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SIMULATION HANDBOOK

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

ECOSOC Commission on the Status of Women Simulation Handbook

The Economic and Social Council, otherwise known as ECOSOC, is one of the six main Organs of the UN. It is the main body for coordinating and reviewing recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

The League of Nations was planning to expand its economic and social functions when war broke out in 1939. Unfortunately the League never got a chance to implement this plan. Nonetheless, many of the ideas that were discussed in the League were later included in the UN Charter.

To increase the impact of ECOSOC, the UN Charter was amended to increase the members in the Council from 18 to 54.

Like the General Assembly, ECOSOC can only make recommendations. It has no way of enforcing its decisions.

ECOSOC coordinates and provides guidance to a wide range of UN entities dedicated to sustainable development that include regional economic and social commissions, functional commissions (see list of subsidiary bodies in Annex) and specialized agencies, programmes and funds.

Reforms over the last decade, particularly General Assembly resolution 68/1, have strengthened ECOSOC's leading role on economic, social and environmental issues and achieving a balanced integration of these three pillars of sustainable development. ECOSOC is also charged with giving special attention to following up on major UN conferences and summits.

ECOSOC is responsible for:

- promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress;
- identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems;
- facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

ECOSOC oversees a complex ecosystem of subsidiary bodies, composed of regional commissions, functional commissions and expert bodies, standing committees and ad hoc bodies that are actively engaged in the work of the UN system on development.



Simulation of an ECOSOC Functional Commission

ECOSOC includes nine Functional Commissions which are deliberative bodies whose role is to consider and make recommendations on a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues. During the Global Leadership Institute we will be simulating the following Functional Commission:

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW):

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) first met at Lake Success, New York, in February 1947, soon after the founding of the United Nations. All 15 government representatives were women. From its inception, the Commission was supported by a unit of the United Nations that later became the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in the UN Secretariat. In 2011, four parts of the UN system—DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM—merged to become UN Women, which now serves as the Secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women.

From 1947 to 1962, the Commission focused on setting standards and drafting international conventions to change legislation that discriminated against women and to foster global awareness of women's issues.

In 1963, efforts to consolidate standards on women's rights led the UN General Assembly to re-quest the Commission to draft a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which the Assembly ultimately adopted in 1967. The legally binding Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), also drafted by the Commission, followed in 1979.

Following the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women , which adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Commission was mandated by the General Assembly to play a central role in monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and advising ECOSOC accordingly. As called for in the Platform for Action, an additional UN office for the promotion of gender equality was established: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).

The simulation of CSW will focus on the priority theme "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls".



Main Elements of CSW Meetings

The simulation of the ECOSOC Plenary is divided into three parts: 1) Opening Plenary, 2) Informal Consultations, and 3) Closing Plenary.

THE OPENING PLENARY

All of the delegates first meet together in a formal meeting to adopt the agenda and Organization of Work by consensus. Following the adoption of these two items, there will be an interactive session in with a UN expert on the agenda item that has been allocated to the CSW.

As part of the Plenary meeting, delegates will engage in a **General Discussion on the priority theme**. During the General Discussion on the priority theme, Member States will have an opportunity to make statement representing their government's views on the agenda item titled, **"Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective"**. Delegates can speak in their national capacity and/or on behalf of a regional or political group. Any delegate representing an individual country, regional or political group wishing to make a statement during the General Discussion must subscribe to the Speakers List before the Plenary begins.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

General Discussion of Zero Draft

Once the Plenary meeting is adjourned, the Commission on the Status of Women will transition into informal consultations where they will first have an informal discussion on the Zero draft of the Agreed Conclusions. This discussion should be very general in nature and focus on articulating a delegation's priorities, what paragraphs they think need to be elaborated and what paragraphs perhaps should be deleted from the text. This is not the time to propose specific amendments to the text. Before taking the floor during the General Discussion of the Zero Draft, delegates will have an opportunity to meet in their regional groups to share their perspectives on the Zero Draft to determine where their positions agree and/or disagree.

Line by Line of Zero Draft

Once the Plenary meeting is adjourned, the Commission on the Status of Women will transition into informal consultations where they will first have an informal discussion on the Zero draft of the Agreed Conclusions. This discussion should be very general in nature and focus on articulating a delegation's priorities, what paragraphs they think need to be elaborated and what paragraphs perhaps should be deleted from the text. This is not the time to propose specific amendments to the text. Before taking the floor during the General Discussion of the Zero Draft, delegates will have an opportunity to meet in their regional groups to share their perspectives on the Zero Draft to determine where their positions agree and/or disagree. Amendments will be inserted into the Zero draft of the Agreed Conclusions which will be displayed on a screen during the Debate of Amendments



Main Elements of CSW Meetings (cont.)

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS (CONT.)

Debate of Amendments

During the debate, the sponsors of each amendment will be asked to explain why they think their amendment should be included in the text. If there are no objections it is then incorporated into the Agreed Conclusions. If there is an objection from one or more delegates, there must be a discussion until all delegates agree whether it should be adopted as is, revised through sub amendments or withdrawn. The goal of the debate should be to reach consensus on the text.

If no changes are proposed to a given paragraph, it will be marked "Agreed ad ref" to indicate that the delegates have temporarily agreed to the text in that paragraph. Delegates can return to paragraphs that have been marked "Agreed ad ref" and propose changes later if they so choose.

Whenever all of the amendments in a particular paragraph have been discussed and resolved, the paragraph will be marked "Agreed ad ref".

If there are any amendments that are contentious during informal consultations and the delegates are having difficulty reaching consensus, they should be "bracketed" or set aside for further discussion later on so that the delegates can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.

Roughly midway through the debate of amendments, delegates will meet again in their regional groups to review the amendments that have yet to be debated.

After going through all the amendments at least once, the delegates should return to those amendments that have been "bracketed". The Facilitator can intervene during the Debate of Amendment and propose suggestions in an effort to help delegates reach agreement on these amendments.

After all amendments have been resolved, the Facilitator should scroll through the entire Agreed Conclusions paragraph and paragraph and ask the delegates to carefully read the text to make sure there are no further objections.

If new objections are raised, these objections must be discussed until agreement has been reached and no where further changes to the text are proposed.

Consensus has been reached when every paragraph is marked "Agreed ad ref".

CLOSING PLENARY OF THE COMMISSION

In the last phase of the simulation, all of the delegates meet together in the Closing Plenary to adopt their Agreed Conclusions by consensus. After the adoption, delegates may take the floor, if they wish, to make a statement. These statements typically focus on paragraphs in the Agreed Conclusions that a particular delegation would like to highlight in some way. It also provides an opportunity for delegations to indicate which paragraphs they would like to disassociate from if their government disagrees with some element in the text.

If consensus is not reached on the Agreed Conclusions, the entire text will be withdrawn by the Chair.



Things to Know about the Rules of Procedure

1. When delivering a speech during the Opening or Closing Plenary, speeches cannot be interrupted. The Speakers List is followed until all speakers have had an opportunity to speak.
2. Passing notes during Formal Meetings is not allowed.
3. The presiding officer during meetings will never ask, "Are any points or motions on the floor?"
4. Parliamentary points (e.g., Points of Personal Privilege, Points of Information, and Points of Inquiry) and motions (e.g., Motion for Moderated or Unmoderated Caucuses, Motion to Set Agenda, Motions to Set Speaking Time, Motion to Move to Voting Procedures, etc.) are not allowed during the conference. These are parliamentary rules of procedure and they are not used at the United Nations because it is not a Parliament.
5. Delegates will not be allowed to yield their time to the Chair or another delegation.
6. The only point that is allowed is a Point of Order, which is only to be used if a delegate feels the rules of procedure are not being followed properly.
7. Delegates must raise a Point of Order without being prompted.
8. The Right of Reply is allowed during the General Debate if a delegation wishes to respond to a comment made during a speech that they find offensive. Any delegation wishing to exercise their right of reply must notify the secretary of their Commission of their request. If granted by the Chair they must wait until the end of the Speakers List to reply. Each delegation can exercise their Right of Reply a maximum of two times during the General Discussion of the priority theme.
9. During informal consultations, there will be no rules of procedure. Delegates are encouraged to work together to achieve consensus on the wording of the Agreed Conclusions that is under consideration.
10. Delegates can make a statement during the Closing Plenary to put on record any reservations they may have on the Agreed Conclusions before or after action is taken.
11. The line by line review offers an opportunity for the delegates to propose changes to the draft resolution. Delegates can indicate if they agree or disagree with the amendments that are proposed. Delegates must wait until the line by line review has been suspended or completed before they can begin debating the amendments that have been proposed.
12. If the Committee is not able to reach consensus, the Agreed Conclusions are withdrawn from consideration.



Terms used in the simulation of the CSW

1. **Bureau:** refers to the Chair and Vice-Chair who are officials elected by the Functional Commissions to preside over meetings.
2. **Facilitator:** The Facilitator is responsible for presiding over the informal consultations and has the responsibility of helping the delegates reach consensus on the text of the draft Agreed Conclusions.
3. **Paragraphs:** Model UN conferences around the world are used to referring to the clauses or sub-clauses of a resolution or Agreed Conclusions. At the United Nations, these are referred to as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.
4. **Zero draft:** Some Functional Commissions rely on beginning with a draft resolution or Agreed Conclusions that has been written by the substantive office in the UN Secretariat who has an expertise on the agenda item that is being discussed. The document, referred to as a “zero draft”, is submitted to the delegates on behalf of the Chair.
5. **Consensus:** Consensus occurs when all of the delegations in a Committee reach agreement on the wording of every paragraph in a draft Agreed Conclusions and are ready to adopt it without voting on it. This is the goal of the negotiation process.
6. **Disassociate:** When consensus has been reached and the Agreed Conclusions is adopted without a vote, any delegate is given the opportunity to make a statement about any reservations they may have about particular paragraphs that are included in the Agreed Conclusions. It is possible to agree to adopt the Agreed Conclusions without a vote and still have elements within it that a delegation is not entirely pleased with. When this occurs, a delegate can take that floor after the Agreed Conclusions have been adopted to indicate that their government wishes to disassociate itself from a particular paragraph.

Terms not used in the simulation of the CSW

1. **Dais:** This term is not used at the UN and is therefore not a part of the terminology of the in this simulation. The proper term to use when referring to the officials presiding over a meeting is the Bureau.
2. **Honourable Delegates or Honourable Chair:** Delegates should not begin their statements with the words “Honorable delegates” or “Honorable Chair.” These terms are used in a Parliament and since the UN is not a Parliament it is not appropriate to use them during the simulation of UN meetings. When a delegate is given the floor to make a statement during the General Discussion, delegates should begin by saying “Thank you Mr/Madame Chair.” Statements are always addressed to the presiding officer not to the delegates.
3. **House:** In some conferences, the person presiding over a meeting might say, “Will the House come to order” if the delegates are making too much noise. Again, since the UN is not a Parliament, it is inappropriate to refer to ECOSCO as the “House” when addressing delegates.
4. **Friendly and Unfriendly amendments:** Delegates are expected to work together to find solutions related to the priority theme. Therefore, these terms are not used at the UN and do not apply the negotiation process in this simulation which focuses on reaching consensus among all delegates.
5. **Moderated and Unmoderated Caucuses:** These terms do not exist at the UN. What does exist are different types of informal consultations which are similar in some respects but differ in other respects.
6. **Clauses:** Model UN conferences around the world refer to the paragraphs in an outcome document like a resolution or Agreed Conclusions as “clauses”. This term is not used at the UN. In contrast, the editorial guidelines at the UN refer to the sections of an outcome document as paragraphs or sub-paragraphs if they follow a chapeau (see next section on Agreed Conclusions).



Notes on Agreed Conclusions

The CSW will adopt what are referred to as Agreed Conclusions which has have a different format that what is used in a resolution. The Agreed Conclusions will be pre-drafted by the Secretariat in advance.

Although Agreed Conclusions are not divided into preambular and operative paragraphs, the structure of this type of outcome document shares some of the same characteristics. The first series of paragraphs in the Agreed Conclusions focus on reaffirming principles that have been adopted in prior Declarations, human rights treaties, and other initiatives that have contributed to achieving gender equality, it highlights important actions that have been taken, expresses concerns that define the problem that is being addressed and so forth. The final paragraphs are where the recommended actions are listed In a series of sub-paragraphs following a chapeau that identifies the stakeholders that the Member States are hoping will taken action on the priority theme.

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Agreed Conclusions are organized in paragraphs that begin with the words “The Commission”¹ followed by a verb in the present tense (e.g., “reaffirms”, “reiterates”, “recognizes”, “recalls”, “stresses”, “expresses concern”, etc.).

When the verb that occurs immediately after “The Commission” is used more than once in a row, the word “also” must be inserted in front of the verb the second time it is used and the word “further” must be

inserted in front of the verb the third time is used in a row. For example:

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms...
2. The Commission also reaffirms...
3. The Commission further reaffirms...

he Agreed Conclusions always contain a paragraph at the end or near the end which contain a list of actions the Commission would like Member States and other stakeholders to take to address a particular issue. The paragraph usually begins as follows:

“The Commission urges governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, interalia, women’s organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, the private sector, national human rights institutions, where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions:”

¹ The very first paragraph in the Agreed Conclusions begins with the words, “The Commission on the Status of Women”. Every other paragraph after that simply begins with “The Commission”.

Notes on Agreed Conclusions (cont.)

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES (CONT.)

This paragraph is called a “chapeau” which ends in a colon (:;) and is followed by a series of subparagraphs that list the recommended actions that the CSW would like the different stakeholders identified in the chapeau to take to address the priority theme. The subparagraphs are lettered as follows: (a), (b), (c), etc., as demonstrated in the following example:

- (a) Take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms so as to improve their lives, livelihoods and well-being;
- (b) Consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of particular priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, limit the extent of any 11 reservations, formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Conventions, review their reservations regularly, with a view to withdrawing them, withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant Convention, and implement the Conventions fully by, inter alia, putting in place effective national legislation and policies;
- (c) Ensure women’s full and equal participation, including in institutions of governance and the judicial system, and secure their empowerment and full and equal access to justice;

and so forth...

When ever there are subparagraphs under a chapeau, they end in a semicolon (;) except for the last subparagraph which must end in a period (.).

The best way to learn how to write good Agreed Conclusions, is to study them:

[Example 1](#) [Example 2](#)

For assistance researching the assigned CSW topic consult the Study Guide and Annotated Bibliography that has been uploaded on the CSW web page.

