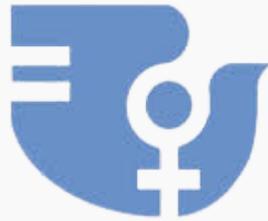


# CERRITOS CONFERENCE 2021

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## CSW

### **TOPIC:**

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND  
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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**DIRECTOR: JADYN ZECHARIAH**

October 9th, 2021

To Delegates of CHSMUN Novice 2021

Dear Delegates,  
Welcome to CHSMUN Novice 2021!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2021 novice conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host this conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of the committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Although there will be a few changes to our conference due to Covid-19, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2021, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. With this strong circuit consisting of over 500 delegates, CHSMUN Novice 2021 will provide a quality experience for beginner delegates to enhance their speaking and delegating skills.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Novice 2021!

Sincerely,

Anushka Panjwani & Naima Dellawar

[sg.cerritosmun@gmail.com](mailto:sg.cerritosmun@gmail.com)

Secretary-Generals

# **Women's Leadership and Political Participation**

## **Note From the Director**

Hello Delegates,

I'm Jady Zechariah and I am delighted to be your Director for the CSW. Issues pertaining to women's rights and empowerment have always been topics which I am incredibly passionate about, and I hope that you all find this topic enlightening. This is my 4th year in MUN and I am extremely grateful for all the incredible opportunities that this program has offered me, the amazing friends that I have met along the way, and the unforgettable memories that I will forever cherish! Joining MUN has been one of the best decisions I've made, as my experiences have definitely helped me become a strong leader, improve on my public speaking skills, stay organized and allow me to think critically. From joining the program as an introverted and shy Freshman who had little to no idea on what MUN even was, I have grown to become a much more confident person, who enjoys debating important world issues.

While MUN can get competitive and stressful, always remember to try your absolute best, and not compare yourself to others! This piece of advice has definitely helped me the most during my journey as a delegate, as I make sure to be proud of all my successes, while also being proud of all of my friends and their accomplishments too.

Outside of MUN, you can find me scrolling through Pinterest looking for inspiration, discovering new music, binge watching Miraculous Tales of Ladybug and Chat Noir, or spending time with friends and family. I also love talking to new people so don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding committee or just MUN in general, as I am more than willing to answer them.

I'm looking extremely forward to seeing everyone in debate, and I hope you all have a great time discussing this topic making the most out of this conference. Don't forget to try your best and have fun! I wish you all the best of luck for committee :)

Sincerely,

Jady Zechariah

Committee Email: [CSW.CHSMUN@gmail.com](mailto:CSW.CHSMUN@gmail.com)

## **Committee Introduction**

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1946, through Resolution 11. CSW is dedicated to ensuring gender equality through female empowerment, and protecting the rights and welfare of women. CSW first began taking action after the ratification of ECOSOC Resolution 1996/6, allowing the Commission to be heavily involved in the implementation and progress of the Beijing Declaration, and the Beijing Platform for Action, both of which play important roles in achieving gender equality. UN Member States' Representatives and organizations attend the Commission's two-week annual sessions to discuss issues regarding women's leadership and empowerment, and obstacles that are blocking progress towards achieving gender equality. With the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action being the fundamental, global policy document

for gender equality, member states carefully observe its development, taking note of any issues regarding its implementation.

Furthermore, CSW's multi-year programme of work was established in 1987 to promote women's education and political participation. The multi-year programme of work maintains priority themes for each year, with this year's main focus being women's participation in policy reform and decision-making as well as the elimination of gender-based violence and discrimination. Priority themes for 2022-2024 include addressing poverty and financial issues through adopting a gender perspective, encouraging women's political participation in disaster risk reduction policies, and education for women through technological innovations.

# Topic: Women's Leadership and Political Participation

## Background:

Women account for less than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses in 27 states, as well as only 11 women serving as Head of State with 12 women as Head of Government in June 2019. The issue regarding Women's Leadership and Political Participation has been a prevalent global issue, mainly due to the lack of education as well as women's procreative role, which prevents women's employment and their participation in decision-making. Despite the lack of women in leadership positions, governments that allow increased participation of women have contributed to many policy reforms when it comes to addressing gender-based violence and achieving gender equality. According to the OECD, figures have shown that the increased presence of women cabinet ministers has contributed to more access to reproductive healthcare, indicating that women's role in their government is crucial to bringing about positive changes to their communities.

The first issue regarding barriers to women's leadership and political participation is the lack of access to education for women, mainly occurring in developing nations and vulnerable communities, with a total of 31 million girls not having access to a primary education. With cultural and societal beliefs encouraging women to stay at home, taking care of their families, it is common that young women will not complete their secondary education. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, less than 1 in 5 girls will complete primary education, with only 15% of young women completing their secondary education in Uganda and 4% of women completing secondary education in Rwanda. Women bear the burden of maintaining the welfare of their households, with their family's responsibilities being their first priority. Young women will leave education in order to get married and raise children of their own, whereas their husbands will work to earn money for their family, thus elevating the role of men in their communities, diminishing the status of women.

When it comes to the workforce and employment, women face multiple issues such as being less likely to earn high-paying jobs due to their procreative role, and the fact that they will take maternity leave, as well as many forms of harassment. As a result, women are restricted to

jobs that are low-quality, in unsatisfactory conditions, preventing them from occupying leadership positions. In order to address the lack of women in the workforce, 30 percent Clubs have been implemented aiming to increase female representation in corporations and the executive board of companies. Such programs have shown to be effective with the United Kingdom's 30% Club helping increase the presence of women in executive boards from 5.9% to 30.6 percent. Workplace harassment and discrimination frequently occur towards women, with over 69% of women being sexually harassed in a professional setting. The issue of workplace harassment only contributes to the low number of women in leadership roles, as many acts of harassment are perpetrated by their bosses or employers themselves, keeping in mind that such acts can also occur within the political sphere.

Women still remain largely underrepresented by their governments, and as a result the implementation of gender quotas have come into effect. Gender quotas have displayed improvements in government policies, with one example being in India, where increased women's participation in their government have allowed for more police response to violence against women, enhanced child nutrition, increased access to clean drinking water, and greater women's entrepreneurship. Even after the elimination of gender quotas in India, statistics revealed that attitudes regarding the status of women and women's empowerment changed substantially, with more women being elected to or running for office, demonstrating that gender quotas contribute to beneficial changes in communities by elevating women's representation. However, the issue regarding forced gender quotas is the fact that they can be seen as undemocratic, and "violating principles of liberal democracy" due to the idea that quotas allow for reserved spaces for female leaders. Nonetheless, several countries have introduced gender quotas, which allow for greater openness during elections while accounting for restrictions that prevent women from holding positions of power. In essence, the lack of women's leadership and political participation due to socioeconomic barriers remains a significant issue which needs to be addressed.

## United Nations Involvement:

The General Assembly's Resolution 66/130, adopted on December 19, 2011, expressed grave concern over the lack of women in politics as a result of discriminatory legislation and cultural norms, low education levels, and the effects of poverty. Consequently, the Resolution urged all states to "enhance the political participation of women" by taking proactive steps to address the barriers that prevent them from doing so. Resolution 66/130 stressed the importance of solutions that would promote gender parity in political decision making, ensuring that member states were committed to increasing the number of female government officials and leaders, eradicating discriminatory laws which restrict women's participation, and also taking action against perpetrators of harassment towards female political candidates.

The UN adopted a Convention on the Elimination against All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 18 December 1979 which acknowledged that there was extensive discrimination against women which violated the 'the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity' which the Convention was said to uphold. According to the 1979 Convention, women's procreative function is the most significant barrier to their chances of employment. Almost invariably, women must pick between a career and caring for their children. As a result, CEDAW stipulated that both men and women must share responsibilities for raising children.

Under the same Convention, maternity protection and childcare were deemed essential rights. CEDAW also aimed to offer young women the right to an education, and also provide access to economic and social opportunities through women empowerment. Additionally, one crucial area of concern addressed by the Convention was the impact of societal and cultural traditions on the status of women, which leads to a lack of representation, resulting in their being denied equal rights. CEDAW brought attention to the necessity for a shift in men's and women's conventional roles in society in order to transform gender stereotypes and women's inferiority.

The United Nations is also currently implementing a program called Women Rise for All, a global campaign that brings women together to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. On September 24th, 2020, this campaign was founded, inspiring women to utilize their voices to make a difference during the pandemic. Representatives are allowed to work cohesively, driven by the Sustainable Development Goals, supporting the UN Response and Recovery Fund in implementing UN Frameworks, ensuring the protection of all lives during the pandemic. During the 75th session of the General Assembly, UN Permanent Representatives joined Women Rise For All, which addressed the program's efforts made towards protecting the rights of women.

## Case Study: New Zealand

One example of a female leader bringing about positive change to a country would be New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern. Ardern first began her political journey at the age of 17, associating herself with the Labour Party, working dedicatedly with members of the party, leading to her being elected as leader of the Labour Party in 2017. Eventually, Ardern's hard work allowed her to become New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister, and her role has allowed for her to guide the country through the COVID-19 Pandemic in an efficient way. What led Ardern to being elected as Prime Minister was her position on climate change, advocacy for free university education, improved access to abortion, and implementation of poverty-reduction programs for children. One of Jacinda Ardern's key leadership moments includes her response to the terrorist attacks on Great Christchurch mosques in 2019, which resulted in the death of 51 Muslim individuals and 50 injuries. Ardern claimed the attack to be led by white supremacy, addressing the negative impact of racism within the country. As a result of the terrorist attack, Ardern swiftly demanded tighter regulations on the sale of arms, banning all military style semi-automatics from being used.

Jacinda Ardern has also led her country through the COVID-19 pandemic, enforcing strict social distancing and lockdown restrictions at the beginning of March 2020. The Prime Minister restricted all forms of travel to New Zealand, being among the first countries to close their borders due to the pandemic. Ardern first implemented a national lockdown when the first 100 cases were confirmed. Ardern's public health response allowed for the virus to be contained as early as August 2020, with a total number of 2,000 cases and 25 deaths.

## Bloc Positions:

**Western Bloc:** There are a limited amount of socioeconomic barriers restricting women's leadership in the Western bloc. Cultural norms encourage women to hold leadership positions, participate in the workforce, and also participate in politics. Despite this, the wage gap still exists even in European countries and the U.S. For every Euro that a man earns in Europe, a woman

will only earn 86 cents on an average. In North America and Europe, women hold over 30% of parliamentary seats, which is a much higher percentage compared to other bloc regions. However, only 9 European countries have surpassed 40% of women in parliamentary positions.

**Latin America and the Caribbean Bloc:** When it comes to female leadership, Latin America and Caribbean bloc has the highest number of women as presidents and prime ministers. The Latin American and Caribbean bloc also includes 5 countries which have surpassed 40% of women in parliamentary positions. However, despite the Latin America bloc leading in the number of elected officials, only 7.2% of women hold positions on the executive board of top companies. Still, the amount of women participating in the workforce has increased from 34.7% to 41.1% in 2018.

**African Bloc:** In the African bloc, women's political participation ranges from 63% in Rwanda, to as little as 34% in Cameroon, with the average percentage of women's representation in parliament being 41.9%. While many African nations are moving towards an increase in female leadership, the largest factor restricting said leadership is the lack of education, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where young women are forced into marriage before completing their secondary education. Today, women consist of 24% of parliaments in Africa (of which there are 12,113) a number that is much lower than other blocs.

**Asia and Pacific Bloc:** Working under the CEDAW, Asian and Pacific countries have made efforts towards establishing more women in leadership positions and working in the economic sector. However, the gender wage gap still remains a prevalent issue in Asian countries, as mostly women take on low-paying jobs, and mostly men take on higher paying jobs. In North and Central Asia, women's leadership has increased to 23% over the last 20 years, whereas East and North East Asia have steadily maintained their 22%, with South, South West Asia, and the Pacific falling behind with only 17% of seats being held by women. Still, women's leadership in Asia and the Pacific bloc as a whole have steadily increased, with 20% of parliamentary seats being held by women in 2020, compared to 13% in 2000.

## Basic Solutions:

When researching and finding solutions to address women's leadership and political participation, delegates should address the cultural, social, and economic barriers that are preventing women from taking on job opportunities, continuing education, and participating in politics (whether it be voting in an election, or running for office). When it comes to female candidacy, women often lack the resources and support to run for office or participate in political decision-making. Delegates should aim their solutions at funding political campaigns, empowering women to take on a higher role in politics, and also ensuring that women recognize their voting rights.

Cultural barriers also lower the status of women, particularly in developing nations. Delegates should implement ways to inform women of their rights as individuals, as well as informing men on the issue of gender equality. This can be done through providing young women with access to education. With the lack of education limiting women from making a difference in their communities, delegates should research ways to provide young women with access to secondary education in order for them to take on leadership roles, participate in the

working field, and participate in politics. Since gender quotas have been seen as helpful in many countries, there still remain disadvantages of forcing such quotas in areas where they are deemed as undemocratic. Delegates should carefully consider the gaps in implementing gender quotas, and instead focus on finding improved ways for women to earn their rightful places in the political sphere through empowerment and policy reforms.

When it comes to the economic sector, the gender wage gap and women's employment are important issues which should be addressed by delegates in their solutions. Delegates' solutions should pertain to providing more women with job opportunities, including jobs that are high paying. Solutions pertaining to legal action against workplace harassment and discrimination should also be a key focus. Delegates should consider implementing programs and policy reforms which will allow women to be protected from perpetrators of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, encouraging them to report said crimes. Finance is also an important issue when it comes to seeking legal action, therefore delegates should consider the economic status of women on an international, and come up with ways to provide all women with legislative and financial help when it comes to dealing with discrimination and harassment within the working field.

## Questions to Consider:

1. How has my country addressed the lack of access to education for women, especially for underprivileged communities, and how can such actions be implemented on an international level?
2. What resolutions or policies does my country support regarding enhancing the role of women and providing them with equal opportunities whether it be socially or economically?
3. What can be done to eliminate all forms of workplace discrimination and harassment against women?
4. To what extent does the wage gap exist in my country? How has my country addressed the lack of employment opportunities for women and what resources are available for more women to participate in the economic sector?
5. What barriers are preventing women from running for office or participating in government decision-making and how will my country bring about change?
6. In what ways do cultural beliefs affect the socio economic status of women in my own country and on an international level?
7. In what ways has women's leadership and participation benefitted my country?
8. How can governments encourage women's political participation through legislative reform?
9. What can be done to address the lack of funding regarding women's political campaigns?

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