

## **Economic and Social Council**

### **Agenda B: Improving global labor standards for women**

#### **1. Committee Introduction**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the 3 main councils of the United Nations. Its main purpose is the pursual of the advancement of human beings' quality of life. To achieve this purpose, this council utilizes organizations such as UNEP, UNESCO, UNEP. ECOSOC was established in New York in 1945, and is generally comprised of a head chair and four deputy chairs. ECOSOC is not only in charge of agendas concerning economics but also humanitarian , cultural, and educational recommendations for the international society.



#### **2. Agenda Introduction**

The prevalence of gender discrimination in labor laws affect all women in all regions, and is limited to developing nations but also developed economies. From a statistical viewpoint, 2.7 billion women in our global society, are legally prevented from selecting jobs from the same market available to men. In 2018, 189 economies were assessed, and of these, 104 economies were found to have legal systems barring women entry into specific jobs, 59 lacked basic laws prohibiting sexual harassment in workplaces, and 18 economies granted husbands the authority to forbid their wives from working.

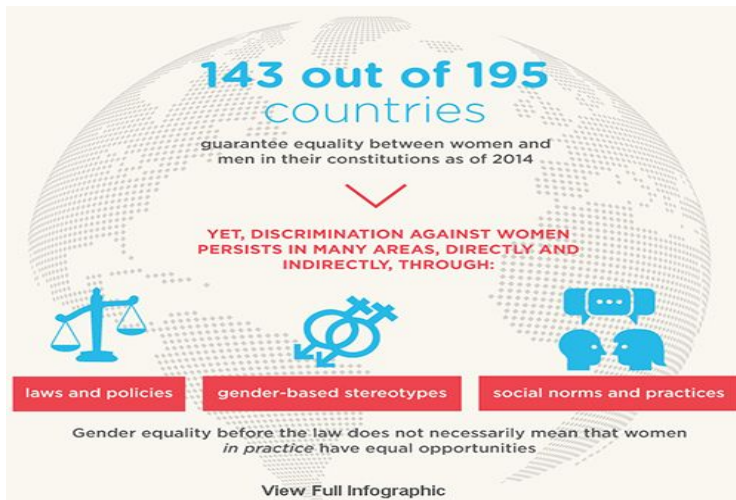
While various industrial revolutions and movements including the Luddite Movement have, to some extent, secured the rights of laborers, women are still excluded from receiving the same protection of rights that men have. They remain less able than men to



participate in the labour market regardless of their merit. The international labor force participation rate for women in ages from 25 to 54 is at a mere 63 per cent. In comparison to the 94 per cent rate for men, this is a dismal statistic. In 2017, research conducted by the United Nations showed global unemployment rates for men and women to be at a respective 5.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent, and has remained largely the same going into 2019.



Even in cases where women are hired, women in all regions are paid less than men. The wage gap in gender is estimated to stand at 23 per cent, meaning that women are only earning 77 per cent of what men earn. And even then, these figures are understating the true extent of gender wage gaps in developing countries where self-employment not included in these statistics are overwhelmingly prevalent. Women are constrained by legislation, by systematic and social barriers from holding the highest positions in a company, with only 4 per cent of Forbes CEO index being women. In addition, violence and harassment hindering women's ability to work is widespread without regard to age, location or social status. Therefore, throughout the conference, delegates will be discussing the issue of unequal labor standards in gender in all regions of the world and are expected to put particular focus on the legislative discrimination they receive.



### 3. Historical Background

#### a. United States

In the United States, the difference in women's labor rate ratio is very wide. In the state of U.S. that has the highest rate of women's labor participation (Alaska), only 68.3% of women were employed. Yet, in Utah, the difference between men's and women's labor force participation rates were at a smaller 16.7%. Women in the United States are in comparatively good working conditions.

#### b. United Kingdom

The UK is the first nation that had citizens awakening to their rights to labor, and was also the starting point of the industrial revolution. It is thereby quite natural that they one of the nations with high standard of labor rights. The employment rate of women in the United Kingdom has been increasing continuously, as of March 2019. 71.4% of women were employed in formal workplaces in December 2018. 22% of women hold jobs in qualitative, specialist occupation. This rate is substantially higher in other countries.

#### c. Greece

Among the members of the European Union, Greece has an unusually low labor standard. Female labor force participation of Greece showed exponential decay from 2012 to 2016, and has been in continual decrease from 2016.

d. Republic of Korea

Last March, the Republic of Korea recorded first place among the OECD nations for rates of women low-paid workers. Professionals attributed this statistic to the low birth rate in Korea. Not only that, the difference in between treatment in the workplace against men and women is also a critical issue. Discriminatory social norms are the cause of physical and verbal harassment toward women. Permanent employee diversion rate of women is 48%, which is  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the diversion rate of men, which is 71%.

e. Russian Federation

Up to the early 1990s, Russia had a very high female labor participation rate. However, the ratio plunged in 1998 from the onset of the Russian foreign exchange crisis, but it recovered a entering the 2000s, making it a country with a slightly higher average rate in comparison to most other countries.

#### **4. Related UN movements and documents**

- Report on empowerment of women's work in the private sector of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (OHCHR)
- The Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) : suggests employers to increase women participation in the labor market and repay by benefit.
- ILO/SU/RES/34 - Resolution on the Achievement of Equal Opportunity and Treatment for Women in the International Labour Office
- Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) : reminds the significance of a gender equality and called on parties to conflict to protect women from gender-based violence

#### **5. Possible Solutions**

Possible solutions can be divided by short-term solutions and long-term solutions. Some of the short-term solutions that can be pursued by regional legislation and by the council are raising

minimum wage, regulating the senseless removal of temporary employees, strengthening the extent of punishment for sexual harassment against female workers and preventing career interruption due to pregnancy and childbirth. While these short-term solutions can be effective in bringing about temporary relief, they remain largely ineffective to combating the issue at its roots. Thus, some long-term solutions include the provision of continuous gender equality education and the establishment of an international organization that supports and aids women's labor unions both economically and socially.

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