



# **GECMUN X**

## **BACKGROUND GUIDE**

### ECOSOC

#### *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Discrimination*

SDG: No Poverty, Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth

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## Committee Introduction

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is responsible for the economic and social work of the United Nations. The Council plays a crucial role in creating international cooperation for sustainable development and tackling issues surrounding the economy, society, and environment. It also consults with academic scholars, representatives from different industries, and over 2,500 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), thereby being crucial to linking the United Nations to civil society. Another responsibility of ECOSOC is that they are the committee responsible for ensuring that projects created and issued addressed by past conferences have proper follow-ups set in place. This committee aims to increase social progress, employment, standards of living, and human rights protection. It also works towards increasing education about social and economic issues.

Past ECOSOC committees have dealt with conflicts surrounding the LGBTQ+ community, specifically, with the introduction of the ILGA, or the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association, into the United Nations. With different concerns arising from the discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, such as rape, murder, deprivation of resources, and more, the United Nations has become alarmed by the different problems regarding the community. Through these circumstances, the Economic and Social Council has granted ECOSOC status to members of the ILGA. There remain uncertainties about the addition of ILGA members and the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, but the issues faced by the community, as mentioned before, have turned the attention towards these issues.

While maintaining peace is the primary responsibility of the Security Council, fostering social progress and enhancing living standards is the main objective of ECOSOC. It's essential to understand that international security and social progress are interconnected. They cannot be achieved independently of each other. The rise of poverty and human rights violations can lead to instability and violence. On the other hand, war hinders the progress of development.

## Agenda Introduction

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Discrimination is a significant issue in the status quo. According to the American Psychological Association, SOGI discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender (Link).

Actors that are affected by SOGI discrimination include cisgender minorities (e.g., women) and LGBTQ+ individuals. Although all nations are affected by SOGI discrimination, nations that have higher levels of SOGI discrimination are of greater concern. Nations with the highest levels of discrimination against women include Syria, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nations with the highest levels of discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals include Pakistan, Somalia, and Egypt.

SOGI Discrimination is highly significant because it affects many areas of individuals' lives. For example, SOGI discrimination in the workplace leads to unfair treatment in terms of salary, employment, provision of training, and even job allocations. Additionally, SOGI discrimination can lead to the use of derogatory statements about an individual's gender and sexual orientation, both in online and offline environments. Furthermore, SOGI discrimination in the law has also led to the criminalization of being LGBTQ+ in certain countries. For example, only 47 UN member nations do not allow transgender people to change the status of their gender legally, and 13 nations (including non-UN member nations) have laws against being transgender.

SOGI not only leads to practical harm, such as employment difficulty, but also has adverse effects on individuals' mental health. For instance, statistics show that the likelihood of suffering from anxiety, depression, and substance abuse is 2.5 times higher in LGBTQ+ individuals than in heterosexual individuals. The fact that individuals are suffering from chronic mental diseases due to SOGI discrimination shows that it is an extremely serious issue.

## Letters from the Chairs

Greetings to all delegates of the GECMUN X ECOSOC committee! My name is Audrey Young, and I'm so excited to be your head chair this year. I'm a senior at Yongsan International School of Seoul. This is my fourth year doing MUN, fourth year participating in GECMUN, and second year chairing! My goal for this committee this year was to create fascinating topics that will spark new debates that aren't just two-dimensional. I want this committee to be an enjoyable experience for the delegates, which means that the discussions do not get boring and repetitive. As head chair, I will do my best to make this happen so you all can have a memorable experience!

Welcome, all delegates to the GECMUN X ECOSOC committee! My name is Claire Lee, and I am the committee's Deputy Chair. I'm currently a junior at Yongsan International School of Seoul. This is my third year participating in GECMUN and MUN in general (I've done GECMUN for every year of my MUN career!) Through this GECMUN experience, I hope you will be able to learn more nuanced topics that help you think beyond what you would learn in an ordinary classroom. I will work diligently to make this committee a successful and memorable one, and I am very excited to get to know everyone!

Hello, to all the delegates of the 2023 GECMUN ECOSOC committee! My name is Catherine Kang, and I am currently a junior at Yongsan International School of Seoul. I will be serving as your Associate Chair on this committee. I joined MUN during my freshman year and have attended GECMUN conferences both online and offline as a delegate of different committees. MUN is an excellent opportunity for everyone to present their speaking and diplomatic skills as they represent their country. It may seem as though it is a highly educational extracurricular, but MUN has always been something that I looked forward to, and I hope that all delegates will also look forward to it as well and gain new experiences, socially and educationally!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Best regards,

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## Key Terms

### **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Discrimination**

“Discrimination based on homosexuality or transgender status necessarily entails discrimination based on sex” (US Supreme Court).

### **LGBTQ+**

Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and any other gender Orientation or sexual identity.

### **ILGA**

the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association.

### **Transphobia**

the feeling of disdain or dislike towards transgender people.

### **Homophobia**

the feeling of disdain or prejudice against gay people.

### **Heterosexual**

sexually or romantically attracted exclusively to people of the other sex.

### **Cisgender**

individuals whose gender identity aligns with their biological sex.

### **Affirmative Action**

a set of policies implemented by institutions that can take various forms. The purpose is to address systemic inequalities and create a more equitable society by providing opportunities for those who have historically faced discrimination.

### **Prejudice**

a preconception, usually negative, about a certain group or event.

## Historical Background

### **1848:**

The first woman's rights convention, the Seneca Falls Convention, had its first meeting on July 19, 1848. The convention was led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a well-known social activist, and had about 300 attending members. One of the main goals of the convention was to advocate against unfair laws for women, such as the law that gave a woman's husband the right to her salary.

### **1919:**

Women in the US gained the right to vote through the 19th Amendment.

### **1948:**

The United Nations General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the principle of equality and non-discrimination is affirmed.

### **1966:**

Sweden becomes the first country to allow gender reassignment surgery legally.

### **1969:**

The Stonewall Riot was multiple riots in a six-day period by the gay community in response to the raid by police officers at a bar in New York City. Bars in the 1960s were hideouts for the gay community as the 1960s were unwelcoming to the gay community, with laws restricting marriages and other rights against them.

### **1975:**

The United Nations announced March 8 as International Women's Day. This day is meant to advocate for gender equality, support organizations created by women, and bring attention to women's contributions to society. Each year, the United Nations chooses a specific topic related to female rights to commemorate International Women's Day.

### **1996:**

The Netherlands becomes the first country to allow legal gender recognition without the requirement of gender reassignment surgery.

### **2004**

The International Olympic Committee introduced guidelines for transgender athletes, allowing them to participate in the Olympics according to their affirmed gender identity.

### **2010**

The Committee of Ministers under the Statute of the Council of Europe passed a resolution that reduced discrimination against genders, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and more. The committee restricted “hate speech” and violence against these people groups, along with more rights in society like sports, housing, job, etc. An effect of this was more LGBTQ+ community members participated in regular jobs without being discriminated against.

### **2015**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are adopted by the United Nations: commitments to achieve gender equality and promotion of the inclusion of transgender individuals are detailed.

### **2016**

The United Nations passed a resolution built up from the resolutions in 2011 and 2014 by the Council that established protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

### **2017**

The Trump administration announced a ban on transgender individuals serving in the United States military, citing concerns about military readiness and medical costs. The policy faced legal challenges and was eventually reversed by subsequent administrations.

### **2017**

Tarana Burke begins the MeToo movement, which involves many female actresses sharing their stories about suffering sexual abuse from Harvey Weinstein. The MeToo movement has become very prevalent on social media and creates space for many women to share their experiences with sexual abuse, leading to many efforts to protect women in work environments.

### **2018**

The World Health Organization (WHO) announces its intention to remove “gender identity disorder” from the ICD, reflecting a shift towards depathologizing transgender identities.

### **2020**

The United Nations calls for a global ban on conversion therapy, highlighting the harmful and ineffective practices targeting LGBTQ+ individuals.

### **2020**

Hungary passed legislation banning legal recognition of transgender and intersex individuals, erasing their legal gender status. The law drew widespread

condemnation from international human rights organizations and LGBTQ+ advocates.

## **2021**

The Taliban take control over Afghanistan, leading to mass oppression of women's rights. The Taliban put several restrictions on women, such as prohibiting women from receiving advanced education, not allowing women to work together with men, and only allowing women to wear certain types of clothing.



## Current State of Affairs

Before 2006, barely any changes were made for the protection of LGBTQIA+ people's rights, with minor revisions, such as *Toonen vs. Australia* in the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), which included anti-discrimination provisions under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). However, starting in 2006, the United Nations recognized the LGBTQIA+ community and reasserted that non-discrimination applies to every human being. The past ten years have included several significant provisions for the LGBTQIA+ community. In 2011, South Africa passed a resolution implying that homophobic and transphobic actions are forms of gender-based violence. Furthermore, in 2016, the United National Security Council began to acknowledge violence against LGBTQIA+ people and condemned it after the Orlando shooting. Gender identity has also become a major topic in 2021, with two reports on gender identity—"Law of Inclusion" and "Practices of Exclusion"—being released by the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (IE SOGI). These two reports have been the foundation for other resolutions and drafts in the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

A military conflict closely connected to SOGI discrimination is the August 2021 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Ever since the Taliban gained control over Afghanistan's government, there have been severe limitations on women's rights. For example, women are not allowed to go outside without a male, girls are not allowed to go to school, and women are forced to wear very conservative clothing. Furthermore, the Taliban law does not protect women from violence, which means that sexual abuse is prevalent. Statistics show that approximately 9 in 10 Afghanistan women have been a victim of domestic violence, and approximately 5 in 10 Afghanistan women have been a victim of physical violence.

Current international policy illegalizes gender or sexual orientation-based discrimination. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all rights should be granted to individuals regardless of gender or sexual orientation. However, some countries still have policies that discriminate against individuals of particular gender and sexual orientation. For example, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, and Pakistan have illegal relationships with people of the same gender. The United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and South Sudan have also illegalized certain types of gender expression for LGBTQ+ individuals.

In 2016, the UN created the Mandate of the Independent Expert for protection against violence and discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (IE-SOGI). The current policy of this mandate is to research and provide visibility to the violence and discrimination experienced every day by LGBTQ+ persons around the world. It advises member states on the best way to prevent, prosecute, and

punish violence and discrimination. The Mandate follows 4 methods to achieve this: visiting countries to conduct fact-finding missions and raise awareness, receiving allegations and concerns of violence and discrimination based on SOGI and bringing them to the attention of states, constantly engaging in dialogue with society, experts, academia, and States, conducting and publishing research on topics relevant to the Mandate. Despite the growth in support for the IE-SOGI by member states, much work and research must be done to ensure everyone can live in a world free from violence and discrimination. The members of the LGBTQ+ are still facing opposition, with a recent US Supreme Court ruling that said website designers can refuse to serve same-sex couples.

The current UN legislation in regards to women is shown in goal 5 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Some targets of goal 5 include: 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, and 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. There has been progress over the last decades, but the world, in general, is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. The socioeconomic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic made situations worse, and progress in many areas is falling behind. Also, women's health services, already poorly funded, have faced significant disruptions due to the pandemic.

## Stances of Parties

### USA

The Supreme Court in the United States of America has banned any discrimination because of sexual orientation or transgender status. The Court in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, reasons that any discrimination against homosexuality or transgender status is discrimination based on sex. In addition, the United States, focusing on discrimination in the workplace, remarks that it is unlawful for an employee to be subject to workplace harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, which includes verbal and physical violence. Within two days in office, Joe Biden passed an Executive Order to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of SOGI with civil-rights level protection.

### China

The United National Human Rights Council keeps watch of Sexual Orientation and Gender Equality and the countries affected by the resolutions regarding SOGI. However, the United Nations Human Rights Council failed to address Russia and China after the 50th session. China's Cybersecurity Law bans information disruptive to the "social order" and also inhibits encouragement towards the LGBTQIA+ community. Nonetheless, since the 1990s, when China banned prosecuting gay men under hooliganism laws, China has made progress in minimizing discrimination. For example, same-sex relations, gender recognition, and LGBTIS registration are legal in China. With activities opposed to their "stance," China has sent a representative stating, "China opposes all forms of discrimination and violence, including discrimination, violence, and intolerance based on sexual orientation and gender identity," at the UNHRC in July 2020.

### Russian Federation

Along with China, the United Nations Human Rights Council failed to address the Russian Federation regarding changes in Sexual Orientation and Gender Equality. In addition, the Russian Federation did not implement bodies independent of the government to abolish the legal ban on the provision of information about homosexuality to minors made by the Council of Europe's Commissions against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in March 2019 or complaints made against the police. The ECRI recommended these implementations to stay in line with the verdict in *Bayev and others v. Russia* in 2017. The Russian Federation has repressed civil society from disobedience by liquidating human rights NGOs, expanding contacts with "foreign agents," and tightening the law prohibiting LGBT propaganda.

### Afghanistan

Years of conflict between the Soviet Union and the Taliban have created a tragic environment for human rights. Violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are common in Afghan society, along with the taboo

that comes with it. This discrimination was fortified by laws criminalizing LGBT people, in which sex between two males would call for 5 to 15 years in prison. Although Afghan society has made minimal progress in advancing SOGI advocacy, with the Taliban taking over, LGBT people find trouble speaking out and finding condolence with NGOs and society.

### **United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom is one of the members of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, which deals with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, etc. The United Kingdom has consistently made developments with NGOs and laws to support people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While continuing to prohibit discrimination and harassment based on SOGI starting from 2000 with the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, the United Kingdom has authorized same-sex marriage and immigrations for these partners in the Marriage (Sex Couples Bill) in February 2013 and Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations in 2006, respectively.

### **Japan**

Although the majority of Japanese society is unaware of the meaning and the term SOGI itself, the Japanese government has implemented laws encouraging the LGBT society. For example, in 2003, under the Law Concerning Special Cases in Handling Gender for People with Gender Identity Disorder, individuals were enabled to change their gender classification legally. Even with certain advancements politically, around 40% of LGBTQ+ people have stated to have trouble in their workplace. These troubles imply that only having political changes in regard to SOGI will not change the organization and culture of society, thus, requiring changes specifically in regard to public life.

### **Pakistan**

Pakistan holds no legal recognition for LGBTQ+ individuals, largely due to misconceptions regarding the LGBT community as a part of the Transgender community. All issues related to the LGBT community are under the transgender sector, and the government hasn't made any clarifications. In addition, with more than 96% of the population being Muslims, LGBTQ+ people can't come out. Nonetheless, with an increasing number of activists, there is more acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community. In 2009, the Supreme Court of Pakistan recognized a third gender requiring medical examinations for issuing ID cards; however, due to protests, the Supreme Court withdrew the requirements for medical examinations. In 2010, a man and a transgender person were arrested for marrying each other. While section 377 has been barely used, this section allows for indirect discrimination against the community.

### **France**

France has made several efforts to combat SOGI discrimination. For example, in 2019, France's Prime Minister held a conference to discuss domestic violence and invested over \$6 million to enhance protections for women. France's efforts to improve life for women have shown to be successful, as France has the third-highest Gender Equality Index score out of all the EU nations. In terms of discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, same-sex marriage was made legal in 2013. Although this legalization led to homophobic riots, the French government and police have made many efforts to stabilize the nation.

### **Canada**

Starting from the 20th century, Canada allowed women to have voting rights and privileges equal to those of men. France's Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act also requires companies to pay women and men equally, making sure that gender discrimination does not occur in the workplace. In terms of equality for LGBTQ+ individuals, Canada's law allows and acknowledges gay marriage. Canada is also part of the UN LGBTI Core Group, a subgroup of UN countries that strives to provide equal opportunities for LGBTI individuals.

### **Yemen**

Women in Yemen have suffered from severe discrimination for many years. Women are sometimes denied fundamental rights such as freedom of movement and political participation. Unethical practices such as female circumcision, sexual abuse, and pre-arranged marriages still exist in some areas. Women also experience profound inequality in various areas, such as education and employment. For example, according to the United Nations Development Programme, only 6% of the workers in Yemen are female. Similar to women, LGBTQ+ individuals are also discriminated against in Yemen. For example, being homosexual is illegal and can even result in the death penalty.

### **Saudi Arabia**

In the past few years, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in women's rights and has gotten rid of many discriminatory laws, such as laws that prohibit women from wearing specific clothing, traveling freely, or having certain jobs. However, Saudi Arabia still has many restrictions against LGBTQ+ individuals. In Saudi Arabia, it is illegal for one to be LGBT or publically announce that they are transgender. Like in Yemen, being LGBTQ can even result in the death penalty.

### **South Korea**

Gender equality in Korea is relatively high. Many women in South Korea receive a quality education and participate in the workforce. In 2005, the South Korean government even got rid of a law that labels the husband as the "head of the household." Additionally, South Korea is in the process of creating more rights for

LGBTQ+ individuals. For example, the South Korean government is working on creating laws that allow gay and lesbian couples to marry.

### **Brazil**

Although Brazil is in the process of amending laws to increase gender equality, many issues still exist. For example, the law reads that the marriage age is 18, but there are many loopholes, such as laws that make it legal for 16-year-old girls to marry if they have permission from their parents. In fact, according to the World Bank, more than one in three Brazilian girls marry before they turn 18. Additionally, LGBTQ+ individuals in Brazil also suffer from inequality and even violence. In fact, approximately 273 LGBTQ+ individuals died from violent murder in 2022.

### **Mexico**

Equality for women has significantly improved in Mexico. For example, states in Mexico, such as Oaxaca and Mexico City, created laws that permitted abortion in the 2000s. However, women in Mexico still suffer from gender-based violence. In fact, the crime of purposely murdering a female on the basis of her gender (called femicide) increased by 137% in 2021. In terms of equality for LGBTQ+ individuals, Mexico has made notable improvements in its law. For example, in 2009, Mexico City created laws that allow gay individuals to marry. However, like women in Mexico, LGBTQ+ individuals also suffer from violence. For example, there were approximately 80 murders of LGBTQ+ individuals in 2020.

### **Venezuela**

Venezuela has made some progress in recognizing LGBTQ+ rights and promoting gender equality, but challenges remain. While same-sex sexual activity in the country is legal, same-sex marriage or civil unions are not recognized. In terms of gender equality, Venezuela has ratified international conventions related to women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The government has implemented policies to promote gender equality, such as the creation of the National Institute for Women.

### **Australia**

Australia has been a leader in advancing LGBTQ+ rights and promoting gender equality. IN 2017, same-sex marriage was legalized through a nationwide postal survey, leading to the passage of the Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act. Some states and territories have also implemented legislation to simplify changing gender markers on official documents. For gender equality, Australia has implemented the Workplace Gender Equality Act, requiring employers to report on gender equality indicators and address any identified gaps.

### **Albania**

Albania has taken significant steps towards advancing LGBTQ+ rights. In 2010, the country enacted an anti-discrimination law that provided protection based on sexual orientation. Notably, in 2013, Albania made a constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. On the international front, Albania demonstrated its commitment to promoting LGBTQ+ rights. As a member of the United Nations, the country actively supported initiatives aimed at safeguarding and advocating for the rights of all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Albania endorsed resolutions and engaged in discussions emphasizing tolerance, inclusivity, and equality for the LGBTQ+ community worldwide.

### **Israel**

Israel is progressive on LGBTQ+ rights, decriminalizing homosexuality in 1988 and banning discrimination in 1992. Same-sex couples can adopt since 2006, and foreign same-sex marriages have been recognized since 2014. Challenges persist, but progress is evident. Women have voting rights and political representation. Laws protect against domestic violence and harassment. Gender equality efforts are ongoing, though gaps remain in fields and leadership positions. As of September 2021, Israel continues to work towards enhancing sexual orientation and women's rights.

### **South Africa**

South Africa has a progressive stance on LGBTQ+ rights, legally protecting individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation since 1996. Same-sex marriage has been legal since 2006. Women's rights have seen significant progress, with gender equality guaranteed in the constitution and efforts to increase political representation. Laws address domestic violence and sexual harassment. Challenges remain in fully implementing gender equality measures and combating gender-based violence. Please refer to recent sources for the latest updates on South Africa's stance on sexual orientation and women's rights.

### **Egypt**

Egypt's stance on women's rights and sexual orientation equality is generally conservative. While the country has laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender, societal norms, and practices often limit women's rights and opportunities. Women's participation in politics and the workforce remains relatively low. Regarding sexual orientation, homosexuality is not explicitly criminalized, but same-sex relationships and LGBTQ+ rights face significant social and legal challenges. LGBTQ+ individuals may experience discrimination, and public displays of affection are generally not accepted. Please note that situations may have evolved since 2021, so it's advisable to consult more recent sources for the latest information.

### **Ghana**

Ghana's stance on women's rights is making progress, but challenges persist. The country has legal protections against gender discrimination, and women have the right to vote and participate in politics. However, gender inequalities still exist in areas like education and the workforce. Regarding sexual orientation, homosexuality is criminalized in Ghana, and there are no legal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals. Same-sex relationships face social stigma and discrimination. It's essential to consult more recent sources for any potential updates on Ghana's current stance on women's rights and sexual orientation equality.

## **Syria**

Syria's stance on women's rights and sexual orientation equality is limited and conservative. Women in Syria face various challenges, including discrimination in laws and societal norms. While women technically have legal rights, traditional and cultural practices often restrict their freedoms. Regarding sexual orientation, homosexuality is illegal, and LGBTQ+ individuals face severe social stigma and legal persecution. The ongoing civil war has further exacerbated human rights issues in the country. Please be aware that the situation in Syria is highly complex and constantly evolving, so it's essential to refer to up-to-date sources for the latest information.



## Possible Solutions

Beginning with solving inequality for women, delegates should focus on solutions that promote women having participation in the workplace. Due to the systematic disadvantages against women in most businesses, policies are needed to support women and help them overcome these additional barriers. Delegates should think about policies, such as specific affirmative action policies, that help put women in these positions. An added suggestion would be to think about ways to put women in higher positions, such as executive boards, since this would further amplify women's voices and help them have a more significant role in the decision-making process.

In addition to encouraging women in the workplace, delegates should ponder solutions to include women in political positions. Currently, there is a severe lack of women in the government. According to the UN, a female is the Head of State in only 17 out of the 193 nations in the world, and in certain areas such as Latin America, only 36% of representatives in the Parliament are female. The UN also warns that at this speed of improvement, it will take another forty years to attain gender equality in government bodies. Delegates should think of solutions to help instigate more rapid gender equality growth.

To discuss discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, it is essential to note that a significant portion of nations (67 nations) still have laws against being LGBTQ+. Some countries ban gay marriage, while others even punish for publically displaying LGBTQ+ identity. Delegates should discuss ways to encourage nations to get rid of such discriminatory laws. Here, it is also important to note that most nations that have laws against LGBTQ+ individuals are affiliated with a religion (usually Islam or Christianity). For example, over 50% of nations that have laws against LGBTQ+ individuals are Muslim. Thus, delegates should think about ways to encourage compromise between gender freedom and religion.

Furthermore, there are several non-governmental organizations that support women and LGBTQ+ individuals. To give examples of NGOs for women, Womankind Worldwide is an organization to improve rights for females in African countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia, and the Center for Reproductive Rights is an organization that advocates for female reproductive rights and healthcare. For organizations that support LGBTQ+ individuals, examples include the Children of Lesbian and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE), an organization that helps create communities for LGBTQ+ children and their parents, and Family Acceptance Project (FAP), an organization that focuses on improving the mental health of LGBTQ+ individuals. Delegates should think about ways their nation's government can support pre-existing NGOs or even foster the creation of new NGOs.

Additionally, delegates should ponder the usage of media to gain support for women's rights. Much of the general public believes that women's rights have developed a long way from how they once were. Though this is true in some cases, much work still needs to be done. For instance, there are countries that barely recognize women as individuals. Thus, we must use media and advertising to challenge stereotypes and promote diverse representations of women.

Finally, delegates should think about engaging religious and cultural leaders in this issue. SOGI discrimination and gender equality issues relate to various religions and cultures, so it is vital to go about them in a considerate manner. Delegates must learn to respect each country's culture and religion by engaging religious and cultural leaders in solutions. They must foster dialogue among them to promote understanding and tolerance, seeking common ground to combat discrimination.

## Questions to Consider

1. How can the countries supporting or not supporting SOGI discrimination minimize the provoking of the other side and reach their agenda?
2. What would be a compromise that the countries can make to satisfy the opposing sides?
3. In light of the complexity of cultural and religious beliefs surrounding LGBTQ+ rights, how can we strike a balance between respecting cultural diversity and upholding universal human rights?
4. Considering the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities, how can we ensure that our policies and solutions are inclusive and do not leave any marginalized groups behind?
5. What actions can be taken to promote women's rights and gender equality in conflict-affected areas where women often face unique challenges and vulnerabilities?
6. What might be some of the consequences of putting more women in political positions?

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