



# Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee

## President's Letter

Oakland University's Fifth Model United Nations Conference

March 13th & 14th, 2021

Hello delegates and welcome to Oakland University's fifth annual Model United Nations Conference. I am pleased to be able to chair the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee this year. My name is Lea Hilliker; I am majoring in International Relations with a minor in Sociology. For me, Model United Nations offers the opportunity to interact with people that share different points of view and strengthens valuable communication skills in and out of the classroom. Your co-chair for this committee is Ryan Olds. He is majoring in Political Science and minoring in Philosophy, and has been participating in MUN for 4 years. Ryan attended OUMUN while he was in high school, and is excited to be staffing the conference now! His advice for you is to not be afraid to raise your placard or bring up a new idea, and never hesitate to collaborate with other delegates. We both look forward to working with you, and hope to guide the discussion in a formal and respectable manner.

As you enter the conference room, remember to participate in the discussion and add relevant information to the conversation. The goal of this committee is to replicate the environment of the General Assemblies, while creating an enjoyable experience for yourself and other delegates. Overall, the key to an efficient and fun conference is understanding the rules, and demonstrating them in a gracious manner. We are looking for delegates to display knowledge of the rules and comprehension of the main topics of this committee with your country's position in mind. Your behavior should also reflect your country's position and the ideas should fall in line with this position.

During the discussion my chair style approach is relatively hands-off. I will try to help and guide the conversation when needed. However, I encourage you to solve and communicate amongst your fellow delegates before asking us. We will also remind you of certain rules and limitations, but will expect you to understand basic procedure during the debate. I am not a

stickler on recommendations or resolution phrasing. I look forward to a creative and innovative display of ideas.

More information about each committee, rules of procedure, and policies for the conference can be found on the [conference website](#).

Best Regards,

Lea Hilliker & Kristina Yerofeyeva

### **Introduction to Social, Humanitarian, & Cultural Issues Committee**

The Third Committee or the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues Committee was founded in 1946 as a part of the United Nations Organization along with other General Assembly committees. SOCHUM's mission is to address "agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world" and was in reaction to the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>1 2</sup> The committee just finished its seventy-fourth session. Thus, the priority focus of the committee is on examination of human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council which was established in 2006.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the committee is concerned with the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination.<sup>4</sup> In terms of social development, the committee addresses issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>

prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.<sup>5</sup> SOCHUM works with many non-government and government organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other groups related to humanitarian causes.

### **Women's Rights**

Revolutions are drastic measures that propel social change. The French and American revolutions inspired language that would later expand rights and liberty to various groups in society. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen expressed the universal truth of certain natural rights endowed to humanity.<sup>6</sup> However, this philosophy would take centuries before policy would represent these ideals. Specifically the role of women in society lacked social momentum until the mid-19th and early 20th century. Prior to this, republican motherhood and other gender-exclusive language represented the role of women as mothers and their civic duty was to raise healthy, knowledgeable, young men.<sup>7</sup> The duty of the daughter was to follow in her mother's footsteps. However, by the mid-1800s suffragists in the United States gained momentum with the Seneca Falls Convention held in 1848.<sup>8</sup> This sparked the initiative to gain women's right to vote; improve literacy for the least industrialized countries in Asia and Africa; and address women's health issues, equality, sexuality, labor laws, and political representation. Feminism and gender studies highlight the lack of female perspectives in history. As a result, the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/soc4697.doc.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <https://rhp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/declaration-rights-man-and-citizen>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.shsu.edu/~jll004/163\\_spring09/Kerber - The Republican Mother.pdf](https://www.shsu.edu/~jll004/163_spring09/Kerber_-_The_Republican_Mother.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/july-19>

goals of feminists vary. The objective of the First Wave was to achieve women's right to vote. Then, the Second Wave was linked to women's empowerment and differential rights. Finally, the more recent Third Wave seeks to discuss representation and challenges reproductive issues, and sexism<sup>9</sup> Consequently, women are more active in politics, and increasingly are using social media as a platform for social change. An example of this was the MeToo movement. This movement represented the influence of celebrity status, and the call for social justice to address sexual and domestic abuse of women.<sup>10</sup>

Internationally, the rights and protections of women continue to be unequally distributed. As reported in article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, one of the goals of the UN is to eliminate discrimination against women. The Committee decided to finalize the adoption of the draft general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations during its fifty-sixth session.<sup>11</sup> This model was to address women's rights in states that struggled with turmoil and unrest. In July, 25th, 2013, the Committee held a high-level panel discussion on HIV/AIDS and women's rights, organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UN-Women, and the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office at Geneva.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Resolution 67/144 features the call to eliminate all forms of violence against women.<sup>13</sup> SOCHUM also urged adoption of a more systematic, comprehensive,

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/6236\\_Chapter\\_1\\_Krolokke\\_2nd\\_Rev\\_Final\\_Pdf.pdf](https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/6236_Chapter_1_Krolokke_2nd_Rev_Final_Pdf.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://metoomvmt.org/>

<sup>11</sup> [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/INT\\_CEDAW\\_SED\\_55\\_20769\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_SED_55_20769_E.pdf)

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[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/INT\\_CEDAW\\_SED\\_55\\_20769\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_SED_55_20769_E.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/un\\_resolutions/a\\_res\\_67\\_144\\_e.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/un_resolutions/a_res_67_144_e.pdf)

multisector and sustained approach, aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, in the fields of legislation, policies, prevention, law enforcement, victim assistance and rehabilitation, data collection, and analysis. Additionally, the resolution strongly suggested states focus on protection and provision of services.<sup>14</sup> Currently about 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.<sup>15</sup> Another regional study on male behavior demonstrates that the perpetration of rape was pervasive, and while it varied across countries, it started early in life with no legal consequences for the majority of the perpetrators.<sup>16</sup> The most common form of violence experienced by women is intimate partner violence, which often leads to injuries and at times death. As confirmed in a global study on homicide, almost half of female homicide victims are killed by their family members or intimate partners, whereas the figure for men is just over 1 in 20 homicide victims.<sup>17</sup> Nations need to recognize the consequences of language sexualizing violence against women and accepting mistreatment of women. The current economic crises have exacerbated vulnerability and economic disadvantage for women, resulted in cutbacks in social spending on health and education, and rendered women more vulnerable to exploitation and violence.<sup>18</sup> The social services represent opportunity and choice for women, and the limitation of these services further widen inequality between men and women. The Human Rights Council, in resolutions 23/25 in May to June of 2013 and 24/23 in September 2013, also continued to address violence against women, including its particular forms, such as rape and sexual violence; and child abuse;

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.ncdsv.org/images/UN-RSG\\_IntensificationOfEffortsToEliminationAllFormsOfVAW\\_8-2-2010.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/UN-RSG_IntensificationOfEffortsToEliminationAllFormsOfVAW_8-2-2010.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/54041dbf4.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.partners4prevention.org/sites/default/files/resources/p4p-report.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/54041dbf4.pdf>

early and forced marriages; and remedies for women who have been subjected to violence.<sup>19</sup>

Overall, the lack of communication between governmental and international governmental leaders with women results in social norms that accept these immoral behaviors. The most recent report was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/140 and focuses on the extent to which gender perspectives are reflected in the work of the General Assembly, of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, and of selected intergovernmental processes of the United Nations. The report concludes with recommendations for further measures to enhance the implementation of gender equality mandates.<sup>20</sup> The goal is to use content analysis on the resolutions adopted to identify how frequent gendered language is used and how the language is portrayed. Language reflects how society views women. Yet millions of women around the world continue to experience discrimination: Laws and policies prohibit women from equal access to land, property, and housing. Economic and social discrimination results in fewer and poorer life choices for women, rendering them vulnerable to trafficking. Gender-based violence affects 30% of women globally. Women are denied their sexual and reproductive health rights. Human rights defenders for women are ostracized by their communities and are viewed as threats to religion, honor or culture. Women's crucial role in peace and security is often overlooked, as are the particular risks they face in conflict situations<sup>21</sup>

**Questions to consider:**

- What is the main focus in improving Women's Rights in your country? (Discuss ideas related to economics, politics, education, healthcare, military, etc.)

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/54041dbf4.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/50a0ca312.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/69/documentslist.shtml>

- What is SOCHUM doing to improve women’s rights or what stance does SOCHUM take on improving women’s rights?
- How do changes in Women’s Rights impact your country?
- Do women in your country have the right to vote and how often do they exercise this right?
- What percent of women work in government?
- What role does your country take in addressing sexual assault and gender-related violence and what policies does your country have currently to address these topics?

***Additional Resources:***

List of Human Rights Issues

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Working Group on Discrimination Against Women

**Refugee Crisis in South Sudan**

The refugee crisis in South Sudan demonstrates the problems resulting from the civil war and its injustices. Since achieving its independence from British and Egyptian rule in 1956, Sudan has experienced recurring civil wars primarily between the North and the South. The 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) officially ended the North-South conflict and set a date for a referendum on South Sudan’s self-determination in January 2011. Voters overwhelmingly chose independence and the Republic of South Sudan declared independence on

July 9, 2011. The United States recognized the Republic of South Sudan that same day.<sup>22</sup> The sovereignty of South Sudan was accepted and other developed nations recognized their responsibility to advocate for the refugees following the civil war between North and South Sudan. The issue of statelessness comes into question as the refugees become accustomed to life in foreign countries; however, the preferred action is that the refugees return back the South Sudan. Religion is the pivotal factor in the conflict. North Sudan, with roughly two-thirds of Sudan's land and population, and the official language is Arabic. North Sudan's identity is an inseparable amalgamation of Islam and the Arabic traditions. South Sudan's majority is indigenous African, which heavily influences the culture, identity, and religion. Additionally, South Sudan has Christian influences and are supportive of Western orientated ideals. Since gaining independence, the South has been threatened by the policies of persecution and forced conversion to Islamic practices. The religious persecution of non-Muslims has the effect of promoting Christianity; Southerners now see Christianity as the most effective means of counteracting the imposition of Islam, especially as Christianity continues influence the world heavily and dominates the world. Although the issue of a constitution in conformity with Islam had been debated since its independence from the northern portion of Sudan, President Ja'far Muhammad Numayri's presidential decree of September 1983, imposing a strict interpretation of Shari'a (the sacred law of Islam) on the country placed the issue squarely on the public agenda, leading to increased tensions and eventual conflict between the government and rebels in the South. The conflict resumed in 1983 when the Khartoum government unilaterally repealed the Addis Ababa agreement. This agreement designated South Sudan with the power of regional

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<sup>22</sup> <https://history.state.gov/countries/south-sudan>

governance and operated outside of northern Sudan's authority.<sup>23</sup> However, when this agreement was repealed, this would divide the South into three regions, reduced the powers of the regional governments, and imposed his interpretation of Shari'a on the whole country, including the non-Muslim South.<sup>24</sup> The conflict demonstrates the religious, social, economic, and political tensions with North Sudan and within South Sudan. As Sudan and South Sudan try to restore law and order under respective centralized governments, the people continue to live in insufficient conditions.

Within the UN operates the UNHCR (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Chair Commissioner) and is the leading entity on human rights. SOCHUM interacts often with UNHCR. Created in December of 1993, The High Commissioner and her Office work to protect and promote human rights to all. The workload is divided between three divisions. The first division is the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division (TESPRDD), which develops policy and provides guidance, tools, advice and capacity-strengthening support on thematic human rights issues, including for human rights mainstreaming purposes; and provides support to the Human Rights Council's special procedures. Next, the second division is the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division (CTMD), which provides substantive and technical support to the HRC and the Council's UPR mechanism, and supports the human rights treaty bodies. Finally, the last division is the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD), which is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Office's work in the field.<sup>25</sup> The UNHCR received US\$177.6 million in voluntary contributions towards this work in 2019. The UNHCR manages the foreign

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<sup>23</sup> <https://peacemaker.un.org/sudan-addisababa-southsudan72>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.meforum.org/22/sudan-civil-war-and-genocide?iframe=true&width=100%&height=100%&iframe=true&width=100%&height=100%>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/WhoWeAre.aspx>

aid sent to South Sudan and is appealing for US \$2.7 billion to address the life-saving humanitarian needs of South Sudanese refugees in 2019 and 2020. Education, health, and food supplies are all severely underfunded, exacting a heavy toll on women and children, who account for 83% of the refugees. “Since the signing of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on September, 12th 2018, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a partial reduction in fighting has been seen.” Said Arnauld Akodjenou, Regional Refugee Coordinator and Special Advisor on the South Sudan Situation. Thus, when basic needs are addressed, focus can be moved to the pressing issue of governmental authority and religious diversity. The UNHCR's goal in South Sudan is to increase funding to the region, particularly in underfunded areas to provide protection, and education.<sup>26</sup> The UNHCR goals for 2020 are that 100% of refugees with disabilities will receive service for their specific needs; 90% of births will be attended by skilled personnel; 85% of primary school-age refugee children will be enrolled in primary education; 83% of households will have an individual latrine; 41% of families will have access to sustainable energy; 3,750 refugees will be trained on SGBV prevention and response; 525,000 IDPs will have access to protection and assistance including core relief items, support to persons with specific needs and psychosocial support.<sup>27</sup> Another group within the UN working for relieving the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).<sup>28</sup> SOCHUM main goals to addressing the South Sudan crisis involves its work with UNMISS and UNHCR, and the funding for the specific programs. Numerous people are forcibly displaced around the globe and there are few solutions or alternatives to help these refugees. The

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/south-sudan-emergency.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2553>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/south-sudan/south-sudan-and-sudan-humanitarian-crisis>

humanitarian needs of refugees are growing from year to year, and it is increasingly difficult to find the capacity and resources to address them. However, the UNHCR remained positioned to deliver assistance for up to 600,000 people, within 72 hours of the onset of a humanitarian emergency. At critical moments, stockpiles were increased to reach even higher numbers of people. The Office dispatched 15,630 metric tons of relief items, of which 2,330 were delivered in 53 airlifts and 13,300 by road and sea. Supplies are rationed out to the refugees to provide the most amount of aid as possible. For example, solar lanterns are better for the environment and have been shown to reduce protection risks, particularly sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol remain two of the most widely ratified international treaties. There were no new accessions or withdrawals of reservations to these instruments during the reporting period. Almost 70 States retain reservations to the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol. These protocols aim to address how to manage the growing refugee population and how to supply aid. However, these solutions are limited and require present-day politics. In 2014, Denmark hosted the Copenhagen Roundtable, building on recommendations from previous discussions in the Netherlands and Japan, to agree among a wide range of actors involved in humanitarian response and long-term development on ways to address protracted displacement. One concrete outcome was the new Solutions Alliance, a network of governments, humanitarian and development organizations, civil society and the private sector that aim to find innovative solutions to displacement. Further cooperation with this Alliance is preferred as the crisis becomes more severe in the growing decades. UNHCR is one of the five co-leads of the Alliance, alongside the Danish and

Colombian Governments, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Rescue Committee.<sup>29</sup>

**Questions to consider:**

- What is your country's position on immigration?
- Does your country have policies addressing refugees' rights?
- What aid does your country provide for refugees? (Discuss the options of money, food, military, weapons, etc.)
- How does your country address corruption, and what policies could be implemented in Sudan?
- What is your country's involvement in the region? (Discuss the economic, political or religious influences in the region.)

**Additional Resources:**

Situation South Sudan

Diversity, Unity, and Nation Building in South Sudan

Signed Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan

Intergovernmental Authority on Development - Home

United Nations Mission in South Sudan: UNMISS

Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/54352ea59.pdf>