

# **STUDY GUIDE**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> annual session of FIMUN! As your committee directors Ezgi Ada Kaya, Fatma Özge Tuncel, Emine Asya Kaya, we are looking forward to see you in our committee.

We are also waiting fruitful debates and effective solutions from you. You should research about the topics and move on by your countries policy.

Here is our email addresses. Please do not hesitate to ask your questions about our committee and topics.

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See you in FIMUN 2020!

## **TOPIC 2: Improvement of the Situation of Women and Girls in Rural Areas**

### **Introduction**

Across the world, most rural women and girls are disadvantaged. Compared to men and boys they receive less formal education, some may get less health care, they have fewer opportunities to work outside the household and when they do, they are often paid less and treated worse than men. Most rural women are constrained by social norms that define them primarily wives, mothers and confined to the domestic sphere, where men do less than their fair share of household chores. Women are typically expected to be subservient to men. At worst, they are subject to emotional and physical abuse by men. Not only is this unjust, but also it means the full potential of rural women and girls – as people, workers, citizens, leaders – is not realised, to the detriment of their households and families, their rural communities and indeed their nations. When rural mothers lack the basics of life – food, income, health care – their children are at risk. Gender inequality thus threatens future generations.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### **Violence Against Women**

Violence against women (VAW), also known as gender-based violence and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), are violent acts the victims of which are primarily or exclusively women or girls.

### *Inequality Between Genders*

Gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's lived experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms. Gender inequality is experienced differently across cultures.

### *Harmful Traditions*

Harmful traditions are forms of violence which have been committed primarily against women and girls in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered, or presented by perpetrators, as part of accepted cultural practice.

### *Suffrage*

The right to vote in political elections.

## **General Overview**

Gender equality has been a constant issue all over world for thousands of years. Only within the last few centuries has there been a recognizable amount of effort to stop the discrimination against women in order to stabilize the social standing of women . While women in urban areas have been benefiting from these changes, unfortunately the same cannot be said for women in rural areas.

Women in rural areas are generally expected to be housewives while the male participants of the family are expected to work outside. Even if the woman works it is usually in farms where women are not treated fairly and paid less. This causes negative stigma around the idea of a working woman and promotes the current standards of financial problems in rural areas. It also must be noted that women play a really big role in agriculture and the industry is dependant on women. In developing countries, women constitute on average 43 percent of the agricultural labor force. However, their ownership of agricultural land remains significantly lower than men's.

The education girls receive in rural societies are also more likely to be less than formal as most girls aren't even able to receive primary education. Women are also even less likely to go to college to receive higher education. This results in women moving to urban areas or and brain drains. It should also be mentioned that most women don't even have enough freedom\rights in said areas to afford doing such things.

While healthcare in rural areas is not sufficient enough to support the native population the matters are far worse for women. Especially when compared to women living in urban areas rural women experience poorer health outcomes and have less access to health care. Many rural areas have limited numbers of health care providers,

especially women's health providers. Health care professionals should be aware of this issue and advocate for reducing health disparities in rural women.

Rural women are at high risk of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. They are also more prone to being victims of honor killings or suicide. e.g. Young Chinese women (between the ages 15-34) have higher suicide statistics when compared to males. The suicide rate of rural women is almost 3 times higher than urban women. Rural girls can be victims of female infanticide or get murdered by their families at young ages.

Some progress has been made to recognize rural women's rights, including their land and property rights. The UN Human Rights Council adopted a draft Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, recognizing the significant role rural women play in the economic survival of their families and the rural and national economy. In 2016, a UN committee on women's rights adopted guidance on the rights of rural women. Some countries have adopted laws that should protect women's property and inheritance rights, but implementation often falters.

### **Major Parties Involved**

- **Italy** has one of the lowest employment rates for women (42%) as compared to the EU average (55,6%). As a result of the progressive deregulation of the labour market and the willingness to tackle the high unemployment rate, in the '90s, a number of policies and legislative measures were introduced designed to support entrepreneurship. Examples of these are the simplification of procedures to set up a business, the reduction of relevant costs, easier access to credit, the improvement of the social security cover for self-employed workers, etc.

In Italy, rural population ageing is one of the main constraints affecting rural development. Indeed, in agriculture there is a high percentage of women in the age group 35-54 (59,4%), a small percentage of 15- 34 years-old-women (22,9%) while women over 50 total 33,9%. This is not in line with the age breakdown of women working in the industrial and service sectors, where there is a higher percentage of young women from 15 to 34 (39,2%) and a lower percentage of women over 50 (17,8%). Rural women work longer hours than the other female workers; 27,5% work part-time. The majority of farms run by women are efficient, innovative and oriented towards diversification, such as the direct marketing of farm products and agro-tourism.

- In the **Russian Federation** there are 20 million women out of a total rural population of 38 million people; 9 million of these women are of working age. Women holding leadership positions as farmers, entrepreneurs or in large and medium enterprises are 19%. The number of rural women with higher vocational education is 1,6 times bigger than for rural men; however,

proportionally, women's unemployment rate is higher. Secondly, rural women have no knowledge of their legal rights and, at the same time, the local and state authorities 'close their eyes' to the application of the law in a variety of issues strongly affecting them, such as sexual violence, domestic violence, enforcement of labour rights and non-discrimination law (so-called 'passive discrimination').

- In **Bosnia**, rural women have a limited access to information on their right and to health services, including counselling and family planning, due to the inexistence of appropriate structures in the country, insufficient funds to set them up, or the distance involved in obtaining such services.
- Since 1989 **Poland**, together with other countries in the region, has undergone radical socio-economic transformations which have had an impact on the characteristics of rural areas. Unfortunately, despite the importance of the agricultural sector for Poland's economy, issues connected with life in rural areas and its inhabitants remain one of the research fields that have been the most neglected; rural women are seldom the focus of studies by researchers in agriculture or gender studies specialists. At the moment, the Polish rural economy is based on small farms producing food mainly for their own use; rural enterprise is also dominated by small family companies, and their earnings are also significantly limited by low demand for goods and services, caused by rural unemployment and poverty. This situation is aggravated by the fact that a large number of farms are run by elderly and isolated people, whose main source of financial resources is social welfare aid and have neither the resources nor the sense of initiative to change their way of farming methods or develop an innovative approach.
- In **Spain**, 24% of the population live in rural areas, including 5 million women. The average Spanish woman living in rural areas is married, over 50 years old, has 2,3 children and devotes eight hours per day to domestic tasks and five to activities outside the house. Less than 9 % of farms are run by women; in the majority of cases, these exploitations are small (less than one hectare) which is below subsistence level; only 3% exploitations above 50 hectares are run by women. The level of responsibility that these women have in running their agricultural business does not correspond to their real decision-making power, because husbands or male family members have the upper hand as a patriarchal mentality continues to reign. In 2007, the government approved a plan to promote gender equality in the countryside and Law 45/2007 on sustainable rural development which established the principle of transversality in rural development policies by encouraging the active

participation of women in positions of responsibility, and positive action. It also called for raising the profile of women's work and their participation as owners or co- owners of farms, retaining women or the incorporation of women in agriculture, female employment and diversification of activities, training, reconciliation and access to new technologies.

- **The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Iraq** is implementing a project to train rural women and empower them economically and socially, prioritizing livelihood opportunities for widows and displaced women
- In **Algeria**, a national committee for the promotion of rural women, composed of ministerial and other relevant bodies, coordinates the work of local provincial committees and civil society. In 2018, a national award for the promotion of women entrepreneurs, which was launched during the celebration of the International Day of Rural Women, was devoted to the best agricultural projects and initiatives for sustainable development to encourage the contributions of rural women and support social mobility in the rural world. In 2019, the award will highlight the best projects undertaken by women in the field of creativity and innovation.
- The single registry for social programmes of **Brazil** helps to coordinate a wide range of public policies, and it is recommended that the person indicated as responsible for the family unit be a woman. That has meant that 85 percent of those who hold the card that provides access to key social programmes are women. Rural development programmes, such as a national programme to support rainwater harvesting and other forms of social technology and a programme for the promotion of rural productive activities that support women farmers, are also following that trend. Between 2012 and 2018, about 148,000 rural women received resources to invest in productive projects, representing some 60 per cent of the total beneficiaries.
- In order to achieve food security and promote agriculture that is resilient to climate change, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development of Burkina Faso** is promoting innovative and resilient agricultural technology, seeds and equipment and making them available to producers. At least 50 percent of beneficiaries in 2019 are women.
- The “Sowing Life” programme, in **Mexico**, promotes the effective participation of women and men, in particular older persons living below the poverty line, in integrated rural development and supports them in establishing

agroforestry production systems that, by combining traditional crops with fruit and timber trees, including mahogany, cedar, cocoa, coffee, rubber, cinnamon and other products, will help to achieve food self-sufficiency, improve incomes and restore forest cover of 1 million hectares, thereby reducing emissions. The programme is operational across eight states in 361 municipalities, of which 113 are indigenous, and is aimed at reaching 230,000 producers in 2019.

- **Azerbaijan** is working closely with FAO to support capacity development for rural women to meet employment and sustainable development targets. FAO is supporting extension services to meet the needs of rural women farmers and producers by undertaking gender-sensitive needs assessments and designing and providing training that considers the crops cultivated by women and their needs and challenges to increase their roles in agricultural decision-making and farm management, improve their productivity, ensure food security and enhance their livelihoods
- In the strategy paper and action plan on the empowerment of women of the **Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services of Turkey** for 2018–2023, the empowerment of rural women is prioritized, in particular for women’s enterprises and cooperatives and for women agricultural workers, by ensuring access to technology, training and social security
- In **India**, with support from UN Women’s Fund for Gender Equality, the Dalit Women’s Livelihoods Accountability Initiative has helped women marginalized by the caste system engage in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme. Between 2009 and 2011, in eight districts, their participation grew from 2,800 to more than 14,000. Many Dalit women now have bank accounts in their names and are unionized to defend their rights.
- In **Zimbabwe**, along one of the poorest stretches of the Zambezi River, new equipment and training offered by UN Women has helped women from the Tonga ethnic group break into the male-dominated fishing industry. Instead of selling fish purchased from men’s boats, they now market their own catch. Sales have doubled, and the women are organizing collectives, extending their market reach to larger towns and cities, and participating in a revolving fund providing small loans.

- In **China's** Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, UN Women helped ensure that scores of women farmers are able to learn about, acquire and maintain advanced irrigation systems. Climate change has made the flow of local rivers, the traditional source of water, unpredictable. Many men have left their villages for jobs in cities, with women remaining behind to take up farming. To underscore new ways of thinking, local drama troupes have staged performances demonstrating the value of women's participation in water management. Surveys have shown that local women, with their confidence bolstered by new skills and options, have become increasingly willing to voice their opinions in village affairs. Important partners in our work with rural women include the Food and

Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme under the initiative "Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women." It aims to empower rural women to claim their rights to land, leadership, opportunities and choices, and to participate in shaping laws, policies and programmes. Evidence shows that this spurs productivity gains, enhanced growth and improved development prospects for current and future generations. The initiative also engages with governments to develop and implement laws and policies that promote equal rights, opportunities and participation so that rural women can benefit from trade and finance, market their goods and make a strong contribution to inclusive economic growth.

- UN-Women and the United Nations Environment Programme are jointly implementing a project on empowering women to secure climate-resilient societies for 2018–2022 in **Bangladesh, Cambodia and Vietnam** and regionally in **Asia and the Pacific**. The project involves Government's, regional forums, academic institutions, women's groups and civil society organizations engaged in climate action and disaster risk reduction to promote the climate resilience of women and marginalized groups. It does so by supporting the participation of women in climate - related decision-making, the generation, analysis and use data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics to inform policy and the transformation of climate and disaster risk reduction policies and financing to be more gender-responsive, and by enabling women to have access to and use renewable energy as a basis for more resilient livelihoods.
- In order to achieve food security and promote agriculture that is resilient to climate change, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development of Burkina Faso** is promoting innovative and resilient agricultural technology,

seeds and equipment and making them available to producers. At least 50 percent of beneficiaries in 2019 are women.

- In **Bulgaria**, in the national action plan for promoting equality between women and men for 2019–2020, the building of modern broadband infrastructure is contemplated in rural areas to ensure the high-speed Internet connectivity that the country deems a prerequisite for the implementation of new forms of technology and for changing gender stereotypes.

❖ **Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue:**

UN Women supports the leadership and participation of rural women in shaping laws, strategies, policies and programmes on all issues that affect their lives, including improved food and nutrition security, and better rural livelihoods. Training equips them with skills to pursue new livelihoods and adapt technology to their needs.

❖ **Possible Solutions:**

In some parts of the world, women represent 70 percent of the agricultural workforce, comprising 43 percent of agricultural workers worldwide. Yet despite their heavy workload and productivity, rural women continue to face discrimination, which is not only a lack of justice but holds back gains in vital areas. If women farmers had equal access to resources and opportunities, they would drive greater progress in ending hunger, boosting food security, and improving health and education.

The Food and Agriculture Organization points out that if women farmers were given the same access to resources such as seeds, credit and fertilizer, the results could be significant. Women's agricultural yields could increase by 20 to 30 percent, raising agricultural production in developing countries by up to 4 percent. It would also mean 100 million to 150 million fewer people going hungry.

Ensuring women's access to land and other resources requires changes in laws and institutions to end discrimination, and supportive public policies to promote equality. It also requires the engagement of community organizations and the participation of rural women in decision-making.

## Appendix

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