STUDY GUIDE

UN Women

Topic A: Promoting the education of girls to empower women in politics and society.

Topic B: Ending all forms of Violence against Women in armed conflict.

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CONTENTS

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMITTEE

1.1 ABOUT THE UN ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (UN-WOMEN)

Officially named "UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women", UN Women was established in July 2010 by the General Assembly (res. 64/289)[1] to improve the coordination and coherence of work on gender equality and women's empowerment. It functions as a secretariat, carries out operational activities at country level and promotes more effective gender mainstreaming across the UN system.

The establishment of UN Women was part of the efforts to improve coherence in the UN system – a result of the World Summit of global leaders in 2005 when the UN Secretary-General was asked to undertake reforms within the UN on system-wide coherence related to operational activities for development. The goal was to have a stronger focus on operational outcomes at country and regional levels and more efficient operational practices. Strengthening the institutional arrangements supporting gender equality and women's empowerment was part of this (MOFAT, New Zealand, 2017).

1.2 MANDATE AND INSTRUMENTS

UN Women procures more than USD 100 million worth of services and goods each year to support its programme of work. UN Women is committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide while delivering green results, with an emphasis on transparency and effectiveness. UN Women is also committed to providing tools to, and supplementing the capacity of, its partners to achieve socio-economic objectives through practicing and encouraging gender-responsive procurement (UN Women, 2017).

It is important to note that decisions taken by the Committee of UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women are not legally binding, and that reaching a consensus is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of policies, decisions and resolutions.

1.3 FUNCTIONS

One main function of UN Women is to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.

Another is to support Member States as they implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.

Last but not least, UN Women also serves to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment (MOFAT, New Zealand, 2017).

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[1] Resolution available here: https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/289, accessed January 14, 2018.

2. AGENDA ITEM A: PROMOTING THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN POLITICS AND SOCIETY

"The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself.''[2].

2.1 SUPPORTING GIRLS TODAY FOR THE COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING OF TOMORROW

2.1.1 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Key findings of a European Parliament Policy department report highlight the strong influence of poverty on access to education, and a marked difference when the gender variable is taken into account (European Parliament, 2015). This same report also suggests that "providing free access to school is a very effective way of addressing gender inequalities." (European Parliament, 2015). While differences between genders in the European Union persist and need to be addressed, this is even more true for developing countries where inequalities are stronger and often deeply rooted in cultural traditions.

Across the globe, the number of children out of school has been declining since 2005, and continues to do so despite the 2008 financial crisis and 2011 debt crisis.[3] The crises affected education in developed and developing countries differently (UNESCO, 2010). The impact was considerably more damaging in developing countries - where infrastructure is less flexible – and actually saw gender inequalities increase. The UN educational body (UNESCO) reported that "governments in the world's poorest countries urgently need an increase in development assistance to offset revenue losses" (UNESCO, 2010). This development assistance is crucial in reducing gender inequalities in access to education. According to the European Parliament (2015), 28 million males and 30 million females are out of school at primary school level. This two-million difference between out-of-school males and females equates to a 7 per cent gender inequality. This number is considerably lower than the 23 per cent gender pay gap, and shows that inequalities worsen after school, on top of the already considerable disadvantages girls suffer from the beginning.

One of the main issues in children's access to education is also the collection of data. The previously mentioned numbers from the European Parliament assess the number of children worldwide not attending school according to gender. UNICEF also has its own database but accounts for an estimated number of 101 million children not attending school (UNICEF, 2011), designating half of these as female. Both the European Parliament and UNICEF are considered to be reliable institutions when it comes to data collection and impartiality, the first being a European Union pillar, and the second a United Nations fund. This highlights issues related to establishing goals at national or international levels (c.f. Part 3, UN 2030 Agenda) from collected data.

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[2] UNFPA, 1994, Issue 7: Women Empowerment.

[3] According to UNESCO, the 2008 financial crisis had an important impact on education, and many reports and academic research have been conducted on the topic. However, the impact of the 2011 debt crisis has not been assessed as many times. Therefore, we are assuming that the 2011 debt crisis also had impact on education worldwide, even though consequences would be way less significant than the 2008 financial crisis.

Poverty has a particular impact on education given the direct and indirect costs of schooling. The costs of education affect girls disproportionately (Rose et al., 2005). To clarify definitions, direct costs refer to factors, such as tuition fees, books, schooling materials, etc. while indirect costs represent the loss of potential production for the household due to the child being enrolled in school. Rose et al. (2005) note that it is particularly the case in developing countries, where poverty is even more significant.

As direct and indirect costs are significant barriers for poorer children and especially girls in countries with no access to free primary school, Deininger (2003) noticed a correlation between access to free education and improvement of gender equality as well as a fairer distribution of wealth.

2.1.2 ADDRESSING BULLYING

Research on school-based violence and bullying suggests that boys are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of bullying (Carbone-Lopez *et al.*, 2010), which led to girls' experiences being overlooked. Carbone-Lopez *et al.* (2010) found "however, that definition and measurement issues may be at play; girls, for instance, are more likely than boys to experience indirect forms of bullying such as teasing".

Among the indirect effects of gender-oriented bullying is the fact that girls a less likely to gain self-confidence, aggravating the already considerable gender-related imbalances between girls and boys. The difference in bullying practices related to gender can be seen as an amplification of gender differences already present in the education they receive.

In its report on addressing gender equality through comprehensive policies, the European Parliament (2005) suggests that educational and support staff should receive training and support to address the gendered nature of bullying and harassment. Such suggestions can be effected by establishing policies applicable to a large number of United Nations Member States.

2.1.3 SOCIAL NORMS

In her study on the impact of social norms and the mother's transmission of role attitudes, Ainara González de San Román *et al.* (2012) found that differences in culture and social norms across countries and even across regions within the same country are crucial determinants in understanding gender differences in PISA[4] results. Addressing social norms and suggesting changes can then be posited as long-term solutions to reduce gender inequalities, and further emphasise females' personal development.

2.1.4 REACHING THE MOST MARGINALISED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The most disadvantaged adolescent females are the poorest girls from the poorest communities. They suffer human rights abuses, a lack of education and economic opportunity, are affected by HIV/AIDS, and have poor reproductive and maternal health outcomes (The Population Council,

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[4] The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a OECD triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. The PISA is a programme by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

2012). The most marginalised, vulnerable and hard-to-reach adolescent girls are often invisible, and not prioritised in many development programmes. Many youth-serving programmes tend to benefit older, educated, urban, and largely male youth (UNFPA *et al*., 2010).

Social, cultural and political systems prevent girls all over the world from fully realising their rights. Over the last few years, agencies have been trying to overcome this formidable challenge through programming that uses Communication for Development (C4D) tools to empower girls in their own development (UNICEF, 2012). Tools like the UNESCO eAtlas[5] also provide detailed information and data to policymakers on the most marginalised girls.

Measures like UNFPA plans and investments to reach the most marginalised girls are developed to respond to extreme situations. Bridging the gap between the most marginalised and other pools of poverty[6] is not only responding to a question of basic human rights, but also returns the most marginalised to pools where programmes and funds exist already.

Investing in the most disadvantaged girls represents a real challenge for charities and even governments, both because of the lack of data and the difficulty reaching them. Existing resources could be used more effectively by better targeting programs and benefits. Many youth programs designed as safety nets for the disadvantaged are underutilized, either absolutely or in relation to their target groups (Bruce, 2006). The effects and benefits of many investments in youth differ significantly according to income and gender. In many developing countries, secondary students are disproportionately male and from upper-income groups. Thus, investments designed to improve the quality of schooling benefit only those enrolled in school, whereas targeted scholarship programs can be designed to benefit mainly poor and/or female out-of-school children and their families (Knowles, 2003).

2.1.5 FAMILY PLANNING

Family planning is the information, means and methods that allow individuals to decide if and when to have children. This includes a wide range of contraceptives – including pills, implants, intrauterine devices, surgical procedures that limit fertility, and barrier methods i.e. condoms – as well as non-invasive methods, such as the calendar method and abstinence. Family planning also includes information about how to become pregnant when it is desirable, as well as treatment of infertility (UNFPA, 2017).

Access to contraceptive information is central to achieving gender equality. When women and couples are empowered to plan whether and when to have children, women are better enabled to complete their education; women's autonomy within their households is increased; and their earning power is improved. This strengthens their economic security and well-being and that of their families. These benefits contribute to poverty reduction and development (UNFPA, 2017).

There are clear economic benefits to investing in family planning (UNFPA, 2017). For every additional dollar that is invested in contraception, the cost of pregnancy-related care will be reduced by $2.22.[7] In terms of socioeconomic benefits, achieving universal access to quality sexual

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[5] The UNESCO tool is accessible here: https://www.tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#!/tellmap/-1195952519
[6] For more information on measuring poverty and extreme poverty, see chapters 1 to 5 of the Handbook on Poverty and Inequality by Haughton Khandker (2009).
[7] Adjusted for inflation, value expressed in November 2017 USD.

and reproductive health services is estimated to yield returns of $120[8] for every dollar invested (Becker, 1992).

2.2 LEADING TO EMPOWER WOMEN

Empowerment as a term derives from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Forms of Discrimination Against Women. While these conventions are central in determining policies for some institutions, such as the European Union, they have yet to be defined comprehensively at a more global level. Empowerment encompasses different elements: equal access to education for girls and boys, equal access to education of the same quality, dignity and an interconnected framework of rights and wellbeing for both genders without distinctions (European Union, 2005).

2.2.1 ECONOMY

Deep legal and legislative changes are needed to ensure women's rights and leadership around the world. Although 47 per cent (Thornton, 2015) of world business leaders say they are in favour of gender quotas on corporate boards, women remain underrepresented in leadership and management-level positions in the public and private sectors. Less than one-third of senior- and middle-management positions are held by women (UN Economic and Social Council, 2017).

In a European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies report (2015), it was recommended that policy-makers for women should engage with continuing education and training. This resulted from a study carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany which showed that women with intermediate level skills are more likely to move horizontally in their career than vertically. This is also due to a tendency in women to take on child care commitments.

2.2.2 POLITICS

Although women can vote and run for public office in nearly every country, in 2013, they accounted for only 21 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide, and served as head of state or head of government in 24 countries (Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2013). Current research posits numerous explanations for the lack of women in leadership roles, including gender discrimination, lack of female role models, aversion to competitive environments, family responsibilities and social norms (Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2013). Some examples include: gender quotas, modelling Female leadership, and political training programs.

As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (c.f. Part 3, 2030 Agenda), UN Women developed a tool to map women's place in politics around the world, which acts as a useful indicator to monitor women's empowerment in politics.[9]

2.2.3 SOCIETY

Some countries' institutional settings are leading the way in terms of women's empowerment (c.f. Part 1.4.3, SDG n°5). Since the 1990s, feminization of higher-education institutions in European

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[8] Adjusted for inflation, value expressed in November 2017 USD.
[9] UN Women's tool available here: http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/03/womens-political-parity-slow-to-grow-as-un-launches-latest-women-in-politics-map/

countries has gradually increased, with positive impacts for society. This is particularly true of Nordic states, which often serve as role models in gender equality (Magno *et al.*, 2004).

2.3 PAST UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was the main outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing, People's Republic of China, in 1995.[10] In 2010, the conclusions agreed of the Commission on the Status of Women were adopted and have continued to serve as a reference text since.[11]

Another important document addressing women's rights is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted in New York in 1979.[12]

Other useful documents on women's rights and women's education are United Nations General Assembly resolutions which are listed on the UN Women website.[13] Resolutions from the United Nations Security Council,[14] and the Economic and Social Council,[15] may be added to these important existing legislations.

2.4 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE 2030 AGENDA

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set targets for policy-makers around the world in reaching a more peaceful, fairer and gender equal world.

For more information about the SDGs, the Graduate Institute developed a portal,[16] as well as other universities and institutions.

2.4.1   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL N°1: NO POVERTY

The first goal of the SDGs is defined as: "end poverty in all its form everywhere" (United Nations University, 2015). As mentioned in part 1.1.1 of this guide, poverty is affecting women more than men, therefore, solving poverty issues would lead to less pronounced gender differences.

Source: UN.

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[10] The document is available here: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/
[11] The document is available here: http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2010/1/agreed-conclusions-of-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women-on-the-critical-areas-of-concern-of-the-beijing-platform-for-action-1996-2009
[12] The document is available here: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx
[13] The website is available here: http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions/general-assembly
[14] The resolutions are available here: http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions/security-council
[15] The resolutions are available here: http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/major-resolutions/economic-and-social-council
[16] The Graduate Institute portal can be accessed here: http://sdg.graduateinstitute.ch/

2.4.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL N°5: GENDER EQUALITY

The 5th goal of the SDGs is defined as "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" (United Nations University, 2015).

Source: UN.

Women's empowerment is a pre-condition to eradicating poverty, and reducing inequality and violence against women and girls. Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is thus a stand-alone goal of the SDGs. It is also a necessary part of all the other goals, with many targets specifically recognizing women's equality and empowerment as both the objective, and as part of the solution. SDG n°5 provides policy-makers with comprehensive goals and targets in achieving a gender-balanced world. Details about this goal can be found on the SDG platform, including all detailed targets.

2.4.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL N°16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

The 16th goal of the SDGs is defined as "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" (United Nations University, 2015).

As mentioned in part 1.2.3 on empowering women in society, institutions play an important role in making change happen and in leading by example.

Source: UN.

2.4.4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL N°17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The 17th goal of the SDGs is defined as "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development" (United Nations University, 2015).

2.4.4.1 Collaboration within the UN system

As a UN entity, UN Women collaborates other United Nations institutions in order to avoid

Source: UN.

wasting resources by repeating the same actions, and respect other agencies', entities' or funds' mandates. UN Women collaborates mainly with related UN agencies and funds, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank Group and the United Nations Global Compact.[17]

UNFPA addresses population and development issues, with a strong emphasis on reproductive health and gender equality, as well as on advancing the rights and opportunities of young people. It is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every

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[17] The UN Global Compact is not a UN agency, entity or fund. It is a framework to encourage and guide businesses worldwide by adopting sustainable and socially responsible policies, and by reporting on their implementation.

childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. Two frameworks guide UNFPA's efforts: the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (MOFAT, New Zealand, 2017).

UNICEF undertakes programmes in health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, the environment, child protection, gender issues and development, emergency response and other fields of importance to children. Its mandates benefit all children everywhere, with a special emphasis on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children. It works with governments, local communities and aid organisations in developing countries and territories, to focus on supporting children during critical periods of their lives when intervention can make a lasting difference (MOFAT, New Zealand, 2017).

The World Bank Group, composed of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), share the common goals of: (1) Ending extreme poverty by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than a $1.90 a day to no more than 3 per cent and; (2) promoting shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40 per cent for every country. The organisations that make up the World Bank Group are owned by the governments of member nations. Members govern the Group through the Boards of Governors and the Boards of Directors (MOFAT, New Zealand, 2017).

2.4.4.2 Bridging the gap between NGOs and the UN system.
NGOs are now routinely consulted during international conferences. They also lobby international organizations at all levels, from field offices to headquarters. However, the State ultimately remains by far the most important instrument in international organizations' decision making and implementation (Uvin, 2010). More collaboration between the UN system and NGOs, especially those looking at women's rights and empowerment, could be a more effective way for the 2030 Agenda to be applied in the field. NGOs often have access to areas or people that the United Nations institutions cannot or do not have the means to reach.

2.5 REFERENCES

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3. AGENDA ITEM B: ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PAST RESOLUTIONS

UN Women defines the impacts of Violence Against Women as "immediate to long-term multiple physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls, including death".[18] The rights of all peoples are enshrined in the preamble of the UN Charter, where there should be "equal rights of men and women" to "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".[19] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, recognised that armed conflicts had different impacts according to gender. It is estimated by the United Nations that "close to ninety per cent of current war casualties are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children, compared to a century ago when ninety per cent of those who lost their loved-ones were military personnel".[20]

3.1.1 PAST RESOLUTIONS

The United Nations General Assembly adopted The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women on December 20th, 1993 without a vote.[21] This is seen as a complementary resolution to strengthen the work of the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.[22] The most recent adoption of a resolution specifically targeting the alleviation of the issue of Violence Against Women was in 2012 with the General Assembly resolution 67/144 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of Violence Against Women.[23] Another key event to look at would be the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which took place in 2013.

3.1.2 KEY DEFINITIONS

The general definition of Violence Against Women as established by the World Health Organization is "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".[24]

The main types of violence against women are physical violence, psychological violence and sexual violence. In addition to these three, economic violence is gaining traction as another prominent form of violence against women.

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[18] "Ending violence against women," *UN Women*, accessed November 20, 2017.

[19] "Charter of the United Nations," *United Nations*, accessed November 20, 2017.

[20] "Women and Armed Conflict, Fact Sheet 5," *UN Women*, last modified 2000.

[21] "General Assembly Resolutions 48th Session," *United Nations*, accessed November 20, 2017.

[22] "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women," *United Nations*, accessed November 20, 2017.

[23] "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women," *United Nations*, accessed November 20, 2017.

[24] "Violence against women," *World Health Organization*, accessed November 20, 2017.

3.2 FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

3.2.1 SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The UN Women defines sexual violence as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting".[25] This type of violence against women is particularly prevalent, one-third of adolescent girls in some countries reported that their first sexual experience was in a scenario where they were forced.[26]

3.2.2 FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is defined as "procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons".[27] The extent of FGM ranges in different types, and may even lead to death if there are complications. It is estimated that at least 200 million girls alive today in 30 countries where data is available have undergone FGM.[28]

3.2.3 CHILD MARRIAGE

The impact of child marriage is usually the "end to girl's education, vocation and her right to make life choices".[29] This also leads to an increase in the risk for intimate partner violence.[30] It is estimated that almost "750 million girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday" and that 1 in 7 girls in West and Central Africa were "married or in union before age 15".[31]

3.2.4 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence is defined by UN Women as "any behaviour by a current or former partner or spouse that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm".[32] Globally, this is the most widely experienced form of violence against women.[33] A global study was carried out and it was found that "10-69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives", and that "40-70% of female murder victims were killed by their husband or boyfriend", showing the extent of the issue of intimate partner violence.[34]

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[25]"Explore the facts: Violence against women," *UN Women*, accessed November 21, 2017.

[26] "Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children," *UNICEF*, August 22, 2014, accessed November 21, 2017.

[27]"Explore the facts: Violence against women," *UN Women*, accessed November 22, 2017.

[28] "New statistical report on female genital mutilation shows harmful practice is a global concern," *UNICEF*, February 05, 2016, accessed November 22, 2017.

[29]"Explore the facts: Violence against women," *UN Women*, accessed November 22, 2017.

[30] Ibid.

[31] "Is Every Child Counted?," *UNICEF*, accessed November 22, 2017.

[32]"Explore the facts: Violence against women," *UN Women*, accessed November 21, 2017.

[33] Ibid.

[34]"Intimate Partner Violence," *World Health Organization*, 2002, accessed November 21, 2017.

3.2.5 HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

UN Women defines human trafficking as "acquisition and exploitation of people, through means, such as force, fraud or deception".[35] The extent of human trafficking is vast – women and girls account for 71 per cent of human trafficking victims, with 75 per cent of them being sexually exploited as a result.[36]

3.3 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT

It has been found that gender-based violence in armed conflict can affect all women, regardless of whether "engaged in armed conflict as military personnel, political leaders, medical/aid workers, or civilians", they will still be at risk of violence against women during conflict situations.[37] Violence against women, or more specifically rape, was "used as a 'weapon of war' in at least 13 countries between 2001 and 2004" and it has been "encouraged by military leaders as a means of furthering war aims".[38] This may lead to a "spike in so-called honour killings, where male relatives murder rape survivors to salvage the honour of the family" – another form of violence against women as a result of conflict.[39]

3.3.1 UGANDA

The political history of Uganda has been filled with strife, leading to armed conflict, most recently between the conflicting political groups.[40] Civilians are held accountable for the actions of the enemy, leading to extreme brutality being imposed on them; with women becoming "vulnerable to both sides".[41]

In Uganda, rape is reported as "social or interpersonal violence" and as an "act of political violence because communities reject women who have been raped and strip them of their social standing".[42] This has economic effects for women as their "relationships with fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons" affect their "access to such resources as land".[43]

3.3.2 LIBERIA

The civil war in Liberia consisted of seven different fighting groups, and was ignited by the attempted overthrowing of the government.[44] A study was carried out to find the extent of wartime violence against women, focusing mainly on physical and sexual violence inflicted by soldiers or fighters in the conflict.[45]

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[35] "Explore the facts: Violence against women," *UN Women*, accessed November 22, 2017.

[36] "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016," *UNODC*, accessed November 22, 2017.

[37] "Violence Against Women in Armed Conflict," *Peace and Freedom* 68, no. 3 (2008): 20.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Meredeth Turshen, "The Political Economy of Violence Against Women During Armed Conflict in Uganda," *Social research: an international quarterly of political and economic science* 67, no. 3 (2000): 806.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 803-804.

[43] Ibid., 804.

[44] Shana Swiss, "Violence Against Women During the Liberian Civil Conflict," *Jama* 279, no. 8 (February 25, 1998): 625.

[45] Ibid., 627.

The results of the study showed that 49 per cent of the women surveyed experienced "at least 1 act of physical or sexual violence from a soldier or fighter during the years 1989 through 1994" and "42% reported witnessing a soldier or fighter kill or rape someone else".[46]

3.3.3 CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of violence against women are multiple, and include health effects such as "physical injury …, emotional problems leading to suicide, suicidal ideation and depression, and alcohol or drug abuse as a method of coping".[47]

3.4 TACKLING THE ISSUE

3.4.1 PREVENTION

Stopping violence against women before it even happens should be the main preventative goal, which would require targeting its underlying causes: social norms.[48] UNICEF has developed a programme to specifically target social norms as a cause of violence against women.[49]

While it can be argued that the role of social norms is diminished in times of conflict, data shows that this is not the case, as "the changes created to community structure, economic roles, and social dynamics offer an opportunity to promote social norms that uphold women and girls' equality, safety, and dignity" even in times of conflict.[50]

3.4.2 DIRECT SUPPORT

When prevention plans fail to properly tackle the issue, women will experience violence against them, especially in conflict zones. This makes it necessary for measures to be put in place to ensure that victims of Violence Against Women get the support they need.

An example of direct support is providing proper health services for victims of violence against women. Other services include psychological support, in the form of helplines and hotlines, and legal support. It must be ensured that these services are provided for and accessible to any victim of violence against women without regard for religion, sexuality, class, or any other factor.

3.4.3 LEGISLATION

In the case of violence against women in conflict areas, legislation has a smaller role to play than in a situation of peace. In armed conflict conditions, legislation is unable to make a larger impact as there is a general collapse of all law and order. Regardless, the last 20 years saw progress on the international level concerning violence against women, but domestic measures must be put in place to facilitate the eradication of this issue, especially in settings of armed conflict.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] "Intimate Partner Violence and Alcohol Fact Sheet," *World Health Organization*, accessed November 21, 2017.

[48] Sophie Read-Hamilton and Mendy Marsh, "The Communities Care programme: changing social norms to end violence against women and girls in conflict-affected communities," *Gender & Development* 24, no. 2 (July 03, 2016): 261.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000. It recognised that armed conflicts had a different impact on women than men. Given these findings, targeted legislation must be suggested to alleviate the situation.

3.5 BLOC POSITIONS

THE WEST

Regarded as the leaders of the liberal agenda, this fact is relatively reflected in the statistics of violence against women in the respective countries and blocs. However, the topic receives less focus in this bloc as armed conflict is not prevalent. The main focus of this bloc would usually be on education.

LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

There are existing frameworks to combat violence against women, but the corruption that is rampant in countries in this bloc hinders the implementation of the existing legislation. There are also no explicit laws on violence against women in armed conflict. The main focus of this bloc would be to regulate the legal structure, especially in rural areas where the incidence of violence against women is exacerbated by the lack of prosecution of perpetrators.

AFRICAN BLOC

While there has been improvement in furthering gender equality in this bloc, there is still a stigma associated with ensuring women's rights. With most of the guide focusing on armed conflict in this region, there is still very little done with regards to this. Delegates should be aware of the religious issues that will arise within this bloc with regards to violence against women. This would be the main focus within the debate since most of the violence against women in armed conflict is specific to African countries.

ASIAN BLOC

There is huge disparity within this bloc, with some countries having low incidence of violence against women and others having extremely high numbers, this is roughly reflected in the economic level of the countries. There is little armed-conflict specific legislation in this bloc, as with the other blocs. Overall, the main focus would be on improving the situation of the few countries where the issue is still prevalent, in order to lessen the disparity within the bloc by focusing on women's empowerment and education.

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6. COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

Afghanistan

Argentina

Australia

Bhutan

Bolivia

Canada

China

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Denmark

Finland

France

Germany

India

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Ireland

Japan

Kyrgyzstan

Libya

Mali

Mongolia

Netherlands

New Zealand

Nicaragua

Nigeria

Norway

Philippines

Russian Federation

Saudi Arabia

Serbia

Singapore

South Africa

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

Syrian Arab Republic

Thailand

Ukraine

United Arab Emirates

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

United States of America