

Agenda 2: Achieving economic empowerment of women, challenges and solutions

While women have been making leaps and bounds in various fields, economic independence and empowerment is an issue that needs constant attention. This session of the Economic and Financial Council at the Bangalore Model United Nations 2018 will focus on the various aspects of empowering women financially.

Numerous organisations have conducted several surveys and published reports highlighting the need for economic or financial empowerment. This background guide seeks to emphasize some of the broader issues or problem areas within this sphere. Having identified some of these issues, ensure that these are addressed during resolution-making in committee. The Executive Board will continue to provide access to additional resources as you pursue your research on these matters.

It is imperative to explore existing solutions and initiatives to further understand their benefits and shortcomings. This can then be applied to helping develop well thought out measures to bridge existing gender based economic disparity the world over.

It is also important to note that this background guide contains sources which are not traditionally used in Model United Nations conferences. These have been used to bolster your understanding of the issue. As with all conferences, only credible sources will be accepted in committee. This however, should not limit you in using alternative websites, journals and other domains to gain a more holistic view of the economic aspects of women empowerment.

Core issues:

1. Gender pay equality in the workplace

Gender equality in the workplace is a multi-dimensional socio-economic problem. Income disparity, leadership representation and other measures are some aspects of this issue.

The link between economic prosperity and female economic participation is long known. The World Economic Forum, in their [Global Gender Gap Report 2017](#), shows that while the estimated earned income is increasing for women, the gap between the same for men and women is actually increasing. Timewise, a company that has long been advocating flexible working hours, has identified [four key reasons](#) for the cause of the gender gap.

Another aspect of income disparity is seen in the employment of women post childbirth. Vox, a general interest news website highlights this as the true cause of the gender wage gap. Taken from the National Bureau of Economic Research from Denmark, [this blog post](#) shows the effect of having children on male and female incomes. It is also worth considering the economic cost of initiatives such as paid parental leave.

2. Representation

Representation is an essential matter when it comes to economic empowerment of women. LinkedIn, one of the world's largest online professional networks has identified some of the [most worrisome statistics](#) from the World Economic Forum's report. According to them, there has been a dismal increase in the proportion of female leaders across the 12 industries studied. It is also known that there is an increase in women employed in industries where there is larger female representation in leadership roles.

Both corporate and political representation have been highlighted. It is noteworthy to consider the critical role that women play in intensive labor industries such as agriculture. According to the UN Women's [Facts and Figures on Economic Empowerment](#), while women comprise of, on average 43% of the agricultural labor force, they control less land and have access to fewer additional resources than men.

3. Adapting to economic change

The current employment and labor market is rapidly evolving. The advent of automation poses serious threats to section of the female workforce with non-transferable and low and

limited skills. This [Guardian article](#) details the effect of that this ‘fourth industrial revolution’ will have on women and their economic and financial stability. Therefore, throughout the discussions of solutions, it is important to consider automation and the future of work and how women fit into this equation.

The political underrepresentation of women is also key to this issue. Policy is considered to be one of the primary solutions to being able to integrate women into the morphing demands of the workforce. Given this, paying more attention to this is crucial. Switzerland’s Inter-Parliamentary Union believes that currently an average of 23.8% of parliaments worldwide are composed of women.

Approaching solutions

Solutions to such empowerment related issues are often social and economic. As the Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly, the Executive Board urges you to consider the financial viability of implementing any proposed solution.

Gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming are two primary methods of addressing empowerment economically. The European Union has been leading this charge for the most part. Understanding how this can be translated to other regions and economies is essential.

For countries which have a lower degree of gender disparity, the International Monetary Fund in a working paper has assessed the implementation of such practices through Foreign Direct Investment methods. For developing countries with large gender disparities, this might offer the best opportunity to help women stand up for themselves, both socially and financially.

We’d like you to discuss this and all other possible approaches in committee. While it is essential to identify the problem to begin with, we’d like the committee to focus on solutions, keeping in mind their practicality and implementability.

Links and sources:

[Women Still a Rare Part of World's Parliament, US News](#)

[What is gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming?](#)

[The Economics of Maternity Leave](#) and [The Economics of Paid Parental Leave](#)

[Foreign Direct Investment and Women Empowerment: New Evidence on Developing Countries](#)
(International Monetary Fund)

[Gender Indicators: What, Why and How?](#)

[The Benefits and Downsides of Pay Transparency](#)

[Should Developing Countries Increase their Minimum Wages?](#)