



**THE UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER
EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

KENYA MODEL UNITED NATIONS

20TH SESSION

2ND MOCK DEBATE

AGENDA

**CURBING AND PREVENTING THE PREVALENCE OF
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

LETTER FROM THE DIAS

Dear delegates,

We are pleased to welcome you to United Nations Women which we are simulating this 2nd Mock Debate of the 20th Session. The dias shall comprise of:

Valyne Laibuta - Chair

Samuel Mue - Co-Chair

Aisha Anwar - Committee Secretary

Qaliti Roba - Committee Rapporteur

For this session and in particular the upcoming debate, we have aptly selected topics that will yield intriguing and fruitful deliberations. They touch on both local and global issues. It is therefore our expectation that you will give your utmost contribution during the debate.

To enable you to get the most out of this experience, we'd like you to familiarize yourself with the given topic. This can be achieved through a thorough reading of this background guide coupled with vast research on the issues raised by the guide topic.

We encourage you to carry out extensive research about your country's position and also give a substantial position paper as a write-up. Kindly note that the Position Papers, which are due by **15th January, 2021 11:59 pm**, shall be sent to the Committee email;

specializedagency2@kenyamodelun.or.ke

We look forward to meeting you all during the Mock Debate.

Regards,

UNW Dias.

COMMITTEE BACKGROUND



On 2nd July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly voted unanimously to create a new organization that would accelerate the progress in meeting the needs of women and girls globally. The United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women which would be referred to as UN Women with its executive board consisting of 41 member states. The creation of UN Women as part of the UN reform agenda aimed at bringing together resources and mandates for a great impact. This new entity merged and built upon the work of four previously distinct parts of the UN System, which focused on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW, established in 1946);
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW, established in 1976);
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI, established in 1997);
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, established in 1976).

MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

UN Women, which became operational in January 2011, is a strong champion for women and girls at the global, regional and local levels. UN Women is meant to enhance the efforts of other

UN Agencies like UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA that do have the responsibility to work for gender equality and women empowerment in their respective fields. UN Women main roles include; supporting inter-governmental bodies like the Commission on the Status of Women in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms and it will help member states to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support and as well forging partnerships¹. Additionally, it will keep the UN system accountable to its own commitments on gender equality including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

To add on, UN Women works to actualize the Sustainable Development Goals reality for women and girls and seeks to include equal participation of women in all aspects of life. They are four strategic priorities:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

¹<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2010/7/un-creates-new-structure-for-empowerment-of-women>

AGENDA ITEM



Following the theme of the 20th Session of the Kenya Model United Nations: *Be the Change, Take the Challenge*; the UN Women committee shall be discussing the following topic:

“Curbing and Preventing the Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence Against Women”.

Gender-based violence against women means violence that is directed against a woman simply because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. The various examples of gender-based violence include but are not limited to, overt physical abuse which includes battering, sexual assault, at home or in the workplace, psychological abuse which includes deprivation of liberty, forced marriage, sexual harassment, at home or in the workplace, deprivation of resources needed for physical and psychological well-being including health care, nutrition, education, means of livelihood, and treatment of women as commodities which includes trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation. Gender-Based Violence against women has become an epidemic that is prevalent in all corners of the world. It is a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in gender stereotypes and gender inequality within most societies.

We believe the issue of gender-based violence is one that requires not only international cooperation but solutions to put an end to the injustices that women worldwide face.²

² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women>

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

History of the Problem

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. It knows no social, economic or national boundaries. Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime.³ The numbers of women and girls affected by this problem are staggering. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) data from 2013,⁴ one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way, most often by someone she is familiar or intimately acquainted with.

Moreover, one in five women is sexually abused as a child, as per a 2014 report.⁵

Gender-based violence against women means violence that is directed against a woman simply because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), as the benchmark for international legislation on tackling gender-based violence, frames gender-based violence and violence against women as '*a gendered act which is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women*'.

Gender-based violence can take various forms, that is, physical, sexual and/or psychological. Examples of Gender-based violence include but are not limited to,⁶ domestic violence, sex-based harassment, Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriage, psychological abuse, trafficking and online violence.

Gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. Justifications for violence frequently are on based gender norms, that is, social norms about the proper roles and responsibilities of men and women. These cultural and social norms socialize males to be aggressive, powerful, unemotional and controlling and contribute to a social acceptance of men as dominant. Similarly, expectations of females as passive, nurturing, submissive, and emotional also reinforce women's roles as weak, powerless, and dependent upon men. The socialization of both men and women has resulted in an unequal power relationship between men and women.⁷

³ <https://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence#>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564625>

⁵ https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/status_report/2014/en/

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https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en

⁷ http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/svaw/advocacy/modelsessions/causes_effects.PDF

Gender-based violence undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence. Victims are exposed to sexual and reproductive health complications as well as mental health. Under the Istanbul Convention acts of gender-based violence are emphasized as resulting in ‘physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.’

The Current Situation

As of 2020, emerging data and reports from those on the frontlines show that the ongoing global pandemic of COVID-19 is fueling widespread violations of women’s rights, including elevated risks of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. In a statement, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UNW, likened Gender-based violence to a shadow pandemic where she stated that "with 90 countries in lockdown, four billion people are now sheltering at home from the global contagion of COVID-19. It's a protective measure, but it brings another deadly danger. We see a shadow pandemic growing, of violence against women."⁸

As more countries report infection and lockdown, more domestic violence helplines and shelters across the world are reporting rising calls for help. Helplines in Singapore and Cyprus have registered an increase in calls by more than 30 per cent. In Australia, 40 percent of frontline workers in a New South Wales survey reported increased requests for help with violence that was escalating in intensity.⁹

During COVID-19 lockdowns, many women and girls have been isolated in unsafe environments where they are at heightened risk of experiencing intimate partner violence. Around one-third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, and 18% have experienced such violence in the past 12 months. In the most extreme cases, violence against women is lethal: globally, an estimated 137 women are killed by their intimate partner or a family member every day.¹⁰ “Confinement is fostering the tension and strain created by security, health, and money worries. And it is increasing isolation for women with violent partners, separating them from the people and resources that can best help them. It’s

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<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/en/desa/world%E2%80%99s-women-2020>

a perfect storm for controlling, violent behaviour behind closed doors. And in parallel, as health systems are stretching to breaking point, domestic violence shelters are also reaching capacity, a service deficit made worse when centres are repurposed for additional COVID-response.”¹¹

The increase in domestic violence against women must be dealt with urgently with measures embedded in economic support and stimulus packages that meet the gravity and scale of the challenge and reflect the needs of women who face multiple forms of discrimination.¹² Gender-based violence is not only a violation of individual women's and girls' rights. The impunity enjoyed by perpetrators, and the fear generated by their actions, affects all women and girls. It also takes a toll on a global level, stunting the contributions women and girls can make to international development, peace and progress.

There is therefore a clear and urgent need for reform and action to ensure prevention and redress of domestic violence against women and girls is prioritized across the globe. We encourage the implementation of policies, and sustainable solutions and models to tackle domestic violence within member states and globally.



¹¹ Supra note 9

¹² ibid

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE UN/UNW TO CURB AND PREVENT THE PREVALENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

UN Women is guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948 by 58 member states of the United Nations; the UDHR states that human rights are fundamental to all human beings and governments are required to take action to protect the rights of all human beings.¹³ In 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW defines what constitutes as discrimination against women, though it does not mention violence against women explicitly, the convention establishes norms, standards and obligates the 187 states that have ratified the convention to end discrimination.¹⁴ In 1993 the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on Violence Against Women which sought to define violence. The result of the adoption of this declaration was that the Commission on Human Rights adopted 1994/45 that appointed a Special Rapporteur on violence against women. The four mandates of the Special Rapporteur include: seeking information on violence against women and recommending measures, ways and means to eliminate violence against women.¹⁵

Between 2008 to 2011, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched the UNFPA Strategy and Framework of Action to Address Gender-Based Violence. The framework identified eight priority areas in which UNFPA should direct programming to address Gender Based Violence.¹⁶ These priority areas include:

1. Policy, Legal and Protection Mechanisms and Funding Frameworks
2. Data collection and Analysis
3. Focus on Sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS
4. Humanitarian Action and Beyond
5. Adolescents and Youth
6. Men and Boys
7. Faith-Based Networks and other custodians of cultural Norms
8. Focus on the Most Vulnerable and Marginalized

¹³<https://vawnet.org/sc/international-laws-and-policies-prevent-and-intervene-violence-against-women>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶<https://vawnet.org/material/unfpa-strategy-and-framework-action-addressing-gender-based-violence-2008-2011>

One of the actions that UN Women has taken against gender-based violence against women is through advocacy. UN Women manage the Secretary-General's campaign UNiTE to end violence against women which initiated Orange Day proclaiming every 25th day of the Month as a day to raise awareness. The campaign has gained international recognition thanks to celebrities and high profile activists who have garnered support for the campaign.¹⁷ In 2012, UN Women launched an advocacy initiative known as '**COMMIT**' which has encouraged 60 countries from every region to make concrete pledges towards ending violence against women. By the end of 2013, 63 countries and the European Union had joined the initiative by improving and passing laws, ratifying international conventions, launching public awareness campaigns, providing safe houses or free hotline services, free legal aid for survivors and putting in place education programs that address gender violence and gender stereotypes.¹⁸

UN Women has also taken action against gender-based violence through increasing access to services through their partnership with the United Nations Population Fund Activities (UNFPA) which has developed the Essential Services Program which aims at improving the quality and access of services globally.¹⁹ UN Women also manages the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, the fund supports innovative approaches that aim to end violence against women. Since the formation of the fund, the fund has provided 426 grants to support innovative approaches that aim to end violence against women in 136 countries, the total has amounted to USD 116 million.²⁰

¹⁷https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20women%20evaw-thembrief_us-web-rev9%20pdf.pdf?la=en

¹⁸ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/commit>

¹⁹https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2013/12/un%20women%20evaw-thembrief_us-web-rev9%20pdf.pdf?la=en

²⁰ Ibid

BLOC POSITIONS

The Americas and Caribbean

Latin American and Caribbean countries have made significant advancements in the promotion of women's rights. They have all ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and 14 of them the convention's optional protocol. Also, there is an Inter-American human rights system that includes a powerful regional instrument to combat violence against women which is the Belem do Para Convention. Through the Beijing Platform for Action and advocacy for women's rights, some countries have acted to bring gender equality through introducing women's affairs ministries and penalized gender-based violence among other things. Despite the progress, there is still much work to do as the region has 10 of the 15 most unequal countries in the world.

United States of America

Gender-based violence (GBV) includes all forms of violence that specifically and disproportionately target women and girls, including dating violence, domestic violence, and sexual assault. It is a problem of epidemic proportions in the United States.

However, efforts currently being funded and implemented to alleviate this problem either address the violence after the fact or attempt to prevent it using strategies that are not optimally beneficial because they intervene too late, do not reach enough people and do not address risk factors empirically shown to lead to GBV. This paper presents an alternative intervention strategy known as STRONG. The strategy's three essential tenets (1) initiation in early childhood, (2) universal-level prevention, and (3) targeting of sexist attitudes, GBV-supporting beliefs, and rigid gender role socialization – are derived from a solid evidence base. Problems with existing programs, advantages of the proposed STRONG program, and obstacles to STRONG's practical implementation are also addressed.

Sub-Saharan African Region (SSA)

According to the United Nations (UN) World Population Review 2019, SSA consists of 48 countries with a population of 1,066,283,427 and accounts for 14.2% of the world population, with a growth rate of 2.66% in 2019. GBV is reported as a common practice in SSA and sexual violence prevalence is high in some countries such as Zambia (90%) and Ethiopia (71%).

According to the Gender Equality Index Report, which includes data on reproductive health, employment, and empowerment, 27 of the 30 countries in the world that exhibit inequitable gender indices, are in Africa. Most African cultural beliefs and traditions promote men's hierarchical role in sexual relationships and especially in marriage. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the African population live in remote rural settings that increase the difficulty to access basic amenities and communities are disparate from the influence of central government or laws that prohibit GBV. Only 22 African countries have adopted laws that prohibit GBV.

GBV against women is a pertinent health challenge in SSA countries. GBV that includes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and non-IPV are prevalent in SSA. More than two-fifths (44%) of women aged 15–49 years of age in SSA countries experienced some form of IPV and almost a fifth (14%) experienced non-IPV. All types of IPV (physical, sexual and emotional violence) are common experiences among women in SSA countries, with emotional violence being the most prevalent. Women living in Eastern and Western African regions experience the highest levels of GBV. The need for an integrated mitigation measure to reduce GBV needs to be considered as a top priority in line with the SDG target in 2030 to reduce all forms of violence in SSA countries. Hence, government and private organizations should understand and address the problem of GBV. All organizations can allocate resources and design appropriate interventions that include law enforcement to ensure social support is provided for women in the quest to eradicate GBV. In addition, more research is required to provide information on the dynamics of communities, the context, and associated factors of GBV and the subsequent effects of women's reproductive health and beyond. Furthermore, more studies on IPV in SSA are required, especially in areas where political instability and war are on the increase.

Asian Pacific Region

Asia and the Pacific is the world's fastest-growing region, but with uneven levels of growth and human development across the sub-regions of South Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific. In recent years, economic growth in the Pacific – in particular – has been relatively low, erratic and inequitable. Economic successes have not translated into development gains for all, as the region's widening economic and social inequities testify. Over the last two decades, the Gini coefficient for developing countries in Asia and the Pacific rose from 0.39 to 0.46, further

widening the gulf between the poor and affluent populations, and testing the limits of social cohesion. Employment growth has lagged far behind gross domestic product growth, especially among young people. In short, Asia has had consistently high, but non-inclusive, growth. In most countries of the region, women are much more likely to have experienced intimate partner violence, than to have experienced physical or sexual violence by someone other than a partner. The proportion of women who have reported the experience of physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, ranges from 15 per cent in Japan and Lao PDR, to 68 per cent in Kiribati and Papua New Guinea. The proportion of women who have reported the experience of physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months, ranges from four per cent in Japan, to 46 per cent in Timor-Leste. Samoa and Tonga differ from other countries, in that women are more likely to have experienced physical violence by perpetrators other than partners, such as by family members or teachers.

European Union

Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls.

Gender-based violence and violence against women are terms that are often used interchangeably as it has been widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men. However, using the 'gender-based' aspect is important as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men. The terms are used interchangeably throughout the European Institute for Gender Equality's work, reflecting the disproportionate number of these particular crimes against women.

The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), as the benchmark for international legislation on tackling gender-based violence, frames gender-based violence and violence against women as a gendered act which is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women'. Under the Istanbul Convention acts of gender-based violence are emphasized as resulting in 'physical,

sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.'



QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

What innovative approaches can States implement to prevent Gender-Based Violence against Women?

How can we as a global community create strong mechanisms/institutions that can aid in mitigating Gender-Based Violence and protect women?

How can States address gender inequality in a bid to prevent Gender-Based Violence against Women?

What sensitization programs can UN Women put in place to mitigate Gender-Based Violence against women globally?

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