UNDP



TOPIC: Economic Empowerment of Women

CHAIRS: Malini Aggarwal, Colin Layden

LAIMUN XXIX

December 2-3

₩ LAIMUN XXIX ₩

Introduction to the USG 4

Introduction to the Dais 5

Committee Description

Topic: Economic Empowerment of Women

Letter from the Secretariat

9

3

LAIMUN XXIX

December 2-3

Letter from the Secretaries-General

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our entire staff, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Session XXIX of the Los Angeles Invitational Model United Nations (LAIMUN) conference. LAIMUN XXIX will take place on Saturday, December 2 and Sunday, December 3 of 2023 at the Mira Costa High School (MCHS) campus.

Our staff, composed of over 120 MCHS students, has been working tirelessly to make your debate experience the best it can be. You will find your dais members to be knowledgeable about the issues being debated and MUN procedure. We pride ourselves in hosting a conference that is educational and engaging, and we hope you take advantage of that as you prepare and debate.

At LAIMUN, we value thorough research and preparation. We ask that delegates write position papers following <u>these directions</u>. The deadline to submit position papers to be considered for Committee and Research Awards is Friday, November 24 at 11:59 PM PT. The deadline to submit to be considered for Committee Awards is Thursday, November 30 at 11:59 PM PT.

We also encourage all delegates to read the <u>LAIMUN Rules of Procedure</u> for conference-specific information and as a reminder of points and motions that can be made during committee.

Feel free to reach out to our staff with any questions or concerns you may have. Delegates can find their chairs' contact information next to their committee profile and the Secretariat's email addresses on the staff page. Any member of the LAIMUN staff will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

Sincerely,

Akash Mishra and Lily Stern Secretaries-General, LAIMUN XXIX secretarygeneral@mchsmun.org



Introduction to the USG

Hi delegates!

My name is Claire Koerber and I am the Under-Secretary General of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for Mira Costa Model UN; I am excited to welcome you all to LAIMUN XXIX.

The advanced and novice ECOSOC committees cover a variety of prevalent international issues that require multifaceted approaches and solutions. Each delegate brings a unique perspective into debate and it is important to use creativity in developing solutions while also paying attention to country policy. Your chairs will hold you to high standards in regards to solutions, speeches, caucusing, and diplomacy, so please be sure to keep this in mind.

To ensure you are adequately prepared for debate, please submit your position papers promptly to your chairs. All work should be your own. This goes for all preparation, speeches, solutions, and resolutions as well. LAIMUN has a strict no pre-written resolution policy, and resolutions should only be worked on at the chair's discretion. Be sure to act respectfully in committee towards fellow delegates and chairs.

I hope LAIMUN XXIX provides you with lasting memories and educational experiences. Our LAIMUN staff do their utmost to give all delegates the best experience possible. We want all delegates to gain knowledge, confidence, speaking skills, and most importantly, a new understanding of international relations and the current events around us that affect the way we live today. Throughout the weekend, make sure to participate and stay engaged during debate. Who knows...if nothing else, you may actually learn a thing or two.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to ecosoc@mchsmun.org or any other secretariat member. Looking forward to seeing you in December and best of luck in your preparation towards success!

All the best,

Lily Stern and Akash Mishra Secretaries-General Claire Koerber Under-Secretary General ECOSOC

Introduction to the Dias

Hi Delegates!

My name is Malini Aggarwal and I will be your head chair along with Colin for UNDP Novice! I am currently a senior at Costa and have been a part of the MUN program since freshman year. I have attended several local conferences over the last 4 years and have had the opportunity to travel to New York and Chicago for MUN. At LAIMUN last year I was a chair for 3rd SOCHUM Advanced.

Outside of MUN, I competitively swim and dance. I also love to go to the beach and hang out with my friends in my free time. At school, I am a part of Link Crew, the Swim team, and am President of Together We Tutor. Aside from this, a fun fact about me is that I love to travel and have visited 36 countries throughout my life. One of my favorite things to do is to listen to music, especially Taylor Swift and Lana Del Rey, so feel free to reach out with any recommendations!

In UNDP, I would like to see a variety of solutions on different subtopics as we tried to choose a topic that can have political, economic, and social solutions. I hope that this range will allow you to create entertaining and detailed solutions. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions, comments, or concerns. We are so excited and looking forward to meeting you!

Best regards,

Malini Aggarwal

Greetings delegates!

My name is Colin Layden and I will be your co-chair along with Malini for UNDP Novice! I am extremely excited to work with all of you. I am a junior at Mira Costa and have been a part of the MUN program since my freshman year. I've participated in several local conferences like BRUINMUN as well as a travel conference in Berlin. I am extremely thrilled to be chairing LAIMUN and to see all of the unique and creative solutions you all have for this committee!

Outside of MUN, I am in a volunteer group called Amigos Unidos in which I have been a part of for three years now. We are able to participate in many volunteer opportunities, helping people with food drives, setting up recreational events, and much more. I'm also a part of Mira Costa's track and field team in which I have long jumped for more than three years. My favorite artists are Kendrick Lamar, MF DOOM, and JPEGMAFIA. I am a major fan of the fast food chain Raising Canes. I feel blessed when the box combo is bestowed upon me. It's four tender and crispy chicken tenders, it's outstanding crinkle-cut fries, the two Texas toast in place of the coleslaw, and finally to top it off the tangy and plentiful sauce to dip all of your commodities in.

For UNDP, I am expecting a variety of detailed solutions on several subtopics relating to the topic and for delegates to have solutions that are related to their country's policies. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns reach out to us at undp.nov.laimun.xxix@gmail.com. Once again, I am absolutely jubilant to see you all in debate!

Best of luck!

Colin Layden

Committee Description

The United Nations Development Programme was formed in 1965. Its main objectives are to provide assistance to countries battling poverty to enhance the quality of life for all people on a global scale through sustainable development. The UNDP created the UNDP's Strategic Plan (2018-2021) which aims to be properly reactive to all 170 nations that they currently provide aid towards, taking into account the many diverse issues each country in particular faces. These varying problems have been condensed into three broad categories: "eradicating poverty; structural transformations; and building resilience". To properly combat these challenges, the UNDP has also created what are known as the Six Signature Solutions, shifting the focus primarily towards poverty reduction and preventative measures; governance to improve the exclusive and unjust societies; resilience that will help in avoiding problematic situations, such as a variety of crises; combating environmental struggles; providing access to energy that is both clean and affordable; and limiting gender inequality overall.

In 2015, all members of the United Nations accepted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, in doing so agreeing to try and reach the best possible version of this planet through the furthest implementation of these goals possible by the year 2030. The UNDP is best fitted for providing help to countries struggling to meet the necessary quotas for these goals, implementing said goals through their work on a global scale through what are called integrated solutions as

¹ https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Development-Programme

² https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/our-focus.html

they work to integrate these SDGs into the struggling countries' societies. The UNDP plans on partnering- as they have proven they are able to do- with governments, citizens, private sectors, and any other necessary components in order to make these optimistic goals a reality.

Furthermore, the UNDP provides aid in the form of five-year country programs. In these programs, countries are funded in order to establish projects aimed at attracting investment capital, training skilled employees, and implementing modern technologies. In addition to funding, the UNDP also mobilizes experts to these countries in order to increase good governance- by building legal frameworks that are viable, responsive, and open to public opinion. Recent UNDP initiatives have focused on eradicating poverty, strategic development on hindering the spread of viruses such as Covid-19 and AIDS, and by promoting sustainable and environmentally positive economic policies- especially in developing nations. A byproduct of these goals include the expansion of communication and infrastructure development in a sustainable way.

Overall, the UNDP wishes to advance their global sustainable agenda. Through a combined effort from partners within the UN network, the UNDP will continue to conquer the economic gap and gross divide of inequality found in certain nations. Some of the programs the UNDP works with includes the UN Sustainable Development Group, DESA, FAO, UNHCR, UN Women, and a plethora of other organizations. Through this strong network of UN partners, the UNDP has been able to leave a noticeable impact in the over 120 countries they have worked with.

Topic: Economic Empowerment of Women

I. Background:

Throughout the world, women have faced economic challenges and backlash for centuries. Historically, women were set to a domestic role and had very little access to rights that their male counterparts had including education, property and voting rights, and job opportunities. These hindrances set back women's ability to be able to engage in economic activities. While several movements began that promoted the economic influence of women, there is more that can be done.

The Industrial Revolution was a great example of this as it allowed women to be accepted into more jobs and workforces. It also allowed for rural-to-urban migration as by 1843, almost 30,000 women in rural England had left their farms to work in cities textile companies.³ However, it also came with drawbacks as women were exposed to unfair pay and horrid working conditions at the time. Another movement that allowed for the empowerment of women were the suffrage movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These movements allowed women to unite under the cause to get the right to vote and mostly succeeded.

By the start of the 1900s, women began to receive the right to vote in elections in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. This number of countries increased significantly after World War I as in the interwar period, over 25 more

³ "The Role of Women in the Industrial Revolution: Tsongas Industrial History Center." *Tsongas Industrial History Center* | *UMass Lowell*, www.uml.edu/tsongas/barilla-taylor/women-industrial-revolution.aspx. Accessed 11 June 2023.

9

countries gave equal voting rights to women.⁴ Throughout the 20th century, other countries began to follow suit and even the United Nations specifically stated in their Convention on the Political Rights of Women that "women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination." These movements and actions allowed for a rise in economic aid for the empowerment of women as giving them suffrage rights allows a whole community to voice their opinion on policies and issues.

International organizations as well as governments have begun to implement policies in order to assure gender equality as well as economic opportunities for women. In Iceland, they are making notable steps that are significantly closing the gender pay gap. In 2018, they made the first policy in the world that required the company's proof that they pay both men and women equally for a job of the same value. If companies in Iceland do not show proof they do not receive certification which means that they receive a fine daily. This has proved to be successful as now Iceland has been labeled one of the most gender-equal countries.

Many countries are additionally making efforts to provide more job opportunities to women. In the United States, there has been significant progress made throughout the 20th and 21st centuries regarding women's inclusion. In 1970, women comprised only 38% of the workforce and a measly 8% of STEM workers. However, in 2019, women made up about 48%

⁴ "Women's Suffrage." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/topic/woman-suffrage. Accessed 11 June 2023.

⁵ "Convention on the Political Rights of Women - United Nations." *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*, treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1954/07/19540707%2000-40%20AM/Ch XVI 1p.pdf. Accessed 11 June 2023.

⁶ "How Iceland Is Closing the Gender Wage Gap." *Harvard Business Review*, 8 Jan. 2021, hbr.org/2021/01/how-iceland-is-closing-the-gender-wage-gap.

4 LAIMUN XXIX

of the workforce but women's inclusion tripled in STEM as the number increased to 27% of women in STEM.⁷ Nonetheless, this percentage is still a minority, and inequality still strongly exists for women in the United States.

In Norway, more and more women are beginning to enter positions of political and corporate leaders thanks to several gender quota laws. For example, in 2006, a law came into effect that mandated that at least 40% of employees must be filled by women on the boards of companies that are listed in Norway.⁸ As a result of this ground-breaking law, there are now significantly more women in Norway working on company boards. To achieve the quota requirement, businesses had to actively seek out and hire qualified women, which caused a substantial shift in the gender dynamic in boardrooms.

However, economic inequality between men and women is still a very prominent world issue nonetheless. Women still encounter obstacles in their pursuit of economic autonomy, such as unequal access to job opportunities, restricted access to credit and capital, wage inequality, and occupational segregation. Examples of this are shown in the United States where on average, women are paid 83.7% of what men are paid year-round. This imbalance gets to be even greater when considering the intersection of sexual orientation and race, especially for Black and

⁷ Christnacht, Anthony Martinez and Cheridan. "Women Are Nearly Half of U.S. Workforce but Only 27% of STEM Workers." Census. Gov., 8 Oct. 2021, www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/women-making-gains-in-stem-occupations-but-still-underrepresented.html.

⁸ "New Law in Norway Gives Businesswomen a Boost – DW – 01/02/2006." Dw. Com, 2 Jan. 2006, www.dw.com/en/new-law-in-norway-gives-businesswomen-a-boost/a-1840259.

⁹ Chun-Hoon, Wendy. "5 Fast Facts: The Gender Wage Gap." DOL Blog, 14 Mar. 2023, blog.dol.gov/2023/03/14/5-fast-facts-the-gender-wage-gap#:~:text=Overall%2C%20women%20are%20not%20paid ,for%20Black%20and%20Hispanic%20women.

Hispanic women, who face even bigger wage gaps. Women's reduced earnings are likely to ruin their ability to make investments in education, training, and skills development, limiting them from being able to gain more mobility and gaining access to high-paying jobs. Women's access to financing and capital necessary for entrepreneurship and business development can also be affected by such a lack of financial resources.

With the introduction of COVID-19, hundreds of millions of individuals were left unemployed. As a result however, the pandemic allowed for more medical jobs. Women began to enter the healthcare workforce, most popularly as nurses. This is especially seen in India where 80% of nurses and midwives are women. Their assistance in containing the pandemic and delivering crucial medical services was invaluable. But they are largely absent from decision-making roles in the healthcare sector, with wages significantly lower than their male counterparts. Women's ability to influence policies, advocate for their needs and concerns, and influence the future of healthcare is hampered by this lack of representation.

These issues must be resolved through coordinated efforts and policy changes as they pose a serious threat to gender equality and economic empowerment. The gender pay gap, occupational segregation, restricted access to finances and entrepreneurial opportunities, workplace discrimination, and the burden of unpaid labor are just a few of the significant economic disparities that women continue to experience. These flaws in the economic system impede women's advancement and restrict their full participation in the workforce, hindering

12

¹⁰ "Your Questions Answered: Women and Covid-19 in India." *UN Women – Headquarters*, 27 July 2021, www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/7/faq-women-and-covid-19-in-india.

both social and overall economic development. We can create an environment where women can prosper economically and contribute to society to the fullest extent possible by modernizing current policies, putting equal pay measures into place, encouraging inclusive workplaces, and supporting work-life balance and affordable childcare. To ensure that women have equal opportunities and access to resources and can play a significant role in advancing global economic prosperity, countries must focus on country policy and take specific action to address this.

II. UN Involvement:

UN Women is fully dedicated to empowering women in every way, including decreasing wage gaps, better access to education, and more career opportunities. Women's rights are not progressing very rapidly, and many people are recognizing this and fighting for advancements. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been working to show that gender equality is a necessity and a human right that should be guaranteed. UN Resolution 1325 was also made by the UN in order to emphasize the importance of peace negotiations and building up women's rights post conflict. This is crucial, especially in developing countries that are prone to conflict and typically infringe upon women's rights. The UN also met for the World Conference on Women in Beijing to focus on improving women's empowerment throughout the world. This conference was held in 1995 and the

¹¹https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowe rment-of-women/

 $^{^{12}}https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/global-norms-and-standards\#:\sim:text=Other\%20key \%20documents-, Women\%2C\%20peace\%20and\%20security\%20resolutions, post\%2Dconflict\%20peacebuilding\%20 and\%20governance.$

conference was a large milestone in the fight for worldwide equality. This equality also included women's education in all spheres of life and worked to help all different socioeconomic groups. Although these actions have been taken, not much has been done to improve the conditions of women, especially in developing nations.

Developing countries have many cultural barriers that prevent women from being treated as equals. One of the most significant programs made by UN Women is the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) which aims to support women and female owned organizations to empower them. Since 2009, they have delivered 65 million dollars in order to financially empower women-led organizations.¹³ This fund has been incredibly effective and impactful; it is constantly improving and becoming more economically efficient.

In addition to this fund, the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) has been entirely dedicated to improving the lives of women around the world. They have been tirelessly working to bridge the gap between men and women in regards to their careers to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goal #5. This goal aims to achieve gender equality and this is exactly what the CSW has been doing by supporting the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as SWAP. This was made in 2006 and its main objective was to support the UN and work with them to cause an impact in all nations and improve the future of women.

III. Topics to Consider

a. Microloans

 $^{^{13}}https://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/fund-for-gender-equality\#:\sim:text=The\%20Fund\%20for\%20Gender\%20E\ quality, Sustainable\%20Development\%20Goals\%20(SDGs).$

Microloans are given to women to help them start their own businesses and it further emphasizes women's positions in the economy and helps them kick start their careers. It is important for women to have the opportunity to become financially independent because they then do not need to rely on others for support. This extent of independence can increase women's safety in areas of poverty. Microloan programs can be difficult to sustain if the women are unable to pay back the loan causing the entire system to fail. Paying back loans becomes difficult for people whose businesses were not successful, which means the people that are in the most need are the ones who are punished. Microloans also risk creating a dependency on loans rather than relieving financial stress and creating independence. On the other hand, microloans can also be incredibly beneficial if they are reliable and made to help women instead of taking away their rights. Implementation of these programs must be extremely specific to prevent countries from going backwards instead of making progress. Microloan programs are risky because they can either not provide enough money or simply not be paid back. Either way, solutions must take into account all risks in this regard.

b. Family Planning

Another topic that is crucial, especially in developing countries, is family planning and education regarding women's bodies and their rights. Many nations are infringing upon women's rights and preventing them from getting access to contraception and birth control. This is a topic that is very dependent on country policy, however, something that most countries have in common is that family planning is important to prevent overpopulation. It is very important to educate both women and men at a young age about planning families and education regarding

prevention. Education on sexual health can emphasize the importance of respecting women's bodies and can teach men about the struggles women endure. Many men may not be aware of the difficulties women face on a day-to-day basis and education on this topic can empower women to improve their livelihood. Education on women's history and the obstacles that they have faced is also something to consider as it could help to provide them with more career opportunities as they could gain more societal respect.

c. Education and Advocacy

Another topic of great importance is providing women with a space to advocate for themselves. Women having an opportunity to express themselves can help teach others that they should be respected and will help women have more of a voice. This voice could be in reference to politics, their own family, or in their career, all of which are very important. Women deserve to speak up for themselves and having a public and safe forum to do so is incredibly important. Women could also gather and talk about other issues in a non judgemental area in order to help them stand up for themselves and what they believe in. This can empower them to make even more social progress, especially in developing countries where their voices are constantly being stripped away and replaced with male figures. Men are most commonly seen in the government considering that women only make up 24.3% of roles in government worldwide. This is due to the fact that many governments are corrupt and built against women. Up until recently, women were not allowed to participate in the government in some countries, meaning every time a woman is elected into a position of power, it is breaking barriers. Unfortunately, women are

16

¹⁴ https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures

forced to pave the way and fight even harder for positions of power, making it much more difficult for them to have a voice. Because of this, public spaces for them to openly share their ideas are crucial.

d. Maternity Leave

Many countries can be extremely stringent when it comes to maternity leave. Some countries feel that women deserve as much time off as they need in order to take care of their newborns and recover from childbirth, while many believe that if women want to enter the workforce that they do not deserve the "advantage" of taking time off to take care of their children. Unfortunately, women that do decide to leave and have a child are also forced to bear the burden that they will be replaced at work and may not be able to return. This takes away a woman's income while she is trying to support her family, forcing her to be reliant on someone else, potentially a man. Careers are such a large part of helping women become economically empowered, and ensuring that women will always have access to a career, even when they take maternity leave, is absolutely necessary. Currently, the International Labor Organization, or the ILO, has a mandate that countries must mandate 14 weeks or more of maternity leave if necessary.¹⁵ However, only 62 countries provide this, making it very difficult for women in the other countries to properly take care of their child and lead a career. ¹⁶ Finally, maternity leave sets women back a year in their jobs, making it difficult for them to transition back in when they are ready.

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¹⁵https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008009/lang--en/index.htm#:~:text=Currently% 2C%20119%20countries%20meet%20the,country%2C%20the%20report%20points%20out.

¹⁶https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008009/lang--en/index.htm#:~:text=Currently% 2C%20119%20countries%20meet%20the,country%2C%20the%20report%20points%20out.

IV. Case Study: Limited Financial Accessibility for Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

Women in Sub-Saharan Africa encounter significant obstacles when trying to access financial opportunities and resources, which hinders their ability to become economically independent and the region's overall development. Lack of financial access reinforces gender disparities by preventing women from starting businesses, obtaining loans, and setting aside money for the future.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, most countries have over 60% of their women working in the labor force. 17 Usually, women work in agricultural sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa as they work long and excruciating hours every week tending to fields of crops that are usually labor-intensive. However, these women significantly fail when it comes to getting credit and other types of agricultural financing as almost all of them receive less than 10% of the finances that go to small farmers because they are subjected to violence, harassment, poor working conditions, and insufficient recognition of their economic efforts.

In addition, the informal economy of Sub-Saharan Africa specifically plays a role with female entrepreneurship. The informal economy is extremely unregulated as there is little to no supervision which leads to corruption within it. Once again, women continue to play an extensive and prominent role in these economies. With the highest proportion of female business owners worldwide, Botswana has 38.5% of female business owners followed by Uganda with 38.4% and Ghana with 37.2%. This is the case as women in Africa are more likely than males to choose entrepreneurship—not because they may possess a burning passion or the necessary

18

¹⁷ Daniels, Nomsa. "Barriers, Costs and Opportunities - Issuelab." WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN AFRICA, www.issuelab.org/resources/21889/21889.pdf. Accessed 12 June 2023.

abilities, but rather because there aren't as many other options available to them. Opportunities for wage work are generally limited in Africa, and this is especially true for women who frequently have less formal education. However, a significant problem for many female entrepreneurs is their limited access to funding. The finance gap for women in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to be over \$20 billion, but considering the significant number of female company owners in the unregulated economy, it is likely larger. Numerous female business owners often operate in unregulated industries with insufficient access to resources or financial services. The financial deprivation that women experience is made worse by the informal sector, stressing the urgent need to overcome the gender gap in financial support and access.

The economic situation in Sub-Saharan Africa would significantly improve if women had access to their own resources, such as assets, income from paid employment, or social security, because it would make women financially independent and add more regulation to informal economies. However, this continues to be a less plausible reality as women are still subject to family farms/businesses. Women make up about 70% of all contributing family employees on family farms and businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa; as a result, they do not get direct salaries or other forms of compensation for their labor. ¹⁸ A cycle of economic disadvantage results from family farms and enterprises not directly compensating women for their labor. Women are unable to acquire assets, establish valid credit, or make investments in their own businesses without access to their own sources of income and resources. This maintains their isolation from official

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¹⁸ "Regional Factsheet Sub-Saharan Africa - UN Women." *Progress of the World's Women*, www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2019/POWW-2019-Fact-sheet-Sub-Saharan-Africa-en.pdf. Accessed 12 June 2023.

financial institutions and restricts their access to credit, capacity to launch their firms, and ability to seek independent financial opportunities.

By removing these obstacles and fostering the economic empowerment of women in Sub-Saharan Africa with inclusive financial systems, land rights reform, and policy change women can succeed and allow for the sustainable development of the region.

V. Guiding Questions:

- 1. What can be done in developing countries to protect women's rights while respecting their culture?
- 2. How can changes be made in legislative bodies to enforce and properly implement laws made to protect women?
- 3. Why is it important to shift away from a patriarchal society and how can this be done efficiently and effectively?
- 4. In terms of economics, how will your country ensure that women are given equal opportunities and equal pay?
- 5. How can women be supported in a way that allows them to both support their families and empower themselves financially?

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