

United Nations Development Fund for Women Committee

Letter From the Chair:

Delegates!

My name is Sarah Strolger, and I am a sophomore here at GW studying International Affairs with a double concentration in Gender in IA, along with a minor in statistics. I am super excited to be your chair as this is my second year chairing at WAMUNC! As a delegate in the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) you will be dealing with two very prevalent issues currently facing UNIFEM, women's participation in the government and security of women in armed conflict. You will be expected to research your country's stance on the topic, work with other delegates through moderated and unmoderated caucus, and create a resolution to solve the issue at hand! As a quick reminder, **you are not required to submit a position paper**, however, if you would like to, please submit it at least 24 hours prior to the start of the conference so I can adequately grade them prior to the conference!

Outside of WAMUNC, I am a part of the GW Model UN team, going into my 6th year competing with GA being my favorite committee type. I am also involved in various student orgs on campus including GW Comedy Nights, GW Dems, and GW Rage. I am also a huge fan of Wallows, Chappell Roan, and the Orioles. I can't wait to meet you all! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to my email:

sarah.strolger@gwmail.gwu.edu (Please CC your advisor)

Best of luck!

Sarah Strolger

Introduction to Committee

Welcome to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Committee for WAMUNC XXVII. As a delegate part of the UNIFEM committee you will explore issues relating to the challenges facing women in armed conflict and women's participation in government positions. This year, we will look into the challenges of armed conflict and how to bring peace to women. Additionally, we will look into women's participation in government. While participating in this committee, please remember, WAMUNC will not tolerate any forms of hate speech, discrimination, or bullying of any kind! Both of these topics affect a wide range of people in many different ways! And as you go into this conference, excited and eager to help find solutions for the issues in compliance with your nation's position, **just remember to be considerate of the ideas you present and how you present them.**

As UNIFEM is a General Assembly (GA) committee, we will follow basic parliamentary procedures. While you are not required to write a position paper, it is encouraged as delegates may find it very helpful during committee. In order to turn it in, please email it to the chair's email (as seen above, please follow instructions in parentheses). We will start the committee with a general speakers list. Delegates will then go through a series of moderated and unmoderated caucuses where delegates can collaborate with different nations to create a bloc. Together delegates will compose a working paper to then be merged with fellow blocs to create a resolution paper. The papers will be presented, and the committee will then vote together on all of the papers (remember, more than one paper is allowed to pass. This also means no papers could pass, just depends on how the committee will go). Any changes to parliamentary procedure

will be up to the chair's discretion. If you have any questions about parliamentary procedures, feel free to reach out to the chair. Another good resource is [the All American MUN website!](#)

Historical Background

In 1976, UNIFEM, a program aimed at providing financial and technical assistance to fellow programs that promote women's empowerment and gender equality, was established with the United Nations Development Programme following the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City. Throughout the 1980s UNIFEM focused on women's economic empowerment, specifically emphasizing support for women in poverty. Additionally, UNIFEM began to advocate for policies addressing violence against women and supported emerging women's organizations worldwide. UNIFEM played a very active role in international conferences, notably the 1995 Beijing Conference, which adopted the Beijing Platform for Action. The Beijing Conference became a landmark conference for women's rights, and UNIFEM became an essential program in advocating for the implementation of its goals.¹ In 1999, UNIFEM launched its Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, a global fund providing support to initiatives combating gender-based violence. Moving into the 2000s, UNIFEM became a significant advocate for gender equality in post-conflict countries, putting an emphasis on promoting the inclusion of women in the peacebuilding process. UNIFEM supported the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, which recognized the impact of war on women and their vital role in conflict resolution and peace processes.²

¹ Nations, United. 2020. "Fourth World Conference on Women | United Nations." United Nations. 2020. <http://www.un.org/en/conferences/women/beijing1995>.

² "UN Women - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women." 2018. UN Women. 2018. <http://www.unwomen.org/en>

UNIFEM has significantly advanced women's leadership and government participation by providing leadership training, advocating for gender quotas, and supporting policy reforms to protect women's rights. It has raised awareness on the importance of women in the decision making roles and supported grassroots organizations to foster local female leaders. However, women currently serve as the head of government in just 13 of the 193 member states of the United Nations, 9 being their country's first female leader.³

As for peace and security of women in armed conflict, UNIFEM played a pivotal role by advocating for policies that recognize and protect women's rights during and after conflict. It was instrumental in the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which emphasized the need for women's participation in peace negotiations, peacekeeping, and post conflict reconstruction.⁴ Promoting women as essential stakeholders in the peace processes has been fundamental to ensure sustainable peace efforts and ensuring that women's security is a priority in post-conflict recovery and rebuilding initiatives.

Topic One: Women's Leadership and Government Participation

In this topic, you will dive into the world of global diplomacy in the UNIFEM committee. You'll explore the profound need of women's leadership and women's government participation. The history of women's leadership and government participation is super complex and is shaped by shifts in political, cultural, social mediums. One of the first cases of women taking on a

³ Chavda, Janakee. 2024. "About a Third of UN Member States Have Ever Had a Woman Leader." Pew Research Center. October 3, 2024.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/10/03/women-leaders-around-the-world/>

⁴ "Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (Security Council Resolution 1325)." n.d. Wwww.un.org. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

governmental position in the modern world was Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, who became the world's first female prime minister in 1960. Her appointment marked a historic moment, as she assumed office following the assassination of her husband S.W.R.D Bandaranaike. Banaranaike's leadership was groundbreaking, as she went on to lead her country for three terms, shaping policies and influencing governance at a time when women's political leadership was essentially unheard of on the international stage.

On the international level, women face significant barriers when it comes to attaining a leadership position due to systemic gender discrimination, cultural norms, and political structures that more than often favor a patriarchal system. Many societies still hold traditional views that regard men as more suited for leadership, which affect the political opportunities available to women. In some regions, women are restricted from pursuing political careers due to social expectations, family responsibilities, or lack of access to education and resources needed to build political capital. Even when women enter politics, they may face gender bias, harassment, and fewer opportunities for advancements compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, political parties and systems often lack mechanisms, such as gender quotas or inclusive policies, that can significantly help bridge the representation gap. These factors collectively have created an environment where it remains challenging for women to attain leadership roles internationally, though progress is being made through advocacy and policy changes made by UNIFEM.

UNIFEM and various nations have implemented several initiatives to encourage women's political participation and presence in government. UNIFEM has promoted leadership training,

advocacy programs, and capacity-building initiatives that empower women to pursue political roles and understand their rights within governance structures. For instance, it has supported gender quota policies, which reserve a percentage of seats in government bodies for women, a practice adopted by countries like Rwanda and Sweden. These quotas have successfully increased female representation in parliaments and local councils. Additionally, UNIFEM has worked with the national government to create safe, supportive environments for women in politics, addressing issues like harassment and discrimination. By partnering with local organizations, UNIFEM has also launched campaigns to challenge societal norms that restrict women's political involvement, fostering cultures that recognize and support women's contributions to leadership and decision-making. Through these initiatives, UNIFEM and fellow nations have made strides towards a more inclusive, gender-balanced political landscape globally. However, it is clear, there is farther the world can go with encouraging women to take on governmental and leadership positions.

Guiding Questions

1. How could women's leadership positively affect the economy?
2. How can women take on leadership positions outside of just government leadership positions?
3. How can your country encourage more women to participate in government and leadership positions?
4. What education is needed to help encourage more female participation?
5. How can various countries encourage more female participation in governmental positions while still remaining respectful towards nation's various cultural views?

Bloc Positions

- Nations opposed to women leadership (i.e. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc.) may form a bloc.
- Nations in favor of women leadership (U.S., Switzerland, Australia, etc.)
- Geographic similarities (Asian nations, American nations, African nations, etc.)

Topic Two: Peace and Security of Women in Armed Conflict

In this topic, you will dive into the world of armed conflict in the UNIFEM committee. You'll explore the profound need for peace and security of women in armed conflict. In times of conflict, disproportionately, women and children are often at the forefront of the negative consequences that come. Women are often disproportionately affected in times of conflict due to their vulnerable social and economic positions, and because conflict often amplifies pre-existing gender inequalities. In war zones, women and girls are at heightened risk of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, trafficking, and exploitation, which are frequently used as weapons of war to intimidate and destabilize communities. The breakdown of societal structures, such as healthcare, schools, and protection services, means that women often lose critical support systems and access to reproductive and maternal healthcare, putting their well-being at greater risk. Additionally, as men are often conscripted or involved in fighting, women are left to bear the responsibility for their families, becoming sole providers and caregivers under increasingly dangerous and resource-scarce conditions. This can force them into informal or unsafe work, exacerbating poverty and reducing their chances of recovery after the conflict.⁵ Women's voices

⁵ "Tackling Gender Based Violence in Fragile Contexts." 2023. World Bank. March 8, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/03/07/tackling-gender-based-violence-in-fragile-contexts>

are also frequently excluded from peace negotiations and decision-making processes, limiting their ability to influence post-conflict rebuilding in ways that address their unique needs and challenges.

UNIFEM has actively been a partner to women in conflict, as part of their mission is to bring women together in order to be a part of the peace negotiations and post-conflict elections. There have been a collection of papers sponsored by UNIFEM in which a variety of topics such as gender issues, peacekeeping, post-conflict planning, etc have been published in an effort to strengthen the UN's capacities to promote peace.⁶ It's clear there is much more work that could be done

Guiding Questions

1. How can delegates promote the protection and security of women in armed conflict?
2. What can a delegation not currently facing armed conflict do to assist women facing armed conflict?
3. Would women's participation in the decision making process assist women in conflict?
4. Beyond necessary aid (water, shelter, food, clothing, etc), what other aid is needed for women facing conflict and how can it be efficiently provided to those in need?

Bloc Suggestions

- Nations currently facing armed conflict (Yemen, Syria, Botswana)
- Nations currently providing aid to nations in armed conflict (U.S., Australia, etc.)

⁶“UNIFEM Resources on Women, Peace and Security.” n.d. UN Women.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2010/1/unifem-resources-on-women-peace-and-security>

- Geographic similarities (Asian nations, American nations, African nations, etc.)

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Country List:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Bahamas
- Bangladesh
- Belarus
- Belgium

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- Belize
 - Benin
 - Botswana
 - Brazil
 - Bulgaria
 - Cambodia
 - Cameroon
 - Canada
 - Chad
 - Chile
 - China
 - Czech Republic
 - Denmark
 - Djibouti
 - Dominica
 - Ecuador
 - Egypt
 - El Salvador
 - Equatorial Guinea
 - Eritrea
 - Finland
 - France
 - Gabon
 - Gambia
 - Georgia
 - Germany
 - Ghana
 - Greece
 - Haiti
 - Iran
 - Italy
 - Jamaica
 - Japan
 - Jordan
 - Kazakhstan
 - Kenya
 - Kuwait
 - Kyrgyzstan
 - Laos
 - Latvia
 - Lebanon
 - Lesotho
 - Liberia
 - Libya
 - Lithuania
 - Luxembourg
 - Madagascar
 - Malawi
 - Malaysia
 - Maldives
 - Malta
 - Mexico
 - Netherlands
 - New Zealand
 - Nigeria
 - Norway
 - Pakistan
 - Qatar
 - Romania
 - Russia
 - Saudi Arabia
 - South Sudan
 - Switzerland
 - Thailand
 - Togo
 - United Arab Emirates
 - United States of America

- Venezuela

- Zimbabwe

