



WOMEN'S RIGHTS

THE 2019 I-MODEL UN UPR



THEMATIC ISSUE GUIDE

The concept of women's rights entails women being entitled to an equal status, without subjection to any sort of discrimination or bias and being able to exercise all of the rights prescribed in the UDHR. All four of the States Under Review have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and agreed to the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. There have also been advances made by a number of civil society groups; acknowledged by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (which consists of independent experts, two from Japan and China). Yet, as highlighted recently by the [OECD](#), progress in East Asia remains 'too slow and uneven' amid 'entrenched social and cultural norms' that maintain discrimination against women and girls. Key issues that delegates are encouraged to review include: **the right of women to be free from any form of violence, (including domestic violence), equal pay for equal work, free choice of employment and political participation and representation, and bodily autonomy.**¹

1. MEASURES TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

According to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), violence against women is understood as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, **physical, sexual or psychological harm** or suffering to women'. Whilst domestic violence against women has been outlawed in most countries, gender-based domestic violence still remains pervasive in all dimensions of society. East Asian countries with strong state infrastructures and publicly adopted policies and legislation to protect women from domestic violence still face high rates of domestic violence crimes against women, occasionally as drastic as homicide. Even with elaborate legal protections and policies aiming to protect women from domestic violence, regional implementation still faces great disparity. Delegates are advised to critically examine and evaluate each legal system and legislative policies of states and find preventative and helpful measures regarding gender-based violence through the following subtopics:

- **Cultural violence against women and girls (in both online and offline spaces)**

¹ Please note that the provided topics within the overall thematic issue are a general guide only. Participants are encouraged to explore other topics related to the thematic issue aside from the ones outlined within this guide.

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- Domestic violence against women and girls and implementation issues with constituted infrastructure
 - Attitudinal education of men and boys and educational workshops on gender equality
 - Through Partners for Prevention (P4P) program by UN Women or other examples of support to women's aid agencies and cross-regional responsive measures

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2. MEASURES TO PROTECT THE RIGHT OF WOMEN TO ATTAIN EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

The employment rights of a woman typically refer to non-discriminatory conditions for women to attain **equal employment opportunities** and **equal pay for equal work** done by men. Since the International Labor Organization Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, the increase of legislations in promoting female employment with equal pay for equal work has been adopted by various states and institutions. Yet, according to CEDAW, the simple adoption of such legislations still requires a lot of initiative from countries to implement them into application, as to overcome the pay gap between genders. UN Women has further published findings that report the worldwide gender pay gap to be 77 cents for every dollar earned by men, with the gender gap even worse for women with children, women of colour, and/or immigrants. Delegates may pursue this issue via:

- Ratios of women in typically 'feminine' careers (teaching, nursing, healthcare, office and administrative work) across high, middle, and low income areas
 - Protective legislation and payment of women in informal economies
- Provision of social security guarantees such as pensions, maternity protection schemes, and occupational disease and accident insurance
- Rates and provision of female education, skill workshops, family planning and parental leave

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3. MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE RIGHT OF WOMEN TO HAVE FREE CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TO TAKE PART IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THEIR COUNTRIES

The inhibition on the political and public participation of women is a flagrant violation of the basic human rights to have free choice of employment and to be able to take part in the government of their countries (UDHR, Article 21 & 23). The 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on

women's political participation notes that 'Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women.' As of November 2018, there has been only an average of 19.4% women parliamentarians in the Asian region. Delegates could thus consider:

- **Methods to promote women's voter registration, voter turnouts of women and the election of female candidates**
- **Educational programs as well as laws and regulations for eliminating forms of systematic or cultural obstacles to [women's participation in politics](#)**
 - **Potential reforms and corrective enhancement of states' electorate institutions**

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4. MEASURES TO ADVOCATE FOR BODY AND FERTILITY AUTONOMY

The woman's right to health is inclusive of reproductive and sexual health of women, as well as the right over one's body entailed by Article 4 of the UDHR and the Platform for Action from the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. Sexual and reproductive rights of women entail that a woman shall be entitled to have full control over their own body and fertility, which directs that she can exercise her sexuality as she wishes and decide when and whether to get pregnant. There have been initiatives by the States Under Review to guarantee such rights, as within the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. Problems remain, however, with the practice of abortion still illegal in the ROK (the repeal of illegal status of abortion will be enacted in 2020) and Japan, both of which are categorised as More Economically Developed Countries in the East Asian region, and issues of involuntary and forced abortions in China and the [DPRK](#). Delegates should focus on legislations and policies tied with bodily autonomy and family planning by examining women's public participation, alongside providing a multidimensional and comprehensive overview of the various institutional and systemic barriers against women's sexual and reproductive rights.

- **Implementation of higher awareness and sex education in schools**
- **Education and access to means for safe sex, contraceptives and abortions**
 - **Provision of childcare and supportive measures for pregnant women**
- **Revision of present policy pertaining to rape and sexual violence against women**
- **Women's right to enter, form, and dissolve marriage and similar types of relationships based on equality and full and free consent**

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OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- **UPR Database:** recommendations to the [ROK](#), the [DPRK](#), [China](#), and [Japan](#)
 - [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)
 - [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)
 - **OECD Development Centre:** [East Asia and the Pacific Social Institutions and Gender Index](#)
 - [UN Women](#)
 - [The Yogyakarta Principles](#)
 - [International Planned Parenting Association](#)
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