legislature or even by political parties.[70] Some quotas save a certain amount of seats for women in office whereas others simply require that a particular number of women be included in each party's list, stipulating at times that they should be given winning slots.[71] However, while quotas increase the number of women in politics, women's participation to public life cannot be reduced to this strategy. There are often deep-rooted social, cultural, and economic issues that contribute to women's exclusion from political institutions.[72] Thus, in order to prevent the apparition of these factors, it is important to focus on the training of female candidates so as to ensure that they are prepared for leadership positions. Female candidates need to develop a wide range of skills such as lobbying, public speaking, networking, negotiating, as well as understanding parliamentary procedures and the media.[73] Finally, women's political empowerment generally requires a strong partnership between the state and civil societies in order to have

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[57] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 8.
[58] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 8.
[59] UN Security Council, *Resolution 1325 (2000),* 2000.
[60] UN Population Fund, *From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change,* 2010, p. 2.
[61] UN Security Council, *Resolution 1889 (2009),* 2009.
[62] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 7.
[63] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 9.
[64] Böckenförde, M &Hedling, N &Wahiu, W, *A Practical Guide to Constitution Building,* 2011, p. 61.
[65] Derich, C, *Tools Increasing and strengthening women's political participation in the Arab Spring,* 2012, p. 11.
[66] Böckenförde, M &Hedling, N &Wahiu, W, *A Practical Guide to Constitution Building,* 2011, p. 62.
[67] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 9.
[68] UN Development Fund for Women, *Who Answers to Women?,* 2008, p. 21.
[69] Böckenförde, M &Hedling, N &Wahiu, W, *A Practical Guide to Constitution Building,* 2011, p. 63.
[70] Böckenförde, M &Hedling, N &Wahiu, W, *A Practical Guide to Constitution Building,* 2011, p. 63.
[71] Böckenförde, M &Hedling, N &Wahiu, W, *A Practical Guide to Constitution Building,* 2011, p. 63.
[72] Böckenförde, M &Hedling, N &Wahiu, W, *A Practical Guide to Constitution Building,* 2011, p. 61.
[73] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 12.

representative female leaders and active organizations on the ground.[74] Without support from the community, women in official leadership positions lack influence in politics and have difficulty staying in power.

### *Advocating for Women's Social and Cultural Empowerment*

Women often experience cultural and social prejudices, especially during the breakdown of law and order that often accompanies transition. One of the most noticeable threats women face is Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), as witnessed in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.[75] SGBV impacts on women's social position by affecting women's health and safety. Preventing SGBV requires different policies such as bringing perpetrators to justice, ensuring the full implementation of CEDAW and the Security Council's resolutions, as well as developing dialogues and interventions involving both men and women on this issue.[76] Another way in which women can be affected during political transition is by health issues, especially HIV-AIDS caused by SGBV.[77] Health care remains low for many women, particularly those who are poor or live at the margins of their community.[78] Social, economic and legal factors can increase women's vulnerability to health issues and diseases.[79] As a result, promoting reproductive and maternal healthcare, as well as treating HIV-AIDS is important in the aftermath of political transition.

Education is a fundamental precondition for women's empowerment in all spheres of society, seeing that women's and girls' education translates into "poverty reduction, income growth, economic productivity, social justice and democracy."[80] There exists an obvious gender gap in education; women make-up for two-thirds of the global illiterate.[81] It is thus important to focus post-transition policies on education and scale up its funding in order to strengthen the democratic process.[82] However, particular attention must also be brought to the content of the curricula and the attitudes of the teachers, so as to ensure that education does not strengthen pre-existing stereotypes and prejudices, but rather serves as an effective catalyst for change.[83] Emphasis must also be placed on the need to overcome cultural barriers and prejudices in order to directly challenge gender discrimination.[84] Gender equality and women's empowerment only acquires legitimacy if men understand the different incentives they have in respecting and advocating for women's rights.[85] Changing boys and men's attitude towards women, by prevailing over certain traditional barriers (whether religious or cultural) must be done through a gender-sensitive education process.[86] Media can also contribute to this by circulating awareness programs and public opinion campaigns.[87] For example, the UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality has implemented a program in Nepal that aims at broadcasting over 52 episodes of gender sensitive programming on the radio throughout l64 community radio stations in the country.[88]

### *Improving Women's Economic Opportunities*

Post-transition reconstruction presents a unique opportunity to re-organize the state and increase women's capabilities in the economy.[89] The first priority is to eliminate the gender gaps in employment due to higher levels of unemployment, lower wages, poor working conditions, stereotypical roles as well as exclusion from economic policy-making positions.[90] Women face these constraints because of a lack of work-life balance, like day care or

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[74] Derich, C, *Tools Increasing and strengthening women's political participation in the Arab Spring,* 2012, p. 11.

[75] Raheb, V & Bechmann, UN *Women's Political Protests in the 'Arab Spring',*2012, p. 37.

[76] Butler, M., K. Mader, and R. Kean, *Women, Peace, and Security Handbook: Compilation and Analysis of United Nations Security Council Resolution Language,* 2010, p. 28.

[77] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 20.

[78] Lopez-Claros, A & Zahidi, S, *Women's empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap,* 2005, p. 5.

[79] Lopez-Claros, A & Zahidi, S, *Women's empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap,* 2005, p. 5.

[80] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation,* 2010, p. 129.

[81] Lopez-Claros, A & Zahidi, S, *Women's empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap,* 2005, p. 5.

[82] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 20.

[83] Lopez-Claros, A & Zahidi, S, *Women's empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap,* 2005, p. 5.

[84] UN Division for the Advancement of Women, *Gender and Institutions: Creating an Enabling Environment,* 2005, p. 8.

[85] UN Division for the Advancement of Women, *Gender and Institutions: Creating an Enabling Environment,* 2005, p. 9.

[86] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation*, 2010, p. 129.

[87] Helgesen, V, *Pathways for Women in Democratic Transitions – International Experiences and Lessons Learned,* 2011, p. 4.

[88] UN Women, *Fund for Gender Equality: Catalytic Grantee Progress report on Development results,* 2011, p. 23.

[89] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 51.

[90] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 28.

flexible working schedules. Thus, a range of policies should be implemented during the transition process, including gender-sensitive labor market regulations, social protection, and legal provision of equal wages, childcare facilities, and employment programs.[91] Additionally, promoting women's entrepreneurship opportunities contributes to reducing the employment gap.[92] Women entrepreneurs are hindered in their activities by different factors such as limited institutional capacity, complicated policies addressing business start-ups, as well as inadequate and insufficient ability to network and access information and technology.[93] In order to foster women's entrepreneurial activities it is necessary to promote training programs, which develop business, management and marketing skills. Creating women's organizations so that women entrepreneurs can access legal support, develop collective loans as well as share information on trade fairs is another good measure.[94]

Improving women's legal status and rights is also critical to women's empowerment in the economic field. Owning land and controlling assets provides people with economic security, cultural identity, and political power.[95] Regrettably, in many countries women are denied this right because of prevalent socio-cultural norms and lack of awareness of women's entitlements.[96] Thus, it is necessary to reform legislation by ensuring women's access to property and inheritance, increase general awareness and knowledge of this issue, and provide legal advice to women wishing to claim their rights.[97] UN Women contributed to the adoption of favorable amendments to women in Kyrgyzstan's Law on Land Management and is now concentrating its efforts in the country on overcoming barriers to women's property rights such as prevailing customs and lack of information.[98]

Finally, equitable access to finance and credits is a key ingredient in creating and sustaining an enabling environment for women's empowerment.[99] Women's access to financial assets is restricted due to factors such as financial illiteracy, limited understanding of how to access these services and how to work with policy-makers and banks.[100] Most efforts have been focused on micro-finance, which has successfully managed to reach out to poor women through gender-sensitive measures.[101] However, post-transition governments should strive to enhance women's access to financial and formal bank services, especially for those who wish to open small and medium-size enterprises.[102] This requires that gender-specific financial legislation be passed so as to give a larger access to a variety of financial tools such as remittance transfers, insurance, debt financing and credit.[103] In order to ensure an inclusive financial sector, incentives should be given to financial institutions so that they extend their services to women and create new products that would satisfy their particular needs. For example, Access Bank in Nigeria gained international recognition after opening a $30 million line of credit targeted specifically towards women entrepreneurs and training its staff in gender sensitivity and assisting women's banking needs.[104] Another good measure was established in Liberia, were corporate credit unions were set up for women, allowing them to form solidarity groups of approximately ten women where each served as collateral for the other if necessary.[105]

### *Addressing Women's Role in DDR Programs, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding*

The Security Council itself handles armed conflicts, while the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) focuses on the political and institutional aspects of transition. Nonetheless, even if most transition processes do not occur during a conflict, its impact on women should still be considered.[106] In a conflict, women can hold several roles, as a civilian or an armed combatant (coerced or willing) and their responsibilities can range from medical and domestic

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[91] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 38.
[92] UNIDO, *Women's Economic Empowerment, Accountability and National Ownership,* 2010, p. 9.
[93] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 33.
[94] UNIDO, *Women's Economic Empowerment, Accountability and National Ownership,* 2010, p. 9.
[95] UN Women, *Women's Land & Property Rights,* 2012.
[96] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 42.
[97] UN Women, *Women's Land & Property Rights,* 2012.
[98] UN Women, *Women's Land & Property Rights,* 2012.
[99] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 48.
[100] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 63.
[101] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 55.
[102] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 67.
[103] UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the role of Women in Development,* 2009, p. 67.
[104] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 47.
[105] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 53.
[106] UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, *Gender Perspectives on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration,* 2001, p. 1.

services, from sexual slavery to military warfare.[107] Consequently, it is important to make sure that Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs, which deal with the transition of demobilized military combatants back into society, keep a gender-sensitive perspective. They should respond to the needs of women affected by conflict and consider aspects such as forced impregnation, sexually transmitted diseases, psychological support and security.[108] Furthermore, the involvement of women in peacekeeping is also crucial in post-conflict societies, as they can offer unique perspectives acquired from their own experience.[109] For example, an association of Rwandese female ex-fighters are actively trying to be part of the African Union's peacekeeping missions, especially in Darfur, by arguing that since they have endured similar trauma, they will be able to reach out to Sudanese women and offer different services than male peacekeepers.[110] Several measures can be implemented to foster a gender perspective in peacekeeping, such as the full implementation of resolution 1325, increasing the number of military or civilian female recruits and guaranteeing the physical security of women.[111] Women can be integrated into peacekeeping systems by creating gender-specific missions and ensuring that peacekeeping units receive appropriate training so as to remove any form of gender discrimination. In Liberia, an all-female peacekeeping unit from India was deployed as role model, so that Liberian women would feel encouraged to apply as peacekeepers and to report SGBV.[112]

Finally, women must be included in the peacebuilding processes and the reconstruction of society, whether in the aftermath of a conflict or simply in the context of political transition. Indeed, women are often excluded from official peace talks and negotiations, which leads to incomplete agreements that do not cater to the particular needs and concerns of women.[113] Most female leaders and civil society organizations are only involved in forums as well as track-two mechanisms (unofficial actors) and are left out from track-one negotiations (official actors), which limits their impact in the peace process.[114] Additionally, women often serve as links between the community and the formal peace negotiators, ensuring full implementation of the accords.[115] Allowing women's participation in formal peace talks will thus lead to unique outcomes such as gender sensitive post-conflict planning, and the empowerment of women in long-term reconstruction.[116]

## Case Study: Afghanistan

After four decades of ongoing conflict, Afghanistan established the foundations for a new state through the *Bonn Agreement* in 2001.[117] Many women's organizations were consulted during these negotiations and as a result, the 2004 Afghan constitution strictly prohibits any form of discrimination against women and calls for the protection of fundamental women's rights.[118] Additionally, it also implemented gender-friendly policies such as quotas to ensure women's political leadership.[119] Women now make up for 27% of parliament compared to 3.7% in 1990.[120] Furthermore, Afghanistan also set up a Ministry of Women's Affairs, which focuses specifically on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.[121] Subsequently, in 2008, a 10-year National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) was launched in order to ensure the application of commitments made in the constitution regarding non-discrimination and equality for women as well as to guarantee the full implementation of

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[107] UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, *Gender Perspectives on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration,* 2001, p. 1.
[108] UNIFEM, *Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*, 2004, p. 2.
[109] Butler, M., K. Mader, and R. Kean, *Women, Peace, and Security Handbook: Compilation and Analysis of United Nations Security Council Resolution Language,* 2010, p. 13.
[110] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 3.
[111] Butler, M., K. Mader, and R. Kean, *Women, Peace, and Security Handbook: Compilation and Analysis of United Nations Security Council Resolution Language,* 2010, p. 13.
[112] Carvajal, D., *A female Approach to Peacekeeping*, 2010.
[113] UN Population Fund, *From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change,* 2010, p. 85.
[114] US Institute of Peace, *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations,* 2005, p. 5.
[115] UN Population Fund, *From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change,* 2010, p. 85.
[116] UN Population Fund, *From conflict and crisis to renewal: generations of change,* 2010, p. 85.
[117] CARE International UK, *From resolution to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 11.
[118] Afghan's Women Network, *UN SCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan*, 2011, p. 14.
[119] Afghan Mission, *Afghan Women and the Transition*, 2012.
[120] UN data, *Seats held by women in national parliament, percentage,* 2010.
[121] CARE International UK, From resolution *to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 12.

international agreements such as resolution 1325.[122] As a result, while in 2001, there were only one million children in school -most of them boys- currently, more than six million children go to school and over 30% of them are girls.[123] Afghanistan has also tried to increase national security, by implementing the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW).[124]

Nonetheless, progress has been hampered by several factors. Despite national commitments towards empowering women, prevalent social norms and customs, mostly patriarchal and clan-based, still contribute to women's exclusion from decision-making positions and socio-economic opportunities.[125] This is particularly the case in rural areas of Afghanistan, where the government has difficulty reaching out to Afghan women. In addition, insurgent groups like the Taliban's persist in their attempts at destabilizing communities of Afghanistan, which hinders the implementation of law and order.[126] As a result, women are still victims of insecurity, which reduces their chances to have access to health care, education and work opportunities.[127] For example, in May 2012, Taliban extremists poisoned 120 schoolgirls as a demonstration of their condemnation towards girls' education.[128] Additionally, at the political level, concerns arose after the 2010 Kabul Conference, where the Afghan government introduced its Afghan Peace and Re-integration Plan (APARP), omitting to mention international agreements such as CEDAW or resolution 1325 as well as national objectives like the NAPWA or EVAW.[129] In addition to these concerns, secret talks are believed to be taking place between Afghan authorities and Taliban leaders. These factors contribute to the raising alarm of women's organization, which fear that women's rights could be used as a bargaining tool with Taliban's and be 'negotiated away'.[130]

### Conclusion

The policies, measures and initiatives that have been mentioned in this Background Guide represent only a small fraction of the different approaches that can be taken by the delegates of the CSW in helping transitioning countries empower women politically, economically and socially. UN Women and the CSW have already undertaken many projects to achieve the third Millennium Development Goal: promoting gender equality and fostering women's empowerment.[131] Nonetheless, delegates must bear in mind when dealing with this topic that the specific context of political transition can represent both a delicate situation as well as a huge opportunity for increased action. Action plans can differ depending on the country's culture and traditions as well as its post-transition political environment. Thus, specific and comprehensive initiatives will be more effective compared to all-embracing and broad responses. While researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How can the CSW involve itself during transition to help countries undergo political transformation while respecting its scope of action and capability? What measures should be implemented within the institutions of the state in order to foster women's political and economic opportunities? How can the CSW have an impact on the social norms and attitudes regarding women's rights and status? How can states involve both men and women in women's empowerment?

[122] Afghan's Women Network, *UN SCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan*, 2011, p.16.
[123] CARE International UK, *From resolution to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 13.
[124] CARE International UK, *From resolution to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 13.
[125] Afghan's Women Network, *UN SCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan*, 2011, p.10.
[126] CARE International UK, *From resolution to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 12.
[127] Afghan's Women Network, *UN SCR 1325 Implementation in Afghanistan,* 2011, p. 7.
[128] Afghan Mission,*Afghan Women and the Transition*, 2012.
[129] CARE International UK, *From resolution to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 10.
[130] CARE International UK, *From resolution to reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance*, 2011, p. 10.
[131] UN Development Program, *Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment,* 2008, p. 8.

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> *Security Council's Resolution 1325 (2000) is a key document that acknowledges the importance women hold in peace and security policies, as well as their role in the post-conflict decision-making process. Nonetheless, Resolution 1325 has rarely been implemented fully of its capacity. For that reason, this document studies the effect of the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan, Uganda, and Nepal in order to ensure that this declaration becomes operational. The experiences in these three countries illustrate the role women can hold in the process of negotiation and in addressing conflict dynamics.*

Derich, C. (2012). *Tools Increasing and strengthening women's political participation in the Arab Spring.* Ankara: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Retrieved August 4, 2012, from http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_31730-1522-1-30.pdf?120723143856

> *In December 2011, an international panel was organized in Istanbul to discuss the Arab Uprisings and their consequences on the role and status of women in the Middle East. Women were key actors in these revolutions. The panel considered the place women would hold in the newly transformed society at a social, economic, and political level. Thus, this conference was the opportunity to discuss ways in which Middle Eastern women could ensure their participation and representation in the new institutions and infrastructure. While this document focuses on a particular region, it gives a comprehensive view of the topic and the situation women face in the context of political transformation, as well as the steps they have to take to ensure gender equality.*

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. (2005). *Gender and Institutions: Creating an Enabling Environment.* Retrieved August 6, 2012, from http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=nuket_kardam

> *This document was written for an Expert Group Meeting for the Division on the Advancement of Women. The conference focused on enhancing the participation of women to development by creating an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women. Thus, this report goes over very important details concerning political transformation and the importance of creating a gender-sensitive environment after a political change. It reviews the different strategies that must be focused on, such as education, human rights, cultural norms, and different policy interventions such as quotas.*

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2010). *Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation.* Retrieved August 23, 2012, from http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/achievinggender.shtml

> *This recent documents is a summary of a series of dialogue that occurred at the Economic and Social Council in 2010. It develops several key thematic including: access to decision-making positions and power, conflict and post-conflict situations, improving women's health and economic opportunity, and finally the importance of education in order to empower women. The book in itself offers several suggestions on measures and strategies that can be considered and researched in order to achieve Gender equality and Women's empowerment.*

United Nations Development Fund for Women. (2008). *Who Answers to Women*? Retrieved August 24, 2012, from http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/media/POWW08_Report_Full_Text.pdf

> *This volume was published by UNIFEM in 2008 and focuses specifically on gender and accountability. The document tries to demonstrate that the achievement of the MDGs as well as other international commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action will only be possible if gender-responsive accountability systems are implemented at the local and global level. This document is a good starting point in understanding the issues women face like security threats in addition to their exclusion from the political, economic, and public institutions.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2008). *Empowered and Equal: Gender Equality Strategy (2008-2011)*. New York, New York, USA: Bureau for Development Policy. Retrieved August 3, 2012, from *http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/womens-empowerment/gender-equality-strategy-2008-2011/0601.pdf*

> *Written in 2008 as a Gender Equality Strategy for the United Nations Development Program, this document explains the different directions that must be taken in order to foster the economic and social empowerment of women. It also focuses on strategies aiming at the equal participation of men and women to democratic governance. In addition, this report defines cornerstone documents on women's rights and their relevance to our topic, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.*

United Nations Development Program. (2008).*Innovative approaches to promoting women's economic empowerment.* Retrieved August 23, 2012, from *http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=2524504*

> *As pointed out by this paper, the third MDG concerns achieving gender equality and empowerment of women by 2015. In order to reach this objective the UNDP summarizes several approaches that they have adopted to promote women's economic empowerment. The programs that are funded by the UNDP vary in goal and importance. Several issues in economic empowerment are challenged such as inheritance right on land and property, gender gaps in employment, access to financial services, in addition to women's leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities. This paper describes several innovative and interesting strategies and projects that should be considered during the committee session.*

United Nations General Assembly. (2009). *2009 World Survey on the role of Women in Development: Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance.* Retrieved August 4, 2012, from *http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/WorldSurvey2009.pdf*

> *This World Survey on the role of Women in Development focuses specifically on "Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance." It is a succinct summary of different recommendations and guidelines that can be implemented in order to empower women. This comprehensive guide on the economic advancement of women explains the different challenges of the topic at hand. It includes the notion of financial services as well as microfinance and talks about the constraints of the labor market. It also pays close attention to the importance of land and property rights for women.*

United Nations Population Fund. (2007). *Women's Economic Empowerment: Meeting the Needs of Impoverished Women.* Retrieved August 4, 2012, from *http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/UN/unfpa_womeneconempowerimpoverish_2007.pdf*

> *The United Nations Population Fund contributed to the publication of this report with the main aim of focusing on the feminization of poverty. While this is not directly linked to our topic, this guide plays close attention to the measures that best serve gender equality and recommends several strategies to promote the advancement of women at a social and economic level. Both rural women as well as urban women are mentioned in order to avoid their exclusion and marginalization, which is also a concern in the context of political transition.*

United States Institute of Peace. (2005). *Charting Progress: The Role of Women in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations.* Retrieved August 24, 2012, from *http://www.ceipaz.org/images/contenido/Role%20of%20women%20in%20reconstruction%20and%20stabilization.pdf*

> *This comprehensive document, which aims at summarizing the key issues relating to women, peace and security, was published by the United States Institute of Peace, a non-partisan institution created by the American Congress to research in-depth conflict and post-conflict situations. It reports the main issues post-conflict countries face in achieving gender equality and women empowerment. Particular attention is given to women's role in peacekeeping missions as wells as peace negotiations. Furthermore, this article also goes over the conventional approaches that can be applied in order to guarantee women's political participation such as electoral*

*systems, quotas, and training. Finally, the document concludes on ways to increase women's role in socio-economic institutions.*

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## II.  Fostering a Gender-Sensitive Perspective in Sustainable Development

*"Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance."[132]*

### Introduction

Sustainable development has three main conceptual pillars or dimensions: economic, social and environmental. The role of women or gender perspectives in sustainable development can be analyzed within this framework. In order to develop a clear understanding of the current position of international policy on gender perspectives in sustainable development, it is important to look at the different international decisions and statements that have been the outcome of many World Conferences on sustainable development and women's empowerment. How Member States have incorporated the issue of gender perspectives in sustainable development practices, and identified gaps and shortcomings to improve international policy in the future, can then be examined.[133]

As defined by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), mainstreaming gender perspectives is the

> "process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."[134]

The definition of sustainable development issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development, more famously known as the "Brundtland Commission", defines it as "development, which meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[135] A combination of the two definitions would conclude that ensuring gender perspectives in sustainable development is the inclusion of women's access to rights, economic prosperity, and progress without environmental degradation.

### International Framework on Gender and Sustainable Development

While gender perspectives have been included in many statements and resolutions at the United Nations (UN), there is a lack of specificity and fully developed action plans.[136] In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), which serves as an international bill of rights for women.[137] While it does not use the exact terms of sustainable development and climate change, it does attempt to address discrimination in development through highlighting the issues of discrimination of women in rural areas in Article 14 and also addressing their right to reproductive health and participation in planning processes in Article 13.[138]

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or as it is informally known, the Earth Summit of 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, resulted in the creation of the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), the creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) as well as the Rio Declaration which defines key policies for sustainable development.[139] The *Rio Declaration* and the Plan of Action *Agenda 21* (the Rio Outcome) emphasize the importance of gender in sustainable development through "principle 20: women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore

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[132] Annan in Veneman, *Statement of UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman on International Women's Day,* 2006.

[133] UN-Women, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: the power behind successful sustainable development,* 2012, p 1.

[134] United Nations General Assembly, *Report of Economic and Social Council for 1997 (A/52/3),*1997, p 27.

[135] World Commission on Environment and Development, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future,*1987, p 21.

[136] UNDP *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation,* 2010, p 3-5.

[137] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180),* 1979, p 1.  2006.

[138] UNPF, WEDO*, Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender,* 2009, p 3.

[139] United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, *The Rio Declaration,* 1992, p 4.

essential to achieve sustainable development."[140] Additionally, the document further addresses including gender perspectives in development policy-making and specifically looks at closing the gender inequality gap in areas such as land ownership, natural resource management, and access to education, sustainable livelihoods and employment.[141]

During the 2002 Rio+10 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, the international community not only reaffirmed its commitment to gender perspectives in sustainable development, but went further to emphasize the need for increased women's participation in policy design, especially in decision-making processes for natural resource management at a local community level.[142] In addition, the Summit outcome also emphasized the importance of access to resources such as fertile land and credit institutions for women as a means of addressing poverty reduction.[143]

Most recently, the 2012 Rio+20 conference was held in order to review and to recommit to goals and objectives set out by the international community at the Earth Summit in 1992. The final outcome document titled *The Future We Want* heavily emphasizes the importance of simultaneously working towards gender equality and women's empowerment as a means of achieving sustainable development and further emphasizing the importance of women's participation and equal access to services and opportunities. The document mentions women and gender-related issues in all sections, including women's roles in achieving every aspect of the outlined measures. More specifically, the section on gender equality and women's empowerment highlights the importance of rural women in maintaining sustainable agricultural practices. The document acknowledges women as "drivers of sustainable development" and also commits to incorporate gender perspectives in policy making through increasing the collection of sex-disaggregated data and analysis through a gender-sensitive lens.[144]

In order to stimulate national level policy-making and increase action out of the statements developed by the Rio Outcome, the UNFCCC triggered the development of *National Adaptation Programmes of Action* (NAPAs) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).[145] The NAPAs are utilized as a method of addressing adaptation needs that are not outlined by the UNFCCC itself, which focuses primarily on mitigation through the reduction of green house gas emissions.[146] The NAPA guidelines prepared by the LDC expert group under the UNFCCC stress the importance of a "participatory approach" in developing the programs, involving women and men from local grassroots levels to provide input and strategies.[147] As emphasized in the guidelines, the participation of women is particularly important to provide a gender perspective on the effects that climate change and development have on the control of natural resource management and access to other resources.[148] The Gender Advisory Team under the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) completed a review of 39 plans in 2009 based on the identified specificities in the guidelines.[149] The study concluded that the while many NAPAs mention women's empowerment or incorporate the importance of gender perspectives, none had completely integrated gender into the document.[150]

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were developed subsequent to the Millennium Summit in September 2000, set international targets for development to be achieved by 2015.[151] All eight MDGs have strong gender-related components and require specific attention to the empowerment of women to be realized. Additionally, MDG 3 on Gender Equality outwardly emphasizes the importance of women's empowerment and incorporation of gender perspectives in achieving the development goals.[152]

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[140] UNEP, *The Rio Declaration*, 1992, p 4.
[141] UNEP *The Rio Declaration,* 1992, p 9.
[142] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender,* 2009, p 3.
[143] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender,* 2009, p 3.
[144] Commission on the Status of Women, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges Chair's summar*y, 2012, p 1.
[145] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender NAPA,* 2009, p 3.
[146] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender NAPA,* 2009, p 3.
[147] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender NAPA,* 2009, p 3.
[148] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender NAPA,* 2009, p 3.
[149] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender NAPA,* 2009, p 4.
[150] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender NAPA,* 2009, p 4.
[151] United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 15 May 2012, p 1.
[152] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender,* 2009, p 3.

At the landmark UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in September 1995, Member States adopted the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA) for the advancement of women in all areas including development.[153] The BPfA makes clear links to sustainable development and gender perspectives through encouraging policy to address women's access to land and credit facilities. It additionally examines the relationship of gender perspectives in environmental degradation and access to health care.[154]

The priority theme for the 2012, 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women was "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges."[155] The committee was not able to adopt agreed conclusions on the priority theme. Instead, the Chair prepared a summary on the debate and negotiations that took place over the high-level sessions.[156] The summary outlines "[a]ction-oriented recommendations for the empowerment of rural women" that address "gender-responsive" policy-making, "leveraging investments" for sustainable development and poverty-related issues, increasing access to resources such as markets, education, land, and finally emphasizing the importance of women's participation and decision making processes.[157] The summary concludes by stressing the importance of gender perspectives in sustainable development and the need for special attention on women in the agriculture sector.[158]

### Reports and Recommendations from UN Bodies and Intergovernmental Agencies

*The Economic Dimension*
Women represent more than 70% of the world's poor, chiefly because they have less access to income generation activities in both developed and developing countries.[159] Additionally, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that approximately 70% of the 1.3 billion people living with less than a dollar a day are women.[160] A report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Gender and Sustainable Development presents studies to evidence that investing in "female human capital" will enhance overall development trends including a decline on poverty rates.[161] The OECD claims that decreasing the gender gap in employment rates has accounted for over half of the increase in economic growth and employment rates in Europe since 1995.[162] Through these conclusions, the OECD also encourages policy makers to examine measures to better facilitate the participation of women in the work force, including measures such as affordable child care facilities and flexible leave policies and other measures such as tax incentives for working women.[163]

In developing countries, women contribute significantly to the agriculture sector.[164] In South-East Asia, over 90% of rice-cultivation is managed by women farmers, and in Africa, women farmers account for over 60% in horticulture farming.[165] Dependence on agriculture employment for women is very high and women often face many barriers for

[153] The Fourth World Conference, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,* 1995, p1.

[154] UNPF, WEDO, *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender,* 2009, p 3.

[155] The Commission on the Status of Women, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges Chair's summar*y, 2012, p 1.

[156] Commission on the Status of Women, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges Chair's summar*y, 2012, p 1.

[157] Commission on the Status of Women, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges Chair's summar*y, 2012, p 3-8.

[158] Commission on the Status of Women, *The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges Chair's summary,* 2012, p 3-8.

[159] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p17

[160] Women's Major Group, *Women's Global Rio+20 Compilation Position Statement UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2012, p 20.

[161] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 8.

[162] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 14.

[163] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 14.

[164] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 14.

[165] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 18.

productivity including household responsibilities such as fetching firewood for fuel and collecting water.[166] In some areas, women can spend more than 5 hours a day on these tasks leaving little time to invest in other income-generating activities or investing time in their education.[167]

The World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development published by the World Bank in 2012 provides an extensive study on the impact of gender equality on the development of states, especially those considered developing.[168] The report finds that women make up at total of 40% of the global workforce and 43% of the global agricultural workforce.[169] It also presents figures collected from the FAO claiming that if women are given more access to resources in developing countries, agricultural output could increase as much as 2.5-4%.[170] Further, women only account for 1% of land holding across the globe; however 59-80% of women are employed in the agriculture sector.[171] The report also highlights that about 2.4 billion people in developing countries still depend on traditional and unsafe forms of fuel including biomass, which are hazardous to human health and the environment.[172] It is mostly women who are exposed to these dangers through traditional cooking and heating methods.[173]

Micro-finance and the development of women entrepreneurs in both developing and developed countries have created a significant impact on women's access to livelihood opportunities.[174] However, barriers in education and financial literacy reduce the quality of impact.[175] Women need increased access to credit and business loans at every level in developing countries. Currently, there are over 3000 micro credit institutions with over 90 million clients in developing nations around the world, more than 83% of those clients are women entrepreneurs.[176] However, addressing gender economics simply at a micro level is not sufficient. Gender must play a role on macroeconomics decision-making and economic policy design.[177] Economic growth should be regulated to promote women's' and girls' access to education, rights and income.[178]

*The Social Dimension*
Social aspects of women in sustainable development focus on access to basic education for improved literacy rates and reduction of overall poverty levels.[179] Two thirds of the World's illiterate adults are women and while more women have access to primary education, but they lack access to secondary and higher education.[180] In addition, sustainable development with a gender perspective would require the inclusion of health care policies and programs that are also designed for marginalized communities and women.[181]

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[166] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 18.

[167] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 18.

[168] The World Bank, World Development Report 2012; Gender Equality and Development, 2011, p 1.

[169] The World Bank, World Development Report 2012; Gender Equality and Development, 2011, p 5.

[170] The World Bank, *World Development Report 2012; Gender Equality and Development,* 2011, p 5.

[171] Women's Major Group, *Women's Global Rio+20 Compilation Position Statement UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2012, p 8.

[172] Women's Major Group, *Women's Global Rio+20 Compilation Position Statement UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2012, p 8.

[173] Women's Major Group, *Women's Global Rio+20 Compilation Position Statement UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2012, p 9.

[174] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 35-37.

[175] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 35-37.

[176] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 38.

[177] United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 2009, p 83.

[178] United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 2009, p 85.

[179] United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, 2009, p 87.

[180] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 43.

[181] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women,* 2008, p 52.

Gender perspectives in social development also strongly focus on women's access to justice delivery systems and political participation at the local and national levels.[182] Across the globe, it is estimated that women hold no more than 16% of legislative seats.[183] Women's political power is important for sustainable development policy because, as studies show, women often engage in better and more sustainable practices as they hold legislative power and account for decisions that allocate more funds to labor rights, social security, education and environmental conservation.[184]

Closing the gender gap in development also includes legal reforms that give women access to land and create awareness on legal rights. Strengthening of rural institutions and health, transportation and infrastructure as well as micro-finance availability and increased investment in innovations to rural infrastructure like hand pumps and modern and clean fuel options will only assist women in engaging in production processes.[185] Additionally, the concept of "green jobs" and economy should focus on poverty eradication and closing social and economic gaps in society. Focusing simply on GDP growth does not guarantee equality, in fact it increases levels of inequality because it does not account for the fair and equal distribution of resources.[186]

*The Environmental Dimension*
Gender perspectives have a major role in addressing some of the key sustainable development-related issues. Central areas where the environment has suffered due to development practices that are not sustainable include: biodiversity, desertification, and water management.[187] These types of development policies not only exacerbate the issues in these areas, but also do not account for the effect that these environmental changes have on female populations.[188]

The decrease in biodiversity globally has an impact on indigenous women and women living poor rural areas most significantly due to their high dependency on land and natural resources.[189] Not only are women highly dependent on agriculture for nutrition, but biodiversity also affects access to medicinal plants, and quality of livestock rearing.[190] Additionally, access to energy sources like firewood is also dependent on biodiversity. [191]

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi arid and dry-sub humid areas.[192] The main effects on populations that have the largest impact on women include the decrease in natural resources and in agricultural production.[193] This often leads to mass migrations from rural to urban areas by male populations in search of income, whilst women are often left behind to manage households and provide for families.[194] This area requires gender-sensitive and specially designed adaptation techniques. Projects and policies that promote renewable energy, innovative agricultural technologies and irrigations systems and the development of women led rural enterprises will help women adapt to the effects of desertification.[195]

Further, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that less than one in every ten female farmers in India, Nepal, and Thailand actually own land and the availability of water sources are closely tied with land ownership.[196] Availability of accessible sources of water is particularly important for rural women because they

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[182] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women*, 2008, p 61.

[183] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women*, 2008, p 61.

[184] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development*, Gender and Sustainable Development; Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environmental Role of Women*, 2008, p 61.

[185] Food an Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State Food and Agriculture 2010-2011; Women in Agriculture Closing the gender gap for development*, 2011, p 62.

[186] Women's Major Group, *Women's Global Rio+20 Compilation Position Statement UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2012, p 8.

[187] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 30.

[188] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 30.

[189] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 31.

[190] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 31.

[191] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 31.

[192] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 31.

[193] UNEP, Women and the Environment, 2004, p 57.

[194] UNEP, *Women and the Environment*, 2004, p 57.

[195] UNEP, *Women and the Environment*, 2004, p 57.

[196] UNEP, *Women and the Environment*, 2004, p 65.

are most often tasked with the collection of water; in East Africa, 27% of calorific intake is spent on collecting water due to lack of availability.[197] Privatization of water sources has also lead to its increase in price and scarcity creating access to water difficult not only for rural women but for those living in urban areas as well.[198] As with the other dimensions, gender perspectives in environmental sustainable development can only be tackled through increased participation of women and better understanding of gender roles in development.[199]

### Conclusion

As outlined by the United Nations Development Programme, "the successful application of a gender approach in development requires a thorough understanding and appreciation of the involvement of both men and women in the development process.[200] Traditional development strategy or design is often criticized for ignoring women's essential role in economic advancement, therefore not only creating a disadvantage for women but also weakening the development strategy all together, rendering it unsustainable.[201] While in present strategies, gender plays a much larger role in the design of development projects, it has not been completely mainstreamed into development policy.[202]

Keeping in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development of economic, social and environmental, what are the key areas that development policy-makers should focus on when addressing the gaps in existing frameworks? How can adaptation techniques to climate change include women? What policies should developing countries have towards their agriculture sectors that would improve women's ability to increase production and participation economic growth? Additionally, how can Member States address social constraints and deep-seated social norms that can completely diminish the effects of any economic and environmental campaigns?

[197] UNEP, *Women and the Environment*, 2004, p 65.
[198] UNEP, *Women and the Environment*, 2004, p 61.
[199] UNEP, *Women and the Environment*, 2004, p 85.
[200] UNDP, *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation*, 2010, p 3-5.
[201] UNDP, *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation*, 2010, p 3-5.
[202] UNDP, *Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation*, 2010, p 3-5.

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Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2008). *Gender and Sustainable Development: Maximizing the Economic, Social and Environment Role of Women*. Retrieved August 9, 2012, from http://www.oecd.org/social/40881538.pdf
>    *This report is a good resource for understanding the three sub-sections of economic, social and environmental elements in sustainable development. The document also specifically looks at the gender perspectives and women's role in each area. Although it does not give extensive detail and resources for them all, it does provide an introduction to each section.*

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. (2011, November). *Women's Global Rio+20 Compilation Position Statement*. Retrieved on August 9, 2012 from http://www.womenrio20.org/Women's_MG_Compilation_Rio+20.pdf
>    *In March 2011 in preparation for the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, the Women's Major Group had compiled priorities and essential points for discussion. The compiled statements include areas of interest to the international community in the last two years. Rio+20 was a major platform for decision-making and goal setting. The progress or outcome of the conference is not reflected here, however the concepts outlined in the document are applicable beyond the conference setting. These identified issues and policies can continue to be the starting point for discussion on gender and sustainable development.*

The World Bank. (2012). *Gender and Development*. Retrieved on August 9, 2012 from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf
>    *This report is a comprehensive look at the last year in development policy and the gender perspectives outlined.  It provides an extensive overall picture of the many types of indicators that fall under 'development', including education, employability etc. The report provides a good detailing of areas of progress and improvement and where women have seen the most advancement in the recent year. A review of the most recent reports can provide extensive insight on the trend of development and the direction that 'gender and development'is progressing towards on an international level.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2012). *Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. Retrieved on August 9, 2012 from http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/the-millennium-development-goals-report-2012/
>    *The Millennium Development Goals are important to highlight in the discussion of this project since more than one goal specifically applies to the advancement of women. Goal number 3 specifically aims at promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in the development of nations. The report emphasizes that the gender equality goal is far from being fulfilled and is at high risk of remaining incomplete beyond 2015. Each goal is reviewed in detail with charts and graphs to show its statistical growth, this review is increasing helpful in identifying gaps for further policy and program development.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2010). *Gender, Climate Change and Community Based Adaptation Guidebook*. Retrieved on September 2, 2012 from http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/environment-energy/climate_change/gender/gender-climate-change-and-community-based-adaptation-guidebook-.html
>    *The Guidebook provides an introduction to what exactly sustainable development is, and how gender and development relate. It provides clear definitions of the terms used in sustainable development and explains the concept of "adaptation". Community Based Adaptation techniques are very good examples of the types of programs being implemented by development agencies that really incorporate gender perspectives and can prove its importance in the success of projects.*

United Nations Population Fund, Women's Environment and Development Organization. (2009). *Climate Change Connections; A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender*. Retrieved on September 2, 2012 from http://www.unfpa.org/public/publications/pid/4028

*This report is a six-part document that provides an overview of different aspects relating to climate change, development and gender. Two separate sections discuss the finance and advocacy of gender and development, the types of aid available and the overall trends. The advocacy section provides methods for civil society. More relevant, there is a section on country National Adaptation Programmes of Action. NAPAS are essential for understanding a national policy towards development and climate change, with special relevance to the gender and women related programs and project designed to address adaptation to climate change.*

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. (2009). *2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance.* Retrieved August 9, 2012 from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/WorldSurvey2009.pdf

*This report is important for understanding the role of women and gender perspectives in economic development. The report goes into details of economic development through distinguishing roles in both macro and micro economics, and the importance of gender sensitive strategies in both sectors. The report also provides a good critique of micro-finance strategies for women's empowerment by highlighting its benefits but also identifying gaps that should be addressed in development strategies.*

United Nations Environment Programme. (2004). *Women and the Environment.* Retrieved August 9, 2012 from http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=468&ArticleID=4488&l=en

*Although this publication is relatively older, the concepts identified in relation to climate change and gender still remain priority concepts in the development sector. This report was also one of the first to clearly define women's relationship with specific effects of climate change such as desertification and water scarcity. This report provides good insight and recommendations for the types of adaptation techniques that can be implemented in climate change response and sustainable development programs with gender perspectives.*

World Economic Forum. (2011). *The Global Gender Gap Report.* Retrieved on September 2nd, 2012 from http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap

*The Global Gender Gap Index developed by the WEF is tool to measure gaps in gender equality in many different spheres including education, employment etc. This Index is used by all major UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations as reliable data on level of gender equality. The Report provides an essential background for understanding the "gender gap" plus regional analysis. Additionally, it has detailed data on individual countries and their levels of gender gap in each given category.*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2011). *The State Food and Agriculture 2010-2011; Women in Agriculture Closing the gender gap for development*. Retrieved on September 2, 2012 from http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/

*This report, while specific to women in rural and agriculture setting in developing countries provides very technical data and insights on the gender gaps that women in the agriculture sector face. Rapid economic development, climate change, and globalization policies that are not designed in a gender sensitive framework often have the most impact on women in rural areas as the report displays. The report not only provides in-depth analysis on these issues, but also provides clear recommendations for policy development.*

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# III. Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality through the Empowerment of Women

*"Women and children play a crucial role in development, investing in their health is not only the right thing to do –
it builds stable, peaceful, and productive societies."[203]*

### Introduction

Goal Five of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to improve women's health, including reducing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 75% between 1990 and 2015.[204] While significant effort is still required to attain it, Goal Five remains one of the most achievable of the MDGs; ten Member States have already met the goal, nine are "on track" to do so, and 51 Member States are "making progress" towards it.[205] In this case, it is important to note the definition of maternal mortality, as "the death of a woman while pregnant or in labor or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes."[206]

The leading causes of maternal mortality are hemorrhaging and hypertension which account for just over half of all deaths, but can be easily managed through a variety of interventions from trained healthcare professionals.[207] Fortunately, the number of women worldwide who have received professional care during pregnancy and childbirth, whether from a doctor, midwife, or other trained personnel, has risen from under 50% in 1990 to 63% in 2010.[208] The most dramatic increases in attended deliveries were seen in South-East Asia and Northern Africa, where nearly all delivering women are now attended by a professional.[209] However, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia still need significant progress in this area, as less than half of all deliveries are attended by professionals.[210] According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the best way to decrease the MMR and to ensure that all pregnant and delivering women receive proper care is through the empowerment of women.[211]

### Maternal Mortality and the Empowerment of Women within the UN Framework

In 1979 the United Nations (UN) first confirmed their commitment to improving the lives of women and girls when the General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*.[212] Article 12 of the document specifically addresses women's health and the need to eliminate gender based discrimination in the healthcare industry.[213] Over fifty Member States have ratified the convention and *CEDAW* remains one of the most important documents for women's empowerment internationally.[214] Continuing the emphasis on the empowerment of women, the UN held the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1994 and produced the *Platform for Action*.[215] The *Platform* created specific guidelines for Member States to decrease the amount of gender based discrimination, with Strategic Objective C.1 addressing access to healthcare.[216] The CSW was tasked with overseeing the implementation of the *Platform* and the Commission has

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[203] Ban, *Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health*, 2010, p. 3.
[204] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Goal 5, Improving Maternal Health: Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, 2012.
[205] World Health Organization, *Trends in Maternal Mortality, 1990-2010*, 2012, p. 37.
[206] World Health Organization, *Maternal Mortality Ratio*, 2012.
[207] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Goal 5, Improving Maternal Health: Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, 2012.
[208] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Goal 5, Improving Maternal Health: Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, 2012.
[209] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Goal 5, Improving Maternal Health: Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, 2012.
[210] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Goal 5, Improving Maternal Health: Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, 2012.
[211] United Nations Population Fund, *The State of the World's Mid-Wifery 2011*, 2011.
[212] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 1979.
[213] United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 1979.
[214] Division for the Advancement of Women: ECOSOC, *Declarations, Reservations, and Objections to CEDAW*, 1981.
[215] United Nations General Assembly, *The Beijing Platform for Action*, 1995.
[216] United Nations General Assembly, *The Beijing Platform for Action*, 1995.

taken numerous steps to ensure its success.[217] This includes the adoption of *Resolution 54/4* in 2010, which specifically addressed the need to decrease the global MMR.[218] In order to achieve this reduction a panel of internal experts was assembled in 2011 to set goals towards the resolution and to further progress towards the *Platform*.[219] The panel reached the conclusion that the only truly effective way to decrease the MMR is to increase women's access to safe and appropriate healthcare services, including reliable family planning services.[220] The CSW has since focused its efforts in this area and is currently working to ensure access to these things globally.

Upon the creation of UN Women in 2010, the UN renewed their commitment to ending all forms of gender-based discrimination and continued their work towards the empowerment of women because "women's empowerment is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all."[221] Goal Five of the MDGs has significant importance for the organization.[222] It is widely believed that women's involvement in the fight to eliminate preventable maternal mortality is one of the most effective and practical ways of lowering the MMR globally.[223] UN Women strongly advocate for the involvement of women at all levels of decision-making on maternal health, from pregnant women deciding for themselves where and how to delivery their babies to women's involvement in individual Member States' health departments, because it will cause a drastic change in the ways that women's health is viewed.[224]

UN Women has outlined five ways Member States can contribute to decreasing the MMR via the empowerment of women. Supporting women's greater bargaining power and control over their healthcare and family planning decisions will allow women greater access to contraception and their ability to have their deliveries attended by trained individuals.[225] Increasing the number of women representatives in national healthcare commissions and governmental health departments will ensure that the healthcare needs of women and girls are not neglected or forgotten and all disparities in women's access to healthcare will be addressed.[226] Ensuring that all harmful and dangerous practices such as female genital mutilation, dietary restrictions for pregnant women, and any other form of gender-based violence are ceased will significantly decrease the chances of maternal mortality or other delivery complications.[227] Increasing the educational and economic opportunities for girls, including their access to fair legal practices and the assurance that they have adequate knowledge about contraception and its usage will significantly reduce the incidences of teenage pregnancy, and consequently the MMR amongst this age group.[228] Finally, switching to clean energy alternatives for cooking fuel will significantly reduce the prevalence of illness and birth defects related to in-door pollution, which disproportionately affects women and girls.[229] All of these steps work to eliminate gender-based discrimination and allow women greater freedom to fully participate in their communities.

It is commonly agreed by experts in the field of medicine and human rights that the best way to both reduce the global MMR and to facilitate the empowerment of women is to make contraceptives readily available, and to legalize abortion worldwide.[230] In fact, one-third of all maternal death could be avoided and child death could be

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[217] United Nations General Assembly, *The Beijing Platform for Action*, 1995.

[218] Commission on the Status of Women, *Panel Discussion "Eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and the empowerment of women,"* Issues Paper, 2011.

[219] Commission on the Status of Women, *Panel Discussion "Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality and Morbidity and the Empowerment of Women," Issues Paper*, 2011.

[220] Commission on the Status of Women, *Elimination of Preventable Maternal Mortality and Morbidity and the Empowerment of Women: Chair's Summary*, 2011.

[221] United Nations Population Fund, *Gender Equality: Empowering Women*.

[222] UN Women, *UN Women: Hopes are High*, 2010.

[223] Commission on the Status of Women, *Report on the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Economic and Social Council*, 2010.

[224] Commission on the Status of Women, *Report on the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Economic and Social Council*, 2010.

[225] UN Women, *Making Change Happen: Actions Necessary to Accelerate the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.*

[226] UN Women, *Making Change Happen: Actions Necessary to Accelerate the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*.

[227] UN Women, *Making Change Happen: Actions Necessary to Accelerate the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*.

[228] UN Women, *Making Change Happen: Actions Necessary to Accelerate the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*.

[229] UN Women, *Making Change Happen: Actions Necessary to Accelerate the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*.

[230] Marcotte, *Contraceptives Could Reduce Maternal Mortality by One-Third in Some Countries*, 2012.

reduced by 20%, if all women had access to effective contraceptives.[231] Having knowledge of and access to contraceptives also increases the empowerment of women because "the ability to decide when and how many children to have allows women to overcome traditional gender roles and increase their level of education, which most often leads to better health."[232] In developing countries, women constitute more than half of the agricultural workforce; women who plan their pregnancies can contribute more and have longer, healthier working lives.[233] Similarly, having spaced births and fewer pregnancies improves the likelihood of child survival and decreases the economic burden on poor families, who can spend more on childcare and education, breaking the cycle of poverty.[234] Poor families with fewer children are also more likely to send their daughters to school, which improves the lives of girls and women and moves countries significantly forward in the areas of women's empowerment.[235]

***Socio-Cultural Factors***

There are many socio-cultural factors that affect the maternal mortality rates in any given Member State. Child marriage significantly affects much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.[236] Numerous studies have shown the connection between child marriages and becoming pregnant before age 20; this is because "girls are pressured to prove their fertility soon after marrying and they have little access to information on reproductive health."[237] Girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are twice as likely as older women to die during pregnancy or in childbirth and girls ages 14 and under are five times as likely to die.[238] In many Member States, pregnancy has become the leading cause of death among girls under the age of 20.[239] Because girls' bodies are not physically prepared for childbearing, they are more likely to develop hypertension or have obstructed labor, which makes it significantly more likely that they will develop fistula - a condition in which prolonged childbirth causes a hole to form in the bladder, vagina, and/or rectum.[240] Infants born to teen mothers also suffer negative consequences.[241] These children are twice as likely to die before the age of one as those born to older mothers; they are more frequently premature or have low birth weight, and are more likely to suffer from malnutrition in the first five years of their lives.[242] It is difficult to know the exact number of girls who have been affected by child marriage; however, it is estimated that worldwide 100 million girls under 18 are married every decade.[243] According to Article 16 (2) of CEDAW all States that have ratified it are under an obligation to specify a minimum age of marriage in their country.[244] Fortunately, there are programs and laws in various Member States respecting this international obligation. India, for example, enacted the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act in 2006, which officially made all child marriages illegal and voided all marriages in which at least one person was under 18 at the time of the marriage, regardless of how much time had passed.[245]

HIV/AIDS can be both a medical and socio-cultural factor in maternal mortality.[246] It is difficult, however, to calculate the exact number of women who have died due to complication from the combination of HIV/AIDS and pregnancy.[247] Little is known about the effects of HIV/AIDS on pregnancy or vice versa; therefore, many deaths are considered to be "incidental" and not maternal.[248] The HIV/AIDS status of many women, especially in developing countries, is unknown making it nearly impossible to calculate how many have died due to pregnancy or delivery complications.[249] Nevertheless, it is important to note that HIV/AIDS can have an impact on maternal health and,

[231] World Health Organization, *Contraceptives Save Lives: Women are Dying Every Day*, 2006.
[232] World Health Organization, *Contraceptives Save Lives: Women are Dying Every Day*, 2006, p. 2.
[233] United Nation Population Fund, *Family Planning and Poverty Reduction: Benefits for Families and Nations*, 2006.
[234] United Nation Population Fund, *Family Planning and Poverty Reduction: Benefits for Families and Nations*, 2006.
[235] United Nation Population Fund, *Family Planning and Poverty Reduction: Benefits for Families and Nations*, 2006.
[236] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs*, 2007, p. 6.
[237] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs,* 2007, p. 13.
[238] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs*, 2007, p. 7.
[239] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs*, 2007, p. 7.
[240] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs*, 2007, p. 7.
[241] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage; A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs*, 2007, p. 8.
[242] Jain, S. and K. Kurz, *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs*, 2007, p. 8.
[243] United Nations Population Fund, *Child Marriage Fact Sheet*, 2005.
[244] United Nations General Assembly*, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence against Women*, 1979.
[245] Parliament of the Republic of India, *The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act*, 2006.
[246] Graham, W. and J. Hussein, *Measuring and Estimation Maternal Mortality in the Era of HIV/AIDS*, 2003.
[247] Graham, W. and J. Hussein, *Measuring and Estimation Maternal Mortality in the Era of HIV/AIDS*, 2003.
[248] Graham, W. and J. Hussein, *Measuring and Estimating Maternal Mortality in the Era of HIV/AIDS*, 2003.
[249] Horton, R., *Maternal Mortality: Who, When, Where, Why*, 2006.

consequently on maternal mortality. Recent research has shown that pregnant women living with HIV/AIDS are more likely to face problems in delivery; furthermore, a woman suffering from HIV/AIDS has an already compromised immune system, making it more likely that she will contract an illness that may lead to late term miscarriage, and this makes the likelihood of hemorrhaging significantly higher.[250] The social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS patients all over the globe has also made it difficult to treat pregnant women who may be living with the disease – many women simply refuse to be tested for HIV/AIDS because they "anticipate the ending of their relationship […], the loss of friendships, [and] isolation from the community."[251]

### Access to Adequate Healthcare

The inability for women to access safe and adequate healthcare during pregnancy and labor are a major factor in maternal mortality. One of the most considerable reasons why women do not have access to appropriate health services is lack of government policy or regulation, despite international treaties, such as *CEDAW*, that put an obligation on Member States to provide for health care.[252] Oftentimes, there is simply no budget for healthcare services in general, let alone maternal health services.[253] Frequently, Member States' governments will simply fail to create any policy concerning standards for medical practices or accessibility and without this there is no basis for guaranteeing women access to services of any kind.[254] Consequently, many doctors trained in obstetrics do not make themselves available consistently, or to those who cannot pay, and while midwifery is a common practice in many Member States there is no guarantee that the midwife has access to adequate equipment or sanitary facilities at all times.[255] These factors are exceptionally problematic for rural women who may not have access to reliable transportation or the funds necessary to pay for the passage, let alone the fees for an appropriate clinician.[256] Many women or their families decide on unattended child-birth in the home or a birth facilitated by an unskilled attendant (usually a woman in the community who has many children of her own, but no formal training in the field).[257] This type of birth leads to a high number of deaths because in most cases, the untrained attendants cannot recognize dangerous conditions and are ill-prepared to treat them.[258]

While the vast majority of maternal deaths due to inadequate healthcare occur in developing Member States, this is also a significant problem in developed Member States.[259] According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the United States is 50th in the world for maternal mortality – behind all similarly developed European states, most South-East Asian Member States, and some Middle Eastern states.[260] In fact, while the MMR has dropped 34% worldwide since 1990, it has doubled in the Unites States, reaching 13.3 deaths per 100,000 births, with over half of these having been preventable.[261] This discrepancy in healthcare disproportionately affects low-income women, especially in rural and inner-city areas, where "doctors may be unwilling or unable to provide maternal healthcare because of the high costs and low fees involved."[262] The WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, and Non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International have all stated that this has gone beyond a problem in the healthcare industry and has degraded into one of the most severe human rights crisis in the United States.[263] While this problem is more commonly documented in the United States, data analysis and research have shown that the MMR in Western Europe and Australia are underestimated.[264] This makes assessing trends and identifying high risk groups difficult or even impossible, significantly increasing the chances of an at-risk woman's pregnancy leading to complications and mortality.[265]

[250] Horton, R., *Maternal Mortality: Who, When, Where, Why*, 2006.
[251] Bukusi, E., C. Cohen, W. Holzemer, M. Onono, and J. Turan, *HIV/AIDS Stigma and Refusal of Testing Among Pregnant Women*, 2011, p. 1117.
[252] Center for Reproductive Rights, *Broken Promises: Human Rights, Accountability, and Maternal Deaths in Nigeria*, 2008.
[253] Center for Reproductive Rights, *Broken Promises: Human Rights, Accountability, and Maternal Deaths in Nigeria*, 2008.
[254] United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, *Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality Now*, 2011.
[255] United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, *Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality Now*, 2011.
[256] Center for Reproductive Rights, *Broken Promises: Human Rights, Accountability, and Maternal Deaths in Nigeria*, 2008.
[257] Every Mother Counts, *Five Barriers to Care*, 2012.
[258] Every Mother Counts, *Five Barriers to Care*, 2012.
[259] Bingham, D., F. Coeytaux, and N. Strauss, *Maternal Mortality in the United States: A Human Rights Failure*, 2011.
[260] World Health Organization, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2008*, 2010.
[261] Bingham, D., F. Coeytaux, and N. Strauss, *Maternal Mortality in the United States: A Human Rights Failure*, 2011.
[262] Amnesty International, *Deadly Delivery: The Maternal Healthcare Crisis in the USA*, 2010, p. 20.
[263] World Health Organization, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2008*, 2010.
[264] Atrash, H., S. Alexander, and C. Berg, *Maternal Mortality in Developed Countries: Not Just a Concern of the Past*, 2005.
[265] Atrash, H., S. Alexander, and C. Berg, *Maternal Mortality in Developed Countries: Not Just a Concern of the Past*, 2005.

*Unsafe Abortions*

Globally approximately 46 million abortions are performed each year, of which about 19 million are outside the legal and formal healthcare system.[266] In developing Member States approximately one-third of all pregnancies are unplanned, 19% of these are terminated, and nearly half of all abortions performed are considered "unsafe."[267] Unsafe abortion is an abortion performed "by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards [for safety], or both" and can result in infertility, lifelong health problems, or in severe cases death.[268] In Member States where contraceptive use is low, abortion is illegal, or finding a trained physician is difficult and expensive, women who experience unplanned pregnancies, especially those who are not married, will go to great measures to terminate it.[269] Many women attempt to perform an abortion themselves by drinking toxic fluids such as bleach or turpentine, inserting foreign objects into their vaginas, or causing external injury to themselves by jumping off a roof or throwing themselves down stairs.[270] Additionally, many women will go to untrained abortionists who often work in unsanitary conditions, are unprepared to handle medical emergencies, and can cause uterine punctures by improperly performing dilation or by improperly performing the abortion which can cause severe injury and infections.[271] All of these situations are extremely unsafe and throughout the world, 5 million women per year are hospitalized for unsafe abortion, of whom 11% die.[272] Of course, this number only reflects those who are taken to receive emergency services, not those who die before they can receive them or those who are never taken at all.[273] While mortality due to unsafe abortion is considered in the statistics for maternal mortality, the officially reported numbers are believed to be substantially lower than actual cases; many families will not report the true reason of a woman's death due to shame about abortion or their unmarried daughter's pregnancy.[274]

*Case Study: Maldives*

Since the adoption of the MDGs, the Maldives has shown an intense commitment to achieving them and the small island State has made significant progress.[275] They have "fully achieved" five goals and are "on track" to achieve the remaining goals by the 2015 deadline.[276] This makes the Maldives the only MDG+ country in South Asia.[277] MDG+ is a program created for Member States who are set to achieve all of the MDGs on or before the 2015 deadline and they have now been given a new set of even more ambitious goals (these goals are likely to be given to all Member States in 2015 as a continuation of the current program).[278] The Maldives have made remarkable improvements in the area of public health, especially in the reduction of child and maternal mortality.[279] By 2005, the MMR in the country had fallen 93%, and continues to fall.[280] There has also been significant improvement in the number of delivering women attended by professionals: 64% of deliveries were conducted by doctors and 36% by other well trained professionals - meaning 100% of births in the Maldives are now performed and attended by properly trained individuals.[281]

In order to achieve the health-related MDGs, the government of the Maldives updated their official health policy, which now states "the enjoyment of the highest attainable level of health is a basic right of every citizen," and there is a special emphasis on women and children's health.[282] An important part of the national healthcare efforts is

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[266] Belton, S., A. Whittaker, and L. Barclay, *Maternal Mortality, Unplanned Pregnancy, and Unsafe Abortion*, 2009.

[267] Guttmacher Institute, *Worldwide Abortion: Legality, Incidence, and Safety*, 2011.

[268] Ahman, E. C. Dolea, and I. Shah, *The Global Burden of Unsafe Abortion in the Year 2000*, 2000.

[269] Ahman, E. C. Dolea, and I. Shah, *The Global Burden of Unsafe Abortion in the Year 2000*, 2000.

[270] Haddad, L., *Unsafe Abortion: Unnecessary Maternal Mortality*, 2009.

[271] Haddad, L., *Unsafe Abortion: Unnecessary Maternal Mortality*, 2009.

[272] Ahman, E. and I. Shah, *New Estimates and Trends Regarding Unsafe Abortion Mortality*, 2011.

[273] Haddad, L., *Unsafe Abortion: Unnecessary Maternal Mortality*, 2009.

[274] Ahman, E. C. Dolea, and I. Shah, *The Global Burden of Unsafe Abortion in the Year 2000*, 2000.

[275] United Nations Development Programme, *Millennium Development Goals in the Maldives*, 2010.

[276] United Nations Development Programme, *Millennium Development Goals in the Maldives*, 2010.

[277] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West , *Post-2015: MDG Monitoring Framework*, 2012.

[278] United Nations International Children's Fund, *Millennium Development Goals Plus Program*, 2004.

[279] World Health Organization, *Country Cooperation Strategy 2007-2011: Republic of Maldives*, 2007.

[280] World Health Organization, *Country Cooperation Strategy 2007-2011: Republic of Maldives*, 2007.

[281] World Health Organization, *Country Cooperation Strategy 2007-2011: Republic of Maldives*, 2007.

[282] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region: Maldives*, 2005, p. 47.

increasing the awareness of family planning and contraceptives.[283] The effects of this plan can clearly be seen in the drop in the country's crude birth rate, from 41 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 18 per 1,000 in 2003.[284] Married couples are encouraged to utilize contraceptives and the country's new family planning facilities provide counseling in family planning strategies.[285] Finally, the government has launched a campaign encouraging young people from across its 200 islands to go into the field of medicine and to practice on their home island, ensuring that there is easy access to clinicians regardless of the remoteness of the area.[286]

The government of the Maldives is also making substantial efforts in the area of empowering women.[287] Women are now encouraged to participate in all levels of society, including in government, and over the last 10 years women have been appointed and elected to office including the Presidential Cabinet position of Attorney General.[288] Progress has been slow in some communities where women working outside the home are stigmatized.[289] However, there has been noticeable progress in the area of men's involvement in child rearing and ensuring that women have safe pregnancies and deliveries.[290] The country has seen a dramatic decrease in instances of domestic violence over the last 10 years.[291] Men in the country have reported higher levels of participation in the home and there has been an increase in the belief that women are not solely responsible for taking care of the family.[292] The country's Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, has stated that he "looks forward to continuing the promotion of maternal health in the Maldives, and [hopes] that women will continue to gain status in [their] society, because this is the only way to ensure a healthy, prosperous Maldives."[293]

*Conclusion*

Over the last 20 years the global MMR has almost halved.[294] These numbers are encouraging but they only tell part of the story. 66 Member States, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa will fall quite short of achieving the 75% decrease target of MDG Goal Five.[295] Fortunately, plans of action have been put into place to ensure a discernible drop in the MMRs in Sub-Saharan Africa.[296] A focus on national and district level healthcare planning is necessary for the plausible achievement of Goal Five – a national focus on family planning, midwife training, and emergency services would help the situation substantially.[297] Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA has said that he is "very pleased to see that the number of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth continues to decline [….] but we can't stop here. Our work must continue to make every pregnancy wanted and all childbirth safe."[298]

While researching this topic, delegates should consider the Commission on the Status of Women's role in combating global and regional maternal mortality ratios, and how this is related to the empowerment of women. Furthermore, the human rights violations and the lack of social justice for mothers, children, and pregnant women should be considered. How can the Commission utilize its resources to both empower women to achieve a higher status in society while simultaneously working to improve their access to sanitary and appropriate healthcare? Should traditional midwife training be utilized to ensure all women have access to appropriate prenatal and delivery services? How can access to birth control and family planning programs, including safe abortive services help to reduce the maternal mortality ratio?

[283] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region: Maldives*, 2005.

[284] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region: Maldives*, 2005.

[285] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region: Maldives*, 2005.

[286] World Health Organization, *Country Cooperation Strategy 2007-2011: Republic of Maldives*, 2007.

[287] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asian Region: Maldives*, 2005.

[288] South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation, *H.E. Uz. Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed assumes charge as the Secretary General of SAARC*, 2011.

[289] World Health Organization, *Country Cooperation Strategy 2007-2011: Republic of Maldives*, 2007.

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[291] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region: Maldives*, 2005.

[292] World Health Organization, *Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in the South-East Asia Region: Maldives*, 2005.

[293] Mohamed, A.J., *Fourth SAARC Health Ministers Meeting*, 2012, p. 7.

[294] Mills, S. and E. Suzuki, *Maternal Mortality: Why Have Some Regions Seen Progress While Others Struggle?*, 2012.

[295] Mills, S. and E. Suzuki, *Maternal Mortality: Why Have Some Regions Seen Progress While Others Struggle?*, 2012.

[296] Paxton, A. and T. Wardlaw, *Are We Making Progress in Maternal Mortality?*, 2011.

[297] United Nations Population Fund, *Maternal Deaths Halved in 20 Years, but Faster Progress Needed*, 2012.

[298] United Nations Population Fund, *Maternal Deaths Halved in 20 Years, but Faster Progress Needed*, 2012.

# Annotated Bibliography

Atrash, H., S. Alexander, and C. Berg. (2005). Maternal Mortality in Developed Countries: Not Just a Concern of the Past. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 186 (4): 700-705.

> *The issue of maternal mortality is commonly discussed as the problem of developing nations; however, it is a far-reaching issue that can affect people in all Member States. This document serves as an admonition that maternal mortality is a current issue in developed nations that needs to be addressed and remedied. Atrash et al. give useful research statistics and case studies that put maternal mortality in developed Member States into perspective and give suggestions as to what needs t*o be done to reverse this problem.

Baker, P., R. Gaenbauer, and L. Kenny. (2011). Saving Mothers' Lives: Progress in Achieving MDG Goal Five. *Obstetricians and Gynecologists*, 13 (4): 259-262.

> *The medical perspective on progress towards MDG Goal Five, this document uses empirical research to show and explain the triumphs of the attempt to decrease the maternal mortality ratio and the shortfalls. Because the report is given from a medical perspective, clinical terminology is used and technical procedures are described, which gives a different perspective and useful information about the fight to decrease maternal mortality.*

Every Mother Counts. (2012). *Five Barriers to Care*. Retrieved on September 1, 2012, from: http://everymothercounts.org/issue.

> *An easy to follow, interactive article about the five main reasons women worldwide do not receive appropriate care during pregnancy and delivery. Each section gives detailed and complete reasons as to why it is a significant problem and how it can lead to mortality, with links to UN, NGO, academic, and various governmental documents that give solutions to the given problem. Each section also provides links to articles which give further information and details about the issue itself or related issues.*

Graham, W. and J. Hussein. (2003). Measuring and Estimating Maternal Mortality in the Era of HIV/AIDS. *Journal of HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries*, 2 (8): 8-13.

> *Graham and Hussein explain the difficulties of measuring the maternal mortality rates in African Member States with high instances of HIV/AIDS and how this affects the ability to decrease the ratio. There is also a discussion about the possible effects of HIV/AIDS on pregnancy and vice versa and how this can affect pregnant women living with the disease. The document clearly outlines one of Africa's greatest challenges in the area of both maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS treatment and shows just how difficult decreasing maternal mortality can be in States with other severe health related issues.*

Horton, R. (2006). Maternal Mortality: Who, When, Where, Why. *The Lancet*, 368 (9542): 1189-1200.

> *One of the most important keys to understanding the global maternal mortality issue is understand who is dying, when and where they die, and why this is happening. Horton's report clearly outlines all of these areas and gives comprehensive, easy to understand information on maternal mortality. The essay goes into great details about each of these questions and explains the possible reasons that these things may be factors and what needs to be done globally to reduce the ratio.*

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. (2010, 13-14 March). *Report on the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Economic and Social Council*. Retrieved on September 2, 2012, from: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/305/76/PDF/N1030576.pdf.

> *The Commission's report on the status of maternal mortality and the empowerment of women, it outlines the cause and effects of maternal mortality globally and how the ratio can be decreased. The report explains the things that the Commission has already put into place in order to combat maternal mortality through the means of empowering women. There is a huge emphasis on the importance of women's participation in healthcare decision making and how increasing the status of women in society will eliminate preventable maternal mortality.*

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2012, June 15). *Goal 5, Improving Maternal Health: Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. Retrieved on August 3, 2012, from: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf#page=32.

> *The official report on the progress being made towards the MDGs and the programs being used to move things forward, this section is the focus on Goal Five, Improving Maternal Health. It answers the questions about what has already been done to improve access to appropriate healthcare services and how the maternal mortality ratio has been reduced in various regions. The document provides both UN bodies' work and the work of NGOs. There is also a special emphasis on the things that still need to be done to further reduce the maternal mortality ratio, especially in those Member States that are far behind the goal.*

United Nations Population Fund. (2006). *Family Planning and Poverty Reduction: Benefits for Families and Nations*. Retrieved on September 28, 2012, from: http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning/mediakit/docs/new_docs/sheet4-english.pdf.

> *Contraceptives are commonly cited as the most effective way to reduce the maternal mortality rates in any give Member State, but they are also an effective way of reducing poverty and improving economies. The UNFPA's report explains how all of these are interconnected with each other and specific ways in which contraceptive use can help economic growth on both individual and countrywide levels.*

United Nations Population Fund (N.A.). *Gender Equality: Empowering Women*. Retrieved on September 22, 2012, from: http://www.unfpa.org/gender/empowerment.htm.

> *The UNFPA outlines the ways in which commonly cited solutions to the MDGs are connected to their actual achievement. The Gender Equality section explains how the heightened status of women and girls in society will help with the achievement of all MDGs, not just Goal Five. The document gives the definition of women's empowerment and explains how it can be utilized as a means of achieving the MDGs globally.*

UN Women. (N.A.). *Making Change Happen: Actions Necessary to Accelerate the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*. Retrieved on September 2, 2012, from: http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MDGsAndGenderEquality_1_MakingChangeHappen.pdf.

> *Often times, MDG achievement strategies are spoken of in abstract notions; however, this document gives concrete examples of what UN Women, the CSW, and affiliated agencies are doing to accelerate the achievement of Goal Five and increase the empowerment of women worldwide. The easy to read, pamphlet style document, in a how-to guide for reducing maternal mortality and empowering women – it outlines the major solutions and gives real world examples as to how they would and have worked.*

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# Rules of Procedure
## Commission on the Status of Women

*Introduction*
1. These rules shall be the only rules which apply to the Commission on the Status of Women (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") and shall be considered adopted by the Board prior to its first meeting.
2. For purposes of these rules, the Director, the Assistant Director(s), the Under-Secretaries-General, and the Assistant Secretaries-General, are designates and agents of the Secretary-General and Director-General, and are collectively referred to as the "Secretariat."
3. Interpretation of the rules shall be reserved exclusively to the Director-General or her or his designate. Such interpretation shall be in accordance with the philosophy and principles of the National Model United Nations and in furtherance of the educational mission of that organization.
4. For the purposes of these rules, "President" shall refer to the chairperson or acting chairperson of the Commission.
5. The Commission shall report its substantive decisions to the Economic and Social Council Plenary Session.

## I. SESSIONS

### Rule 1 - *Dates of convening and adjournment*
The Commission shall meet every year in regular session, commencing and closing on the dates designated by the Secretary-General.

### Rule 2 - *Place of sessions*
The Commission shall meet at a location designated by the Secretary-General.

## II. AGENDA

### Rule 3 - *Provisional agenda*
The provisional agenda shall be drawn up by the Director-General and communicated to the Members of the Commission at least sixty days before the opening of the session.

### Rule 4 - *Adoption of the agenda*
The agenda provided by the Director-General shall be considered adopted as of the beginning of the session. The order of the agenda items shall be determined by a majority vote of those present and voting.

*The vote described in this rule is a procedural vote and, as such, observers are permitted to cast a vote. For purposes of this rule, those present and voting means those Member States and observers, in attendance at the meeting during which this motion comes to a vote. Should the Commission not reach a decision by conclusion of the first night's meeting, the agenda will be automatically set in the order in which it was first communicated.*

### Rule 5 - *Revision of the agenda*
During a session, the Commission may revise the agenda by adding, deleting, deferring or amending items. Only important and urgent items shall be added to the agenda during a session. Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda shall be limited to three speakers in favor of, and three against, the inclusion. Additional items of an important and urgent character, proposed for inclusion in the agenda less than thirty days before the opening of a session, may be placed on the agenda if the Commission so decides by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. No additional item may, unless the Commission decides otherwise by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, be considered until a commission has reported on the question concerned.

*For purposes of this rule, the determination of an item of an important and urgent character is subject to the discretion of the Director-General, or his or her designate, and any such determination is final. If an item is determined to be of such a character, then it requires a two-thirds vote of the Commission to be placed on the agenda. The votes described in this rule are substantive votes, and, as such, observers are not permitted to cast a vote. For purposes of this rule, —the members present and voting — means members (not including observers) in attendance at the session during which this motion comes to vote.*

### Rule 6 - Explanatory memorandum

Any item proposed for inclusion in the agenda shall be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum and, if possible, by basic documents.

## III. SECRETARIAT

### Rule 7 - Duties of the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General or her/his designate shall act in this capacity in all meetings of the Commission.

2. The Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General, shall provide and direct the staff required by the Commission and be responsible for all the arrangements that may be necessary for its meetings.

### Rule 8 - Duties of the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall receive, print, and distribute documents, reports, and resolutions of the Commission, and shall distribute documents of the Commission to the Members, and generally perform all other work which the Commission may require.

### Rule 9 - Statements by the Secretariat

The Secretary-General, or her/his representative, may make oral as well as written statements to the Commission concerning any question under consideration.

### Rule 10 - Selection of the President

The Secretary-General or her/his designate shall appoint, from applications received by the Secretariat, a President who shall hold office and, *inter alia*, chair the Commission for the duration of the session, unless otherwise decided by the Secretary-General.

### Rule 11 - Replacement of the President

If the President is unable to perform her/his functions, a new President shall be appointed for the unexpired term at the discretion of the Secretary-General.

## IV. LANGUAGE

### Rule 12 - Official and working language

English shall be the official and working language of the Commission.

### Rule 13 - Interpretation (oral) or translation (written)

Any representative wishing to address any body or submit a document in a language other than English shall provide interpretation or translation into English.

*This rule does not affect the total speaking time allotted to those representatives wishing to address the body in a language other than English. As such, both the speech and the interpretation must be within the set time limit.*

## V. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

### Rule 14 – Quorum

The President may declare a meeting open and permit debate to proceed when representatives of at least one third of the members of the Commission are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of the members of the Commission shall be required for any decision to be taken.

*For purposes of this rule, members of the Commission means the total number of members (not including observers) in attendance at the first night's meeting.*

*Rule 15 - General powers of the President*
In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by these rules, the President shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Commission, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. The President, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings of the Commission and over the maintenance of order at its meetings. He or she shall rule on points of order. He or she may propose to the Commission the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times the representative of each member may speak on an item, the adjournment or closure of the debate, and the suspension or adjournment of a meeting.

*Included in these enumerated powers is the President's power to assign speaking times for all speeches incidental to motions and amendment. Further, the President is to use her/his discretion, upon the advice and at the consent of the Secretariat, to determine whether to entertain a particular motion based on the philosophy and principles of the NMUN. Such discretion should be used on a limited basis and only under circumstances where it is necessary to advance the educational mission of the Conference and is limited to entertaining motions.*

*Rule 16 – Authority of the Commission*
The President, in the exercise of her or his functions, remains under the authority of the Commission.

*Rule 17 – Voting rights on procedural matters*
Unless otherwise stated, all votes pertaining to the conduct of business shall require a majority of the members present and voting in order to pass.

*For purposes of this rule, the members present and voting mean those members (including observers) in attendance at the meeting during which this rule is applied. Note that observers may vote on all procedural votes; they may, however, not vote on substantive matters (see Chapter VI). There is no possibility to abstain on procedural votes.*

*Rule 18 - Points of order*
During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

*Such points of order should not under any circumstances interrupt the speech of a fellow representative. They should be used exclusively to correct an error in procedure. Any questions on order arising during a speech made by a representative should be raised at the conclusion of the speech, or can be addressed by the President, sua sponte, during the speech. For purposes of this rule, the members present and voting mean those members (including observers) in attendance at the meeting during which this motion comes to vote.*

*Rule 19 - Speeches*
No representative may address the Commission without having previously obtained the permission of the President. The President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The President may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

*In line with the philosophy and principles of the NMUN, in furtherance of its educational mission, and for the purpose of facilitating debate, the Secretariat will set a time limit for all speeches which may be amended by the President at his/her discretion. Consequently, motions to alter the speaker's time will not be entertained by the President.*

*Rule 20 - Closing of list of speakers*
Members may only be on the list of speakers once but may be added again after having spoken. During the course of a debate, the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Commission, declare the list closed. When there are no more speakers, the President shall declare the debate closed. Such closure shall have the same effect as closure by decision of the Commission.

*The decision to announce the list of speakers is within the discretion of the President and should not be the subject*

*of a motion by the Commission. A motion to close the speakers list is within the purview of the Commission and the President should not act on her/his own motion.*

### Rule 21 - Right of reply
If a remark impugns the integrity of a representative's State, the President may permit that representative to exercise her/his right of reply following the conclusion of the controversial speech, and shall determine an appropriate time limit for the reply. No ruling on this question shall be subject to appeal.

*For purposes of this rule, a remark that impugns the integrity of a representative's State is one directed at the governing authority of that State and/or one that puts into question that State's sovereignty or a portion thereof. All interventions in the exercise of the right of reply shall be addressed in writing to the Secretariat and shall not be raised as a point of order or motion. The reply shall be read to the Commission by the representative only upon approval of the Secretariat, and in no case after voting has concluded on all matters relating to the agenda topic, during the discussion of which, the right arose.*

### Rule 22 - Suspension of the meeting
During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension of the meeting, specifying a time for reconvening. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be put to a vote immediately, requiring the support of a majority of the members present and voting to pass.

### Rule 23 - Adjournment of the meeting
During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move to the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be put to the vote immediately, requiring the support of a majority of the members present and voting to pass. After adjournment, the Commission shall reconvene at its next regularly scheduled meeting time.

*As this motion, if successful, would end the meeting until the Commission's next regularly scheduled session the following year, and in accordance with the philosophy and principles of the NMUN and in furtherance of its educational mission, the President will not entertain such a motion until the end of the last meeting of the Commission.*

### Rule 24 - Adjournment of debate
During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. Two representatives may speak in favor of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. The President may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

### Rule 25 - Closure of debate
A representative may at any time move the closure of debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified her/his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion shall be accorded only to two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be put to the vote immediately. Closure of debate shall require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. If the Commission favors the closure of debate, the Commission shall immediately move to vote on all proposals introduced under that agenda item.

### Rule 26 - Order of motions
Subject to rule 18, the motions indicated below shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or other motions before the meeting:
> a) To suspend the meeting;
> b) To adjourn the meeting;
> c) To adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
> d) To close the debate on the item under discussion.

### Rule 27 - Proposals and amendments
Proposals and amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretariat. Any proposal or amendment that relates to the substance of any matter under discussion shall require the signature of twenty percent of the members of the Commission [sponsors]. The Secretariat may, at its discretion, approve the proposal or amendment for circulation among the delegations. As a general rule, no proposal shall be put to the vote at any meeting of the

Commission unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations. The President may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments or of motions as to procedure, even though such amendments and motions have not been circulated. If the sponsors agree to the adoption of a proposed amendment, the proposal shall be modified accordingly and no vote shall be taken on the proposed amendment. A document modified in this manner shall be considered as the proposal pending before the Commission for all purposes, including subsequent amendments.

*For purposes of this rule, all proposals shall be in the form of working papers prior to their approval by the Secretariat. Working papers will not be copied, or in any other way distributed, to the Commission by the Secretariat. The distribution of such working papers is solely the responsibility of the sponsors of the working papers. Along these lines, and in furtherance of the philosophy and principles of the NMUN and for the purpose of advancing its educational mission, representatives should not directly refer to the substance of a working paper that has not yet been accepted as a draft resolution during formal speeches. After approval of a working paper, the proposal becomes a draft resolution and will be copied by the Secretariat for distribution to the Commission. These draft resolutions are the collective property of the Commission and, as such, the names of the original sponsors will be removed. The copying and distribution of amendments is at the discretion of the Secretariat, but the substance of all such amendments will be made available to all representatives in some form.*

### Rule 28 - Withdrawal of motions
A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended. A motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any member.

### Rule 29 - Reconsideration of a topic
When a topic has been adjourned, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the Commission, by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, so decides. Reconsideration can only be moved by a representative who voted on the prevailing side of the original motion to adjourn. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be put to the vote immediately.

## VI. VOTING

### Rule 30 - Voting rights
Each member of the Commission shall have one vote.

*This rule applies to substantive voting on amendments, draft resolutions, and portions of draft resolutions divided out by motion. As such, all references to member(s) do not include observers, who are not permitted to cast votes on substantive matters.*

### Rule 31 - Request for a vote
A proposal or motion before the Commission for decision shall be voted upon if any member so requests. Where no member requests a vote, the Commission may adopt proposals or motions without a vote.

*For purposes of this rule, proposal means any draft resolution, an amendment thereto, or a portion of a draft resolution divided out by motion. Just prior to a vote on a particular proposal or motion, the President may ask if there are any objections to passing the proposal or motion by acclamation, or a member may move to accept the proposal or motion by acclamation. If there are no objections to the proposal or motion, then it is adopted without a vote.*

### Rule 32 - Majority required
1. Unless specified otherwise in these rules, decisions of the Commission shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.
2. For the purpose of tabulation, the phrase "members present and voting" means members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members which abstain from voting are considered as not voting.

*All members declaring their representative States as "present and voting" during the attendance roll call for the meeting during which the substantive voting occurs, must cast an affirmative or negative vote, and cannot abstain on substantive votes.*

### Rule 33 - Method of voting

1. The Commission shall normally vote by a show of placards, except that a representative may request a roll call, which shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the members, beginning with the member whose name is randomly selected by the President. The name of each member shall be called in any roll call, and one of its representatives shall reply "yes," "no," "abstention," or "pass."

*Only those members who designate themselves as present or present and voting during the attendance roll call, or in some other manner communicate their attendance to the President and/or Secretariat, are permitted to vote and, as such, no others will be called during a roll-call vote. Any representatives replying pass must, on the second time through, respond with either a yes or no vote. A pass cannot be followed by a second pass for the same proposal or amendment, nor can it be followed by an abstention on that same proposal or amendment.*

2. When the Commission votes by mechanical means, a non-recorded vote shall replace a vote by show of placards and a recorded vote shall replace a roll-call vote. A representative may request a recorded vote. In the case of a recorded vote, the Commission shall dispense with the procedure of calling out the names of the members.

3. The vote of each member participating in a roll call or a recorded vote shall be inserted in the record.

### Rule 34 - Explanations of vote

Representatives may make brief statements consisting solely of explanation of their votes after the voting has been completed. The representatives of a member sponsoring a proposal or motion shall not speak in explanation of vote thereon, except if it has been amended, and the member has voted against the proposal or motion.

*All explanations of vote must be submitted to the President in writing before debate on the topic is closed, except where the representative is of a member sponsoring the proposal, as described in the second clause, in which case the explanation of vote must be submitted to the President in writing immediately after voting on the topic ends.*

### Rule 35 - Conduct during voting

After the President has announced the commencement of voting, no representatives shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual process of voting.

*For purposes of this rule, there shall be no communication amongst delegates, and if any delegate leaves the Commission room during voting procedure, they will not be allowed back into the room until the Commission has convened voting procedure.*

### Rule 36 - Division of proposals and amendments

Immediately before a proposal or amendment comes to a vote, a representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment should be voted on separately. If there are calls for multiple divisions, those shall be voted upon in an order to be set by the President where the most radical division will be voted upon first. If objection is made to the motion for division, the request for division shall be voted upon, requiring the support of a majority of those present and voting to pass. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given only to two speakers in favor and two speakers against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment which are approved shall then be put to a vote. If all operative parts of the proposal or of the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

*For purposes of this rule, most radical division means the division that will remove the greatest substance from the draft resolution, but not necessarily the one that will remove the most words or clauses. The determination of which division is most radical is subject to the discretion of the Secretariat, and any such determination is final.*

### Rule 37 - Amendments

An amendment is a proposal that does no more than add to, delete from, or revise part of another proposal.

*An amendment can add, amend, or delete operative clauses, but cannot in any manner add, amend, delete, or otherwise affect preambulatory clauses.*

***Rule 38 - Voting on amendments***
When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal shall be voted on first and then the amendment next furthest removed there from, and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted on.

*For purposes of this rule, furthest removed in substance means the amendment that will have the most significant impact on the draft resolution. The determination of which amendment is furthest removed in substance is subject to the discretion of the Secretariat, and any such determination is final.*

***Rule 39 - Order of voting on proposals***
If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Commission decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted.

***Rule 40 - The President shall not vote***
The President shall not vote but may designate another member of her/his delegation to vote in her/his place.

## VII. CREDENTIALS

***Rule 41 - Credentials***
The credentials of representatives and the names of members of a delegation shall be submitted to the Secretary-General prior to the opening of a session.

***Rule 42 - Authority of the General Assembly***
The Commission shall be bound by the actions of the General Assembly in all credentials matters and shall take no action regarding the credentials of any member.

## VII. PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

***Rule 43 - Participation of non-Member States***
The Commission shall invite any Member of the United Nations that is not a member of the Commission and any other State, to participate in its deliberations on any matter of particular concern to that State.
A sub-commission or sessional body of the Commission shall invite any State that is not one of its own members to participate in its deliberations on any matter of particular concern to that State. A State thus invited shall not have the right to vote, but may submit proposals which may be put to the vote on request of any member of the body concerned.

*If the Commission considers that the presence of a Member invited according to this rule is no longer necessary, it may withdraw the invitation. Delegates invited to the Commission according to this rule should also keep in mind their role and obligations in the commission that they were originally assigned to. For educational purposes of the NMUN Conference, the Secretariat may thus ask a delegate to return to his or her commission when his or her presence in the Commission is no longer required.*

***Rule 45 - Participation of national liberation movements***
The Commission may invite any national liberation movement recognized by the General Assembly to participate, without the right to vote, in its deliberations on any matter of particular concern to that movement.

***Rule 46 - Participation of and consultation with specialized agencies***
In accordance with the agreements concluded between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, the specialized agencies shall be entitled: a) To be represented at meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary organs; b) To participate, without the right to vote, through their representatives, in deliberations with respect to items of concern to them and to submit proposals regarding such items, which may be put to the vote at the request of any member of the Commission or of the subsidiary organ concerned.

***Rule 47 - Participation of non-governmental organization and intergovernmental organizations***
Representatives of non-governmental organizations/intergovernmental organizations accorded consultative observer status by the Economic and Social Council and other non-governmental organizations/intergovernmental organizations designated on an ad hoc or a continuing basis by the Commission on the recommendation of the Bureau, may participate, with the procedural right to vote, but not the substantive right to vote, in the deliberations of the Commission on questions within the scope of the activities of the organizations.