

GSMUN'19

STUDY GUIDE

UN WOMEN



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Letter from the Committee Directors;

Most Distinguished Participants;

We are more than honored to welcome you all to the 19th annual session of GSMUN, which will be held between 26-29 April at Galatasaray University. Our names are Eda Tarhan and Ayşe Neva Şen, we will be serving as the responsible directors of the committee of United Nations Women. We are currently two sophomores in Prof. Dr. Mümtaz Turhan Social Sciences High School and have been attending Model United Nation conferences for approximately three years now.

Firstly, we would like to thank the Secretariat, for their kind invitation and the opportunity to serve you at this prestigious conference.

In UN Women, the delegates will tackle the problems that are faced by women in the workplaces all around the world. We believe that the UN Women will be a delightful and enjoyable three days for the participants who are looking forward to raising their voices against the gender-based discriminations and find solutions for these issues.

In order to be prepared for the debate please read the study guide carefully and check out the further readings sections. And also, do not limit yourselves with the study guide, ensuring gender equality in the workplaces is a broad topic that covers numerous issues, there are hundreds of sources online regarding the agenda item that would be helpful for you to get ready for the debate.

Lastly, we are looking forward to meeting you all and have a great conference!

For any further information please do not hesitate to contact us via;
senayseneva@gmail.com & milenyumeda@gmail.com.



UN Women

UN Women is the branch of the United Nations dedicated to ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports the UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design programmes, policies laws, and services to ensure that the standards are achieved and truly benefit women and girls around the globe. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

1. Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
2. Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy
3. All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
4. 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

Other Bodies of the UN Dedicated to Gender Equality

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Introduction to the Agenda Item

Sex or gender discrimination is the different treatment of individuals in their employment because of their gender. If a person has been rejected for employment, fired, or otherwise harmed in employment because of their sex or gender, then they may have suffered sex or gender discrimination.

Glass Ceiling & Promotional Bias

The "glass ceiling" is a form of workplace gender discrimination. It is the unwritten code or opinion that women cannot hold certain senior positions that men do and are prevented from advancing beyond a certain point because of gender in spite of their skills, competence, talents, and qualifications.

The glass ceiling situation falls under the category of promotional bias. The glass ceiling movement was originated in the late 1900s, was supposed to shatter the barrier that prevented women from moving up the corporate ladder. Although women have come a long way, they are not there yet.

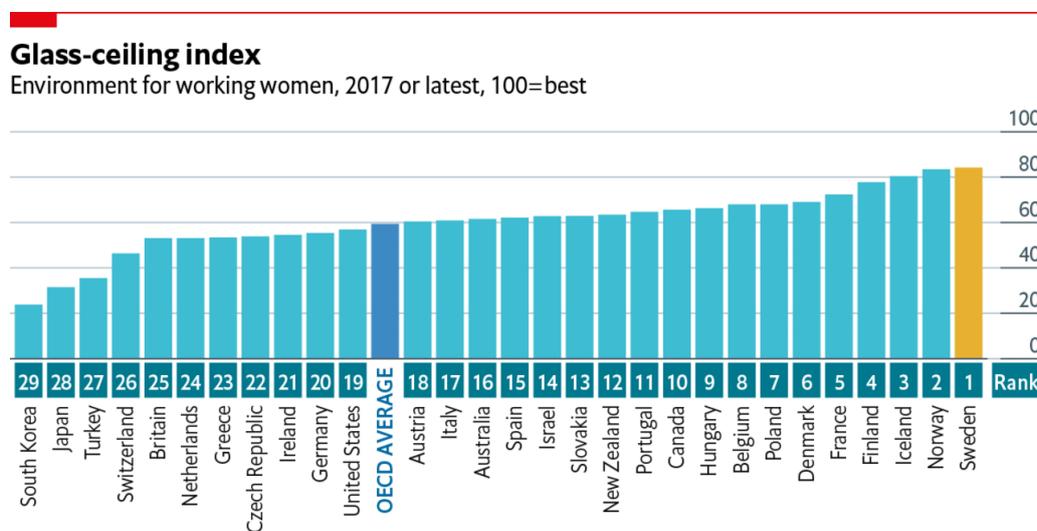
In 1990, there were only six women on the Fortune 500 list of CEOs. In 2017, the number of women increased to 32. Significant progress was made since there is more women but the ratio of 32 to 468 is still a very big difference.

Furthermore, sexual discrimination goes further than just CEOship. A man and woman may hold the exact same position and perform the same duties within a company, but the job title is different. The man may also be paid more, or he may be entitled to raises or promotions on a different schedule, and at a faster pace than his female colleagues.

Interview Questions

The interview process should be similar, if not similar, for both genders. However, women are often expected to field different types of questions. Women are frequently asked if they have children or if they intend to have children.

These types of questions are unfair and more importantly, have no bearing on a person's ability to do a job well. However, many employers predicate hiring potential employees on the notion that they might need to take maternity leave. Employers need to consider that fathers may need to take paternity leave. Neither gender should be asked the question.



Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality; Eurostat; GMAC; ILO; Inter-Parliamentary Union; OECD; national sources; *The Economist*

Definition of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The United Nations General Recommendation 19 to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women defines sexual harassment as an action that contains "such unwelcome sexually determined behavior as physical contact and advances, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography and sexual demands, whether by words or actions. Such acts can be humiliating and may have the potential of constituting a health and safety problem; it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable ground to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile working environment."

Forms of Sexual Harassment:

1. Physical forms of sexual harassment such as any unwanted contact, varying from intentionally touching, caressing, pinching, hugging or kissing to sexual assault.
2. Verbal forms of sexual harassment include culturally and socially inappropriate remarks with sexual overtones such as sexually suggestive jokes or comments about a person's attire or body, made in their presence or directed toward them. This category also includes persistent proposals and unwelcome sexual requests or insistent personal invitations to go out.
3. Non-verbal forms of sexual harassment are unwanted gestures, suggestive body language, indecent exposure, lascivious looks, repeated winks, and gestures with fingers. It also includes the unwelcome display of pornographic materials, sexually explicit pictures and objects, screen savers or posters as well as sexually explicit emails, notes or SMS messages.



Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have brought renewed attention to workplace sexual harassment. However, the vast majority of allegations go unreported, and those who do report tend to face troubling and sometimes even deeply disturbing outcomes.

Research released on December 12, 2018, by the Center for Employment Equity, analyzed all sexual harassment complaints filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and state Fair Employment Practices Agencies between 2012 and 2016.

The research found that nearly all sexual harassment goes unreported and those that do report tend to face severe retribution and limited redress.

They estimated that about 5 million people experience sexual harassment at work every year, yet on average only around 9,200 files a charge with the EEOC or state Fair Employment

Practices Agencies. In other words, 99.8% of people who experience sexual harassment at work never file a sexual harassment charge in the United States.

Statistics from another research conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights reveal the degree to which women are subjected to sexual harassment at work, unconfined by geography or a specific industry. In the opinion of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, “an estimated 83 million to 102 million women (45% to 55% of women) in the EU - 28 have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15.”

It is said that more than 540 employees adduced abuse incidents accusing their employers January to May 2018 including rape, gender-based bullying, slapping, forced sexual relationships by misuse of power forced overtime and not letting female workers take bathroom breaks. One of these complaints belonged to Radhika, a female garment worker in India. She explained the situation:

“[My] batch supervisor came up behind me as I was working on the sewing machine, yelling, ‘You are not meeting your target production,’” said Radhika, a woman quoted in the report employed at an H&M factory in Bangalore, India. “He pulled me out of the chair and I fell on the floor. He hit me, including on my breasts. He pulled me up and then pushed me to the floor again [and] kicked me.” After the incident, Radhika filled an official complaint and the Human Resources department of the company told the supervisor to end his abusive behaviors. Nevertheless, the result did not change, Radhika could not quit her job at the factory to support her daughter after her husband’s death and kept silently working in abusive circumstances.

Yet, an introspective analysis of business circles reveals that existing laws are ineffective and that prevention of sexual harassment is more a matter of culture than a matter of court. This fundamental abuse should be addressed by answering three questions: when and how to respond to the complaint; how to evaluate its content; and how to ensure that the company’s reaction is effective.

Wage Inequality and Gender Gap

In the majority of countries men are most likely to take more part in the labor force rather

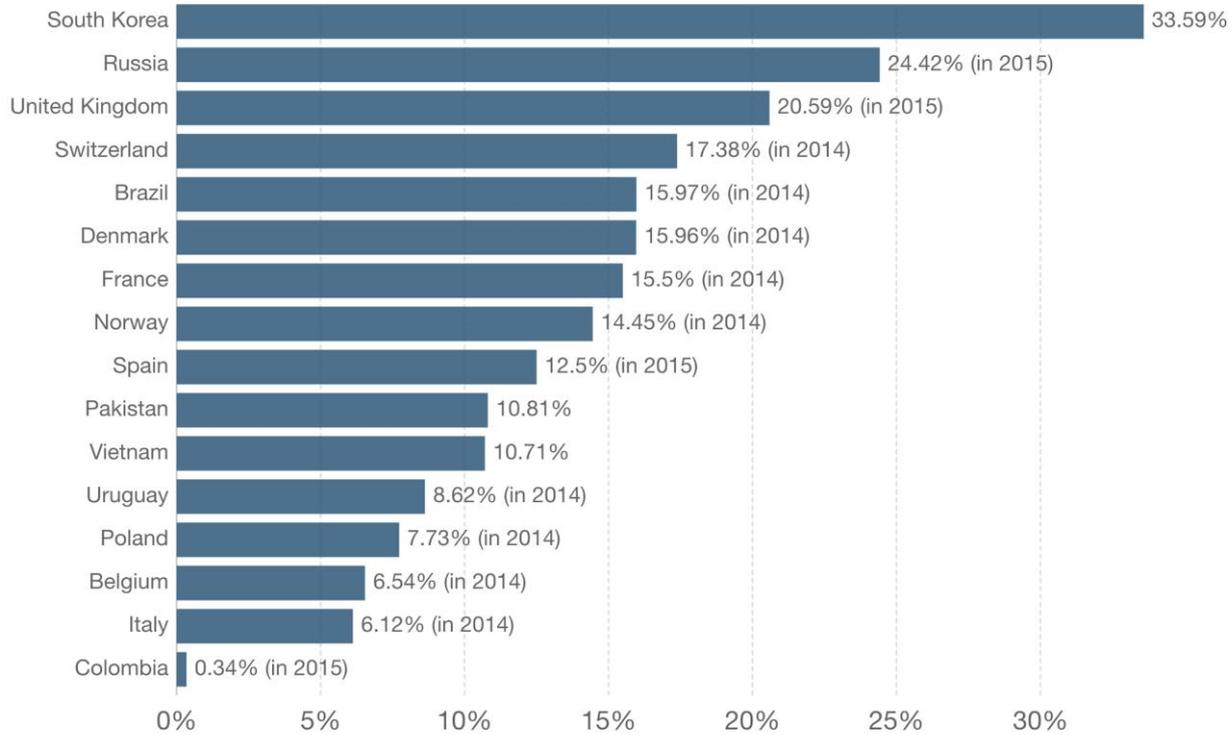
than women, however, in the last century, things have started to change. Last two decades had been an improvement of gender equality in the market with diverse positions. Even though women and the members of disadvantaged groups take place in the labor force in today's world, unfortunately, we could not achieve an equal working environment for everyone yet.

Starting in mid-1990s wage inequality started to increase in developed and developing countries. In the years between 1995 and 2007 (Financial Crisis) despite the rise in productivity, it could not be observed directly as wage transmission which is another evidence shows that workers could not benefit from the economic growth fairly. Gender inequality is still a common practice, mostly on women. Some instances regarding inequality are:

1. Women's share gets paid less than men in many cases, and the reputation of the jobs tends to be lower compared to men in labor.
2. There is a higher chance of women being own-account workers on family responsibilities, rather than men. In general, these workers, so-called "housewives" are unsalaried and devoid of any revenues.
3. In some parts of the history and even in the 21st disadvantages groups in the society are suffering from unrighteousness. Not only the gender but also race, religion, sect, being a refugee and many more differences can conduce discrimination and this discrimination may cost a family to famish. Economic growth cannot transform itself on the wages of the workers directly. Governments or states should work for reducing the inequalities and encourage to distribute the employment and wages with justice. In the data below there is the portrayal of the gender wage gap rates in several countries.

Unadjusted gender gap in average hourly wages (%), 2016

Gender wage gap, unadjusted for worker characteristics. It is calculated as the difference between average earnings of men and average earnings of women expressed as a percentage of average earnings of men. The data corresponds to gross hourly earnings and includes both full-time and part-time workers.



Source: ILOSTAT

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Social Protection of Employees

According to the International Labour Organization, only 27% of the world's population has adequate social security coverage and more than half lack any coverage at all. The ILO actively promotes policies and provides assistance to countries to help extend adequate levels of social protection to all members of society. Social security involves access to health care and income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of the main income earner. While male workers can be also deprived of their rights in labor, the ratio of female workers who are unable to access these facilities are higher. Social protection of these employees is an extremely important issue for people all around the world.

The “Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All” builds on efforts already underway in more than 30 countries. These include projects to help countries extend coverage at the national level and to strengthen community-based social security organizations. Regardless of the several projects of UN Women in the past years, there are still many workers who cannot benefit from social protection by their employers/governments.

Gender Equality in Education

With being an important part of the United Nations Development Programme’s Sustainable Development Goals, providing education for everyone is one of the main aims of the United Nations. There are both male and female children who cannot benefit from the education system, however again, girls are more likely to be unable to get an education in schools compared to boys according to the world average education gap data.

The researches made in 134 countries show that in 30 countries less than 90 females for every 100 males finished lower secondary school, while in 17 of these countries less than 90 males for every 100 females finished lower secondary school. In the vast majority of the countries lower education either equals to lower working standards or unemployment. Therefore, the lack of educational opportunities provided for females causes them to take less part in the labor or being mistreated in the work environment. The ratio of the educational opportunity gap may change according to the country’s education policies, customs, common sectors, family structure, etc. It is extremely important to provide education to every human being despite the customs that are unfavorable for females in society.



Women of Minority Groups;

Race, Ethnicity and Religion Discrimination in the Workplace

Throughout the study guide, the discrimination against females had been clearly shown, unfortunately, the discrimination that female members of the minority groups only gets worse in the workplaces. Basically, discriminations against the disadvantaged groups because of any classifications including race or color consists of being treated differently by their coworkers or employers due to their presence in the specific group of people/classification. Ethnic discrimination is one of the most common situations in the workplaces when it comes to minority groups. It does not matter whether the company employs plenty of members of minority groups, still, people can encounter unpleasant acts by their employees or employers. Of course, this discrimination is not always limited to being excluded by the person's coworkers. As mentioned in the glass ceiling part, these people are most likely to struggle more regarding advancing beyond titles and increment in their wages.

In the United States of America according to The Bureau of Labour Statistics non-white people only consisted of 19 percent of the workforce in the country in 2011. Being the second most common group in the labor force, 12 percent of the 19 percent were black people, and 5 percent of the people were comprised by Asians. The only difference was not the number of people but also the average incomes of the members of these groups.

It should be taken into account that female members of the minority groups all around the world do not only struggle with discrimination in their workplaces but also in the process of applying for a job. Mostly, the chance of a member of a disadvantaged group to be accepted for a job is much less than a member of a dominant group in society. While being a female worker have already its own problematics, being a woman of minority groups in the workplace is even harder.

Pregnancy Discrimination

Before starting with the impacts of pregnancy discrimination in woman workers lives, it is essential to understand the definition of the topic. The term pregnancy discrimination consists of behaving towards a female applicant or employee deprecating because of their pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth.

Pregnancy discrimination is one of the most common struggles that many female employees have to face in their careers. Even the possibility of having a baby can be a reason for women to refrain from starting a family due to the negative impacts in their work lives. According to The Guardian, there are approximately 50.000 women that are losing their jobs because of having had a child or being pregnant. Many employers inform their female workers that they can no longer continue working because of their pregnancy. While men are equally responsible for the growth of a child, women are considered to be unable to work efficiently due to their responsibilities at home as a mother. In every country of the world, governments should promote gender equality and prevent such unpleasant treatments towards women in places.

In the United States of America, The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) is one of the implementations against gender-based discriminatory actions. PDA bans pregnancy discrimination in every possible step of female workers careers such as employment, firing, hiring, payment, training programmes, assignments at work, etc. Also, the rights of nursing mothers at the workplace is another issue that should be paid attention.



Work-Life Imbalance

Another evident challenge that working women in the 21st century is the imbalance between work and personal life. Their personal life tends to suffer due to work commitments or vice-versa. The family likely feels neglected after late night shifts at the office. Or, on the contrary, women still find themselves in the same dead-end position years later, since they have to leave work on time to pick up their kids from their after-school activities.

In a world that women are considered responsible for most parts of their children's growth and family life, long hours of work might be discouraging from taking part in labor at all. Both female and male workers should be able to spend time with their families and hobbies in their spare time. That's why working hours should be arranged carefully, governments should work for a suitable time limit for both employers and employees.



Child Care Availabilities

As pointed out in the pregnancy discrimination part, women are less likely to take part in labor if they have or might have children in the future. Parental leave is a more common practice for women as they tend to take more responsibility for the growth of children around the world. Moreover, if not quitting the working life entirely, female workers tend to work part time more frequently than men or refrain from more hours of work that can improve their careers. Therefore childcare availabilities are one of the key points when it comes to bringing in the female workers to the labor force. It is observed in many European countries that when people are able to benefit from the childcare facilities, more women can contribute to the workforce of a country.

In order to make these facilities to be available to all citizens, government financial support for parents, free child care facilities can be considered as a solution. Even though financing free childcare to all citizens might be struggling for some countries' economies, time or age limitations can make this idea more applicable.

Furthermore, when governments support child care facilities, they eventually also support the economy of their countries. Contribution of women in the workforce can cause very positive impacts on economic growth.

Further Readings

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