



# **CSW** Chair Report

Topic 1: Developing Strategies to Address the  
Global Gender Pay Gap

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# Personal Statements

## **Irati Herreros Tolosana**

Esteemed delegates,

I am Irati Herreros from the American School of Bilbao. It is with great honor that I welcome you all to this conference as your chair in the CSW committee. I started MUN back in 2021 and I have attended 7 conferences, this will be my 8th, and the first one as a chair. I am excited to take on this new role and guide the debate in a diplomatic and fun way.

I look forward to seeing you all in April!

Kind Regards,

Irati

## **Anamaria Banović**

Honorable delegates and guests,

My name is Anamaria Banović and it is an honor and a pleasure to be able to serve as the Deputy Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at this year's annual MUNISS conference. I am 18 years old and currently in 11th grade at the Friedrich-Schiller-Gymnasium in Marbach. So far I have attended two MUNISS conferences, both as a delegate. This will be my first and likely last year attending as a chair, as such I wish everyone a relaxing preparation time and I look forward to seeing you all in April!



# Introduction

From suffragettes who fought for a right to vote all the way to women of today who are fighting for the right to abortion, women have been striving for decades to be seen as equals to the opposite sex, be it at home, school or work. However, gender roles still persist, be it the notion that women should not work due to their traditional roles of housekeepers and caretakers, that they are less efficient or less valuable workers than men or that there is no worth in „investing“ in them long-term, i.e. paying or treating them equally while working, since many will at some point have to take maternity leave due to a pregnancy or multiple. Concerning the matter of parental leave, once again the fault lies in preconceived notions of traditional family relations, as women not only take parental leave more often than men, but longer as well. As such, the gender pay gap, the difference between average gross earnings between men and women in the workplace, has posed some problems in achieving gender equality. While progress has been made in closing the gender pay gap over the past few decades, it still remains a prevalent issue in our society. Therefore, it is the intention of the Commission on the Status of Women to try and find a solution to this problem which has plagued our society for years.

# Glossary

**International Labour Organization (ILO):** An organization under the United Nations which sets international labour standards and promotes proper working conditions („ILO HOMEPAGE“).

**Equal Pay Act (EPA):** A law signed by John F. Kennedy in 1963 prohibiting employers from paying unequal wages to men and women who perform similar work (*Equal Pay Act of 1963*)

**Non-Governmental Organization (NGO):** Task driven organizations that serve a specific cause operating independently of the government (Folger).

**Women’s Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE):** An NGO that supports Muslim women leaders and fights for women’s rights by challenging societal norms and issues (*Our Vision*).

**International Equal Pay Day:** Celebrated on 18th September, the International Equal Pay day aims to bring awareness to the issue of the gender pay gap which persists in our society (*Equal Pay Day*).

**Gender Pay Gap:** The Gender Pay Gap is the average difference between men and women’s gross hourly earnings („Cambridge“).

**Parental leave:** A period of absence which is granted to an employee in order for them to take care of a newborn („Cambridge“).

**Minimum wage:** The minimum amount the employer is required to pay their employees („Cambridge“).

# Issue Explanation

According to the International Law Organization, the issue of pay gaps is mainly prevalent between men and women in the workforce, as for every dollar that a man earns a woman earns 77 cents for the same quality and amount of work („Equal Pay for Work“)

In order to combat such an issue, some countries have enacted laws concerning transparency, gender quotas and representation, however the implementation of such laws varies as in many parts of the world actions towards solving the gender pay gap problem have either stalled or are not being considered at all.

Further fueling these difficulties are different factors such as gender-based discrimination in which women are expected to conform to traditional values, experiencing career interruptions, especially as mothers, and are seen as less efficient workers than their male counterparts.

As of 2024 the global gender pay gap for all 146 countries counted stands at 68.5%, having been surveyed since 2006, the gender pay gap has since improved by 0.1 points. With 93.5% of their gap closed, Iceland continues to be, together with Finland, Norway and Sweden, one of the most progressive countries when it comes to combating the gender pay gap, having more than 80% of their gap closed. Overall, Europe has seen major improvement since 2006, having 75% of its gender pay gap closed, which puts it at the top in the regional rankings. In contrast to this, regions of the Middle East and North Africa are not faring as well, ranking last among the regional rankings, struggling with closing the gap. („Global Gender Gap Report“).

Although significant improvement has been achieved worldwide it is of the utmost importance that the gender pay gap continues to be addressed so that it is eliminated as an issue in our society. On the one side, be it for the betterment of global gender equality or preserving and retaining talent, closing the pay gap would see improvements in increased productivity and inclusion within our society. Aside from this, according to the World Economic Forum, further closing of the gender pay gap would result in the increase of the global GDP by \$12 trillion and grow countries' economic

output by 35% („Drop to the Top“). On the other side, ignoring this challenge would result in lower sales due to equally lower purchasing power of women who have less capital, not to mention the resulting government expenditure on public services and increased poverty rates for women due to lacking retirement savings. Lastly, lower income single parent households can lead to restricted access to education opportunities for children.

Therefore, not only does the gender pay gap affect women, but our children and governments as well.

## Perspectives of Parties Involved

- **Afghanistan:** As of 2024, women in Afghanistan are still prohibited from further education. The Taliban has violated multiple education, employment as well as human rights of women with the recent law on promotion of virtue and prevention of vice preventing them from singing and talking outside of their own homes. Women have also been banned from working for NGOs (Global Gender Gap; „Afghanistan Gender Country Profile“).
- **China:** China has around 68.4% of its gender pay gap closed, meaning, women earn 68,4% of what men do on average. When the People’s Republic of China was founded, under Mao Zedong and his planned-economy, equal pay and work were heavily promoted. However, as China began to transition into a market economy, the pay gap worsened. Nevertheless, laws such as the Labour Law of 1994 and the 2005 Employment Promotion Law try to create transparency and equality within the workforce, still, although these laws persist, their enforcement proves to be quite the challenge for the Republic (Global Gender Gap; Chen).
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** The Democratic Republic of Congo has 60.9% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 140th place in the global rankings. The gap is further widened by traditional gender roles as well as economic factors such as education opportunities (Global Gender Gap).
- **France:** France has 78.1% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 22nd place in the global rankings. In 2019 a new transparency reform was implemented, which requires companies with over 50 employees to regularly report on their wage distribution and the gender pay gap (Global Gender Gap; Palladino).
- **Germany:** Germany has 81% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 7th place in the global rankings. In 2017 the government enacted a transparency legislation titled “Transparency in Wage Structures Act” which requires corporations with over 500 employees to conduct



reports on gender and equal pay within their company (Global Gender Gap).

- **Iceland:** Iceland has 93.5% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 1st place in the global rankings. In 2018 the government put out the first policy in the world which requires companies with more than 25 employees to prove that men and women are paid equally for the same work. This is ensured through a developed job evaluation tool called the “Equal Wage Management Standard” (Global Gender Gap; Wagner).
- **India:** India has 64.1% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 129th place in the global rankings. The government has taken significant action against the gender pay gap, enacting the Minimum Wages Act in 1948 and the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 also ensures that women in rural areas are able to work (Global Gender Gap).
- **Iran:** Iran has 57.9% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 143rd place in the global rankings. In Iran women are expected to stick to their domestic and traditional duties. The NGO WISE is working towards fighting unjust interpretations of the Quran, hoping that women will no longer be discriminated against due to the belief that men are the superior sex (Global Gender Gap).
- **Russia:** As of 2023, Russia’s gender pay gap has been on the rise, with it reaching 49.1% . The issue has only been propelled by the ongoing war in Ukraine and the sanctions that have come from it (Global Gender Gap; Mehrara).
- **United Kingdom:** The United Kingdom has 78.9% of its gender pay gap closed putting it in 14th place in the global rankings. In the UK the gender pay gap is usually larger in high-earning employees and those who are over the age of 40. The United Kingdom has seen a gradual decrease of the gender pay gap (Global Gender Gap).

- **The United States of America:** The United States of America have 74.7% of their gender pay gap closed putting them in 43rd place in the global rankings. Laws such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits gender based wage discrimination and the Lilli Ledbetter fair pay act of 2009 which expands the time frame for suing due to pay discrimination are important steps towards combating the issue of the pay gap however they are limited due to lacking powers which enforce them (Global Gender Gap).

# History of the Topic

Historically speaking, women have always been expected to uphold traditional values. Pre-industrial revolution, women and girls took up domestic roles, taking care of the household and the offspring, being afforded limited education, while the men would go to work to be able to financially support their families. Nonetheless, it is important to note that women at this time were not completely limited to domestic duties, as they could also be found working in the agricultural fields or as artisans.

This system would soon change with the “start” of the Industrial Revolution in the 1760s. Due to higher demand for workers and ever increasing poverty rates, the so-called “Proletariat families” would soon take over as the new family standard, having the women work alongside their husband in order to be able to feed their families. As expected, this change did not mean that women were any closer to becoming equals with the opposite sex, as they were still limited, both in their pay and independence, as any legal business they had would have to be done with the approval of the patriarch of the household. („Kursbuch Geschichte“, 40f.)

Nevertheless, this minuscule taste of freedom inspired many, which resulted in the beginnings of women’s movements in the 18th century, mainly in Europe, but which would eventually spread to the rest of the world, mainly in the 19th and 20th centuries.

During the two world wars, women took up even greater numbers of the workforce as many job spots in factories were left vacant. Their contribution was willed, promoted and even celebrated, as they began to be seen as valuable members of society.

However, after the end of WWII, many women once again returned to their domestic duties, but their will for freedom became even stronger as some decided to stay in the workforce, resulting in feminist movements all across the globe during the post-war period. They began properly working alongside their counterparts, which resulted in many different reactions, some negative, other positive such as the signing of the “Equal Pay Act” by the former president of the United States, John F. Kennedy, which called for

immediate implementation of equal pay among coworkers, regardless of their gender (*Equal Pay Act of 1963*). Many followed afterwards, with Iceland in 2018 being the first country in the world to enforce a policy which would have employers sanctioned if they did not provide equal pay and proof of it for all of their employees (Wagner).

Today, not only is the gender pay gap improving, but women's rights in general as well, even so, our society is still far from achieving perfect equality and freedom for our women, as many issues have still not been fully solved or even addressed.

## Potential Solutions for the issue:

Aside from the International Equal Pay Day, founded in 2020 and celebrated on September 18th, the United Nations has already addressed the gender pay gap through various resolutions, such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, adopted in 1979, with the most recent rework being in 2007, urging signing states to comply with the given obligations of protecting women's rights and furthering their education.

Furthermore, the *Resolution concerning the promotion of gender equality, pay equity and maternity protection*, adopted by the ILO in 2004, calls upon all governments to promote female entrepreneurship, eliminate all gender based discrimination in the workforce and provide all women access to maternity protection.

As these resolutions have been addressed by the UN and its sub branches, so have individual countries undertaken measures to ensure that their own gender pay gap is lowered as much as possible.

The aforementioned policy that Iceland has passed is one of many, requiring companies with over 25 employees to be transparent about the paid wages if they do not wish for penalties, including the transparency *Law on Equal Pay for Men and Women* passed by Germany in 2017, where companies with over 200 employees are required to disclose all information concerning the wage distribution between men and women, the transparency law initiated by the Australian *Workplace Gender Equality Agency* and the agency itself which was founded in 2012 by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act*.

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