

Hilton 2019

UN Women

Committee Overview

This committee will be run Harvard Style, meaning that resolutions are not to be written until the date of the conference itself. Any resolutions written beforehand will not be accepted and the delegate will not be considered for awards. Additionally, it is highly suggested that every delegate write at least one position paper on a topic, as doing so will be necessary to be considered for an award. Position papers should be turned in at the beginning of the conference.

All delegates are expected to come to the first day of committee with a working knowledge of all or most of the topics, as well as the policies of the countries that they represent. The purpose of the UN Women committee is working for the empowerment and rights of women globally and to work collaboratively to address conflicts affecting women across the world. We expect members of this committee to be able to communicate effec-

Committee Description

Improving Menstrual Health in South Asia

Combating Sexual Harassment in Garment Factories in Asia

Trafficking of Brides from Myanmar to China

Honduras' Abortion Ban

Chairs

Alice Yawman | alicey1312@gmail.com

Hello delegates! My name is Alice Yawman and I have been involved in Model UN as either a page or a delegate since eighth grade. I am now a junior at Brighton High School where I am a soccer goalie and an editor for our school newspaper. I'm also a Student Ambassador for the Four Walls Project, a charity which builds houses for families in Nicaragua. I've enjoyed being a UN Women delegate in the past and I'm so excited to be chairing this committee!

Anushka Mandava | anushkamandava@gmail.com

Hi delegates! My name is Anushka Mandava and I was a MUN page sixth through eighth grade and have been a delegate since ninth grade. I'm a junior at Pittsford Sutherland High School and this is my first time chairing. I'm a member of my class Student Council, of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, and of Debate Club. In my free time, I love to paint and volunteer at the hospital. I'm looking forward to a fun and memorable committee!

Improving Menstrual Health in South Asia



Many countries in South Asia, including Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and others, have cultural taboos and stigmas related to women's periods. This means that many women in these countries don't have access to proper menstruation supplies and healthcare.

Some women in South Asia are too ashamed to buy sanitary products, while others were simply never educated about periods and aren't aware of their biological causes or the existence of products like pads and tampons. For example, 80% of Pakistani girls and women do not have access to sanitary products. Many of these girls are not taught about menstruation and are surprised and confused when they get their first period.

According to the India National Family Health Survey, 40% of Indian women ages 15-24 have no access to sanitary supplies. Many girls in South Asia skip or drop out of school because of their periods, and certain employers in the region are reluctant to hire women because they might have to miss work for their period. In the worst cases, this can induce women to take dangerous medicines or undergo surgery so that they will no longer menstruate.

Cultural stigmas can also result in exclusion from daily life for some women and girls. In parts of Nepal, menstruating women are confined to an isolated hut or room for the duration of their period. The practice, known as Chhaupadi, is technically illegal in the country, but still occurs in certain regions. In 2017, UN Women partnered with an organization called Restless Development Nepal to help end this practice by providing education and support regarding proper menstrual hygiene to community leaders and local and government officials.

In some South Asian countries, local and national governments, as well as independent citizens, have started taking steps to improve menstrual health and education. Notably, the Indian state of Maharashtra has recently made menstrual education mandatory in schools, and other states in India have followed with similar initiatives.

How can the UN work to end the stigma against women's periods in South Asia? Can the UN collaborate with South Asian governments and independent organizations to achieve this goal? How can education about menstruation be effectively provided to women in South Asia?

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2018/01/21/shame-stigma-taboo-menstruating-south-asia/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-48836690>

<https://www.newsdeeply.com/womensadvancement/articles/2018/11/15/tackling-menstrual-hygiene-among-adolescents-in-india>

Sources:

Combating Sexual Harassment in Garment Factories in Asia



There are approximately 75 million garment workers in the world, 75% of whom are women. Particularly in Asia, women employed in the garment industry are often forced to endure verbal and physical harassment, including inappropriate sexual comments and advances, insults, and bodily contact like pinching and groping. This can come from their male coworkers or supervisors, and factory management often turns a blind eye to such behavior. Women are also harassed or even fired for requesting maternity leave, sanitary products or rest time during their periods.

Harassment has been documented on a wide scale in garment factories in India, Pakistan, Cambodia, China, and other Asian nations. 68% of Cambodian women employed in the garment industry say that they have been made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe at work, and about half of Indian women employed in the industry have experienced verbal abuse at work. This type of treatment often occurs in workplaces which already have harsh conditions and low wages, making an already difficult situation even worse for the women employed there.

The UN has made efforts to improve the culture within the garment industry in the past. A 2014 UN Trust Fund project provided anti-harassment training to over 18,000 workers and managers in Indian and Bangladeshi factories. Another initiative, called the Better Work program, was founded by the UN International Labor Organization in 2007 and operates in multiple Asian countries, including Bangladesh and Cambodia. Its strategies for improving conditions for factory workers include reducing long hours and eliminating unjust threats of dismissal, goals which could make these workplaces more hospitable for female employees.

Although countries like India and Pakistan already have laws against sexual harassment, they often go unenforced, and there are 59 countries around the world which have no specific protections against sexual harassment. Although this committee will focus on Asia's garment industry, workplace harassment is an issue throughout the world, and most countries represented in this committee will have their own connection to this topic.

How can standards of behavior within Asian garment factories be changed to create more women-friendly workplaces? How can we induce a broader cultural change that will lead to the fair treatment of female employees? What policies can nations adopt to stop workplace harassment and discrimination?

Sources:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/12/combating-sexual-harassment-garment-industry>

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/garment-industry-violence-infographic/>

<https://asiafoundation.org/2019/03/13/curbing-sexual-harassment-in-chinas-garment-industry/>

Trafficking of Brides from Myanmar to China



Women and girls from Kachin and northern Shan States in Myanmar are being sold into sexual slavery in China. The Myanmar and Chinese governments both have failed to stem the trafficking of ethnic Kachin women as "brides" into China. Additionally, law enforcement officers in China and Myanmar have put in little effort to find these girls. When women escape and run to the Chinese police, they are jailed for immigration violations rather than being treated as victims of crime. Families who seek help to find their loved ones are either turned away or are asked to pay.

Due to a decline in population of women and the now abolished "one child" policy in China, the gender imbalance is leaving many Chinese men without wives. Therefore, the demand for women is high and families in China are willing to buy brides from Myanmar. It is extremely difficult to estimate the number of women and girls being trafficked as there are no reliable statistics on either side. Data shows that around 226 women were trafficked to China in 2017, but this number only represents a small number of cases; it's hard to gather accurate statistics, as many cases of missing women go unreported.

Most of the trafficked women suffer ongoing physical and emotional abuse, having been locked up, raped, and forced to bear the child of the captor. Reports have claimed that these women were raped repeatedly until they became pregnant. Survivors have explained that Chinese families are more interested in having a baby rather than a "bride". Once the baby is born, the captors sometimes allow women to escape. The women are easy prey for traffickers, as many don't have jobs or legal protection.

Previously, the Chinese government passed numerous laws against trafficking and ratified the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol in 2009. Additionally, there are severe penalties for buyers and traffickers. However, due to weak enforcement and corruption among officials, it has been extremely difficult to implement these policies. This results in the women being vulnerable to trafficking and forced marriage.

How can the UN provide resources/help to the Myanmar women that have escaped from their captors? What can the UN do to assist law enforcement officers in China and Myanmar to find the women? What policies can China and Myanmar pass to stop the trafficking of the Myanmar women?

Sources: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/03/21/give-us-baby-and-well-let-you-go/trafficking-kachin-brides-myanmar-china>

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/22/asia/kachin-women-trafficked-china-hrw-intl/index.html>

<https://time.com/5555695/china-women-trafficking-myanmar/>

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Honduras' Abortion Ban



In Honduras, abortion in all instances is illegal, even in cases of rape, incest, when a woman's life is in danger, and when the fetus can't survive outside the womb. Any woman who has an abortion, and anyone found to have helped her, can be charged with crime and imprisonment. For example, any woman found guilty of obtaining an abortion could still be sentenced to up to six years in prison.

Many Honduran women use unsafe abortion methods to end their pregnancy. An abortion pill is a medicine that ends an early pregnancy. Many women have carried out clandestine abortions or unsafe abortions which usually are extremely dangerous. For example, women have used sharp objects to break their amniotic sac, have used over-the-counter drugs, illegal drugs, or drugs that are known to result in miscarriages to end their pregnancy.

The Honduran government has passed a law which bans emergency contraception- also called the "morning after pill". This pill is used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or a contraceptive failure. The harsh abortion laws in Honduras force women to lie about their condition when they go to the doctor. For example, women experiencing complications from abortion pills and other methods often claim their symptoms are a result of a miscarriage. Symptoms of abortion pills include high-fever, nausea, and bleeding, and intense abdominal pain.

Previous cases have shown that women have been arrested as the doctors reported the abortions. For this reason, many women would rather suffer the consequences of unsafe abortion methods rather than seek help. Since many of these pregnancies are unwanted or unplanned, they result in severe consequences. For example, Honduran women miss school, are pressured to get married before they're ready, and are often forced to leave their community out of shame.

Research from around the world has shown that when abortion is banned, women don't have fewer abortions, but rather, riskier ones, as they end pregnancies without medical care. As many women end pregnancies, the unsafe abortions are endangering their lives. It is estimated that around 50,000 to 80,000 abortions occur each year and that more than 8,600 Honduran women were admitted to the hospital in 2017 for complications from abortion or miscarriage, including uncontrolled bleeding.

Recently, the UN has declared abortion a human right. UN Human Rights Committee's General Comment on the Right to Life affirms that abortion is a human right, that preventable maternal deaths are a violation of the right to life, and that the right to life begins at birth. The document explains that governments should provide safe, legal and effective access to abortion if a pregnancy causes pain or suffering to a woman.

How can the UN work to help the women affected by the Honduras' abortion ban without infringing on national sovereignty or the nation's laws? What are some other ways these women could receive help or information regarding abortions? What steps can be taken to change the stigma around abortion?

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/06/life-or-death-choices-women-living-under-honduras-abortion-ban>

Sources:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/06/honduras-abortion-bans-dire-consequences>

<http://news.trust.org/item/20190606172540-rktad/>