



Mission Viejo High School MUN
34th Annual Conference
Vox Populi



UN Women: Underage Pregnancy

Hello delegates! My name is Rebecca Soo, and I'll be your head chair for the MVHS MUN 2017 conference. I am a junior at Mission, and I have been in MUN for three years now. I am involved in numerous clubs and activities in school including, but not limited to Mock Trial, Girl Up, orchestra, and Key Club. Outside of school I like to go to the beach, shop, swim, and hang out with friends. I cannot wait to meet all of you at our conference, and I look forward to having an amazing committee session. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at mvhsmunwomen@gmail.com.

I. Background

Every year, about 16 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth around the world. As a result, complications during the pregnancy and child birthing process, are the second cause for adolescent female deaths, who are at a much higher risk of dying than women aged 20-24 in the same circumstance. In addition, over 3 million girls undergo unsafe abortions yearly. Over the past two decade, about 11%, of all births worldwide have been to adolescent girls. 20,000 pregnancies alone have been to girls who reside in developing countries such as those in sub-Saharan Africa. A majority of adolescent pregnancies and childbirths are unplanned and result from a lack of information, access to education, and/or health care. For example, in many countries, social pressures to bear children immediately after marriage or even before, is commonplace. More than 30% of girls in low and middle income countries marry before they are 18, and 14% before they are 15. Unprotected sex as a result of unaccessible contraceptives or coerced sex is a major factor in adolescent pregnancies. Though the death and mortality rate in all regions (specifically South-East Asia) have dropped significantly in the last decade, the issue of adolescent childbirth and perilous abortions continue to pose significant economic and social consequences, such as the forgoing of education and opportunities, which lead to fewer life skills and an annual economic loss of labor that the community and country must compensate for.

II. Past UN Involvement

The UN has recognized the issue of adolescent pregnancy and has taken a stand against the issue through organizations like the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund since 2011. Six objectives have stemmed from which aim at: reducing marriage before the age of 18, creating understanding and support to reduce pregnancy before the age of 20, increasing the use of contraception, reducing coerced sex, reducing unsafe abortions, and increasing the use of skilled antenatal, childbirth and postnatal care among all adolescents. On October 30, 2013, the UN released a report nicknamed "Motherhood in Childhood," that highlighted the high rate of teenage pregnancies in developing countries and urged Governments to aid girls through access to education and health services. In addition, international agencies and programmes such as the "H4+" initiative brought about by UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, and funded by the World Bank, worked towards advancing the Millennium Development Goals 4 (reducing child mortality) and 5 (improving maternal health) prior to 2015. Recently, the new Sustainable Development Goals set for the 2030 Agenda, have also targeted



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adolescent pregnancies through Goals 3 (good health and well-being) which advocates for the promotion of sexual and reproductive health, family planning, and comprehensive sexuality education and maternal health services; Goal 4 (quality education with gender equality); and Goal 5 (gender equality) which focuses on eliminating child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation practices), which directly work to eliminate the problem of adolescent pregnancies.

III. Possible Solutions

Delegates, it is your mission to create solutions in order to solve this international crisis and eliminate its repercussions. Solutions for this issue must be broad and all-encompassing in order to accommodate the varying degree of the problem in different nations. Though education and awareness are always points of key importance, the Dias would be in favor of innovative and creative solutions that go beyond simply following the course of history. Establishing a united front on behalf of the international community and utilizing diplomatic means is essential to the permanent eradication of this issue. Therefore, solutions proposing some sort of useful convention in which new ideas could be expressed and combined with old initiatives, is highly encouraged. Immediate action such as the distribution of contraceptives, along with long-term solutions such as permanent health care, prenatal care, and lasting educational systems are both essential and are expected to be discussed in this committee.

IV. Country Bloc Positions

Western: A majority of the Western World has come to recognize the issue of underage pregnancy and has taken steps to eradicate the issue through government programs targeted at adolescents. The West has therefore taken the lead in this issue and has most minor issue, though often disagreeing in the methods of liberal alternatives such as abortion, with the rest of the world.

African: Half of the underage pregnancies in the world come from sub-Saharan African nations and occur as a result of low income and coerced, unprotected sex. The large problem, though recognized, remains a persistent issue in African countries who have made progress in the past, but still struggle with the problem today.

Asian: Asian countries account for only 2% of all underage pregnancies in the world, since nations like North Korea have the lowest pregnancy rates in general. However, the culture of many oriental nations promote gender inequality and child marriage.

Latin: The Latin Block accounts for about 18% of all underage pregnancies, many of which occur out of marriage and are unintended. Many pregnancies end terminated in induced abortions. Additionally, young girls are subjected to 4 times the risk of maternal death and complications than women in their twenties.

Middle Eastern: In the Middle East, problems concerning the loose laws meant to deal with underage pregnancies are major issues. Coerced and forced sex is a common problem adolescent teens are faced with, which results in complications in pregnancies as a result of the lack of health care and information available.



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V. Guiding Questions

1. What has your nation done to address the problem of underage pregnancy?
2. What is the degree of intensity of the issue in your country? What are the major factors in underage pregnancy that are specific to your country (coerced/forced sex, lack of education, child marriage, etc.)
3. What short term and long term solutions are applicable to your country?
4. How can contraceptives or other means of eliminating unplanned pregnancies be used in your nation given your nation's specific social standards, values, or religion?
5. What can be done to aid those who have already been affected by underage pregnancies?

VI. Works Cited

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