

**Committee:** International Labor Organization (ILO)

**Issue:** Promoting Gender and Religious equality in executive positions

**Student Officer:** Katerina Gerantoni

**Position:** President

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates of the International Labor Organization,

My name is Katerina Gerantoni and I am currently attending the 11th grade at the German School of Athens (DSA). During the 4<sup>th</sup> ACGMUN online conference I will have the honor to serve as the President of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and more specifically as the expert chair on the issue of “Promoting Gender and Religious equality in executive positions”. My first MUN experience dates back to 2017 and since then I have served as a delegate, ambassador, ICJ officer and Student officer in several conferences in Greece and abroad.

This study guide serves the purpose of introducing you to the first topic of the ILO’s agenda. However, you are strongly advised to conduct further research on your own, so you are well prepared during the conference. Taking that into account, I would advise you to have a look at the links in the bibliography section, as I think they may be proven very useful. I can guarantee you that this year’s conference will be a wonderful experience for all, if you come thoroughly prepared and actively participate on all days. Lastly, should you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me at: [katerinagerant@gmail.com](mailto:katerinagerant@gmail.com)

I wish you the best of luck with your preparation and look forward to seeing you all during the conference.

Yours truly,

Katerina Gerantoni

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it is no secret that gender equality and religious equality are far from reality. Women are underpaid and underrepresented in executive positions in comparison to their male coworkers. Some of the main reasons behind the constantly growing inequality are based on the wage gap, sexism and religious intolerance. It is a fact that many people are denied access to executive positions due to their gender and religious beliefs.

In 2019 about 48% of women aged 15 and above were in the labor force, whereas nearly 75% of men aged 15 and above were working. Globally, only 41 million (1.5%) men provide unpaid care on a full-time basis, compared to 606 million (21.7%) women.<sup>1</sup> In addition, until 2019 about 43% of working mothers faced maternity discrimination in their workplaces. These statistics clearly depict the existence of sexism in the workplace and its effects on growing inequality rates, due to the fact that women are often denied positions as they are as a “burden” for their employer if they decide to give birth and go on maternity leave.

In recent years it has been noted that even more women pursue higher education worldwide, nevertheless the gender gap in the employment sector remains high. In some occasions, however, the gender gap is still spread among both sexes, despite having obtained a higher education degree. The reasoning behind that is unclear and varies from case to case.

When it comes to religious discrimination, it can happen at any time but especially during the hiring process for job applicants. An employer may misjudge one’s actions to take time away from work for religious reasons leading to another cause of religious discrimination in the workplace. It should be noted that an employer is under no legal obligation, in most UN member states, to automatically give their workers time off for religious holidays as well as time and a place to pray daily. Despite that, the refusal of such requests without a reasonable excuse could be seen as discrimination.

Lastly, one should keep in mind the universal fact that everyone has the right to be treated fairly in a workplace despite their religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability etc. More specifically article 18 of the Universal Declaration of

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<sup>1</sup> “Statistical Overview of Women in Global Workplaces: Catalyst Quick Take.” *Catalyst*, [www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-workforce-global/](http://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-workforce-global/)

Human rights, clearly states that everyone has the right of equal treatment, no matter their beliefs. Hence it is of utmost importance to ameliorate religious and gender-based discrimination in the workplace and in executive positions.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **Gender equality**

Gender equality supports the idea that people of all genders are treated equally and are presented with the same opportunities and obligations.

### **Religious equality**

Religious equality is essentially the equal treatment of all religions in all sectors of everyday life, including judicially.

### **Face veils**

A face veil is a religious garment that is used to cover the head and parts of one's face. Usually, it is worn by women of the Islamic religion. Some examples of a face veil include: The niqab, which covers the whole face except of the eyes. The hijab, which covers the neck and the head, but leaves the rest of one's face clear. The burka, which covers both the body and the face of a woman, and leaves a mesh space in front of the eyes to see through.

### **State religion**

A state religion is used to define the formal endorsement of an official religious body to serve as the state's only official religion.

### **Secularism**

The political philosophy which advocates for the separation between the church, other religious institutions and the state.

### **Executive positions**

In an executive position the person selected is responsible for administrating a project or any activity related to the business.

## Wage gap<sup>2</sup>

The wage gap is a statistic often used as an index describing the status of women's earnings compared to men's earnings. Other comparisons for which the wage gap statistic is needed are those between the earnings of other racial and ethnic minorities to those of white males, since it is a group which generally does not face race- or sex-based discrimination.

## Gender Mainstreaming<sup>3</sup>

Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that takes into account the interests and concerns of both women and men in order to tackle gender inequality. More specifically, the Council of Europe defined the term in 1998 as: “The (re) organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender perspective is integrated into all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.”

## Gender Quota<sup>4</sup>

Gender quotas are essentially internal rules that require a certain percentage of both sexes to be represented in the candidates that are up for discussion for an executive position or any other job position.

## Maternity leave

Maternity leave is the time period a woman should leave from her job some weeks prior to and some weeks after giving birth. The time period varies in different countries, with a global standard period being 12 weeks at least. During that time frame, and if a woman is currently employed, the employer is obliged to pay a certain percentage of her normal wage. Again, the percentage varies in countries worldwide.

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<sup>2</sup> “The Wage Gap.” *Infoplease*, Infoplease, [www.infoplease.com/us/society-culture/gender-sexuality/wage-gap](http://www.infoplease.com/us/society-culture/gender-sexuality/wage-gap)

<sup>3</sup> “What Is Gender Mainstreaming?” *Gender Equality*, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>.

<sup>4</sup> “Gender Quotas.” *Gender Quotas | International IDEA*, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/quotas#:~:text=Gender%20quotas%20at%20this%20stage,that%20are%20up%20for%20discussion>.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Gender wage gap

To begin with, the gender wage gap is calculated in a way according to which different factors like education, type of job, working hours etc. are not taken into account. But it has shown that on a general note, women earn less than men. The exact percentage of the difference is different in every country and continent and in many cases the ethnic background of the men and women results in an even bigger gender wage gap.

The 1957 Treaty of Rome firstly introduced the principle of equal pay for equal work. Yet, efforts to ameliorate the constantly growing gender gap have taken place only in the last decade.

### Reasons behind gender wage gap<sup>5</sup>

First and foremost it should be clear that a closer gender wage gap in a country, does not equal more gender equality. Where a lower gender wage gap is indeed ideal, it has been proven to be caused by women having less pay. Whereas a higher gap between the wages of the genders usually indicates that many women have limited access to jobs or are working part-time jobs.

About 30% of the total gender pay gap can be explained by an overrepresentation of women in relatively low-paying jobs such as care, sales or education. There are still women working in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) sectors, a field that is historically dominated by men. Women in executive positions are statistically very low, meaning that less than 7% of top European companies' Chief executive officers (CEOs) are women. A data provided by Eurostat shows that women in executive positions still face many disadvantages, more specifically they are said to earn about 23% less per hour than their male coworkers.

Last but not least women still face pure discrimination in their workplaces, seeing as if they decide to give birth they would need to take some time off from their jobs while also being paid by their employer. This factor alone makes women less likely to be selected to serve not only in higher executive positions but also to get employed in the first place. In some cases women are even demoted after returning from maternity leave, thus earning even less.

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<sup>5</sup> "Understanding the Gender Pay Gap: Definition and Causes: News: European Parliament." Understanding the Gender Pay Gap: Definition and Causes | News | European Parliament, 31 Jan. 2020, [www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200109STO69925/understanding-the-gender-pay-gap-definition-and-causes](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200109STO69925/understanding-the-gender-pay-gap-definition-and-causes)

## The sustainable development goals (SDGs) and Goal 5: Gender Equality

The sustainable development goals were set by the general assembly in 2015 in order to serve as “the blueprint for the future”. They are 17 in total and each goal is divided in more specific targets. The topic of “Promoting Gender and Religious equality in executive positions” is closely related to goal5: “Gender equality”.



Figure 1 The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs)

Image source: “The Sustainable Development Goals.”

UNICEF Georgia, [www.unicef.org/georgia/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.unicef.org/georgia/sustainable-development-goals)

## Women in politics

The field of politics has been a mainly male dominated field for a long time. Currently there are 14 countries with female leaders. Specifically Taiwan, Germany, Iceland, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, Bangladesh, Namibia, Serbia, Barbados, Gabon, Togo and Lithuania all have women as their acting Prime Ministers. It should be noted that in 9 additional countries the Presidents or Heads of State are women as well. Women held 32.1 % of seats in national parliaments in the EU in 2019. This share has increased since 2003, when women accounted for about one-fifth of members in national parliaments.<sup>6</sup> However, there is still no single EU country where women hold the majority of the parliamentary seats.

Although these numbers may sound revolutionary for the history of feminism, women are still underrepresented in the field of politics and governance. As in many countries there have never been any women in executive governmental positions.

<sup>6</sup> “SDG 5 - Gender Equality.” SDG 5 - Gender Equality - Statistics Explained, May 2020, [www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/SDG\\_5\\_-\\_Gender\\_equality#Leadership\\_positions](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/SDG_5_-_Gender_equality#Leadership_positions)

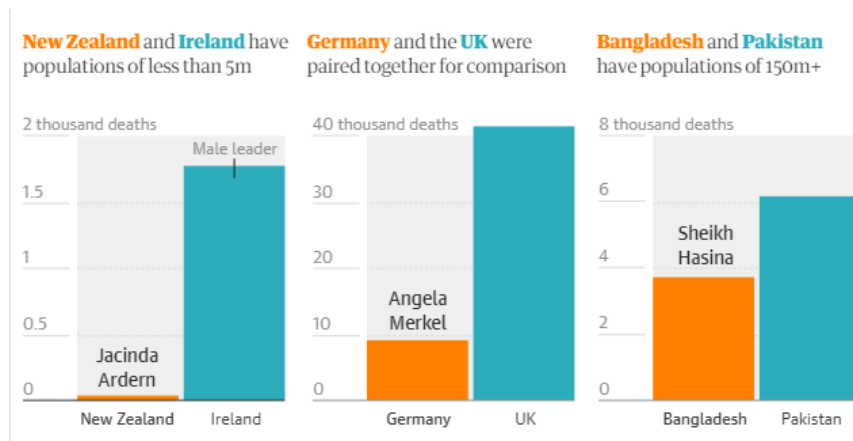


Figure 2: Covid 19 deaths in countries with female leaders until August 20, 2020

Image source: Henley, Jon. "Female-Led Countries Handled Coronavirus Better, Study Suggests." *The Guardian, Guardian News and Media*, 18 Aug. 2020, [www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/female-led-countries-handled-coronavirus-better-study-jacinda-ardern-angela-merkel](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/18/female-led-countries-handled-coronavirus-better-study-jacinda-ardern-angela-merkel)

A common characteristic of women politicians is that they usually tend to follow more democratic ideologies.

Another point that promotes the idea of women in executive governmental positions is the fact that they have been proven to cope best with the Covid 19 pandemic at its early stages (as seen in Figure 2).

### Religious discrimination around the world

Religious discrimination and religious freedom regulations vary from country to country. As the majority of the countries worldwide have signed conventions and treaties condemning religious discrimination, there is no official legal document on a national level that directly encourages such practices. Nevertheless many countries have adopted laws that target specific religious groups by, for instance, banning their religious garments. Additionally, there have been many instances of hate crimes aimed at religious minorities where the state government turned a blind eye on and/or failed to address and condemn.

### The situation in Europe

Despite the vast majority of European states having various laws promoting the freedom of religion and condemning any form of discrimination, including religious discrimination, there are still countries that have adopted laws that rather promote religious discrimination.

In eastern European countries like Hungary and Bulgaria where Christianity is a big part of the local society, there have been several attacks by right-wing extremists

against religious minorities and specifically Jewish and Muslims residents.<sup>7</sup> In these instances it seemed as the local authorities turned a blind eye on the attacks, thus failing to protect the affected citizens. Additionally the French government in light of the Charlie Hebdo incident has recently introduced a legislation with the goal of giving France all the necessary means to fight Islamic radicalism. This legislation however has been strongly criticized for stigmatizing the French Muslim community, which counts more than six million members.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, a multitude of countries has banned the use of religious Muslim headwear. More specifically 7 nations in Europe have banned the burqa, namely Germany, Austria, Denmark, France, Belgium, Latvia, and Bulgaria.

### **The situation in Oceania**

All the counties of the Oceanian continent support the fundamental right of the freedom of religion. Despite the fact that only two countries, Tuvalu and Samoa, have different versions of Christianity as their state religion, almost every other country in Oceania refers to Christianity in their constitution, making it a core principle and religion in the continent.

During the past decade, several violent accidents directly related to religious discrimination have taken place. More specifically in March 2019, the Christchurch mosque shooting took place in New Zealand, counting about 50 victims. The governmental response to this event was to reevaluate gun control laws and impose a limitation on automatic weapons. Another incident took place in December 2017 in Fiji, where vandals damaged a Hindu temple. The governmental response was not enough to finish the investigation. The government of Fiji generally keeps a more passive stance against religious discrimination incidents.

## **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED**

### **Tunisia**

Since the 2014 revaluation of the Constitution Tunisia has adopted one of the most revolutionary laws concerning gender equality and the right of women to work in

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<sup>7</sup> “2017 Report on International Religious Freedom: Hungary.” U.S. Department of State, 2017, [www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/hungary/](http://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/hungary/)

<sup>8</sup> Tidey, Alice. “Here's What You Need to Know about France's New Separatism Law.” Euronews, 9 Dec. 2020, [www.euronews.com/2020/12/09/here-s-what-you-need-to-know-about-france-s-controversial-separatism-law](http://www.euronews.com/2020/12/09/here-s-what-you-need-to-know-about-france-s-controversial-separatism-law)



Asia and is in fact the first ever country of the said continent to adopt such a law. Specifically article 46 of the 2014 constitution states:

“The state commits to protect women’s accrued rights and work to strengthen and develop those rights. The state guarantees the equality of opportunities between women and men to have access to all levels of responsibility in all domains. The state works to attain parity between women and men in elected Assemblies. The state shall take all necessary measures in order to eradicate violence against women”<sup>9</sup>

Although Tunisia still faces issues related to gender equality and gender discrimination, this specific article is a step in the right direction for Tunisia and the Asian continent as a whole.

### **Greece**

For the past ten years, Greece has achieved 52.2/100 points on the gender equality index of the European Union while also being 15.9 points below the EU’s average. With these statistics, Greece been placed last in the EU list and holds this position since 2010, despite having improved in the recent. In 2020 Greece appointed for the first time in history a woman as their President or head of state. Her presidential length will last from 2020 to 2025.

### **The Netherlands<sup>10</sup>**

The Dutch law forbids any discriminatory acts concerning one’s religion, personal beliefs, political opinion, race, temporary/permanent employment contracts or working hours, etc. Another sector of vital importance in Dutch law is the prevention of harassment in the workplace, by the employer. Should the employer fail to protect their employees as well as customers, the affected person reserves the right to contact the legal authorities so as to penalize the employer and/or the harasser. Moreover, the law states all employees should be able to fulfill their religious duties in their workplaces, nevertheless the employer is not obligated to provide them a prayer room in order to do so, since no such law has passed.

### **Belgium**

Belgium is a nation that has faced several terrorist attacks caused by Jihadist groups

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<sup>9</sup> Tunisia’s Constitution of 2014. [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia\\_2014.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> “Anti-Discrimination Laws in The Netherlands.” *L&E Global Knowledge Centre*, 5 Oct. 2020, [knowledge.leglobal.org/anti-discrimination-laws-in-the-netherlands/](https://knowledge.leglobal.org/anti-discrimination-laws-in-the-netherlands/)



Figure 3: Protests against the ban of face veils in universities in Brussels, Belgium

Image source: Daily Sabah. "Thousands Protest against Belgium's College Headscarf Ban Ruling." Daily Sabah, Daily Sabah, 5 July 2020, [www.dailysabah.com/world/europe/thousands-protest-against-belgiums-college-headscarf-ban-ruling](http://www.dailysabah.com/world/europe/thousands-protest-against-belgiums-college-headscarf-ban-ruling)

in the past, many of which have led to the loss of lives. Thus, in July of 2011 a new law passed, which proposed a ban on wearing veils covering one's face in public. This law directly targeted the Belgian Muslim community. One should take into account that the Belgian parliament passed this law by a vote of 149-1 in April 2010. Yet, the anti-Muslimism approach by the Belgian government did not stop there. In June of 2020 another ban was imposed on religious garments in universities. This action was the result of a concerted effort by far-right parties and believers of extreme secularism policies in Belgium to deprive Muslim women of the right to choose how they dress.<sup>11</sup> Despite Belgium's dark past with terrorist attacks both laws serve as a mean of increasing religious discrimination worldwide and especially in the European Union (EU).

### Norway

Norway can be characterized as one of the most Progressive countries in Europe when it comes to gender equality in executive positions. In 2003 they adopted their first gender quota laws making them one of the first countries worldwide to do so nevertheless these laws were fully adopted in the 2006-2008 period. Some would argue that the main reason behind these laws were the percentage of female politicians at that time. These laws carved the path of Norway to achieve a high gender equality rate both in workplaces in general and in executive positions as well as a more equal treatment between men and women. As in 2020 Norway is ranked

<sup>11</sup> Hammouchi, Othman El. "Belgium's Other Racism Problem." *POLITICO*, POLITICO, 23 June 2020, [www.politico.eu/article/belgiums-islamophobia-denial-discrimination-muslim-population/](http://www.politico.eu/article/belgiums-islamophobia-denial-discrimination-muslim-population/)

amongst the highest countries with gender equality in their executive positions making them some of the most important countries in this issue.

### **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)**

Since its establishment in 2010, the UN Women organization has been active in more than 70 countries worldwide. The UN Women is also the leading UN organization for gender equality and women empowerment. Since 2010 they have set the goal to strengthen women's voices, leadership, and political participation in all 193 member states. In order to achieve that, they have been engaging in actions such as but not limited to: Lobbying for constitutional changes, drafting and discussing quota laws, to the education of voter and identification programs.

### **BLOCS EXPECTED**

Bloc one: Countries that support the freedom of religion and advocate for women's rights, typically "western" developed countries like: USA, UK, Germany, The Netherlands, Canada, South Africa, Tunisia, Iceland, and the Scandinavian countries, etc. This bloc could consist of all the members of the European Union with the exception of France and Belgium. Keep in mind that despite some of the aforementioned countries having a state religion, having different religious beliefs does not make one illegal nor a victim of discrimination.

Bloc two: This bloc will consist of countries that are lower on the gender and religious equality index lists. Specifically Less economically developed countries from the African and Asian continents and the pacific where the policies are more conservative. Some of these countries may be Niger, Sudan, Eritrea, Papua New Guinea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan but also China. It should be noted that some of these countries are accused of practicing conversion therapies for one's faith and religion. In this bloc, western countries are also expected to be members. Specifically countries like Belgium and France, which have adopted anti-Muslimism laws exp. banning face-covering veils in universities and workplaces.

### **TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of event</b>
April 1919	Foundation of the ILO
10 December 1948	The General Assembly (GA) adopts the Universal Declaration for Human Rights.

March 1957	The signing of the Rome treaty or EEC firstly introduced the equal pay for equal work principle.
21 July 1960	Sirimavo Bandaranaike becomes Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, making her the first ever woman prime minister in the world.
3 September 1981	The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) was instituted.
25 November 1981	The General Assembly adopts resolution 36/55, thus proclaiming the declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
15-26 July 1985	The World Conference on Women in Nairobi takes place, where the concept of gender mainstreaming first broke openly.
2003	Norway adopts their first-ever gender quota laws
2 July 2010	Formation of the UN Women
1 October 2010	The United Kingdom (UK) introduces the 2010 Equality Act, which inter alia protects the freedom of religion in all sectors.
July 2011	Belgium bans the wearing of veils covering the face in public.
January 2014	Tunisia adopts a new constitution which promotes equal working rights for both men and women
2015	The General Assembly sets the sustainable development goals with the intention of being achieved until 2030.
15 March 2019	The Christchurch mosque shooting takes place in New Zealand leaving 50 victims behind, the vast majority being Muslim.
June 2020	Belgium passes a law which bans religious garments in universities

## RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) <sup>12</sup>

Since its introduction in 1981, this convention now counts more than 185 parties worldwide. Moreover, the CEDAW has been characterized as the basis of all UN Women programs as well as many gender equality and women empowerment laws on a national level. By deciding to follow this convention, its members are

<sup>12</sup> A/RES/34/180 - E - A/RES/34/180 -Desktop, [undocs.org/en/A/RES/34/180](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/34/180).

obligated to work towards the eradication of stereotyped roles for women and men, the elimination of discrimination in employment, ensuring women's equal rights and participation in public life and equality before national and international law.

### **Sustainable development goal number 5: Gender Equality<sup>13</sup>**

The goal "Gender equality" is a very broad goal, thus it has been divided into several smaller targets. More specifically target 5.4 is: "Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate." Another target directly involved in our issue is target 5.5: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life."

These targets have the intention to be fully successful until 2030, just as the sustainable development goals. Although we cannot be sure whether complete gender equality in the workplace and executive positions can be achieved until 2030, the situation is constantly improving. To be exact, by early 2020 the percentage of women holding seats in parliamentary bodies reached 24.9 percent in single or lower houses and 36 percent in deliberative bodies. Moreover, up until 2019, 28 percent of people in executive positions worldwide, were women.

### **Universal Declaration of human rights<sup>14</sup>**

**Article 18:** "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance."

### **Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief<sup>15</sup>**

This Declaration was adopted by the United Nation General Assembly (GA) in November 1981 through resolution 36/55 and states the following:

Article 2 paragraph 1: "No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or belief."

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<sup>13</sup> "Goal 5 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs." *United Nations*, United Nations, [sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5)

<sup>14</sup> "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/#:~:text=Article%2018.,%2C%20practice%2C%20worship%20and%20observance](https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/#:~:text=Article%2018.,%2C%20practice%2C%20worship%20and%20observance)

<sup>15</sup> "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance." *OHCHR*, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ReligionOrBelief.aspx>.

Article 4 paragraph 1: “All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise, and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life.”

### **Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programs in the United Nations system (E/Res/2014/2)<sup>16</sup>**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution marks the last follow-up on this exact topic since 1997 and serves the purpose of introducing gender mainstreaming in the UN member Nations. Specifically, the sub-clauses of clause 6 suggest the following techniques:

“(a) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all its operational mechanisms, inter alia, the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other development frameworks;

(b) Ensuring that managers provide strong leadership and support, within the United Nations system, to advance gender mainstreaming;

(c) Increasing investment in and focus on outputs and outcomes relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(d) Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and reporting so as to allow for system-wide assessment of progress in gender mainstreaming;

(e) Mobilizing and developing sufficient gender expertise for planning, implementation and gender-related resource allocation and tracking;

(f) Mainstreaming gender-responsive planning and budgeting and intensifying the use of gender marker systems, including in the humanitarian program cycle;

(g) Strengthening capacities and using existing resources, including institutions and infrastructure, to assist in the development and application of unified training modules and tools on gender mainstreaming;”

### **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

There have been several attempts on a national level by member states with the help of Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or Intergovernmental

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<sup>16</sup> “United Nations Official Document.” *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E%2FRES%2F2014%2F2](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E%2FRES%2F2014%2F2)

organizations (IGOs). More specifically in countries like Belgium, France, Iceland, Norway, Italy, Germany, Israel, Spain, India and Pakistan public corporations are legally obliged to follow the gender quotas set by their governments. These countries also advocate for gender quota laws also in executive positions and in the boards of directors of these companies.

Nevertheless gender quotas can only be implemented by the country's own jurisdiction on their National sovereignty this means that International organizations like the UN have no jurisdiction on what happens inside of a country.

With that being said, there are no previous attempts on an international level given the fact that no International Organization or non-governmental organization as the jurisdiction to impose gender and religious equality, via quotas and/or other methods, in executive positions. The documents listed above are the closest that an international organization has come in order to solve the issue on an International level.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **Implementation of gender quota laws**

Despite the anti-discrimination and gender equality laws, that a majority of the UN member states have adopted, women are still underrepresented in many working areas. The implementation of gender quota laws will essentially result in equality in the number of workers in a company. With these laws, women will no longer be underrepresented and the gap between the two sexes will eventually decrease to the minimum. As there have been several countries that follow gender quota legislations one can clearly see that such countries are coming closer to eliminating the gender gap in executive positions and in the workplace in general.

### **Gender mainstreaming strategies**

The implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies will not only benefit and improve gender equality in the workplace but also in everyday life. Gender mainstreaming is one of the few long term solutions to gender equality, given the fact that the implementation of such strategies develops and sets the basis for a more equal feature. It should be noted that gender mainstreaming does not only refer to women empowerment and disregards the male population, but rather focuses on developing a framework where both genders can benefit equally from all sectors of society.

### **Implementation of secularism policies**

The ideology of secularism advocates for the official separation of religious institutions and the state. This would mean that in cases where the state is directly connected with the religious institution of religion and therefore religious inequality constantly grows, the implementation of secularism policies will break the tides of the institution and the state, thus resulting in a more accepting environment for



every religion. If implemented correctly, secularism policies will function as a step in the right direction of tackling religious inequality and the stereotypes that lead to it.

One should keep in mind, however, that secularism can cause more harm than good if implemented with the goal of targeting and alienating religious minorities (as seen in the examples of France and Belgium). Secularism policies should focus on firstly eliminating the state religion, in cases where it is the reason behind the discrimination of other religious minorities.

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