

**Committee: UN Women**

**Topic: Increasing Access to Feminine Hygiene Products in Developing Nations**

**Report of the Chairs**

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## **I. Theme of the Conference**

Model United Nations San Antonio (MUNSA) is a conference dedicated to fostering authentic and passionate debate amongst delegates in order to generate solutions to current global issues. The theme of *MUNSA XXIV: Envision* encapsulates our mission to urge delegates to foresee a future in which these problems have been dissolved. With collaboration in mind, delegates from every committee are encouraged to visualize innovative resolutions and a prosperous world to come. Together, we will propel ourselves into an age in which brilliant ideas converge to transform our world and address its most paramount issues.

## **II. Rationale**

Although feminine hygiene products are a necessity for all women, two-thirds of the international female population have little to no access to proper sanitation. Women are unable to attend school, acquire jobs, and partake in everyday activities without appropriate hygienic measures. This is a worldwide issue; however, access to sanitation is most limited in the Middle East, North Africa, and South America. This committee visualizes a brighter future in which the basic needs of women are met worldwide through widespread access to proper sanitation.

## **III. Background of the Topic**

Traditionally, women are expected to be the caretakers of the household. This outdated belief is still commonly practiced today. In India, 23% of girls drop out of school to stay at home and support their families.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, women are often treated as impure when experiencing a menstrual cycle due to religious and cultural stigmas. Women are more vulnerable to disease when forced to stay in unsanitary living conditions caused by limited access to feminine hygiene products.<sup>5</sup>

After the Women's Suffrage Movement in 1848, more and more countries have pursued equal rights for women. UN Women has educated people on the importance of sanitation and clean water to decrease the stigmatization of menstrual cycles and increase support for women worldwide. UN Women began working with Nepal in 2015 to educate the population on women's health and sanitation. As a result, only 5% of women in Nepal are sent to sleep by themselves during their menstrual cycle when compared to 20% before the program.<sup>3</sup> This project has informed many citizens about women's health as well as promote better treatment of women.

#### **IV. Contemporary Evidence of the Topic**

UN Women's 2030 Agenda addresses gender-responsive water and sanitation systems. More than 4.5 billion people lack necessary sanitation. Furthermore, the lack of water in communities and households, especially in developing countries, is often detrimental to women.<sup>2</sup> Countries with the poorest sanitation include Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Indonesia, China, and India.<sup>6</sup> It is most common for female residents to remain at home in these nations.

Women in developing regions of the world have limited access to proper sanitation and feminine hygiene products, which severely hinders their ability to attend school, work, and societal functions.<sup>1</sup> With an increase in women pursuing education and work, addressing women's hygiene and sanitation is crucial. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has prioritized the issue of gender-responsive sanitation by focusing on water allocations and water trading.<sup>2</sup> This includes helping governments create policies and programs that correspond beneficially with the rights of women.<sup>1</sup> Individuals around the world are experiencing a decrease in health as a result of limited access to clean water, especially the two billion people worldwide who have absolutely no access to clean water.<sup>2</sup>

#### **V. References and Research Resources**

1. Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda: Gender Responsive water and sanitation. (2019, September) Retrieved from

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/6/issue-brief-gender-responsive-water-and-sanitation-systems>

2. Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation (2019, September)  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-6-clean-water-sanitation>
3. Abolishing Chhaupadi, Breaking the Stigma of Menstruation in Rural Nepal (2019, September)  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/4/feature-abolishing-chhaupadi-breaking-the-stigma-of-menstruation-in-rural-nepal>
4. Towards gender quality through sanitation access (2019, September)  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/3/towards-gender-quality-through-sanitation-access>
5. Expert Group Meeting discusses strengthening gender mainstreaming efforts in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector (2019, September)  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/1/announcement-egm-discusses-strengthening-gender-mainstreaming-efforts-in-the-wash-sector>
6. Top Countries Without Sanitation (2019, September)  
<https://www.livescience.com/16712-top-countries-poor-sanitation.html>

## **VI. Note to the Delegates**

Thank you for participating in MUNSA XXIV and choosing to be apart of our conference. Our names are Carter Murray and Anna West and we will be your co-chairs for UN Women. We look forward to a unique and intriguing debate that creates an enlightening experience for both the chairs and the delegates. If you have any questions or concerns you may reach us through the contact information below.

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## **VII. Director-General Contact Information**

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