

2025 Mid-South Model UN Conference



UN Women

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025 Mid-South Model United Nations Conference (MSMUN) and to the UN Women Committee. My name is Victoria Hibbs, and I will be one of your 2025 UN Women chairs. I am a junior majoring in International Studies and Russian. Courtney Shopoff and Ayat Yasar will also be chairing UN Women with me. Courtney is a freshman planning to major in English with a minor in Business. Ayat is a freshman planning to major in Political Science and International Studies with a minor in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

We are all very excited to chair the UN Women committee. The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan for UN Women strives to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls everywhere in the international community. Therefore, the topic we will be discussing this year is reproductive rights. This topic has a significant impact on the

We look forward to meeting all of you at the conference and hope that these issues will inspire debate and cooperation. Please do not hesitate to email Courtney, Ayat, or myself if you have any questions.

Regards,

Victoria Hibbs, Ayat Yasar, and Courtney Shopoff

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Committee: UN Women**Topic: Reproductive Rights**

The United Nations Women committee is dedicated to the equality and empowerment of women and girls across the world. Our important work focuses on examining women's rights questions, and working to amend them.

UN Women was founded in 2010 by the General Assembly as the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Our work enforces and promotes the ideal of equal participation which ought to be enjoyed by the entirety of the international community, regardless of gender. These include women's ability to lead, participate, and benefit equally from governance systems, women's ability to have income security and work and economic autonomy, women and girls' ability to live a life free from violence, and women's ability to have a greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and equally benefit from the prevention of natural disasters, conflicts, and humanitarian action. We seek to design equal settlements for these issues in the international community, initiating studies to encourage cooperation and popularizing equality for all.

The Committee discusses questions relating to the advancement of women, their fundamental rights, and their right to equality.

Reproductive Rights

1. History and Past UN Action

The United Nations established UN Women in 2010 by the General Assembly, reinforcing the UN's commitment to the empowerment of women and girls worldwide. The organization works to ensure that women can exercise autonomy over their bodies, access healthcare services, and benefit from legal protections that uphold their reproductive rights.

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) marked a pivotal moment in recognizing reproductive rights as essential to sustainable development. The resulting Program of Action emphasized that women must have access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare, including family planning, maternal health services, and education on sexual and reproductive health. Additionally, the 2024 publication, Documenting reproductive violence the documentation of reproductive violence to date by UN-mandated fact-finding and other investigative mechanisms.

UN Women and other UN agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), continue to advocate for policies that guarantee reproductive autonomy. This includes eliminating legal barriers to contraception and abortion, ensuring access to safe maternal healthcare, and addressing gender-based discrimination that restricts women's control over their reproductive choices. Through international initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 3 on health and well-being, the UN seeks to promote women's reproductive rights as a cornerstone of global progress.

2. Recent Developments

The stake of reproductive rights has been on the line for years, especially with the overturning of Roe V. Wade in June of 2022. However there has been some recent development within the fight to reclaim those rights.

The United Nations has fought to reduce maternal mortality, increase access to modern contraceptive, ensure universal healthcare including reproductive services, and have pushed for the decriminalization of abortion. These actions reflect the United Nation's effort to better and support the fight to reclaim reproductive rights.

In January of 2024, the Committee of Human Rights passed a case named "They Are Girls. Not Mothers". This ruling extends to over 170 countries and consists of protections for sexual assault survivors. Additionally, it calls for the legalization of abortion to ensure protection for women put at harm.

In September of 2024, The United Nations released a report denouncing Poland's abortion policy and calling it a human rights violation. Poland has been under investigation by the United Nations due to the criminalization of abortion which has taken a toll on women's health. The Committee of Human Rights calls upon Poland to adopt comprehensive abortion reform, improved access to abortion, and an end on criminalizing women seeking care.

Overall, there has been a movement present that defends women and their health. The fight for reproductive rights will continue and will continue until proper measures are taken.

3. Key Issues to Address

Below are seven key factors that can affect women's empowerment and their equality, as such, addressing these issues is integral to creating a permanent change in the world.

- Domestic Violence and the unequal impact on women
- Equal education
- Work opportunities, the wage gap
- Right of women to own and manage property and their finances
- Gender norms and social norms
- Workplace and other discrimination, gender and otherwise
- Women's right to body autonomy

4. Problems That Should Be Addressed and Possible Solutions

In advancing reproductive rights, a country must consider all possible outcomes and effects on its society. Ensuring access to reproductive healthcare leads to improvements in women's health, education, and economic stability. To protect women from health risks, limited reproductive autonomy, and economic hardship, UN Women urges nations to consider these questions.

5. Questions to Consider

- What are the trends in each country that could be connected to banning abortion and women's health?
- What are the potential consequences that one may face when seeking an abortion?
- What role can local and federal governments play in providing comprehensive abortion care?

6. Resources

- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/un-women-strategic-plan-2022-2025>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/statement/2022/06/statement-reproductive-rights-are-womens-rights-and-human-rights>
- <https://data.unwomen.org/country/algeria>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/research-paper-documenting-reproductive-violence-en.pdf>

7. List of Countries

- Afghanistan: The only country to have an education ban on girls over 6th grade. Women are restricted from working outside the home and have to be accompanied by a man when traveling over 78 kilometers.
- Brazil: There have been great strive to improve women's healthcare, but the work has fallen short in government representation, the wage gap, and domestic violence.
- China: There have been significant changes, but work still needs to be done on the women's unemployment rate and the wage gap.
- Denmark: The leading country in women's rights and equality in terms of healthcare, workplace environment and wages, and government representation.

- France: High ranking country in terms of women's healthcare, but lower in terms of women's property rights (such as owning land).
- Indonesia: Relatively neutral in terms of progress, nothing exceptional. Work needs to be done on women's representation in government.
- Mexico: Regardless of the high number of women's representation in the government, the adolescent birth rate is relatively high and the unequal number of women versus men in domestic, unpaid labor.
- New Zealand: Has made increasing steps to decreasing gendered violence but has still seen a need for improvement in areas such as the wage gap.
- Russia: Adolescent birth rate and reproductive rights have made steady progress, but women's representation in government is low.
- Somalia: Has seen very little legislation to improve conditions for women and has seen many adolescent births and marriages and little to no reproductive freedom.
- Sweden: One of the top countries in gender rights: they replaced maternity leave with parental leave, eligible to both parents and women and men have near equal seats in government.
- Syria: Has seen improvement in reproductive healthcare, but has also seen drawbacks in women's representation in government and gendered violence.
- United Kingdom: Done work to decrease gendered violence and women's healthcare, but has seen shortcomings in the unequal number of women versus men in domestic, unpaid labor.
- United States: One of the P5 countries, but has a very high maternal mortality rate and unequal representation in government; however, they score very high in education.
- Zimbabwe: Work has been done to promote reproductive healthcare, but there have been many cases of violence against women and a lack of women's representation in government.