



Mission Viejo High School MUN
34th Annual Conference
Vox Populi



UN Women: Empowerment of Women

Hello, delegates! I am Ruslana Yurtyan, and I will be your head chair for our MVHS MUN 2017 conference. I am a sophomore, and this is my second year of MUN. Apart from MUN, I am involved in The Key Club. Outside of school, I dance and have been doing so for the past 13 years, and have participated in 11 years of Nutcracker Ballet Performances. I am so excited to have the exciting opportunity to chair the Novice UN Women committee and look forward to enjoying an amazing committee session with you. If you have any questions, please email me at noviceunwomen@gmail.com.

I. Background

Throughout history, women have been marginalized, and despite the immense improvement of women's rights, the authority and freedom of women is still threatened. The empowerment of women describes the goal of encouraging women to take opportunities that allow them to participate in economic, social, and political affairs. In the early 1900's, the unjust nature of women's rights came to light. In 1908, women in New York became restless, and marched in protests, demanding better treatment and better wages. This turmoil occurred not only in the United States, but also on an international scale. An International Conference of Working Women was formed in 1910, and, as a result, the first International Women's Day was celebrated in Australia, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. From that moment on, there was a worldwide surge of feminist activity. Women were gaining respect and attention. Unfortunately, by the early 2000s, the progress of women's rights slowed down as feminism became an unpopular topic. Since then, there has been a positive shift on the general public's opinion on women's rights, and interest in the topic has been reignited. Women's economic empowerment has been named one of the sustainable development goals by the UNDP. The purpose of these goals is to "produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world."(www.undp.org). This is necessary, not only to ensure gender equality, but also to improve economies. For developing countries and countries with post-conflict governments, the economic participation of women is crucial to stabilize the state, and a necessary aspect of advancing society.

II. United Nations Involvement

The United Nations officially established International Women's Day to be on March 8th, beginning in 1913. In 1979, the General Assembly passed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, (CEDAW). There are 189 countries that have signed and ratified this convention. The only countries not included in this count are The United States and Palau, which have signed but not ratified the treaty, and the 6 non signatories including Iran, Somalia, Sudan, the Holy See, Niue and Tonga. As part of the effort to revitalize the fight for equality during the early 2000s, the United Nations created the UN Women committee in 2010. This committee aims to establish "standards and norms[,] to help Member States to 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."



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They also, “lead and coordinate the UN system’s work on gender equality[.]”
(www.unwomen.org)

III. Possible Solutions

In order to truly reach best empowerment of women, many social barriers must be broken. In many countries, it is the social norm to marginalize women. In order for this issue to be resolved, these social norms must be altered. To empower women is to give them social and political power. If the general population is more tolerant towards women holding political positions, the goal of women’s empowerment can be achieved. Once women can be seen as completely valid members of society, they can make better contributions to society which, as a result, improves their self-confidence and self-respect. Another possible solution would be to give women, who don’t have the means to be part of society, better opportunities. Private organizations can be created that can help provide women with more opportunities to better themselves and their society. Another possible solution would be to send successful women out to schools to give advice on how to rise up, and voice their opinions. When thinking of solutions, make sure to be creative.

IV. Bloc Positions

Western: Generally the western bloc is one of the most involved in the progression of women’s rights. This bloc is devoted to improving society for women and giving them more opportunities. Despite their push towards the empowerment of women, they are still respectful of cultural differences.

African: Africa has drastically improved the situation for women lately. There has been a surprising increase in women in political power. Now, Africa holds a top position in women’s parliamentary representation.

Asian: Due to the variety of cultures and political systems in Asia, the positions on the roles of women are varied. Some countries that lean more towards democracies have better opportunities for women.

Middle Eastern: Typically Middle Eastern countries have much less opportunities for social participation. Religious and social norms can cause discrimination against women in these areas.

Latin: There has been a fairly slow, but steady growth of opportunities for women. This development varies from country to country, but over the years, more women have been seen to take part in political and social dealings.



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V. Questions to Consider

Are there any social boundaries in your country that might prevent women from gaining opportunities that support female empowerment?

Have there been past attempts to create a more equal society in your country? If so, were the results good or bad?

What actions could be taken both politically and socially to solve this issue?

How would an increase of women's political participation impact your country?

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