



**ENTIDAD DE LA ONU PARA
LA IGUALDAD DE GÉNERO**



COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The UN Women's Committee is such that it is designated to fight for and fulfill women's rights, gender equality, and women empowerment across the globe. It was created in July 2010 by the General Assembly under the name of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing such, member states of the United Nations participated in this huge step towards women's empowerment and gender equality. It seeks the creation of programs, services, and law policies, and to collaborate with governments to make all Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women worldwide. Across the globe, the female population has to confront issues involving health, wage gaps, education, violence, security, and discrimination. Said issues are discussed during the committee's annual sessions, the next one being CWS 67 occurring from March 6 to March 17 with the main theme of "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls". The United Nations has also stated many different points on the importance of gender equality in our modern times. For example, according to the UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres "achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world" (UN "Gender Equality").

In addition, the UN Women's Committee participates and hosts distinct forums designed to discuss issues such as the participation of women in innovation and technology, the abolition of child marriage, equal pay, and more. These are only some of the issues addressed within the past forums.

AGENDA

I. Equality in the remuneration of men and women in Europe and Latin America.

Overview:

“Worldwide, women only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. As a result, there’s a lifetime of income inequality between men and women, and more women are retiring into poverty.” (UN Women, s/f) Globally, gender inequality slows down economic development and fosters income inequality. This persistent wage inequality is present in all labor sectors for various reasons. One of the main reasons is that women's work is undervalued no matter how much effort or skills it requires. That's why women tend to concentrate in different labor areas than men. (UN Women, s/f)

The gap is much wider for women of color, immigrants, and/or mothers. An example of this is the "maternity penalty" as it pushes women into the informal economy, casual and part-time work. Also, the gender pay gap is affected by age. It is usually lower when women start working but it increases as time goes by. This happens as a result of women's work interruptions. All these patterns of inequality vary from country to country and tend to be higher in developing countries than in developed ones.

Is important to take into consideration that “remuneration” isn't just a basic salary, it's all the elements of earnings. For instance; overtime pay, bonuses, travel expenses, company stock, insurance, and other benefits.

Equal pay for work of equal value:

All workers regardless of gender have the same right to receive equal pay for work of equal value. “Work of equal value” refers not only to work that is the same or similar but also to work that is not equal but is of equal value. In many cases, the work of women and men often

involves different types of qualifications, skills, responsibilities, or working conditions, but they are of equal value and therefore deserve equal pay.

Overview of the situation in Europe:

In the countries of the European Union, it is estimated that women earn an average of 13% less than men per hour. Gender inequality in pay is not just paid discrimination but encompasses a host of inequalities women face in access to work, progression, and rewards. The most common in Europe is the sectoral segregation, the unequal proportion of paid and unpaid work, and the hierarchical position in companies. It is important to note that a lower gender pay gap in certain countries such as Luxembourg (with a 0.7% pay gap) does not mean that the labor market is more gender equal. A lower gender pay gap may occur in countries with a lower employment rate for women.

Overview of the situation in Latin America:

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the average woman works 25 hours more per month than the average man. Despite this, only half of the women are paid or benefit from their work. In other words, their work in many cases does not receive formal remuneration, which results in scant protection of their human and civil rights. Governments in the region need policies to promote equal enjoyment by men and women of human rights, including the right to reap economic and social benefits. Women spend disproportionately more time in unpaid activities than men in Latin America. They are less likely to be paid than men since a large percentage spend more time producing goods and services for household or family consumption. Unfortunately, these activities are not remunerated in the way they should.

II. Situation of women in Afghanistan.

Overview:

On August 15, 2021, the Taliban entered Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and took control of the country. Since then, this situation has meant a deterioration of women's rights, their condition, and their social and political status. During the last 12 months, violations of the human rights of women and girls have increased drastically.

Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls are prohibited from going to secondary school and from participating in politics. The Taliban have a cabinet made up solely and exclusively of men, likewise, there is no Ministry of Women's Affairs.

As a result of the imposition of Taliban power, most Afghan women cannot work outside the home, must cover their faces in public, and must be accompanied by a man when traveling. In addition, they continue to be subjected to multiple forms of gender-based violence.

Afghanistan is a country facing enormous challenges such as natural disasters and severe economic crises that leave some 25 million Afghans in poverty and famine. That is why the discriminatory measures against women and girls in Afghanistan increase the instability of the country caused by the economic and, above all, humanitarian crises. (Natalia Kanem, 2022)

As the head of the UN Population Fund said, “keeping girls out of secondary school not only violates their right to education and prevents them from realizing their full potential, but it also puts them at increased risk of early marriage, early pregnancy, violence, and abuse.”

The lack of rights for women in Afghanistan not only makes them vulnerable to situations of gender violence but also has economic consequences that in the future will have a drastic impact not only on the country's economy but on the entire world. The fact that

women cannot work outside the home means that fewer people generate income. Likewise, prohibiting girls from attending secondary school also has a monetary cost, according to a new analysis from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The analysis shows that the country loses 2.5 percent of its annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to the decision. Unicef studies showed that the Afghan economy would gain at least \$5.4 billion if all three million girls finished high school and joined the workforce.

Afghans who take to the streets to protest for their rights are being threatened, arrested, and tortured. Women's rights activists report there have been detentions, forced marriages, and rapes.

UN Women and international community possible actions:

- Targeted, substantial, and systematic funding to programs that address women's rights and empowerment.
- Prioritize hearing from Afghan women directly on their needs and strengthening advocacy for the full spectrum of their rights, including women's right to work and engage in public and political life.
- Facilitate women's meaningful participation in all stakeholder engagement in Afghanistan—this includes any delegations meeting with Taliban officials.
- Provision of services for women, by women to meet overwhelming needs.
- Health, education, and protection services.
- Investing in women-led civil society organizations, to support the rebuilding of the women's movement.

- Restoring, protecting, and promoting the full spectrum of women's and girls' rights and creating spaces for Afghan women to advocate for their right to live free and equal lives.

III. Political and social freedoms of women in Iran.

Overview:

Political and social freedoms for women have been issues of great concern worldwide for the UN Women Committee, however, in Iran gender inequality when it comes to said freedoms has become an alarming issue. There have been many different protests which include religious practices such as the hijab which have resulted in violence, aggression, and mass arrests on behalf of government officials of the country. Iranian women aren't allowed to move freely and be out in public without the hijab, making the denial of their choice of dress impact their public lives. Also, women's participation in the workforce demonstrates a huge gender gap. According to Human Rights Watch, "women's labor force participation in 2019 was barely 18 percent, and fell to 14 percent in 2020. Men's participation, by contrast, was 72 percent in 2019, falling to 70 percent in 2020" (Begum). This issue includes many factors such as religion, education, human rights, and more. All points must be taken into consideration to find a viable solution.

The humanitarian point of view:

The suppression of political and social freedom for women is an issue that involves the violation of many human rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the declaration, article 7, "All are equal before the law and are entitled without

any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and any incitement to such discrimination". The suppression of political freedoms and discrimination before the law demonstrates a clear violation of this human right. Other articles involving equality include the 1st and 2nd points of this same declaration.

There have been many testimonies of Iranian women expressing their experiences with the nation's governmental system, one of these cases being Mahnaz Parakand. She is an Iranian activist and lawyer who in an interview with the United Nations Human Rights Council states that "At 22 years old, I was arrested for participating in political demonstrations. I was imprisoned alongside hundreds of other women. From the moment I entered prison, I was tortured with batons and gun butts all over my body, as well as with electric cable strikes on the soles of my feet, which made me unable to wear shoes and to walk" (Q4). Said acts violate articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which address the security of a person, as well as torture.

Religious Point of View:

Many of the political and social freedom suppression that occurs in Iran are defended by the religious beliefs that exist in this territory. Said is mentioned in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance". As well as article 19 of the same declaration which states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and

expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

Many recurring protests including social freedoms go against the hijab which is a religious practice. It is important to take into consideration that all individuals have the right to practice their religion and sustain their own beliefs.

Question to take into consideration: To what extent should religion justify political measures?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- United Nations Charter: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- UN News: https://news.un.org/en/?gclid=CjwKCAjwtp2bBhAGEiwAOZZTuBqO8uMm3MG89KFhPQd-O63SEGC033vmr_C-dr_ceDnsDx_91s-14xoCzlQQAvD_BwE
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA_E_Final_WEB.pdf
- UN Gender Equality: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>
- UN Women Website: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>.

I. Equality in the remuneration of men and women in Europe and Latin America.

➤ **Important questions to consider:**

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/explainer-everything-you-need-to-know-about-equal-pay>

➤ Equal pay for work of equal value: (possible solutions)

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay#:~:text=Worldwide%2C%20women%20only%20make%2077,women%20are%20retiring%20into%20poverty.>

➤ Equal pay for equal work between men and women: Pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms [EU Legislation in Progress]:

<https://epthinktank.eu/2022/02/21/equal-pay-for-equal-work-between-men-and-women-pay-transparency-and-enforcement-mechanisms-eu-legislation-in-progress/>

➤ Evidence and statistics; gender wage gap in Latin America and the Caribbean:

<https://latinaer.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40503-019-0075-3>

➤ Evidence and statistics; gender wage gap in Europe:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/gender-pay-gap-situation-eu_en

II. Situation of women in Afghanistan.

➤ **Important facts on the topic:** <https://medicamondiale.org/en/where-we-empower-women/afghanistan>

- UN Women and international community on the issue:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/speech/2022/07/press-briefing-the-situation-of-women-and-girls-in-afghanistan>

- UN agencies recommitment to women, girls in Afghanistan one year after Taliban takeover:

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/08/1124662#:~:text=Afghan%20women%20are%20now%20mostly,forms%20of%20gender%2Dbased%20violence.>

- The Backstory of Women's rights in Afghanistan:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/womens-rights-afghanistan-history>

III. Political and social freedoms of women in Iran.

- Iranian Women's Demands for Freedom Must Be Heard:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/16/iranian-womens-demands-freedom-must-be-heard>

- Vatanka, Alex, and Vali Kaleji. "Women in Iran: Political Representation without Rights." Middle East Institute, 2 Nov. 2022,

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/women-iran-political-representation-without-rights.>

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