

MUNIKL'26

THE UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (UNWOMEN)

STUDY GUIDE

Under Secretary General: Günselin ŞANIER

**Agenda Item: Enhancing gender-sensitive public space policies aimed
at upholding women's security and peaceful mobility.**

1. Table of Contents

1. Table of Contents.....	2
2. Letter From the Secretary General.....	3
3. Letter From the Under Secretary General.....	4
4. Key Words.....	5
5. Introduction to the Committee and Historical Background.....	7
6. Introduction to the Agenda Item.....	8
7. Key Challenges.....	9
7.1. Widespread Harassment in Public Spaces.....	9
7.2. Poor Urban Infrastructure.....	9
7.3. Conflict & Fragile Environments.....	10
7.4. Lack of Data.....	11
8. Legal Frameworks.....	12
8.1. Definition of the CEDAW.....	12
8.2. UNSC Resolution 1325.....	13
8.3. 2030 Agenda & SDG 5.....	15
9. National and Policy Level Frameworks.....	16
9.1. Gender-Responsive Law Making.....	16
9.2. Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP).....	17
10. Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Initiative.....	17
11. Bloc Positions.....	19
11.1. Developed Countries (Western Bloc).....	19
11.2. Developing Countries (Global South).....	19
11.3. Conflict-Affected Countries.....	19
11.4. Least Developed Countries.....	20
11.5. Donor Countries and Aid Dependent Countries.....	20
12. Relevant Countries.....	20
13. Questions to Ponder.....	22
14. Further Reading.....	24
15. Bibliography.....	26

2. Letter From the Secretary General

Dear Delegates, It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the fourth annual session of Izmir Kız High School Model United Nations Conference. I am Ecrin Tügen, and I will be serving as your Secretary General for this conference. I am here to ensure you have an unforgettable experience in the best way possible.

During the conference, you will not only engage in diplomatic discussions, but you will also develop your leadership and communication skills, gain a deeper understanding of international issues, learn about the policies of other countries, practice crisis management, and socialize with delegates from other schools who may become your close friends. Briefly, this conference will offer you far more than you expect.

Of course, a great conference does not come together easily. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my Executive, Organization, and Academic Teams, who have worked constantly and intensively throughout the entire process. I am certain that this conference will be amazing because of their hard work.

MUNIKL'26 has been my biggest dream for years; finally, my dream comes true with your interest and participation. I cannot fully express how grateful I am to all of you for being part of this journey. Wishing you a beneficial, enjoyable and truly unforgettable conference experience.

Warm Regards,

Ecrin TÜGEN
Secretary General, MUNIKL'26

3. Letter From the Under Secretary General

Dear MUNIKL'26 delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN) of the MUNIKL'26 conference! I am very excited to be with you.

Dear delegates, our committee will be even more productive, fun and creative with your diverse perspectives, experiences and knowledge. Regular discussions and suggestions from each of you will play an important role in our resolution paper. However, in order to achieve this goal, you must prepare, work with determination and dynamism and proceed by respecting the discussions of other delegates.

I hope this study guide will be a helpful source for you. By reviewing this guide, you should read the Questions to Ponder the section that I have prepared for you, do your research and come prepared. (If I were you, I would come by doing very detailed research for the question to ponder!)

Since you are one of the most important factors that create value in this conference, don't hesitate to contact me at any time to get help if you have any questions or ideas about the conference and our committee. I'm here for you. I wish everyone good luck and work!

Warm regards,

Günselin ŞANIER
Under Secretary General
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4. Key Words

Gender-sensitive policies

Policies that take into account gender differences and are designed to address the specific needs of women. These policies aim to reduce inequalities and create a more inclusive system.

Women's safety

Refers to the protection of women from physical, psychological, and sexual harm, ensuring they can live free from violence, harassment, and threats in both public and private spaces.

Peaceful mobility

The ability of women to move freely in public spaces without fear, intimidation, or restriction. It is essential for equal participation in daily life activities.

Public space security

The process of ensuring that public areas such as streets, parks, and transportation systems are safe and accessible for everyone through both infrastructure and legal measures.

Safe cities

Urban environments where women and vulnerable groups can live, move, and participate in social life safely. This concept often involves comprehensive urban planning strategies.

Gender equality

The state in which individuals of all genders have equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities. It is a fundamental component of sustainable development.

Women's empowerment

The process of enabling women to gain control over their lives and participate fully in economic, social, and political spheres. Education and representation are key elements.

Freedom of movement

The right of individuals to move freely without discrimination or restriction. For women, this right is closely linked to safety and security.

Public transportation safety

Ensuring that public transport systems are safe for women through monitoring, enforcement, and the use of security measures and technologies.

Sexual harassment prevention

Measures, laws, and awareness initiatives aimed at preventing sexual harassment and protecting individuals in public and private spaces.

Gender-based violence (GBV)

Violence directed at individuals based on their gender, including physical, sexual, and psychological harm. It is a major global human rights issue.

Policy implementation gap

The discrepancy between the existence of laws or policies and their actual enforcement in practice, often limiting their effectiveness.

Social norms and stigma

Deeply rooted societal beliefs and prejudices that can restrict women's behavior and lead to the stigmatization of victims.

Cultural barriers

Traditional and cultural structures that may limit women's rights, freedoms, and participation in public life.

Women's participation in decision-making

The inclusion of women in political, economic, and social decision-making processes, leading to more inclusive and effective policies.

Human rights protection

The legal and institutional frameworks that ensure the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms for all individuals, including women.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5)

A global goal established by the United Nations aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

5. Introduction to the Committee and Historical Background

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN) is one of the bodies of the United Nations that shines a light on gender equality and the empowerment of women globally. It was firstly established in 2010 in order to bring together different parts of the UN that had worked separately on women's issues.

UNWOMEN does not function as a government and does not pass laws that nations have to follow.

However, it works with supporting countries, provides funding, expertise and encourages governments to adopt policies that can improve the lives of women and girls internationally. Its main mandates are eliminating discrimination against women, promoting women's participation in political and economic life and ensuring that women have equal access to education, healthcare, employment and basic humanitarian rights.



UNWOMEN collaborates with other UN bodies, like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as well as governments and non-governmental organisations, in order to ensure the needs of women are not overlooked. It also creates and promotes global frameworks like Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), particularly Goal 5, which focuses on gender equality.

With the gradual shift and changes in international focus on women's rights and gender equality, many major steps have been established. The First major and starting step was the creation of the United Nations in 1945, which included gender equality as one of its core mandates. However the issue of women began to increase decades later and received a lot of global attention. In 1979 the UN adopted *the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** which set an important legal standard for protecting women's rights and is still used today as a foundation for gender equality policies.

A big turning point came with the establishment of the *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*** that had the specific impact of armed conflict on women and what role women can play in peacebuilding and conflict effects. It highlighted that women should not only be victims but also participants in creating peace.

6. Introduction to the Agenda Item

The agenda item “Enhancing gender-sensitive public space policies aimed at upholding women’s security and peaceful mobility” addresses the pressing need to create urban environments where women and girls can move freely and safely. Across many countries, women’s access to public spaces is constrained by harassment, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient policy measures, limiting their participation in social, economic, and civic life.

This agenda is anchored in international frameworks such as the UN Women mandates, the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 5 on gender equality), and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. It emphasizes the development and implementation of gender-sensitive policies, inclusive urban planning, and targeted public safety interventions to foster environments that are safe, accessible, and equitable for all.



Key considerations include preventing harassment and violence in public spaces, addressing urban planning deficiencies, ensuring policy enforcement in fragile or conflict-affected environments, and improving the collection of gender-disaggregated data. By implementing these measures, states and communities can promote women’s security, support their mobility, and advance broader objectives of gender equality and social inclusion in public life.

7. Key Challenges

7.1. Widespread Harassment in Public Spaces

No single uniform definition of bullying exists. Although complete agreement on definition has yet to emerge, European definitions have continued to converge focusing on persistent and prolonged exposure to negative and aggressive behaviours of a primarily psychological nature. Although some definitions put less weight on persistency of exposure, research has consistently showed that more than any other factor it is the repeated nature of the phenomenon which makes it so damaging, qualitatively changing the nature of the



experience. Still, it is acknowledged that in some cases individual acts may be so devastating or have such a lasting impact that they can constitute bullying in their own right. A further central feature of the phenomenon is the imbalance of power, which prevents targets from successfully defending themselves, whether the

imbalance precedes the bullying (e.g. due to hierarchical position, experience or social capital) or emerging during the conflict. Whilst some definitions include ‘intent or purpose to cause harm’, most choose to leave it out as intent is hard to prove, and, more importantly, the fact that someone has no intent to harm does not free them from responsibility for their actions, particularly when they ought to know or have been made aware that the behaviour is unwanted.

7.2. Poor Urban Infrastructure

Urban services encompass the infrastructure systems and services designed to meet the socioeconomic and environmental needs of cities. These services can be categorized into areas such as transportation, health, education, social services, safety, water, and energy management. There is an ongoing debate regarding the content, scope, providers, and methods of delivering these urban services. At the local level, urban services are predominantly associated with local governments, as they are responsible for meeting the locally shared needs of residents. The delivery and operation of urban services that fall within the responsibilities of local administrations can be delegated to various stakeholders, including institutions and organizations providing services to the city.

The provision of services in areas such as health, education, sports, environment, social assistance, libraries, parks, traffic and culture, as well as services for the elderly, women and children, the disabled, the poor and the disadvantaged, are carried out to promote solidarity and participation within the locality, and increase efficiency, savings, and effectiveness in services. These tasks are assigned to municipalities and extraordinary provincial administrations. In fulfilling these services, the fundamental principles of urban service policies include the optimal use of resources, the creation of new resources, and the maximization of public benefit. Additionally, from an integrative policy perspective, urban services must be inclusive, non-discriminatory, equally accessible to all groups, and prioritized for disadvantaged groups to ensure equitable provision.

7.3. Conflict & Fragile Environments

Conflict affected areas are places where violence and insecurity are ongoing which creates extremely dangerous living conditions for civilians. While all civilians living in the zone are impacted, women and girls are at the highest risk due to a combination of legal protection, economic dependence and social inequalities.

The OECD (2010) reports, however, that such a focus on gender equality in fragile situations is implemented only to a limited extent. While donors have developed various tools to promote gender equality in other arenas, they have yet to develop strategies to systemically incorporate gender equality considerations in fragile contexts.



The gender initiatives that donors have implemented in fragile and conflict-affected contexts often involve discrete ‘gender’ projects, rather than genuine mainstreaming. These have had a technical rather than political focus and have not been linked to the broader statebuilding agenda.

In order to improve international engagement with gender in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, donors need to understand gender as a political issue and to incorporate gender issues into political, conflict, security and economic analysis. Existing programming tools for gender equality in other domains could also be reviewed and drawn upon in developing strategies and tools in these contexts.

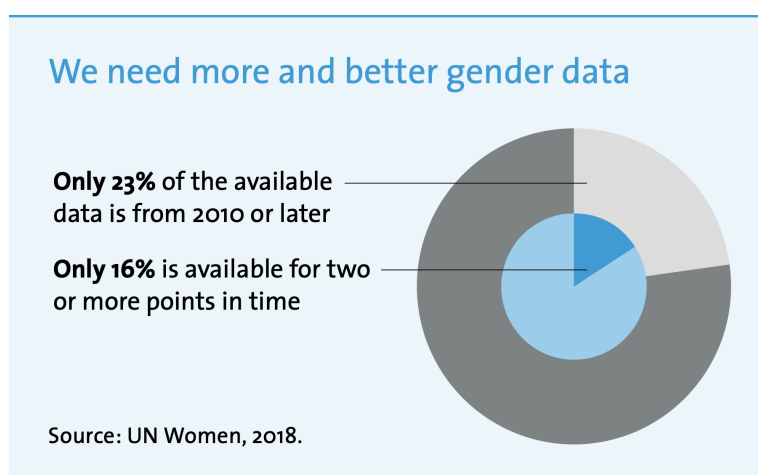
7.4. Lack of Data

Monitoring progress on gender equality in the SDGs requires access to quality gender data that are collected frequently and regularly. But an assessment of gender data availability suggests there is a long way to go. Many of the gender-specific indicators cover ‘emerging statistical areas’ where measurement methodology is not well developed or emerging. For many areas, emerging or established, official statistics are often missing. Country-level data gaps impede not only national monitoring of progress on the SDGs but also regional and global monitoring as these aggregates are ultimately derived from country-level data. Only 12 (22 per cent) of the 54 gender specific indicators are produced with enough regularity to be classified as Tier I by the IAEG-SDGs⁴, meaning that enough data is available to monitor progress across all regions. The mismatch between data availability and data demand is a shared concern for rich and poor countries alike. Other limitations include technical capacity and financial constraints within national statistical systems, inconsistent disaggregation, lack of timely reporting to the international statistical system, limited data dissemination, and lack of coordination between data producers within countries.

Gender biases are embedded in the concepts, definitions and classifications used, in the way questions are asked, in how the samples are drawn for population surveys and in how data are collected. These flaws and biases affect the accuracy and reliability of the data collected, undermining the quality of gender statistics.

Labour force surveys that ask only about the respondent’s ‘primary economic activity’, for example, will leave out the contributions of women who perceive paid work as secondary to their unpaid care and domestic work. In

Uganda, asking about secondary activity increased women’s labour force participation from 78 per cent (when only primary activity was recorded) to 87 per cent.⁵ International statistical standards and classifications can help overcome some biases and improve the international comparability of the data. However, particularly in the case of emerging areas, such standards are not readily available, fully understood nor consistently adhered to for gender data production.



8. Legal Frameworks

8.1. Definition of the CEDAW



One of the most important legal frameworks on addressing women's rights globally is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). CEDAW establishes a complex and comprehensive framework for eliminating discrimination against

women in all aspects of life including political participation, education, employment and healthcare.

This convention is relevant to conflict and post conflict areas because it requires nations to take active measures in order to ensure equality even in times of national crisis. It obligates governments to adopt laws, policies and programs that protect women from discrimination and any kind of violence. CEDAW goes beyond formal equality and it promotes substantive equality which means that nations must address structural and implemented inequalities that disadvantage women. This is highly and particularly important in conflict zones where women often face more complex and severe discrimination.

The optional protocol to CEDAW also allows individuals to directly bring complaints to an international committee which strengthens accountability mechanisms. However the enforcement relies heavily on state cooperation and there are limited direct penalties for non-compliant nations.



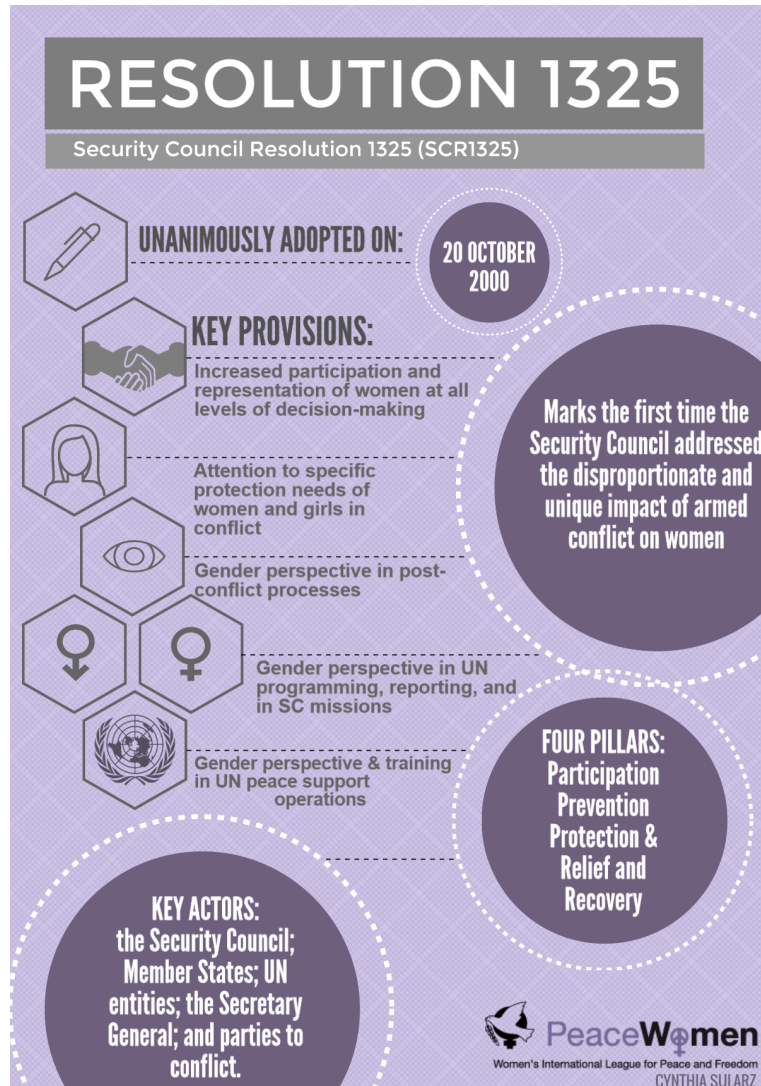
8.2. UNSC Resolution 1325

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is a turning point in international law by formally recognizing specific impacts of armed conflict on women after its adoption in 2000.

Resolution 1325 is built on four pillars, prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery. It calls on all sides in conflict to protect women and girls from violence, sexual violence and emphasizes the need to include women in negotiations, conflict resolutions and post conflict reconstructions. It also highlights the importance of a consideration of women's needs in refugee camps, disarmaments programs and humanitarian responses.

Resolution 1325 does not legally bind the same way treaties do, however it carries a significant political weight. It has become a foundation to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda that includes follow up resolutions that addresses issues such as conflict related sexual violence and women's role and leadership in peacebuilding.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993 is another major key legal framework. This declaration is one of the first international aspects to define violence against women and recognizes it as a violation of human rights.



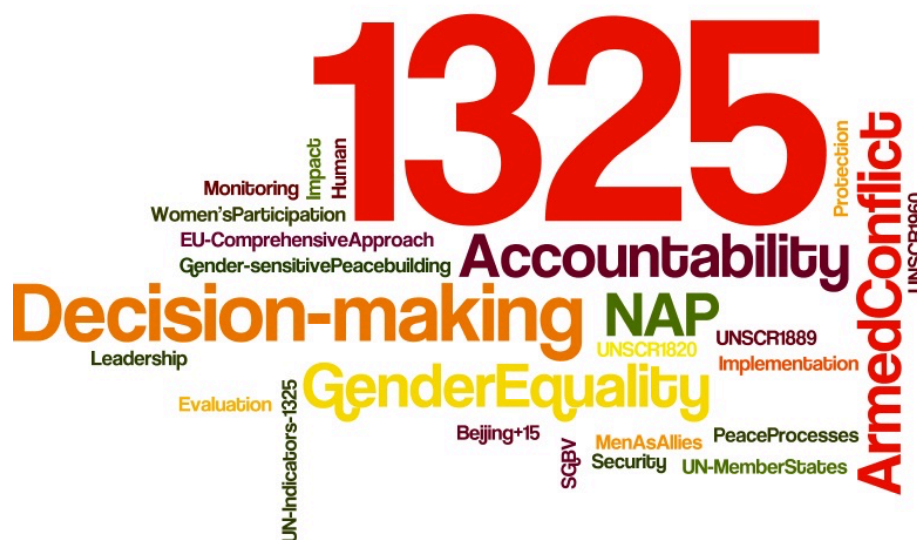
The Declaration emphasized that violence against women includes physical, sexual and psychological harm. In conflict zones violence is often in different forms including sexual violence that is used as a weapon of war, domestic violence in displacement settings and exploitation.

The declaration calls on nations to exercise prevention, investigation and punishments for acts of violence against women as well as providing services for those women who are in need. International humanitarian law, especially Geneva Conventions provide essential protections for civilians during armed conflict. These conventions alongside their additional protocols create rules for the humane treatment of individuals who are in need. Under these important frameworks, women are under special protection against violence. The Geneva Conventions also emphasized the protection of civilians in occupied territories and humane treatment for prisoners of war.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 5 provides a broader aspect of the development framework that is highly aligned with post conflict recovery. In post conflict zones achieving goals is really important for long term stability of life.

Regional agreements such as the African Union’s protocols on women’s rights and the European Union's gender equality evaluations and protocols also contribute to women in conflict zones. These frameworks align international standards to regional contexts which makes them more effective in addressing challenges.

The combination of CEDAW and Resolution 1325 creates a strong complex and binding system. CEDAW provides legal binding obligations, and Resolution 1325 enlarges these principles into the context of peace and security.



8.3. 2030 Agenda & SDG 5

In the 70 years since its founding, the United Nations has achieved significant results in advancing gender equality. These achievements include the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women, the principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women, and the adoption of several landmark agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.



In this report entitled "We the Peoples" on the occasion of the General Debate of the 66th Session of the General Assembly in September 2011, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon acknowledged that women's potential is not being fully realized due, among other things, to persistent social, economic and political inequalities, and underscored the vital role of gender equality as a driving force for development progress.

Gender inequalities remain deeply rooted in every society. Women suffer from a lack of access to decent work, and are subject to occupational discrimination and

gender pay gaps. In many cases, they are denied access to basic education and healthcare and are victims of violence and discrimination. They are underrepresented in political and economic decision-making processes.

To better address these challenges and to identify a single recognized driving force to lead and coordinate UN activities on gender equality, UN Women was established in 2010.

UN Women works to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, empower women, and achieve equality between women and men in development, human rights, humanitarian aid, and peace and security.

The vital role of women and the need for their full and equal participation and leadership in all areas of sustainable development are reaffirmed in What We Want for the Future (paragraphs 236-244) and the Open Working Group Recommendation for the Sustainable Development Goals. Proposed Sustainable Development Goal 5 addresses this issue, stating: "To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

9. National and Policy Level Frameworks

9.1. Gender-Responsive Law Making



Gender-responsive law-making starts with amending or repealing laws that discriminate on the basis of sex, either explicitly or implicitly. It also implies enacting laws that affirm the gender-equality principle and guarantee gender equality in practice. This includes ensuring the protection of women and girls from discrimination, as well as from any form of violence or abuse that affects them disproportionately.

9.2. Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP)

UN Women strives to ensure that all operations, including procurement processes, support its mandate to achieve gender equality and empower women. Gender-responsive procurement (GRP) is the sustainable selection of services, goods, and works that considers the impact on gender equality that goes beyond cost management. It also involves leveraging purchasing and sourcing opportunities to promote gender equality and support social and economic progress through gender-responsive measures at all stages and tiers of procurement and the supply chain. GRP includes due diligence approaches to identify and mitigate risks to gender equality, including women's rights and non-discrimination, as well as to identify opportunities to advance gender mainstreaming in the supply chain.

The United Nations, as well as the public and private sectors, can leverage procurement to achieve great socioeconomic change for women and girls on a global scale by ensuring the gender responsiveness of the vendors and promoting women-owned businesses.

Procurement plays a vital role in sustainable development and gender equality, aligning with SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment and SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

10. Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Initiative

The UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces (SC SPS) Global Initiative has been implementing comprehensive programming to prevent and respond to sexual harassment (SH) in cities and public spaces (e.g. transportation, commodity sectors, schools, online, etc.) since the inception of UN Women in 2011 and currently spans 68 cities in 38 countries. The Global SC SPS Initiative is grounded in the principles of human rights and leaving no one behind (LNOB) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It addresses the urgent call to respond to the global scourge of SH that affects women and girls, communities and countries, including in lost opportunities for women and girls to realise their full potential when the causes and consequences of sexual violence (SV) are not urgently addressed. By fostering local ownership through multi-sectoral partnerships in support of programming, local and provincial/state governments, grassroots women, women's rights organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and other partners have received a wide range of support under the SC SPS Global Initiative to develop and implement comprehensive initiatives to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in urban, rural, humanitarian, and other settings.



These occur in any of a number of places - on buses and trains, in streets, at markets and parks, and many others. They are common in developing and developed countries, in urban and rural areas.

As a result, many women and girls do not enjoy the right to freedom of movement. Opportunities for work and education suffer. Access to services and enjoyment of culture and recreation are constrained. Poor women and girls as well as those belonging to socially stigmatized groups are among the most vulnerable to risk.

In private domains, such as homes, violence against women and girls is now widely recognized as a human rights violation. But violence in public spaces, especially sexual harassment, is still largely tolerated and perceived as a “normal” part of social life. This reflects discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender stereotypes and inequality.

They impede the recognition, prevention and adequate response to sexual violence against women and girls. Through its Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces global flagship initiative, UN Women since November 2010 has galvanized global and local partners to transform public spaces in 27 “champion” cities. Global momentum has steadily grown since. In 2013, the UN Commission on the Status of Women identified sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on governments to take preventive measures. This call was further affirmed in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.



11. Bloc Positions

11.1. Developed Countries (Western Bloc)

Developed countries emphasize the importance of protecting women from gender based violence, ensuring access to education and healthcare and increasing women's participation in political and peacemaking processes. These countries support international frameworks.

A major aspect for this bloc is accountability since they advocate for mechanisms that hold the actors of violence responsible and often support institutions like international courts. They also focus on data collection and monitoring systems.

11.2. Developing Countries (Global South)

Developing countries highlight the importance of state sovereignty. They recognize the challenges that are faced by women and girls in conflict areas and they are cautious about external involvements in domestic relationships. They argue that solutions should be locally driven and culturally sensitive.

The Global South bloc strongly focuses on economic development as a solution. The risks of poverty and lack of infrastructure are argued to be the root causes of many issues that affect women.

11.3. Conflict-Affected Countries

Conflict Affected Nations Countries that are directly affected by conflict have a special and complex position. Their biggest concern is the immediate stability of security since ongoing conflict makes the long term development more difficult. However they do acknowledge the importance of gender equality but they often tend to prioritize border peace and reconstruction efforts.

These nations request humanitarian aid, financial support and technical assistance from international organizations. However they sometimes resist criticism or intervention. Governments in conflict areas may have limited capacity to implement and adopt policies that are related to women's rights even if they are willing to implement and adopt them.

11.4. Least Developed Countries

Least Developed Countries face severe structural challenges that include poverty, weak institutions and limited infrastructure. These challenges are worsened by conflict which makes them extremely vulnerable and difficult to provide basic service for women and girls. This bloc is in strong need for international financial assistance, humanitarian and development aid. They emphasize that without enough resources it is not realistic to expect significant progress in areas such as healthcare, education and basic humanitarian needs.

11.5. Donor Countries and Aid Dependent Countries

The division between donor and aid dependent countries is a major problem. Donor countries focus on ensuring the aid that has been sent is used effectively and may push for transparency measurements. Aid-dependent countries emphasize the need for increased support and argue that strict conditions can limit the response to crises.

12. Relevant Countries



India represents a central focus in discussions on women's safety and public space security due to its large population and high incidence of gender-based violence, making it a key country for UN Women interventions.



Canada serves as a global leader in gender-sensitive policies and women's empowerment programs, providing best-practice models for safe cities initiatives and SDG 5 implementation.



China is strategically important because of its large population and global influence, offering a unique perspective on balancing policy development with cultural and political considerations.



Afghanistan highlights the critical challenges faced in conflict-affected states, where women's mobility and safety are severely restricted, emphasizing the urgency of international support.



Saudi Arabia exemplifies the role of cultural and religious norms in shaping women's access to public spaces, making it a sensitive but essential country for gender equality debates.



Italy provides a stable European perspective, representing countries where policy frameworks exist but continued monitoring and implementation are important to achieve SDG 5 goals.

13. Questions to Ponder

- 1. How can cities design public spaces to enhance women's safety and security?**
- 2. How can urban planners integrate gender perspectives into city infrastructure?**
- 3. What measures can be taken to ensure safe mobility for women in public transportation?**
- 4. How can local authorities use lighting and surveillance to reduce harassment in public areas?**
- 5. In what ways can community engagement improve women's access to safe public spaces?**
- 6. How can governments close the gap between laws and their real-world implementation?**
- 7. What strategies can prevent gender-based violence in streets, parks, and public venues?**
- 8. How can social norms and cultural stigma be addressed to support safer mobility for women?**
- 9. In what ways can technology, such as reporting apps or smart surveillance, enhance women's safety?**
- 10. How can women's voices be included in decision-making related to public space policies?**
- 11. What steps can be taken to make public transportation fully accessible and secure for women?**
- 12. How can cities learn from successful Safe Cities programs globally and adapt them locally?**

- 13. What measures can ensure accountability of authorities for protecting women in public areas?**
- 14. How can gender-sensitive policies be linked effectively with SDG 5 goals?**
- 15. In what ways can multi-sector partnerships (government, NGOs, private sector) promote safer public spaces for women?**

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