

Committee: SOCHUM 1

Topic: The question of gender equality

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Summary

Gender equality refers to the state of treating individuals of all genders fairly and without bias, providing them equal opportunities, rights, and recognition in all aspects of life. It emerged as a response to historical and ongoing disparities between men and women in various spheres such as education, employment, politics, and personal autonomy. Gender equality is vital for upholding human rights and dignity, fostering social justice, and promoting inclusive development as it drives economic growth by providing equal access to resources. Additionally, gender-balanced political participation enhances decision-making and policy effectiveness, while combating gender-based violence. Furthermore, embracing gender equality reduces harmful stereotypes, creates diverse and innovative societies, and intersects with broader equality goals. As a cornerstone of the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality is integral to achieving sustainable progress, inspiring future generations, and nurturing social cohesion. The movement towards such equality gained momentum with the suffrage movement of the late 19th century, which aimed to secure women's right to vote and hold elected positions. In particular, many activists organised rallies, protests, and campaigns to challenge the exclusion of women from political participation, ultimately leading to legislative changes granting women the right to vote. Up till today, there have been countless efforts to promote and advance gender equality. Some relevant examples are the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, the Equal Pay Legislation, UN Conventions, Title IX, and much more. Thanks to these dedications, the trend of gender equality across the world, especially in LECDs, has been rapidly increasing. Developing countries such as Jamaica, Ethiopia, and Chile have been showing great improvement in gender equality starting from 2009. Despite significant progress, however, modern society still faces conflicts related to gender equality, including the

gender pay gap, underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, workplace discrimination, gender stereotypes, and issues surrounding reproductive rights and violence against women.

Definition of Key Terms

Gender equality - Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male.

Gender equity - Provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men.

Gender mainstreaming - Systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men in all policies and actions.

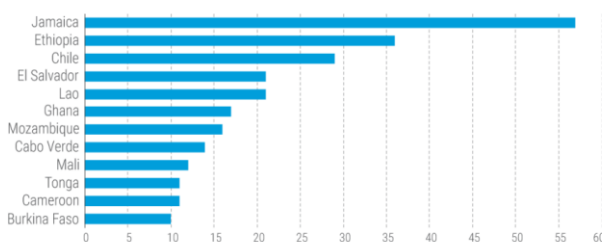
Diversity - Differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual

orientation, gender identity, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people.

Intersectionality - Analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.



Developing countries with highest relative improvement in gender equality between 2009 and 2020



Source: UNCTAD SDG Pulse 2022.

Gender Action Plan (GAP) - The UNICEF Gender Action Plan serves to reinforce the commitments to gender found in the organisation's periodic strategic plans.

Stereotype - A set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong.

Background Information

History of the problem

Gender Equality was made part of international human rights law by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10th December 1948. It aimed to prevent violence against women and girls, essential for economic prosperity.

In the late 19th century, the suffrage movement secured women's right to vote and hold elected positions. Many activists organised rallies, protests, and campaigns to challenge the exclusion of women from political participation, ultimately leading to legislative changes granting women the right to vote.

Later on in the late 20th century, the women's liberation movement addressed a wide range of gender-related inequalities, including workplace discrimination, reproductive rights, and societal norms. The movement highlighted the importance of dismantling traditional gender roles and advocating for equal opportunities and treatment.

The United Nations has unquestionably played a significant role in promoting gender equality through initiatives such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Modern Conflicts

Despite all these efforts, modern society continues to struggle with various conflicts related to gender equality such as gender pay gap, underrepresentation in leadership roles, workplace discrimination and harassment, unequal access to education and much more. Not only that, with the rapid development of technology, gender inequality can also be exemplified through online harassment or gender stereotypes in the media.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Finland - Finland is well known for their commitment towards gender equality. They are one of the first countries to give women voting rights.

Norway - Similar to Finland, Norway has been advocating for gender equality for an extended period.

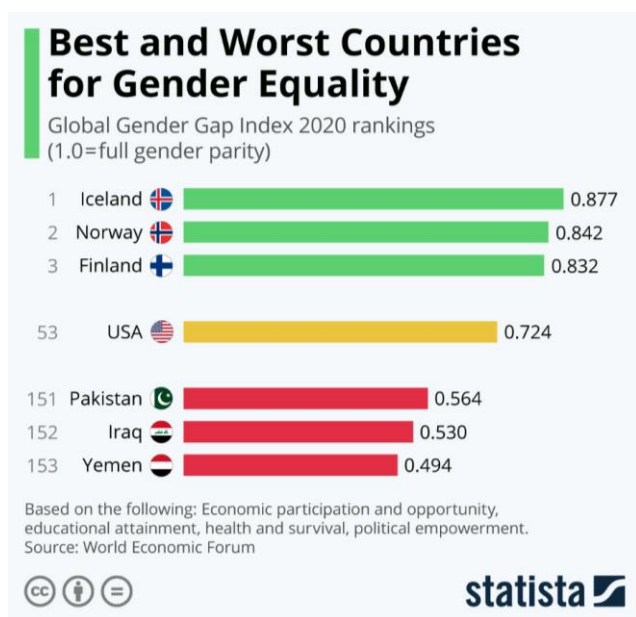
New Zealand - New Zealand is considered one of the most gender-equal countries in the world.

Iceland - The Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men is the reason gender equality is a hallmark of Icelandic culture. The law, established in 2000, was revamped in 2008 with the overarching goal of reaching equal rights through all paradigms of society. Iceland is also considered as the first country to promote gender equality.

Afghanistan - Since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021, women have been wholly excluded from public office and the judiciary. Today, Afghanistan's women and girls are required to adhere to a strict dress code and are not permitted to travel more than 75 km without a mahram. They are compelled to stay at home.

Yemen - Yemen currently ranks last in the gender gap and gender inequality. In various aspects like education, employment prospects, safety, and political participation, there are significant disparities evident between men and women.

The United States - The United States has taken many steps in reducing the gender gap and minimising gender discrimination. More specifically, in 1963 it passed the Equal Pay Act, which prohibited pay discrimination based on gender, and in the next year the Civil Rights Act, that outlawed gender discrimination and Title IX of the Educational Amendments in 1972, which suggested equal federal financial assistance indiscriminate of sex. On top of that, the inequality, prejudice, and violence against men, transgender men and women, as well as gender nonconforming individuals and non-binary individuals, are also widespread in the United States. As can be seen, although there has been significant progress made in the United States, there are still some social disparities with regards to gender equality.



Img Source: <https://www.statista.com/chart/20364/best-and-worst-countries-for-gender-equality/>

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
March 19, 1911	First celebration of International Women's Day (Copenhagen)
June 26, 1945	Gender equality enshrined in the United Nations Charter
June 19-July 2, 1975	UN First World Conference on Women in Mexico City
December 18, 1979	CEDAW: An "international bill of rights for women"
September 5-13, 1994	International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo
September 4-15, 1995	UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing
October 31, 2000	Passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325)
July 2, 2010	Creation of UN Women
September 2015	Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals

For more information: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/global-progress-toward-gender-equality-timeline>

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Creation of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – or UN Women (2 July 2010)

Development of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, Goal 5, to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York (8 December 1979). This entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981 after the twentieth country had ratified it. By the tenth anniversary of the Convention in 1989, almost one hundred nations had agreed to be bound by its provisions.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): An international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights. (2016)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
 - An international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights. (2016)
- Creation of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – or UN Women (2 July 2010)
- International human rights law by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.
- Development of 17 Sustainable Development Goals
 - Goal 5, to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"



Img source: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1761/file/Genderglossarytermsandconcepts.pdf>

Possible Solutions

- Encourage the government to invest in care work to not only acknowledge its importance but also to create jobs and foster economic growth without increasing carbon emissions, by:
 - investing in the expansion of care services
 - increasing support for unpaid caregivers
 - supporting unpaid care work through paid family leave and flexible working arrangements
 - considering care work as a collective good, expanding its availability and providing adequate support
- Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism in ways such as but not limited to:
 - supporting data collection and research on sexism, gender stereotypes and sex-based discrimination
 - eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions based on stereotyped gender roles
 - implementing guidelines and sanctions on women's images in the media
 - establishing clear criteria for evaluation when making hiring or promotion decisions (gender pay gap)
- Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls
- Achieve a balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making
- Fund women's organisation

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