

AFTarin'25

Yusuf Ziya Öner Science High School Model United Nations Conference

UNWOMEN

Agenda Item:

**Tackling gender inequality in education
and promoting women in Science,
Technology, Engineering, Arts, and
Mathematics (STEAM) fields**

Under Secretary General:
Efe Ertekin

Academic Assistant:
Nehir Doğu

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1. Letter from the Secretary General

Distinguished delegates,

It is with profound honor and an enduring sense of purpose that we extend our warmest welcome to you all for AFTRAIN'25. As the Secretaries General, we are genuinely honored to see this conference once again gather bright young minds who share a belief in dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation.

First and foremost, gratitude must be extended to our dedicated academic and organization teams. Without their unwavering efforts, the vision we aim to share with our generation would have never come to life.

We live in a time when global knots grow more complex every day, yet it is also a time filled with opportunities. The work you will do here represents what diplomacy truly means, the ability to seek solutions, wind up those complications and connect them across tough conditions.

On behalf of the Secretariat, we wish you an inspiring and memorable experience. Let us bow our heads, the king is back!

Kind regards,

Kaan Muştu & Ömer T. Demirel

Co-Secretaries-General

1. Letter from the Under Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

I am Efe ERTEKİN. As the Under Secretary General of the UNWOMEN Committee, it is my utmost honor to serve you a warm welcome.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the conference Executive Team for providing us with this platform to explore this critical issue. I am more than honoured to be part of this conference and to work alongside you all on our committee.

Additionally, I really want to thank the Academic Assistant, Nehir Doğu, for all of her support in this process.

Please don't forget to take the time to carefully read this guide and respond to questions at the Questions To Be Addressed section. I highly encourage you to research our topic and the policies of your allocated country. If you have any questions about Model United Nations, or the Committee itself, you can reach me via efe.ertekin35@gmail.com I look forward to meeting you all on 28-30 November.

Now the floor is yours,
Efe ERTEKİN
Under Secretary General of UNWOMEN

2. Letter from the Academic Assistant

Dear Delegates,

It is with great delight that I, the Academic Assistant of the United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, welcome you all to AFTRAIN'25. It is an honor to be writing this letter for our amazing committee. I would like to express my sincere appreciation and highest regards to the Executive Team.

It has been a great pleasure for me to work on this topic and being able to see women taking such an active role here. Truly inspiring.

I, along with my fellow Under-Secretary General and a great friend Efe Ertekin, have prepared this study guide to assist in your research with his invaluable contributions and support, and we are expecting you to read it thoroughly **and do your own research for your allocation** to have a good understanding of our agenda item.

If you do have any questions regarding the agenda, procedure, or MUN in general, I am always open to answering your questions. You can reach out to me through the Email Address or my phone number I have placed below.

nhrdogu@gmail.com

0501 036 5809

Sincerely,

Nehir Doğu

3. Introduction to the Committee

a. History of the Committee,

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UNWOMEN was established on July 2, 2015 in New York. The committees' establishment was a response to a UNGA resolution. Following this resolution, a report was presented highlighting the importance of a committee specifically for women.

After years of negotiations between UN member states, women's groups, and civil society, on 2 July 2010 the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in order to establish UN Women by merging the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW, established in 1976); the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI, established in 1997), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, established in 1976).

b. Functions of the Committee

The committee has 4 specific roles besides Working for the empowerment and rights of women and girls globally,

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.

- To help Member States 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.

- To lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality, as well as promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

UN Women's main areas of work include:

- Leadership and political participation
- Economic empowerment
- Ending violence against women
- Humanitarian action
- Peace and security
- Governance and national planning
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- HIV and AIDS

UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality, and in all deliberations and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda. The entity works to position gender equality as fundamental to the Sustainable Development Goals, and a more inclusive world.

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:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance system
- 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.

c. Member States

The UNWOMEN has 45 member states of the United Nations serve as members of the committee. The Committee consists of one representative from each of the 45 Member States elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the basis of equitable geographical distribution:

- 13 members from Africa
- 11 from Asia
- 9 from Latin America and Caribbean
- 8 from Western Europe and other States
- 4 from Eastern Europe

Members are elected for a period of four years.

List of the Member States

AFRICAN STATES (13 members)

1. Algeria
2. Cabo Verde
3. Côte d'Ivoire
4. Democratic Republic of the Congo
5. Egypt
6. Ethiopia
7. Mali
8. Mauritania
9. Mozambique
10. Nigeria
11. Rwanda
12. South Africa
13. Tunisia

ASIA-PACIFIC STATES (11 members)

1. Bangladesh

2. China

3. India

4. Japan

5. Lebanon

6. Pakistan

7. Philippines

8. Republic of Korea

9. Saudi Arabia

10. Sri Lanka

11. Vacant

EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES (4 members)

1. Czechia

2. Lithuania

3. Romania

4. Ukraine

LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN STATES (9 members)

1. Belize
2. Bolivia (Plurinational state of)
3. Brazil
4. Chile
5. Colombia
6. Costa Rica
7. Cuba
8. Panama
9. Trinidad and Tobago

WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHER STATES (8 members)

1. Belgium
2. Italy
3. Liechtenstein
4. Netherlands (Kingdom of the)
5. Portugal

6. Spain

7. United Kingdom

8. United States

5. Introduction to the Agenda Item

a. Key Terms Regarding the Agenda Item

- Gender Equality: Gender equality in definition is the state in which access to rights or opportunities is not affected by gender. It's not only women who are affected by gender inequality, all genders are impacted, including men, trans and gender-diverse people. This in turn impacts children and families, and people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Gender-Based Discrimination: Gender-based discrimination can be defined as an activity of discrimination, such as violence, just because of the gender of the victim.
- STEAM Fields and Education: STEAM fields are Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. The education for STEAM fields are being told not just in universities but in high schools too in some of the countries.

b. Gender-based discrimination in education systems

Gender includes the doctrine how it should have a function in society inborn biological sex. Gender which is constructed in society, determines the statutes of men and women and their suitable roles. In almost every society, the most important fundamental causes of women having lower status than men is the traditional gender roles. Gender discrimination is a universal problem in all societies, but rather emerges as a discrimination against women. The projection of gender inequality in education is not just the numerical disparity between men

and women. Another dimension is inequalities which are formed both in the structure and content of education and both in the school's cultural climate, prevailing gender clichés and values by reproducing. Gender equality issues in education have become central issues of global concern and policy for more than 10 years. This interest is mainly focuses on girls' access to education and the right to complete education which is the most obvious indicator of gender inequality in education. The removal of barriers that exist between men and women is although among the principles of the basic agreements, it seems that equal opportunities are not provided to women in terms of accessing education which is accepted as one of the main areas of life.

Gender gaps in educational attainment and skills arise in youth, reflecting gendered socialisation processes. Girls and boys, for instance, expect to pursue different careers and their expectations largely reflect existing occupational segregation. Gender gaps in basic skills – including reading, mathematics and science – also appear relatively early.

In nearly all EU and OECD countries, women have surpassed men in terms of educational attainment, reflecting several interrelated factors, such as perceived differences in labour market opportunities for women and men without tertiary education; changes in social norms and economic opportunities; and educational systems and occupational degree requirements; among others. Although women may be more likely to pursue tertiary education, notable segregation by field of study persists, with women far less likely to pursue studies in engineering, mathematics, information and technology.

Gender gaps in literacy and numeracy evolve over the life course, reflecting that women and men use different skills at home, at school, and at work as a result of segregation by occupation and education and gender norms and stereotypes around paid and unpaid work.

Women and men report similar levels of participation in adult education and training, but barriers to access differ by gender, with women much more likely than men to report that family responsibilities are preventing them from engaging in learning opportunities.

Incorporating a gender angle into education policies is essential to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all. By considering gender, policies can promote inclusivity, challenge stereotypes, and create a learning environment where every student can thrive, regardless of their gender. To overcome gender segregation by field of study, governments have implemented a range of interventions, including gender sensitive learning materials, teacher training and career counselling, alongside dedicated career pathways, industry partnerships and targeted financial incentives. To close gender gaps in lifelong learning and adult skills, governments are turning toward flexible learning options and short-cycle programming at learning institutions, as well as policies and programmes that support a better balance between work, family and education.

c. Promoting Women in STEAM fields

More girls are in school today than ever before, but they do not always have the same opportunities as boys to complete and benefit from an education of their choice. Too many girls and women are held back by biases, social norms and expectations influencing the quality of the education they receive and the subjects they study. They are particularly under-represented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (steam) education - women make up only 35% of steam graduates, figure unchanged in ten years - and consequently, in steam careers.

This gender disparity is alarming, especially as steam careers are often referred to as the jobs of the future, driving innovation, social wellbeing, inclusive growth and sustainable development. UNESCO is giving special attention to this issue through research, policy and capacity-building work and as part of its efforts to promote the empowerment of girls and women through education.

In a world increasingly driven by science and technology, empowering women in steam fields has never been more crucial. Education is a powerful vehicle for driving women's and girls' empowerment in steam fields. Despite a significant positive shift in women's enrolment in steam fields, a recent academic study from Kosovo suggests that women exhibit less confidence in their abilities in steam fields despite showing higher academic performance compared to men.

UNESCO supports national capacities to deliver gender-responsive STEM education. With financial support from partners, including the Government of Japan and other donors, UNESCO is building capacity-building of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Girls need to see women succeeding in STEM fields in order to believe that they can do it too. Counselling and guidance can help girls see STEM pathways they would not have considered. Role models and mentors increase girls' confidence in STEM and influence their career aspirations. Relevant information about education and job opportunities can help challenge existing career stereotypes. Female mentors can improve the culture of STEM workplaces. The culture of STEM can be male-dominated and hostile to women.

Mentorship activities can challenge stereotypes about ‘gender-suitable’ subjects. In Kenya, Safaricom, a telecommunications company, launched a digital mentorship programme for secondary school students in partnership with UNESCO and the Eneza Foundation. Students receive information about STEM studies and career pathways from mentors and role models through radio, television and text messages.

Regional training in francophone and anglophone countries in Africa have so far reached over 350 teachers, teacher trainers, school administrators and government partners from 21 countries, and established a corps of Master Trainers to support local capacity-development efforts. A training package and an accompanying advocacy toolkit were developed to facilitate quality gender-responsive STEM education, and close gender gaps in STEM studies and careers. This work was carried out in cooperation with national and regional partners including the Ministry of Education of Senegal and Rwanda, the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation (IFEF), the African Union's International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), Microsoft, and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).

UNESCO has expanded related initiatives at country level through innovative partnerships with Airbus, HNA, Intel, L'Oréal, Prada, WomEng and other partners. In Kenya, annual Scientific Camps of Excellence for Mentoring Girls in STEM have been identified by the UN as a good practice.

6. Past Actions Regarding the Issue

Note from the Academic Team: This section of the guide aims to be a guideline for the extra research that you, the delegates, can conduct. We highly encourage you to research these agreements and example UN Resolutions.

a. Past International Agreements

1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) - 1979
2. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - 1995
3. UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education - 1960
4. UNESCO STEM and Gender Advancement (SAGA) Framework - 2015
5. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Agreed Conclusions

b. United Nations Resolutions related to the Agenda

68/220 (2013)

70/212 (2015)

72/247 (2017)

76/227 (2021)

7. Questions to Be Addressed

1. Should UNWOMEN establish new campaigns regarding the issue? If yes, what should they be?
2. How can UNWOMEN encourage member states to reduce gender based discrimination in their education systems?
3. How can UNWOMEN increase the number of women participating in STEAM fields?
4. Should UNWOMEN have international collaborations with UN Bodies, and NGOs?
5. How could UNWOMEN increase public awareness about the issue?

8. Bibliography

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<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-03/The%20Journey%20of%20Women%20in%20STEM.pdf>