

Cerritos Advanced Conference 2020

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)



Topic A: LGBTQ+ Rights

Topic B: Disability Rights

Director: Kanika Patel

POSITION PAPERS DUE on October 17th by 11:59 pm to Committee Email

October 24-25, 2020

To Delegates of CHSMUN Advanced 2020

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to CHSMUN Advanced 2020!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2020 online advanced conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host our very first advanced 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 this wasn't what we expected, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience at the online conference. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2020, 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 6 schools and over 500 delegates, CHSMUN Advanced 2020 will provide a quality experience for intermediate 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 Advanced 2020!

Sincerely,

Anjali Mani and Karishma Patel

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Secretary-Generals

A Note From The Director

Delegates,

My name is Kanika Patel and I'm very excited to be serving as your UNHRC head chair! As I head into my 6th year of MUN, I have gained insight into many of the global issues plaguing the world today, leading me to develop a strong passion for human rights. As for my hobbies, I enjoy watching Netflix and YouTube, scrolling through instagram, taking walks, and eating sweet foods. Although this conference is occurring in an unexpected format, I hope that you will all gain some valuable MUN experience and be able to participate in an engaging debate. I chose topics that I believe will let every country have a unique perspective and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and solutions in committee!

Sincerely,

Kanika Patel

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Director, UNHRC

Committee Introduction

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was created on March 15, 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly as a replacement for the UN Commission on Human Rights. The UNHRC was established with the purpose to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as address violations of human rights around the world. The Council currently consists of 47 United Nations Member States which were elected by the United Nations General Assembly. This council has the ability to discuss all human rights issues and it meets at the UN office at Geneva. The UNHRC has a Universal Periodic Review mechanism which serves the purpose of assessing human rights situations in all United Nation Member States. Additionally, the UNHRC has an advisory committee that provides expertise and advice on various thematic human rights issues. Their complaint procedure allows organizations and individuals to bring violations of human rights to the Council.

Topic A: LGBTQ+ Rights

Background:

The LGBTQ+ community consists of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or other affiliations. Currently, 72 nations criminalise homosexuality, specifically consensual, same-sex sexual activity. The majority of these countries use sodomy, buggery, and unnatural offences to criminalise sexual activity between men. Of these 72 nations, 44 nations criminalise consensual sexual activity between women using laws that are against lesbianism, sexual relations with a person of the same sex, and gross indecency. Moreover, 11 countries have imposed the death penalty for engaging in consensual same-sex sexual activity. The death penalty is a possibility in Afghanistan, Brunei, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, and the UAE. However, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Yemen, and Northern Nigeria have implemented the death penalty. Additionally, 15 countries criminalise the gender identity and expression of transgender people by using laws against cross-dressing, impersonation, and disguise. In addition to the criminalization of homosexuality, the LGBTQ+ community also faces threats due to the prevalence of hate crimes. In 2015, one in five hate crimes committed in the United States was due to sexual orientation. In recent years, there has been a drastic increase of violent crime against transgender individuals, specifically trans women of color, within the United States. For instance, in 2019, at least 27 transgender people died in the U.S. due to violence, the majority of them were black transgender women. 2020 has already seen the deaths of 26 transgender or gender non-conforming individuals by violent means. In spite of the increased violence faced by the transgender community, sixteen states across the United States do not include sexuality or gender identity in their hate crime laws and four states have no hate crime laws at all. Another hardship the LGBTQ+ community faces is the denial of fundamental human rights. For example, those in same-sex relationships are often forbidden from adopting children. Currently, only fifteen states U.S. have passed a law which guarantees gay couples the right to second-parent adoption and five states legally allow adoption agencies to deny adoption to gay couples because of their sexual orientation. Additionally, many individuals who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly LGBTQ+ youths, are subjected to conversion therapy which includes electroshock therapies, forced internments in clinics, exorcism, and other practices. Other aspects of these conversion therapies include emotionally traumatic or physically painful experiences to get the individual to identify those feelings of shame with their LGBTQ+ identity. Conversion therapy is based on the false premise that being LGBTQ+ is a mental illness that needs to be cured even though all major medical associations have agreed that LGBTQ+ identities are normal. For instance, in 1973 the American Psychiatric Association determined that homosexuality was not a mental illness and in 2007 they have concluded that it is unlikely that individuals will reduce same-sex attractions or increase other-sex attractions through the utilization of sexual orientation change efforts or conversion therapy. The LGBTQ+ community also faces high levels of discrimination at the workplace. Gay and trans individuals face the threat of being fired from their jobs on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. This means that regardless of their performance or skill, a person can lose their jobs if their boss

discovers and disagrees with their identity. Steps have been taken to reduce workplace discrimination because of sexual orientation. Currently, seventy-seven countries prohibit discrimination in employment, including Australia, Canada, France, and Germany. Although the United States has ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protect employees from discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, 20% of LGBTQ+ Americans have experiences discrimination when applying for jobs. 32% of LGBTQ+ people of color in the United States face workplace discrimination which is more than their white counterparts as only 13% of the white LGBTQ+ community suffer from this type of discrimination. Additionally, transgender individuals face difficulties having their gender legally recognized. In 1/3 of the countries globally transgender people can have their gender recognised legally. However, only 7 of these countries allow this to happen without restrictions. In 41 countries, it is legal with social or medical requirements. These requirements include getting a psychiatric diagnosis and undergoing irreversible sterilization, violating their human rights. Transgender individuals also face problems accessing bathrooms. These individuals, are often times not allowed to use public bathrooms in the same way their cisgender peers would. Specifically, transgender children in school face the possibility of not being able to use the bathroom that suits their gender identity. This is why many LGBTQ+ rights activists have pushed for the introduction of more gender neutral bathrooms. LGBTQ+ individuals also face discrimination in housing, public accommodations, healthcare, and the criminal justice system. Discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals in regards to housing comes in many forms. For example, it occurs when a transgender woman is asked not to dress in women's clothing on the property or when gay man is evicted because his landlord believes he is going to infect other tenants with HIV/AIDs. The LGBTQ+ community also faces disparities when it comes to their healthcare. LGBTQ+ have less access to care due to the minority status of LGBTQ+ people, lack of education and training for health care workers, lack of clinical research on health issues that impact LGBTQ+ people, and fear due to stigma, discrimination, and bias in the healthcare system. Lastly, the LGBTQ+ community, particularly LGBTQ+ people of color face higher rates of incarceration, unfair treatment, and abuse in the criminal justice system. The LGBTQ+ community faces a different set of problems in countries where being LGBTQ+ is not accepted. For example in Iraq the LGBTQ+ community not only faces a threat from the Islamic States in Mosul and Hawija, but also from groups supported by the government that commit "killing campaigns". Attacks on gay people under Isis have been widely reported and it continues to this day. LGBTQ+ community spaces have been burned down or bombed making it unsafe to meet with people. The threat of execution is also present in many countries. For example, Amnesty International estimated that 5,000 gay individuals have been executed since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

United Nations Involvement:

The first action the United Nations took to protect the rights of the LGBTQ+ was on June 17, 2011 when the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted its first resolution on the

rights for homosexuals and transgendered individuals. The resolution called for the end to sexual discrimination and recognized it as a priority issue of the United Nations. The Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity was a non-binding resolution that expressed grave concern at all acts of violence and discrimination against individuals due to their sexual orientation and gender identity. The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/67/168 on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions. This resolution included crimes motivated by the victim's sexual orientation and gender identity. This was the first time that these crimes and killings were mentioned in a United Nations General Assembly passed resolution. In July 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights launched the U.N.'s Free and Equal Campaign against homophobia and transphobia and to promote understanding of the human rights of LGBTQ+ people. In 2017, UN Free and Equal reached 2.4 billion social media feeds across the world through videos, graphics, and plain-language fact sheets. UN Free and Equal campaigns and events have been organized in almost 30 countries with support from the United Nations as well as political, community, and religious leaders and celebrities from all different regions of the world. Additionally, when the United Nations released its Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, many countries utilized language that would ensure the LGBTQ+ is included. In September 2016, the United Nations appointed Vitit Muntarbhorn to serve as their first ever independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity. Through this role, Vitit Muntarbhorn has worked to reduce violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and tried to improve their situation in all U.N. member states. The United Nations refugee agency has also played a vital role in aiding LGBTQ+ individuals in fleeing violence and persecution and in helping them resettle in countries that are more accepting of LGBTQ+ people. They also frequently update their guidance on how to effectively and sensitively assist LGBTQ+ refugees.

Case Study: Brunei

Brunei is a small South-East Asian country that is especially dangerous for LGBTQ+ individuals. In 2014, Brunei introduced Sharia law, giving it a dual legal system with both Common Law and Sharia Law. Homosexuality was already illegal in Brunei, however it was previously punishable with prison time. The new legislation implemented means adultery and sex between men is punishable by stoning to death. The new penal code also using whipping to punish lesbian sex. After the United Nations called the punishments cruel and inhuman, Brunei said that there would be a high threshold for evidence, suggesting these punishments would be used rarely. Brunei's foreign ministry has also stated that the implementation of Sharia law is about prevention rather than punishment. After these laws were implemented, international outrage was sparked and many began to boycott luxury hotels associated with Brunei over the legislation. In addition to these laws, discrimination and stigma against the LGBTQ+ community is prevalent. The implementation of these new punishments signal a rising intolerance and a further marginalization of the LGBTQ+ community. In a country where homosexuality is already illegal, these laws will make the LGBTQ+ individuals in Brunei fearful for their lives. Thus delegates should focus on protecting LGBTQ+ individuals in countries where homosexuality is illegal and implement solutions that can help empower LGBTQ+ individuals.

Bloc Positions:

Western: In many Western countries, there are laws preventing LGBTQ+ individuals from facing discrimination. For instance, the European Union has protected LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination at the workplace since the year 2000. Even though laws like these are in place, discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community is continuing to increase. Although more than half of the nations around the world that have legalized same-sex marriage are in Europe, there are many western countries who have still not legalized it. In the United States, gay marriage has been legalized but LGBTQ+ individuals are not protected from discrimination in all states. Canada legalized homosexual activity in 1969 and legalized gay marriage in 2005, has protected LGBTQ+ individuals from housing and employment discrimination. Within the Western bloc, it is essential to focus on combating discrimination in employment and housing as well as providing access to proper healthcare.

Latin America and Caribbean: Currently, most Latin American countries no longer consider homosexuality as a crime, but that is not the case in the Caribbean. For example, in former British colonies like Jamaica, there is a law declaring that the “abominable crime of buggery” is punishable with up to ten years in jail. Half-dozen nations in Latin America have recognized same-sex marriage and there are a few other nations that offer similar legal partnerships but not marriage. There has been a new surge in activism within Latin America due to the end of military dictatorships and the lessening influence of Catholicism. Argentina has Latin America’s most open gender identity laws. Individuals can change their gender if they do not identify with the gender they were assigned with at birth, without authorization from a judge or doctor. Even though laws are slowly changing within this region, discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community is rampant. Central American and Caribbean countries as well as South American countries like Brazil have been singled out as especially poor environments for LGBTQ+ people. Within Latin American and the Caribbean, it is essential to focus on combating all kinds of discrimination, protecting LGBTQ+ individuals, and increasing activism.

African: Out of the seventy-two countries that criminalize homosexuality worldwide, 32 of them are in Africa. The extent to which the laws are enforced varies greatly from country to country. For instance, Uganda has seen a sudden increase in anti-gay arrests whereas Gambia hasn’t prosecuted anyone under their anti-sodomy laws since 2017. Even when the laws are not enforced, the laws promote a stigma around homosexuality and provide a justification for homophobia behavior. Africa is also one of the most religious continents in the world with 93% of sub-Saharan Africans are either Christian or Muslim. These beliefs influence many different parts of people’s lives, including their attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, countries like Uganda, Nigeria, and Togo have laws that range from 10 years to life in prison or the death penalty as a punishment from same-sex relationships or homosexual behaviors and expressions. Within the African bloc it is important to protect individuals from sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence as well as provide sexual and reproductive healthcare as LGBTQ+ individuals are often denied or can’t access those services.

Asian-Pacific: In the Middle East, the LGBTQ+ community fears persecution due to the fact that homosexuality is illegal in most Middle Eastern countries. With the Muslim majority and Christian minority in the Middle East, homosexuality is condemned and considered to bring shame to the person and their family. As a result, honor killings of homosexual family members as an attempt to restore honor to the family occurs in many different areas of the Middle East. Those who are caught engaging in homosexual behavior are punished differently in different regions. For instance, LGBTQ+ individuals face punishments like fines, jail time, or even death in some areas. Homosexuality is still a very taboo topic in Asia and being gay can get the individual arrested or result in a legal execution in some countries. However, being gay is legal in a number of Asian countries. Taiwan is the only country in Asia that has legalized gay marriage and Thailand is on the brink of introducing civil unions. With the lack of laws allowing LGBTQ+ individuals to be LGBTQ+, protecting them and their rights is an essential aspect.

Basic Solutions:

Basic Solutions for LGBTQ+ rights include combating housing, employment, and healthcare discrimination. This can be done through a variety of methods including the implementation of various organizations or reducing the stigma around homosexuality. Additionally, the LGBTQ+ should be given better access to healthcare specifically tailored to them and to adequate legal protections. Protecting the LGBTQ+ community, specifically trans individuals, from violence is also an essential aspect of this topic. LGBTQ+ individuals should also be given access to family planning services, services that will protect LGBTQ+ families, and help gay couples adopt children. Solutions to end the practice of conversion therapy should also be implemented as well as rehabilitation solutions for those who have gone through conversion therapy. Focus on implementing solutions that have been proven successful in the past. Previously, when laws meant to protect the LGBTQ+ community were implemented, they have not been enforced, thus delegates should focus on the enforcement of laws and policies that protect LGBTQ+ rights.

However, if your country's policy does not support LGBTQ+ rights, do not try to implement solutions that are in favor of LGBTQ+ rights. Follow your policy and implement solutions that are in correlation with your country's stance on LGBTQ+ rights.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is your country's policy on conversion therapy and what can be done to end it?
2. What solutions would be effective in providing support to LGBTQ+ individuals in areas where homosexuality is criminalized?
3. What laws does your country have on changing your gender and on transgender individuals?
4. How will you protect LGBTQ+ individuals, specifically transgender individuals, from violence?

5. What solutions can be implemented so LGBTQ+ individuals can access proper healthcare, even in areas where homosexuality is illegal?

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Topic B: Disability Rights

Background:

15 percent of the world's population is estimated to endure a disability of multitudinous forms, of which 80 percent are located in developing nations. In addition, the World Bank estimates that 20 percent of the world's most poverty-stricken lives with some sort of disability. As exemplified through many examples in history, poverty and disability create an unbreakable cycle due to the fact that those below the poverty line struggle to access basic necessities which can potentially lead to them acquiring some sort of disability. Once this has occurred, stigmas prevent them from accessing education, rights, and employment. According to UNESCO, 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. Moreover, the International Labor Organization estimates that 386 million people with disabilities are of working-age, however, unemployment rates of this population exceed 80% within Asian countries. For instance, out of the 70 million persons living with disabilities in India, only 100,000 have obtained a job. As stated by a study done in Orissa, India, 25% of women with intellectual disabilities were raped in addition to 6% of women with other forms of disabilities being sterilized by force. The cause of such rates regarding education and inhumane treatment is the result of negative perceptions, or stigma, towards disabled individuals in these developing nations as proven by a British study done in 2004. Strikingly, only 45 nations have anti-discrimination laws along with laws directly mentioning disabilities. In many Latin American countries, less than 20% of disabled people obtain insurance benefits and specifically in Ecuador 84% of disabled persons have zero benefits from insurance due to the lack of proper funds because of stigma. Those living with disabilities face a multitude of barriers including attitudinal barriers which included stereotyping. People often stereotype disabled people assuming their quality of life is poor or that they are not healthy due to their disability. Disabled people also face high rates of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. Disability discrimination is when individuals are treated differently due to their disability, perceived disability, or association with a disabled person, and this is especially prevalent in the workplace. This can happen in various aspects of employment including recruitment, hiring, firing, training, pay, and other employment-related activities. Disabled individuals face harassment in employment and sometimes are required to take medical exams. Additionally, those with physical disabilities can face substantial mobility barriers in their workplace. 36% of disabled people in the United States have reported some kind of discrimination in the workplace and of those 36%, 51% have been directly refused a job due to their disability. Disabled people also face problems when it comes to accessibility. Accessibility is a word that is used to describe the degree to which a product, service, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. It can also be viewed as the ability to benefit from or even access a system or entity. Specifically, accessibility is used to focus on individuals with disabilities and their right to access entities through the usage of an assistive device. One facet of accessibility is the ability to access transportation. Oftentimes public transportation is not accessible to people with disabilities or accessible public

transportation options are not available regularly. There is also a lack of awareness and respect among bus and taxi drivers and fellow commuters. Access to buildings is also a crucial aspect to improving accessibility. Houses that are built are not accessible to those with disabilities and often disregard regulations in place meant to cater to the needs of persons with disabilities.

People with disabilities also face health care disparities, some of which include lower rates of screening and more difficulty accessing services compared to people without disabilities. Those with disabilities report seeking more healthcare than people without disabilities and also have more unmet needs. For instance, a recent survey of people with serious mental disorders showed that up to 50% of people in developed countries and up to 85% of people in developing countries received no treatment in the 12 months prior to the study. Additionally, women with disabilities receive less screening for cervical and breast cancer than women without disabilities. People with intellectual impairments or diabetes are also less likely to have their weight checked and adolescent with disability are more likely to be excluded from sex education programmes. People with disabilities also are especially vulnerable to secondary conditions, comorbid conditions, age-related conditions, and higher rates of premature death. Individuals who have disabilities face a range of barriers when accessing healthcare. The affordability of healthcare services and transportation are some of the main reasons why people with disabilities don't receive healthcare services in low income countries. 33% of people without disabilities can't afford healthcare whereas 53% of people with disabilities can't afford healthcare. There is a lack of adequate services for people with disabilities. For example, research in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, states of India, found that after cost, the lack of services in the area was the most significant barrier to accessing healthcare services. Physical barriers also pose a threat to the availability of healthcare services. Uneven access to buildings, inaccessible medical equipment, poor signage, internal steps, narrow doorways, and inadequate parking and bathroom facilities create barriers to healthcare. For example, women with mobility difficulties are often unable to attain breast and cervical cancer screening since the examination tables are not height adjustable and the mammography equipment can only accommodate women who can stand. Lastly, people with disabilities were more than twice as likely to report encountering health care providers whose skills are inadequate to meet their needs. They are also four times more likely to report being treated poorly and three times more likely to report being denied care. Close to two-thirds of all people with disabilities live in low income countries. In low and middle income countries, problems associated with poverty, such as inadequate water and sanitation, lack of access to healthcare, malnutrition, and poor living conditions, increase the risk of disability. Disability in low income countries can lead to the individual from being excluded from work, education and healthcare and it can lead to high healthcare and other expenses, exacerbating poverty. Children comprise approximately one-third of the world's disabled population and approximately 65% of the disabilities impacting children are preventable. Children with disabilities are less likely to start school than their peers without disabilities. They also have a lower rate of staying and being promoted in schools. 10% of disabled children in India don't go to primary school whereas 60% of disabled children in Indonesia don't attend primary school.

United Nations Involvement:

The United Nations involvement in the rights of the disabled dates back to 1946 where at the sixth session of the Social Commission, the commission agreed on the need to establish international standards for the treatment, education, training, and placement of people with disabilities. In 1951, the Social Commission focused on the social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, drawing attention to this issue. At the ninth session of the Social Commission, interest was expressed for the development of services for persons with disabilities that could boost their independence and productive role in society. During the 1960s increased awareness was developing regarding the importance of disability rights and rehabilitation for disabled persons in part due to the Social Commission's monitoring mechanisms for various United Nations rehabilitation programmes, specialised agencies, and NGOs. In 1969, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and its aim was the rehabilitation of persons with physical and intellectual disabilities to advance their integration into society. Through these initial steps, the UN recognized the role of society in establishing barriers concerning the participation of the disabled in society. The 1970s was a turning point for disability rights since the concept of human rights for people with disabilities started to be accepted internationally. Soon after the General Assembly endorsed the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons in 1971. This Declaration, nevertheless, still retained an holistic approach to disability in some areas seeing that it referred to disabled persons as dependent on social security, welfare, and separate facilities. Their second declaration in 1975 addressed this matter as it set standards in regards to equal rights for persons with disabilities. In 1978, the Secretary-General established the intergovernmental Advisory Committee for the International Year of the Disabled. In addition to this, the UN held the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 in Denmark which adopted a declaration to improve the economic and social development of disabled persons. The UN extended its pursuit in disability rights as it moved into the 21st century by the 2008 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its optional protocols with the most recent one being drafted from 2017-2018. In 2016, the GA adopted resolution 71/165 on the Inclusive Development of Persons with Disabilities. One major recent action taken by the United Nations on disability rights was the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, A/RES/61/106, which was adopted on December 13, 2006. The Convention entered into force on May 3, 2008 and it followed decades of work done by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It leads the movement from viewing a disabled person as an object of charity and social protection towards viewing a disabled person as a person with rights who can claim those rights and make decisions for their own lives. The Convention was made to be used as a human rights instrument and it has a broad categorization of persons with disabilities. It reaffirms that all people with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Case Study: United States

Currently, 61 million adults in the United States live with a disability. Ever since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed by Congress in 1990, there have been numerous attempts to weaken it. The American with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunities for people with disabilities in transportation, employment, public accommodations, state and local government services, and telecommunications. However, ADA never specifically names all of the impairments that are covered and says that it applies to people with “significant” impairments which requires a judgment call. ADA’s critics criticize its vagueness however its supporters embrace the flexibility of the law since it can deal with disability discrimination no matter who it harms. Although the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act changed many things, such as wider supermarket aisles, ramps in schools, and more accessible public transportation, one thing has deteriorated for disabled persons in the U.S. Employment for disabled Americans has fallen since 1990 and there’s an even larger gap between non-disabled and disabled job opportunities today. In the early 1990s, around half of disabled Americans were employed but according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2019 only 19.3 percent of persons with disabilities were employed. Along with decreased employment rates, disabled persons also face harassment frequently. Delegates should take into consideration how to enforce laws already in place to protect disabled persons, how to protect disabled persons from harassment, and how to empower them.

Bloc Positions:

Western: In the Western Bloc, people with disabilities have worse educational and labour market

opportunities and are more likely to be in poverty than people without disabilities. A OCED study in 2009 showed that in 21 upper-middle and high income countries showed higher poverty rates among working-age people with disabilities than among working-age people without disability in all but three countries. The relative poverty risk was the highest in Australia and Ireland and the lowest in Iceland and Netherlands.

Latin America and Caribbean: Almost 12% of the Latin American and Caribbean population is thought to live with at least one disability and this represents around 66 million people. This region’s population is mainly impacted by visual or mobility impairments, followed by hearing and speech limitations. People with mental or cognitive deficiencies or limited capacity for self-care find it the hardest to integrate into economic or social activities. Aside from women, this region's most economically and socially disadvantaged groups have a higher rate of disability. Disabled people in Latin America and the Caribbean remain invisible and unrecognized. Even though legislation laws for people with disabilities are improving in Latin

America, there are only a handful of organizations that comply. If more people and organizations were compliant, the discrimination and neglect faced by disabled persons would be reported and treated as a violation of rights. In some Latin American countries, disabled people are not considered to be a full citizen of their country since they can't practice basic human rights such as voting or owning or inheriting property. Additionally, there is a lack of education in schools about people with disabilities.

African: 80 million people live with disabilities in Africa. Disability in Africa is caused by many factors such as, malnutrition, disease, environmental hazards, industrial accidents, or war. The majority of Africans with disabilities are excluded from schools and work opportunities, ensuring that they live as the poorest of the poor. School enrollment of the disabled is 5-10% and 70-80% of disabled people are unemployed. There is also a social stigma surrounding disability which results in isolation and marginalization for the disabled. When disabled persons approach members of the public for help, they are treated as a nuisance. Sexual abuse against disabled people is also common in Africa. For example, 87.4% of girls with disabilities in Zimbabwe had been sexually abused. Additionally, accessibility to public amenities and public transportation is difficult. Those using wheelchairs have it especially hard since ramps are not used.

Asian-Pacific: Almost 60% of the world's 650 million persons with disabilities live in Asia and the Pacific. This region has by far the largest number of people with disabilities in the world. Many disabled people live in poverty, suffer prejudice, exclusion, and discrimination. In certain societies in Asia, disabilities are perceived as being related to misconduct in the previous life, thus many disabled people are viewed as a disgrace to the family. In East Asia, only 11.33% of the school age population of disabled people attended primary school. There is also a lack of training and employment opportunities and income earning activities for disabled persons. Those with disabilities live as some of the poorest people in this region, thus they are more likely to live in unhygienic conditions and have less access to healthcare. Women with disabilities are more disadvantaged since they experience discrimination on three counts: as a woman, as a woman with disabilities, and as a woman living in poverty.

Basic Solutions:

Basic solutions for disability rights includes combating a variety of challenges faced by the disabled population worldwide. The discrimination and the exclusion the disabled population should be addressed. Solutions that can combat this as well as reduce the stigma around disability in developing and developed countries should be implemented. Accessibility remains one of the main issues affecting disability rights. Accessibility solutions should address accessibility to public spaces, healthcare, information, education, and job opportunities. The disabled population also faces violence at a higher rate than non disabled persons, thus finding solutions to protect them from this violence is imperative. Women and children with disabilities face a separate set of issues and specific solutions to protect and empower them should be implemented. Solutions should be proposed for disabled persons in both developed and developing countries as they face different issues.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does your country have legislation in place to aid disabled persons, if so, are they enforced?
2. What solutions can be implemented to reduce the stigma and violence associated with those who have disabilities?
3. How are institutionalized individuals with mental disabilities treated in your country? What are some ways to improve it?
4. How can public spaces be made more accessible for those with physical disabilities?
5. What solutions can be implemented to make healthcare more accessible to those who need prosthetics, medicine, or other services?

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