Promote Women’s Political Participation & Leadership

United Nations Development Program

Annual Spring 2020 Model UN Conference

Global Classrooms DC

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

Established in 1965, UNDP serves as the UN’s global development agency to provide knowledge, experience, and resources to help countries create their own solutions to global and national development challenges. UNDP works in about 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and build resilience to shocks and crises. They help countries develop strong policies, skills, partnerships, and institutions so they can sustain their progress. Through all those areas UNDP encourages the protection of human rights, and the empowerment of women, minorities, and the poorest and most vulnerable people in society.\(^1\) To better focus its efforts, UNDP uses the following approaches, known as Signature Solutions, to meet their goals:

- Keeping people out of poverty
- Governance for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies
- Crisis prevention and increased resilience
- Environment protection and nature-based solutions for development
- Clean, affordable energy
- Women’s empowerment and gender equality

As a part of UNDP’s effort to help countries meet the sustainable goals, the organization has adopted the Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021 that lays out the organization’s plans to achieve gender equality across all its work.\(^2\) The strategy provides detailed plans to add plans to protect gender equality in every part of UNDP’s work to reduce poverty, build resilience, and achieve peace in communities and territories.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While many women have the right to participate in political processes, their families, and their societies, women still struggle to have a voice with national and local decision-making bodies. Women’s political participation leads to more inclusive, responsive, equal, and democratic societies. That participation can include everything from voting in an election to serving as a representative to leading an entire country. Yet in many countries, women face the challenges of discrimination, violence, and a lack of

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1 \(\text{“UNDP About Us.” United Nations Development Programme.} \text{http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/about-us.html.}\)

support, experience, and money that prevent them from taking active roles in leadership and political participation.

Globally, women do not have equal access to participation in political life, or equal access to positions of leadership. For example, only 24.3% of all national parliamentarians were women as of February 2019, and as of January 2019, only 20.7% of government ministers were women.³ Outside of government, while there are more women CEOs of Fortune 500 companies than ever before, women still represent just 6.6% of all Fortune 500 CEOs.⁴ Since gender equality and the political empowerment of women are essential for democracies and economic development worldwide, it is important that global and regional organizations help develop policies and design effective action plans to support gender equality.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS?**

Women make up half of the world’s population, but governments and national legislatures are largely dominated by men, which makes it difficult for women to make their voices heard. Important global issues like climate change and global health often disproportionately impact women, and their voices are important to discussions about how the global community should act to confront these challenges. As Ban Ki-Moon, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations said, “the world will never realize 100% of its goals if 50% of its people cannot realize their full potential.”⁵

Female participation in the political process can be anything from women voting to running for office or advocating for issues important to them. Research shows that women’s leadership in political decision-making processes improves those systems.⁶ Whether a legislator is female or male has a distinct impact on their priorities, and women are associated with policies that improve the quality of life for families, women, and racial or ethnic minorities.⁷ They often raise important issues that others overlook, and studies have shown that the empowerment of women

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is the most effective way to help a country develop. In addition, when women are active in societies recovering from conflict, peace is more likely to last longer and reach more people.

**WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES TO WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP?**

For much of history, women were not allowed to vote or participate in politics. The first country to grant women’s suffrage was New Zealand in 1893, with other countries soon granting limited rights. When a shortage of labor led to women taking on traditionally-male jobs in World War I, people’s ideas of what women could do began to change, and many countries began granting the right to vote to women. Importantly, this right was extended to all adult women in New Zealand, including white women, Māori women, women who didn’t own land, and other discriminated groups.  

In 1979, the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The result of more than 30 years of work by the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Convention is often compared to an international bill of rights for women. It is also a call to action for countries to guarantee that women can enjoy all of their rights, specifically their right to vote, hold public office, or represent their countries on international levels.

In 2015, all 193 member countries in the UN adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a plan to end poverty, protect the planet, and guarantee equality for all. Out of 17 total goals, Sustainable Development Goal #5 sets targets to achieve gender equality and promote women’s leadership and participation at all levels, and Sustainable Development Goal #16 promotes responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. Empowering women by increasing access to political participation and positions of leadership is vital to achieve gender equality and a sustainable world.

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Gender equality and the political empowerment of women is key to strong democracies. Ensuring women’s and men’s equal participation in governance and the decisions that affect their lives are crucial to achieve inclusive and effective governance.

However, despite some progress, globally women remain underrepresented in all aspects of political life. As of June 2019, 11 women are serving as Head of State and 12 are serving as Head of Government around the world. Further, in 103 countries, women’s representation in elected bodies varied from less than 1% to 50%, with the average being only 26%. As of February 2019, only 3 countries have 50% or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda, Cuba, and Bolivia. The UN has identified that 30% of women in a legislature is enough to make meaningful change, but many countries fall short of that point.

Even when women have the freedom to pursue positions of political power or leadership, they face many gender-based obstacles to success. It is very common that, when women take

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13 Inter-Parliamentary Union. “Women in national parliaments,” as at 1 February 2019

positions of power in government, companies, or in the public eye, they face enormous “resistance, discrimination, social stereotypes, and double standards.” Other obstacles include gender-based bias media treatment, an absence of family-friendly or gender-sensitive workplaces, a lack of confidence in their capabilities, and not enough effort to recruit female candidates for political campaigns. In addition, women who are appointed to ministry or cabinet-level positions are usually leading social issues such as education or health, while other portfolios such as foreign affairs, defense, or finance remain dominated by men.

Women make strong leaders and bring a unique set of strengths to the table when in management positions. Women are competent leaders with strong traits including risk-taking, resilience, agility, managing ambiguity, and embracing teamwork. Leadership teams that include women are more effective because they have a strong ability to read people, or knowing something about them without them saying anything at all. Increasing the number of women in leadership positions has the potential to increase economic growth and promote gender inclusion.

However, according to Forbes, out of 279 companies that employ a total of 13 million employees, women represent just 23% of senior vice presidents, 29% of the vice presidents, and 34% of those at the senior manager and director levels. Further, a 2018 study determined that women are 21% less likely to be promoted to manager, and African American women are 40% less likely than men to be promoted to manager.

### PAST UN ACTION

Historically, there have been several international agreements regarding women’s leadership and political participation. A few months after the UN was first founded, it created the Commission on the Status of Women as the global body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. More recently, the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women committed 189 governments to take bold action on critical areas for women. In addition, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in 2011 on women’s political participation. The resolution stresses

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17 “What Makes Women CEOs Different?” Korn Ferry Institute, [https://www.kornferry.com/institute/women-ceo-insights](https://www.kornferry.com/institute/women-ceo-insights)
20 “Women in the Workplace 2018” Lean In, [https://womenintheworkplace.com](https://womenintheworkplace.com)
the importance of women’s political participation and calls on UN Member States to take measures including:

- To review the impact of their electoral systems on the political participation and representation of women, and to adjust or reform those systems
- To strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that discriminate against women, and to adopt policies that promote women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making
- To promote awareness and recognition of the importance of women’s participation in the political process at the community, local, national, and international levels
- To investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of female elected officials and candidates for political office, to create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences, and to take all appropriate steps to hold those responsible
- To encourage greater involvement of women who may be marginalized, including indigenous women, women with disabilities, women from rural areas, and women of any ethnic, cultural or religious minority

As the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration approaches in 2020, governments and UN agencies are all working to mobilize the world to finally achieving human rights for all women and girls, culminating at the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2020.

CASE STUDIES IN PROMOTING WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

France

Women have long been underrepresented in French politics. Women were given the right to vote in 1944, much later than many other western countries. Although women make up 53% of the voting population, they made up only 11% of deputies in the National Assembly and 6% in the Senate. In the government, prominent women have served as ministers, with the most famous example being Simone Veil, who promoted access to abortion as the health minister.

Despite these strides, women continued to be vastly underrepresented in French politics. Beginning in the late 1990s, female politicians began advocating for a policy of equal access for men and women to elected positions, known as gender parity. In 1999, the French government amended the Constitution and introduced a system that requires political parties to nominate an

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equal number of men and women candidates in city-wide and national elections. Political parties that fail to do so will have their nominees declared ineligible or face financial penalties.

The reforms were very popular, with 74% of voters in favor when the law was first adopted. But applying the law has not been easy. In some areas, a lack of women volunteers have made it difficult for political parties to reach their parity quota, and some parties had to withdraw their list from participating. Other female politicians found the law hypocritical and insulting to women, and claim that high female participation can be achieved without forced parity laws because the public already favors greater female participation.

Nevertheless, the gender parity law has seen impressive results. In the most recent French election in 2017, 223 of the 577 newly elected deputies were female, meaning that 38% of the National Assembly is now female. French President Emmanuel Macron’s party, La République En Marche!, made nominating women a central part of their platform, leading to the largest number of women ever represented in the Assembly.

However, it will likely be many years before France can reach full parity. Some political parties opt to pay the financial penalty rather than nominate greater numbers of women. Often, political parties nominate women in seats where they are unlikely to do well, simply to satisfy the quota.

The French government has also passed laws making the workplace more gender-equal and accessible for women. Mandatory negotiations between companies and trade unions on gender equality allows women to fight gender discrimination in job recruitment and allow them greater access to professional training courses. New laws also require that large companies’ board of directors must discuss their policy on pay equity, to encourage gender equality at top corporate leadership positions.

The Philippines

Mindanao is the second largest island in the Philippines and is home to many indigenous peoples and ethnic groups, many of whom lost their land in the early 20th century due to colonization. As a result, these people, called the Moros, have a claim to historical injustice and insist on creating

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an independent Moros homeland. Violence erupted between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which led to over 6,000 deaths between 1989 and 2012.

Negotiations between the Moros group and the Philippine government began in 2014. Unlike previous peace negotiations, which did not include any women, the 2014 negotiations included three women in the 12-person negotiation team. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, who headed the government’s negotiating panel, was the first woman to sign a major peace agreement. For comparison, in the 61 peace agreements between 2008 and 2012, only two of them had women as a signatory. This progress represented a major step forward for the participation of women in the peace-building process.28

The inclusion of women led to the final agreement allowing for reserved seats for women in the Bangsamoro Parliament, and at least one woman appointed to the cabinet. The Parliament also agreed to ensure that women are represented in decision and policy-making.29 Finally, the transition commission included Froilyn Mendoza, who represented the voice of indigenous peoples and succeeded in including the protection of women’s health in the final provisions.

Women were able to have a much greater role in the Mindanao peace negotiations because the emphasis was on building a society without the unjust political and economic structures that sparked the conflict, rather than simply ending violence without addressing their underlying causes. Women were especially able to understand and navigate the complicated relationships between the different groups, which allowed them to connect with both parties.

Based on the results of these negotiations, the UN recommended that future negotiations teams be open to civilians rather than exclusively military members, which means that women would more likely be able to participate.30 It also encouraged countries to popularize the idea of women being a part of peacemaking and create public opinion that would favor their participation.

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30 Ibid., 15.
The United States

Although many people think that Democrats and Republicans are completely opposed to each other in the US Congress, there are still important areas where lawmakers from both parties continue to work closely with each other.

One such area is the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues in the House of Representatives. The Caucus focuses on major policy decisions that impact women and families, and includes all 102 female House members from both parties (above image). Within state legislatures, similar bipartisan women’s caucuses exist, working to increase the number of female representatives and support female legislators. Sometimes, these caucuses are apolitical or nonpartisan, instead being a group of female legislators to address important topics such as health care, government budgets, education, economic development, and many others.31 Other caucuses focus on using female legislators as an example to inspire young women to take leadership positions and participate in politics.

Research shows that female representatives are more likely than their male counterparts to work with lawmakers from the opposing party, and women are much more results-oriented, meaning they are more concerned with achieving an outcome rather than receiving publicity or credit. Their common experience as women in a male-dominated space helps to encourage bipartisan work, and women in leadership positions in both the US House and Senate help create opportunities for other women in Congress. Women in Congress point to bipartisan, women-only activities such as the congressional women’s softball team and the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues as key to fostering a collaborative environment. At a time when the political climate is increasingly polarized between Democrats and Republicans, this caucus offers lawmakers a way to bridge the divide between the two parties and work on gender issues important to both parties.

Groups like the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues are especially important, as women have spent decades working to break the “glass ceiling,” or an unofficial barrier

for women in American politics. In 2016, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to win a presidential nomination from a major political party in the US. In the 2018 midterm elections, a record-breaking number of women were elected into office, leading to a Congress with 102 women—nearly a quarter of the House of Representatives. Of these, more than a third of them won their seat for the first time in the 2018 election. Similarly, in the Senate, 25 of the 100 senators are currently women, following a trend of greater public support for women in political office. According to a Pew Research Center survey, 59% of adults in the US agree that there are too few women in high political offices and top executive business positions today. That survey also found that 49% of US adults believe that gender discrimination is a major reason for why there aren’t more women in office. The American public is recognizing faster than ever the challenges that women face when running for office or for business executive positions.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has traditionally been a male-dominated society. Until very recently, women could not make major decisions such as traveling without the permission or presence of a male guardian. While the Kingdom has recently loosened some of its restrictions, women still face major difficulties in living independently. Women continue to be forbidden from interacting with men not related to them, and most public buildings have separate entrances for different genders. Until 2015, Saudi women were not allowed to vote, making it the last country in the world to allow women’s suffrage.

Even after Saudi Arabia granted the right for women to vote in municipal elections, women continue to face many obstacles. When women first voted in December 2015, they made up only 6% of registered voters. Some common obstacles included the timing of the registration period, which is only open during the country’s most popular vacationing period and during August, when many stay inside because the daily temperatures rarely fall below 104°F. Providing the necessary documents were equally difficult, since registering to vote requires a proof of residency. Because many women rely on their male guardians to own property, this proved to be a challenge for those registering to vote.

In addition, the most conservative groups of Saudi society have launched a campaign against women’s suffrage, with one prominent Muslim cleric saying that “it is forbidden for Muslim women to participate” and warning of “consequences in the afterlife” for those who voted. These social pressures mean that many women do not consider registering to vote, and for those that do, there is a sense that their votes will not mean anything.

Despite the discouraging numbers, women are without a doubt becoming more integrated with society, especially under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. For the first time, the government is actively promoting the benefits of working women, and has stated that increasing female workforce participation is an important goal for the Kingdom’s future. In order for women to be able to participate equally in government and business, however, social ideas about what is appropriate for women will need to change in Saudi Arabia, and the process can take many years.

**New Zealand**

New Zealand prides itself as being a world leader in gender equality and women’s rights. It was the first country to grant women universal suffrage in 1893, and 38% of its Parliament is female. New Zealand has had a woman in each of its high offices, and the current Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, has made history by having a baby while in office, showing that motherhood does not need to impede women from pursuing their goals.

Its greatest success lies in female political participation within indigenous and minority groups. The Maori, an indigenous group in New Zealand, has suffered ethnic discrimination for a long time. When New Zealand’s Constitution was first written in 1852, the Maori could not vote because they did not own land. For Maori women, who face

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discrimination for being both an ethnic minority and female, it was extremely difficult to make their voices heard in society. With the help of parliamentary seats designated or set aside for Maori people, these women were able to run for office once they won the right to vote.\textsuperscript{38}

Although there continues to be debate over the effectiveness of Maori-specific seats, they are now an important part of New Zealand’s politics. Strikingly, women are actually better represented in Maori seats than in non-Maori seats, and at times, there are over 20\% more women in Maori seats, showing that minority women can achieve strong levels of representation when given the opportunity.\textsuperscript{39}

CONCLUSION

Research and evidence clearly show that women can contribute valuable input in politics and more participation by women is key to reaching an inclusive society. However, women continue to face both physical and social obstacles that discourage women from running or being elected to office. Delegates should carefully consider how to encourage women to participate in politics and identify ways to do so on all levels of politics, whether it be international bodies like the UN or local elections. Finally, delegates should consider how countries can help each other improve women’s political participation.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why is women’s participation in politics and leadership positions important? Why is equal participation in politics a concern for people of all genders?
2. How do issues of participation in politics affect women in your country?
3. How is the lack of women’s leadership linked to other social, political, and economic issues in your country?
4. What are other obstacles to achieving women leaders not described here?
5. What is your government’s response to the lack of women in leadership positions?
6. What are some local initiatives you would suggest to confront gender inequality in public representation?
7. What are some solutions that other countries have tried and you want to adopt into your country?

GLOSSARY

\textbf{Advocacy:} Support for a particular cause or policy
\textbf{Apolitical:} Not involved in politics
\textbf{Board of Directors:} A group of people that makes sure the company acts on the behalf of shareholders; sets policies for corporate management and the company’s direction
\textbf{Caucus:} A conference of lawmakers that share a common goal

CEO: Chief Executive Officer; the highest-ranking person in a company or other institution who is ultimately responsible for making important decisions for their institution; does their job by working with a Board of Directors
Disclosure: The unfair treatment of one particular person or group of people because of sex, religion, nationality, ethnicity (culture), race, or other personal traits
“Double Standard”: A set of principles that applies differently and usually more rigorously to one group of people than to another
Election: A formal and organized choice by vote of a person for a political office or other position
Empowerment: The ability of a person to take control of their lives with the help of government and civil society
Executive: A person responsible for running an organization or government agencies
Fortune 500 Companies: The Fortune 500 is Fortune magazine’s yearly list of 500 of the largest US companies ranked by total revenue for their respective fiscal years
Gender equality: The equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys
Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021: This UNDP strategy is a guide to incorporate gender equality into all parts of the UNDP’s work as part of the UN 2030 Agenda
Gender parity: Equal access to the same resources or opportunities for both men and women; often used as a statistical measurement to show the ratio of access between men and women
Glass Ceiling: An unofficially recognized barrier to advancement in a field or profession; especially affects women and minority
Governance: The exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels
Head of Government: The highest official in the executive branch of a sovereign state, a federated state, or a self-governing colony, who often presides over a cabinet, a group of ministers or secretaries who lead executive departments.
Head of State: The public persona who officially represents the national unity and legitimacy of a sovereign state and formally represents the people of the nation.
Legislature (also known as parliament): An important part of most governments consisting of an assembly of people with the authority to make laws for a country.
Minister: A senior government official who heads a government department, and works with other ministers to make and implement decisions on policies.
Municipal elections: Local elections for positions in a town or city
Nonpartisan: Not biased towards any political group or party
Parliamentarians: People represent specific areas of a country, and make the laws for the entire country; representatives
Pay equity: The idea that people in the same workplace should be paid equally for the same work, regardless of their gender, sex, ethnicity, or beliefs
Political participation: The freedom to speak out, assemble, and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected, and to hold office at all levels of government.
Quota: A fixed number that a group or person can receive or must contribute. In this case, political parties have to nominate the number of women required by the quota or be punished
Resilience: The capability of systems and individuals to cope with significant challenges
**Signatory:** A person or country that signs a treaty or agreement

**Strong democracies:** A system where people’s human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, promoted and fulfilled, allowing them to live with dignity.

**Sustainable Development Goal #5:** One goal in the UN’s plan to end poverty, protect the planet, and guarantee equality for all. Goal #5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

**Trade Unions:** An organization of a group of workers to protect their rights and interests; often negotiates with companies on behalf of a group of workers

**Women’s Suffrage:** The right for women to vote in elections

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**EXTRA RESOURCES**

*In our Extra Resources section, we provide resources for students to use in their research for the Spring Conference. Students are responsible for researching their position for their assigned countries, and these resources help point them in the right direction.*

**UN Women: National-level review of progress in promoting women’s political participation**

The UN compiled reports on every country’s progress towards implementing the Beijing Declaration. The reports cover trends, achievements, and remaining gaps in each country. These reports provide a valuable overview of each country’s policies and how they approach this critical issue.

Read more here: [https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#regional-review-processes](https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#regional-review-processes)

**ICAN’s Better Peace Tool (PDF): practical steps for the effective inclusion of women peacebuilders and gender perspectives in mediation, conflict prevention, and peacemaking**

An open source guide offering practical steps for the effective inclusion of women peacebuilders and gender perspectives in mediation, conflict prevention, and peacemaking. Helping to make the word and spirit of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 agenda a reality.


**The International Center for Research on Women (PDF): Opportunities and Challenges of Women’s Participation in India**

A report that surveyed nearly 3,000 elected female and male village leaders that examines the disconnect between how often women raise gender issues such as domestic violence with their representatives and how often these issues are discussed in local assemblies and governing bodies.
UN Women News Article: Following elections, proportion of Senegal’s female parliamentarians almost doubles

After a new parity law was established, Senegal’s parliament saw the number of female representatives almost double in 2012.

UN Women (PDF): The Beijing Declaration and Platforms for Action Turns 20

A report on the progress of implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platforms for Action in 2015. The report finds that the world as a whole has seen slow and uneven improvements for women and girls, and for some it has worsened.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE): Promoting women’s political participation and gender equality

The OSCE works to facilitate cooperation between European countries and has a number of documents and reports on promoting women’s political participation in Europe, including on gender equality in elected office and on women’s participation in elections.

The Brookings Institute: Women’s Political Participation and Development

The Brookings Institute discusses the positive impact women have on the political process in India with two reports that show that women raise economic performance and help lower maternal mortality rates.

Women Deliver: Why Women in Politics?

This article from Women Deliver offers an overview of why women’s participation in politics is so important.

**World Federation of United Nations Association (PDF): Increasing Women’s Political Participation**

The World Federation of United Nations Association offers a primer on best practices from around the world on increasing women’s political participation and addressing the factors that deter women from entering politics.

Read more here: https://wfuna.org/files/inline-files/wfuna_-_best_practices_for_increasing_women_s_political_participation_d....pdf

**Women’s Political Participation & Decision-Making Power is Essential to Creating a Gender Equal World**

This Medium blog post by Women Deliver discusses how women in decision-making positions is important in all sectors of society. It also discusses some solutions that focus on meaningful engagement of women in politics and business.

Read more here: https://medium.com/@WomenDeliver/womens-political-participation-decision-making-power-is-essential-to-creating-a-gender-equal-3c73ebe0e722

**Global Fund for Women: ‘A women’s place’ is on the ballot**

This article covers eight examples of women’s participation in elections as candidates and their impacts.

Read more here: https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/top-8-women-and-politics-around-world/

**VIDEO: UN Women on Policy Spotlight on Women’s Political Participation**

UN Women’s Director of Policy, Purna Sen, speaks with UN Women Policy Advisor Gabriella Borovksy about women’s political participation and violence against women in politics.


**UN Women: Women in Politics, 2017**

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women’s map displays global rankings of women in executive and parliamentary branches of government as of January 1st, 2017.

GLOBAL CLASSROOMS DC POSITION PAPER OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

What is a Position Paper?
A position paper is a short document that outlines a country’s opinion on an issue. The paper includes a short summary of what the issue or problem is, explains why the country is interested in the issue, and communicates the country’s stance on what should be done to address the issue. A position paper is written as if you were the actual representative of the country stating its position. Your personal opinions on the issue should not be included. A position paper is not a summary of your country’s GDP, government, economy, languages, etc. unless directly relevant to the issue. Only one position paper is written per country, per grade school committee; if there are 2 or 3 delegates representing the same country on a committee, they should write the paper together.

Why write a Position Paper?
Writing a position paper will help you organize why an issue matters to your country and what your country wants done on the issue. The first thing you will likely do in committee is present an opening speech about your country’s position. You should be able to pull portions of a well written position paper into an introductory speech on your country’s perspective. Also, your delegation is not eligible to win best / outstanding delegation without the submission of a position paper. There are separate awards given for best position paper.

How to Write a Position Paper
(1) Research the Issue. The questions you want to answer are:
1. How does this issue affect your country?
2. How does this issue affect your country’s neighbors or allies?
3. Is this a global problem that impacts everyone?
4. What would your country like to see done on this issue?
5. Are there countries or groups of people who will be particularly sensitive to addressing this issue?
6. Are there any conventions or resolutions on the topics that your country has signed or ratified?
7. What are UN actions on the issue? Has your country supported or opposed these actions?
8. Keep in Mind: What a country says, and what it actually believes should be done may be different. Also, some countries may believe that no action should be taken on an issue. They may disagree with how others feel or may not want international involvement. It is okay if your position is that the international community should do nothing, but you will need to explain why.

(2) Brainstorm Specific Actions. Come up with 3-4 specific things that can be done to reach the outcome your country desires. For example: “The United States believes we should send a peacekeeping mission to monitor human rights abuses in Syria and encourage talks between both sides.” You will present these ideas in committee as possible solutions to the problem and attempt to pass a resolution which includes these actions.
(3) Outline Your Paper. Make an outline of what points you want to cover in your paper and the order in which you would like to address them. Remember a good paper should briefly explain the problem, explain why your country cares about the issue, and inform others what your country should like to see done. If you know other countries favor a solution that you will disagree with, make sure to include why your country disagrees.

(4) Write your Paper. Position papers should be no more than one page long and be written from the perspective of the country you are representing. Rather than being a report on the topic, a position paper should explain what your country wants to see done to address the issue. Start by giving a brief summary of the issue and how it impacts your country. Then explain the specific actions you would like to see taken. Close by summarizing your country’s overall position. Proper grammar and spelling are a must!

Award Criteria and Eligibility

- One position paper award will be given out per committee.
- The ideal position paper will have a clearly defined and summarized topic with your country’s position clearly outlined. Points are also awarded for organization, style and correct grammar.
- GCDC Staff will be fact checking position papers, so be sure to include the most up to date information and a works cited (or list of all the sources you use).
  - Proper source citation: if an idea or quote came from another source, you must provide a footnote / citation.
- Papers will be disqualified if the conference staff has discovered that students did not write their own papers or that content has been plagiarized.
- Make sure your position paper must have the required header below! Do not create any additional title pages - points will be deducted for improper format.
- Formatting Requirements: 500 words minimum, 1,500 words maximum. Times New Roman font, 12-point size
- All position papers must be sent to gcdc@unanca.org by March 25, 2020 at 11:59 PM EST.

REQUIRED POSITION PAPER HEADER

Committee: Examples: UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
Topic: Climate Change
Country: The United States of America
Delegate Name(s) and Grades: Bob Smith and Jane Doe (gr. 7)
School (Teacher/Coach): Madison High School (Mr. Jones)

The United States of America believes …