Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Information on the committee:

History of the committee

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was formally established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 64/289) on the 2nd of July 2010 and began its operations on the 1st of January 2011. Previously, the UN had other agencies, like UNIFEM, established as a voluntary fund in 1976. The argument for the establishment of the UN Woman was inefficiency of the previous system, which relied on volunteers and donations. Since then, United Nations have established many programs, such as Ending Violence against Women (EVAW), established a system to help track progress toward achievements of the SDG 5, established the financial mechanism Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which plays the key role in funding many programs in which UN Women is engaged.

Mandate

UN Women can:

- Support intergovernmental bodies in formulating policies regarding gender equality
- Lead UN work in ensuring gender equality and security of individual women,
- Monitor progress of the UN programs and hold UN accountable,
- Run and fund programs and initiatives targeted at achieving gender equality.
- Consult other agencies and committees on their projects and resolutions.

UN Women can not:

- Enforce binding international laws and treaties,
- Realistically ask the Secretary General to deploy peacekeepers or recommend UNSC to do so,
- Unilaterally intervene into sovereign domestic affairs.
- Fund massive infrastructure projects
- Independently set a global budget.

Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

WPHF is one of the most important instruments for the implantation of the gender equality programs, as it enables financing of CSOs and direct UN Women projects. WPHF works as a multi-partner trust fund with money collected from the pooled UN resources, direct governmental donations (mostly from Western nations such as USA, UK, Canada), philanthropists and from the private sector. Everyone can donate money specifically to the UN Women cause.

The money can reach the programs directly, often fractionated to prioritize specific programs when it is urgent or the program generally has a higher priority for implantation, especially when it comes to programs implemented in war zones such as Ukraine, Sudan, Afghanistan and the DRC. Frontline Humanitarian programs and campaigns against Sexual and Gender violence historically always had the highest priorities.

Women's rights in DRC:

Notable History:

Women have never had a lot of rights in the DRC. Married women still may not open a bank account, accept a job, obtain a commercial license, or rent or sell real estate without permission from their husbands.
DRC is a very fractured Nation, as struggles to control various Mineral assets, ethnic tensions, and aggressive interventions from neighbouring states, have led to food shortages, poverty and a weakened healthcare system.. The second Congolese War (1998-2003), also known as Africa's world war, is the bloodiest conflict since World War 2 and its main staging ground was the DRC. After this war, the Congolese government tried to integrate the Armed militias involved in the Conflict into a unified Military. Over the years these militias have repeatedly rebelled, and destabilized the nation. Violence on the border between Rwanda and the DRC persists, especially in northern and southern Kivu, provinces of the DRC, where M23 holds the ground since 2022.

Health and physical wellbeing:

The DRC has a rate of 1.05 Doctors nurses and midwives per 1000 people, which is significantly below the sustainability index. This of course leads to higher maternal mortality rates. Additionally married women may only use contraceptives with the permission of their husbands leading to an AIDS Crisis.
71.79% of People with HIV in DRC are women, but only 58% of these women are being treated, in comparison with the 73% of their male counterparts.
In the eastern DRC, specifically in North and south Kivu, sexual violence has doubled since 2023 when M23 seized control of the land. The Armed non-state groups have a history of Human trafficking, especially of women and children further endangering these.
Inside of DRC there is systematic violence against activists and their families trying to improve women's lives, both by individual vigilantes, but also by Armed Organisations.

Basic Rights:

In addition to the things noted in the beginning Article 45 of DRCs civil code states that a woman's husband has rights to the woman's property even if explicitly stated differently in the marriage contract. Additionally women are paid much less than their male counterparts, and are very rarely promoted.
Child Marriage is another notable problem in the DRC. 37% of girls are married before they become adults, and annulment is very difficult to access. The practice is technically illegal in DRC but lacks any form of enforcement.

Education:

According to a report by the World Economic Forum, Women have a notably lower literacy rate and have much lower participation in higher education. This exasperates the gender based divide for the access of better jobs.

Economic situation of DRC:

After the major devastation of the first and second Congo wars in the late 90s, the Democratic Republic of Congo has struggled to rebuild and progress both economically and socially. The DRC continues to be one of the poorest nations in the world, despite large amounts of natural resources.

According to the Fragile States index (FSI) DRC was the 5th least stable nation in the world, further complicating the task of cementing women's rights in the area.

Tips for the Resolution:

Because UN Women is not one of the Committees with the capabilities to impose laws on member Nations, we recommend the following types of operative clauses: Urges, Recommends, Encourages, Calls upon, Reaffirms, Requests,

Therefore the Resolution should have precise requests from member states, specifically some sort of precise voluntary financial technical and logistical support. You do not have to deal with the Rwandan-Congolese Conflict yourselves, as that breaches the scope of our sessions.

In MUN debates, just like in real life, the discussion often stalls when the finances come into play. Think about: some awareness campaigns, some fundraising schemes, which CSOs and NGOs you want to prioritize (examples: Panzi Foundation, Women Human RIghts Defenders, etc). Note, while it is technically possible to propose contributions from member states, it might be met with hostilities.

Also, keep note that in order for the resolution to be effective, you need the DRC to be willing to accept it.

Only one resolution passes. Consider partially merging working papers on points all blocks agree. Blocks exist to find consensus to which everyone agrees, not to create rivalry within the committee.

Read More

https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us
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UN condemns M23 violence against human rights defenders in DRC - JURIST - News
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