



SOCHUM

Delegate's
Study Guide

Welcoming Letter

Distinguished delegates,

This is the first sentence marking what will eventually be one of your most tremendous and challenging academic experiences, where you will have the opportunity to get in touch with international issues, overcome the fear of public speaking and meet incredible people. Here are your chairpersons welcoming you to this edition's SOCHUM committee and hardly trying to figure out a way to be a helping hand throughout the exquisite Lazar Model United Nations journey. Moreover, it is our utmost pleasure to witness your development throughout these four days and we hope that you will get the chance to outdo yourselves, both academically and personally.

As to briefly present ourselves, we are a hard-working, passionate, charismatic and, why not, fiery duo that will not hesitate to show you both our funny and "scary" sides throughout the conference. We will be here to facilitate your work, be a handout when things are going south, stimulate you regardless your MUN experience and offer you constant feedback in order to help you reach your full potential.

For the first timers, we congratulate you for your decision to apply as a delegate to the second edition of LazarMUN and we encourage you to speak out your mind whenever you feel to. Do not let the fear of making mistakes be in your way, we are all here to learn from each other! Strengthen your knowledge of both the topics, prepare your opening speeches, embrace the teamwork and you will do more than fine.

As for some tips in order to make the best out of this conference: stick to your country policy, try to speak freely as much as you can, without reading from a piece of paper or from your laptop, listen carefully to the other delegates and come up with as many points of information as you can, we absolutely love them!

Last but not least, our most precious piece of advice for you would be to enjoy every delightful moment of the conference and to not be permanently focused on the final "destination", because in the end it's the little things that will bring you the best memories!

That being said, we are looking forward to meeting you all in February and we are at your disposal at any time prior to Lazar Model United Nations, so if there is anything that you would like clarified or explained you can contact us both!

Kind Regards,
Alexandru Lumina & Ema Melihov

Introduction to the Committee

The Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee is one of the six main bodies of the United Nations General Assembly. It deals with agenda items relating to a range of social and cultural affairs that are of significance for people all over the world, with a focus on the examination of human rights issues. More specifically, the Third Committee analyses questions relating to “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”. The Third Committee of the GA only releases non-binding resolutions, that is to say it cannot impose action plans and regulations upon states, it can only give suggestions and provide analysis on the matters at hand. Moreover, it collaborates with special rapporteurs and independent experts in order to gather and compile the information necessary to tackle the aforementioned problems.

Topic A: The rights of Indigenous Peoples

•Key terms

Peoples-in this context, it is defined as a distinct identifiable society, a body of persons that share the same culture and traditions, with common language and beliefs.

Indigenous peoples- It generally refers to a population strongly linked to a particular territory, with distinct social, economic and political systems, distinct language, culture and beliefs, that are mainly committed to traditional, non-industrial lifeways. They are seen as the victims of colonization, evolving independently and being subjects to the domination of their late arrivals. They include groups often referred to as tribal peoples, hill tribes, adivasis, janajati, orang asli, aboriginal or native.

Tribal- is an ethnic group, mostly self-sufficient, that has marital relationships with members of another tribes and is in continuous mobility, seeking subsistence economy. Even though most tribal peoples are considered indigenous, there are some who are integrated into the national economy, having a special status acknowledged by their governments (for example the Quechua and Aymara Indians of the Andes, who form the majority rural and agrarian population in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia)

Nomadic- characterizes the communities lacking a fixed habitation, moving permanently from different places with the purpose of obtaining food or finding pasture for livestock. They include hunter-gatherers (the oldest human method of subsistence), pastoralists and

peripatetic nomads (or traders). Today, nomadic activity is very rare, even though many cultures have originally been nomadic.

Sedentism- a transition process that sees a nomadic population settling into a permanent registrable placement that provides all the conditions for a living.

•Overview of the topic

Nowadays, the people who are hit the hardest by livelihood insecurity, poverty and marginalization are those on the economic and political margins. The disparities between the poorest and the wealthiest gradually increased over the years, whereas the poorest are becoming more vulnerable to the new socio-economic and environmental challenges, often facing threats to the access to resources, basic healthcare, political rights or economic well-being. Moreover, the international community has made an unprecedented pledge throughout the Millennium Development Goals (adopted in 2000) to protect the world's poor from the threats of the 21 century, reaffirming the principles of poverty reduction, democratic governance and human rights protection, which have been at the basis of the United Nations system since its establishment in 1945. Yet, there are still some major problems in terms of providing the proper treatment to the indigenous communities.

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. Spread across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants - according to a common definition - of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. Even though that they only represent 5 percent of the world's total population, indigenous peoples constitute more than 15 percent of the global poor. Therefore, indigenous peoples are often considered the poorest sections of society, scoring lower than others in terms of standard of living and general welfare. The life expectancy of indigenous people is as much as 20 years lower than that of their non-indigenous counterparts. Often lacking adequate social protection, healthcare and information, they are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS.

Structural forms of violence and discrimination, as well as the long-running conflicts affecting a number of Asian countries, often hit indigenous women the hardest. The amount of cases including rape, sexual enslavement and murder of indigenous women and girls that have been reported is staggering, yet few have been investigated, with the perpetrators brought to justice. In some cases, their lands are still subject to exploitation and even land grabs without consultation and without consent.

Because of their under-representation in national and local politics, indigenous peoples are also frequently left out of mainstream development efforts and policy-making processes. They share the same interests and problems with the other inhabitants, but their wishes are often ignored during the planning and implementation of development programmes and policies. Indigenous groups are often taken as impediments to the progress of the overall society by the dominant groups and the policymakers.

Conditions of extreme poverty, exclusion and isolation are severe barriers to sustainable and multicultural indigenous educational programmes. The recent move toward community-based education and local control has not, and will probably not, close the gap with the non-indigenous in terms of access to education and educational performance in the foreseeable future. There is, however, a growing awareness at international and national levels of the pressing need to support indigenous peoples' right to education, not only as a moral imperative and legal obligation, but also within the framework of inclusive and sustainable development that strengthens both individual students and whole societies.

•Historical Background

In 1923, Haudenosaunee Chief Deskaheh, a Native American hereditary chief and appointed speaker travelled to Geneva to speak to the League of Nations and defend the right of his people to live under their own laws, on their own land and under their own faith. Even though he was not allowed to speak and returned home in 1925, his vision nourished the generations that followed and the interests in the rights of indigenous peoples gradually increased overtime.

In 1950, concerns about situations of forced labour among “native populations” prompted the International Labour Organization to work on what became, in 1957, Convention No. 107, entitled “Convention Concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and SemiTribal Populations in Independent Countries”. This Treaty was later criticized as assimilationist by the indigenous movement, which had become more visible at the international level in the 1970s. This would eventually lead to the adoption of ILO Convention No. 169 in 1989

The efforts to draft a specific comprehensive instrument that deals with the protection of indigenous peoples worldwide began in 1982, when the Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established by the Economical and Social Committee (ECOSOC), with the mandate of developing a set of minimum standards that would protect indigenous communities. Diminishing the problems faced by these peoples, including discrimination, marginalization, oppression and exploitation was the core target of this new institution, that

was the first step made by the international community in regards to integratig and protecting the indigenou directly. The Working Group submitted a first draft declaration that underlined the rights of indigenous peoples to the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which was later approved in 1994.

The Draft was sent for consideration to the then U.N. Commision on Human Rights for further discussion, but moved very slowly because of concerns expressed by States with regards to some of the pre provisions of the draft declaration, even though, initially, it was considered appropriate to implement. The open-ended working group hoped that the instrument would be adopted by the General Assembly within the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004). Since this did not take place, the mandate of the working group was extended by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights into the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2005-2015). Finally, after many rounds of negotiations, the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted on 13 September 2007, with an overwhelming majority of 144 states in favour and 4 against. Since the adoption of the Declaration, Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada have all reversed their positions and expressed support for the Declaration. Colombia and Samoa have also endorsed the Declaration.

•Current Situation and Stance of Major Actors

Latin America

Latin America's indigenous have made significant progress in reducing poverty and gaining access to basic services. In Peru and Bolivia, for example. about one-third, respectively one-fourth of the indigenous households escaped poverty. Their access to electricity increased with almost 50 percent in countries such as Panama and Peru; the number of educational opportunities made for the benefit of the indigenous throughout Latin America might be the most important accomplishment of the decade.

Even though significant progress has been made, there are still major problems that these communities face everyday. While indigenous peoples represent only 8 percent of the population in Latin America, they make up approximately 14 percent of the poor and 17 percent of the extreme poor. Contrary to what might be expected, today, nearly half of the indigenous peoples live in urban areas. In those particular environments, they tend to be in more precarious and unhealthful conditions, being more vulnerable to natural disasters in

some residents. And in the rural areas, which are still home to most of the indigenous peoples (60 percent in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Panama), they are more disadvantaged and have much lower levels of access to public services.

Africa

The number of indigenous people in Africa is estimated to be around 50 million. Most indigenous peoples are nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. Many of them are still facing multiple challenges, including the dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, forced assimilation into the way of life of the dominant groups, marginalization, poverty and illiteracy.

The challenge to recognize indigenous peoples in national laws and constitutions continues, but there is no doubt that there have been some major achievements, mostly in the last decade: the Republic of Congo in 2011 became the first African country to adopt a specific law on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous populations, The Central African Republic is the first country in Africa to have ratified ILO Convention No. 169 in 2010. Kenya's constitution recognizes historically marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, who included the "peoples' rights" into its body, that serve as a basis for coverage of indigenous peoples.

A major challenge for indigenous peoples in Africa is access to education. The education gap between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples remains critical. Primary school enrollment rates for indigenous children generally are much lower than the national average. In Cameroon, for example, only 1.31 per cent of the indigenous Baka children in the district of Salapoumbé attended primary school in 2006.

The problems of indigenous peoples in Africa extend to the poor conditions where they are usually exposed and their social status and health issues. A recent study conducted by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in the Republic of Congo reports that 41.9 percent of Batwa women giving birth at home are likely to die, compared to 33 percent of women from the dominant Bantu ethnic group. Similarly, the infant mortality rate for home births is estimated to be around 48.8 percent for the Batwa people, compared to 35 percent in the Bantu population.

Asia

Even if indigenous communities enjoy socially legitimate human rights, the lack of formal recognition exacerbates their vulnerability, especially in the context of expanding large-scale land investment, extractive industries and monoculture plantations, all of which have been on the rise in recent years. In addition, the lack of respect of the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in programmes and investments increases the vulnerability and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples in the region. Indigenous women are even more vulnerable than indigenous men and often face 'triple discrimination' not only on

the basis of their ethnicity and socio-economic condition but also on the basis of their gender. Despite the broad international consensus on the important role indigenous women play in eradicating hunger and malnutrition, they still face limitations in the recognition and exercise of their rights. Only a few countries have enacted national laws to protect Indigenous Peoples and an explicit recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights through a dedicated legal, policy and institutional framework is absent in most countries.

Canada

Canada recognizes that key socio-economic indicators for Aboriginal people are unacceptably lower than for non-Aboriginal Canadians. Aboriginal peoples' living standards have improved in the past 50 years, but they do not come close to those of non-Aboriginal people. Life expectancy is lower and illness is more common. In 2000, "life expectancy at birth for the registered Indian population was estimated at 68.9 years for males and 76.6 years for females. This reflects differences of 8.1 years and 5.5 years respectively, from the 2001 Canadian population's life expectancies". Fewer children graduate from high school, and far fewer go on to colleges and universities. Many indigenous communities have poor access to schools.

The Canadian Council on Social Development identified poverty as one of the most pressing problems facing Aboriginal peoples, particularly in cities, where 60 percent of Aboriginal children live below the poverty line. In Winnipeg, 80 percent of inner-city Aboriginal households reported incomes below the poverty line, a much higher percentage than for poor non-Aboriginal families. Approximately 55 percent live in communities where half of the houses are inadequate or sub-standard, manifested in deteriorated units, toxic mould, lack of heating and insulation, and leaking pipes.

United States of America

In the United States of America, the socio-economic conditions for indigenous peoples (Native Americans) had improved significantly in the last years. The most important reason for the improvements was self determination, allowing tribes to break away from the overall pattern of intractable poverty, allowing these communities to have decision-making power in their own lands and to be able to exercise this decision making power efficiently. Despite these trends, the average income of Native Americans is still less than half the average for the United States overall. Almost a quarter of Native Americans and Alaska Natives live under the poverty line in the United States, compared to about 12.5 percent of the total population.

The rates of violence in every age group among Native Americans are higher than those of other ethnicities in the United States. Nearly a third of all Native American victims of violence are aged between 18 and 24. Indigenous women are also particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Native American women, for example, are 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually violated than women in the United States in general.

New Zealand

New Zealand is another country ranking high in global comparisons of human development, but where there exist persistent disparities between Maori and non-Maori in areas such as paid work, economic standard of living, housing, health and justice. Educational improvements have been made as recently as the 1986-1996 period. The proportion of indigenous peoples with a post-school qualification increased from 16.1 per cent in 1986 to 22.6 per cent in 1996. The comparable increase for non-Maori was from 33.3 per cent to 35.5 percent. However, in 1996, a higher proportion of non-Maori had a post-school qualification than a school qualification or no qualification, whereas Maori were more likely to have no qualifications.

With 8,500 prisoners among a national population of 4.5 million, New Zealand ranks as one of the highest jailers in the developed world. But as has been repeatedly highlighted in reports by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the indigenous peoples' component is staggering. While those who identify as Maori make up about 15% of the New Zealand population, the corresponding figure behind bars is more than 50% and, as the most recent data suggests, more than six of every ten Maori prisoner will be back inside within 48 months.

•Legal Framework

1. *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (21 December 1965)* <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>

(The first international document that addressed the problem of discrimination based on race or religion, having a universal scope. The Member States condemned all sorts of racial discrimination and undertook to pursue by all appropriate means a policy of eliminating these acts in all its forms)

2. *International Labour Organization Convention Number 169 (7 June 1989)*

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_COD E:C169

(Acknowledges the obligation of protecting the indigenous peoples', recognising their legitimacy to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic progress, whereas their identities, languages and religious should be maintained and developed. The convention admits that the indigenous peoples are unable to enjoy their fundamental rights in many parts of the world and their laws, values and customs have often been eroded.)

3. Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (13 September 2007)

https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/1/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

(The Declaration is the most comprehensive statement of the rights of indigenous peoples ever developed, giving prominence to collective rights to a degree unprecedented in international human rights law. The main scope of this document is to encourage governments to work alongside indigenous peoples and integrate them into their national economy, in order to solve global issues.)

4. Resolutions Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/general-assembly-resolutions-on-indigenous-peoples.html>

In recent years, the adoption of the multiple resolutions that aimed the integration of the indigenous peoples is the clearest indication that the international community is committing itself to the protection of the individual and collective rights of this particular collectives. Some important documents adopted by the GA include:

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2010-decided to organize a plenary meeting, known as the “World Conference on Indigenous Peoples”. The meeting was an opportunity to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Resolutions regarding the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples: Resolution 66/142 (19 December 2011), Resolution 68/327 (14 September 2015), Resolution 73/156 (17 December 2018)

5. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

(The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in July 2000 as an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. The Permanent Forum has a mandate to:

- Provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council, as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations, through the Council
- Raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system
- Prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues)

6. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In this context, the Commission on Human Rights decided to appoint in 2001 a Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, as part of the system of thematic Special Procedures. In the fulfillment of the mandate, the Special Rapporteur:

- Promotes good practices, including new laws, government programs, and constructive agreements between indigenous peoples and states, to implement international standards concerning the rights of indigenous peoples;
- Reports on the overall human rights situations of indigenous peoples in selected countries;
- Addresses specific cases of alleged violations of the rights of indigenous peoples through communications with Governments and others;
- Conducts or contributes to thematic studies on topics of special importance regarding the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

•Points to be addressed (The goal of the resolution)

1. How can the indigenous peoples be integrated into the national economy?
2. How can the international community take action in order to protect the indigenous peoples' lands and cultures?
3. What is the implication of indigenous communities in the fight against climate change?
4. What are the main problems faced by indigenous peoples?
5. How can the indigenous peoples be integrated in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals?

•Further Research

<https://www.amnesty.org.au/how-it-works/what-are-indigenous-rights/>

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i0838e.pdf>

<https://stories.undp.org/10-things-we-all-should-know-about-indigenous-people>

<https://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/pdf/IDWIP%20Joint%20Statement%20FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD3-6JIUF7M>

https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf

Topic B: Women's Reproductive Rights

- **Overview of the topic**

Since the oldest times, women have continuously been exposed to a plethora of risks and challenges when it came to their fertility and reproductive health. This has brought to the world's attention the need of creating a set of rights that will help, guide and encourage women through their whole reproductive life. The reason for which the focus of reproductive rights has been on protecting women is because for biological and social reasons women are more directly affected than men by decisions with respect to reproduction. Reproductive rights matters are crucially important to women as they affect their mental and physical integrity, their health and sexual autonomy, "their ability to enter and end relationships, their education and job training, their ability to provide for their families, and their ability to negotiate work-family conflicts in institutions organized on the basis of traditional sex-role assumptions".

Briefly, it can be said that women's sexual and reproductive health is related to multiple human rights, including the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to health, the right to privacy, the right to education, and the prohibition of discrimination. Despite these obligations, there is an alarming frequency of violations that take a lot of different forms, from denial or subjecting women's access to sexual health services, to forced sterilization, abortion or even genital mutilation. Violations of women's sexual and reproductive health rights are often deeply engrained in societal values pertaining to women's

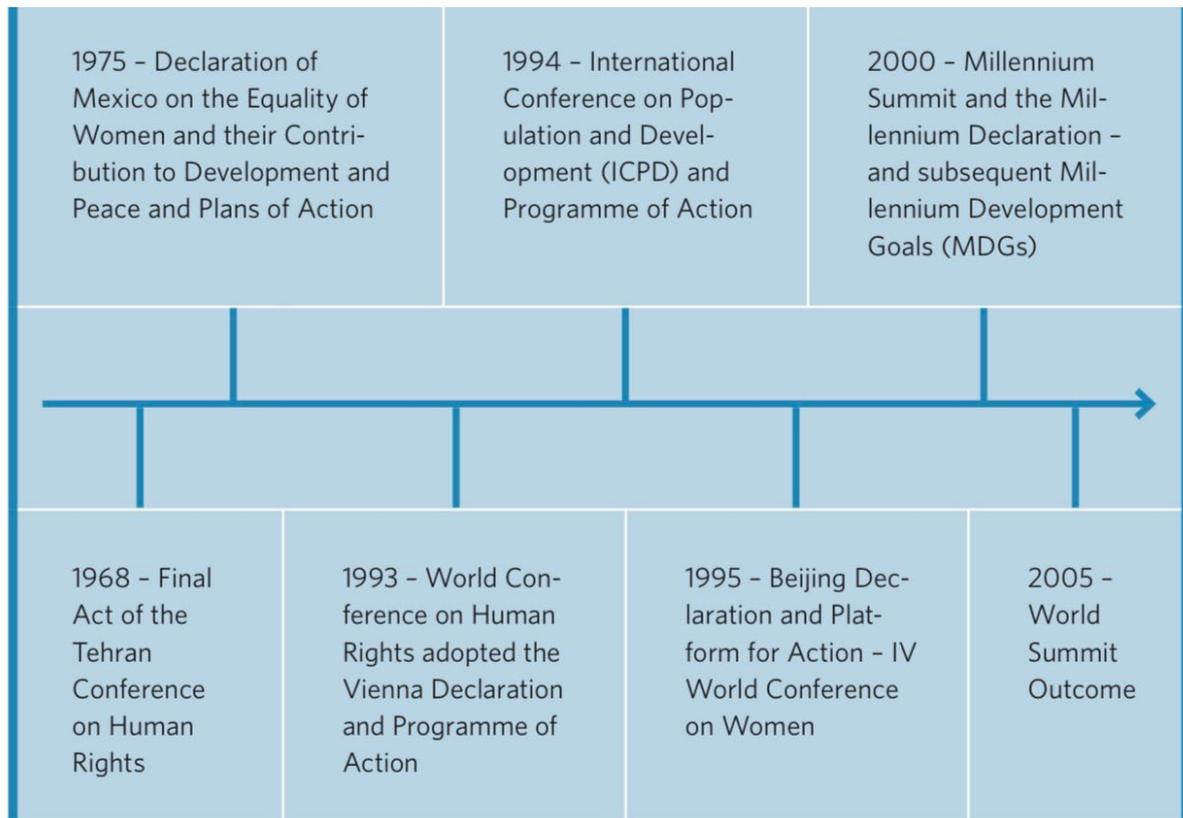
sexuality. Patriarchal concepts of women's roles within the family mean that women are often valued based on their ability to reproduce. Early marriage and pregnancy, or repeated pregnancies spaced too closely together have a devastating impact on women's health with sometimes fatal consequences.

The issues are not theoretical and numerous statistics show an alarming truth: around 287,000 maternal deaths occurred worldwide in 2010, most of them preventable and more than 200 million women are annually estimated to experience life-threatening complications in connection with pregnancy, often leading to serious disability. The affected women are left unable to decide freely on whether to have children and the number and timing of child bearing, and in addition are rendered more at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The United Nations has acknowledged the importance of addressing the situation of women's reproductive rights for more than 50 years now and has taken action towards establishing commitment for protecting women's reproductive rights on a global level, especially given the fact that there are considerable discrepancies between the way reproductive rights are seen and treated in different parts of the world. . For instance, the risk of dying during pregnancy, and when giving birth, for a woman in a developing region is 15 times higher than in developed regions. In total, 99% of maternal deaths occur in the developing world, mainly in Africa and South Asia.

- **Historical Background**

The United Nations addressed a concern regarding population growth in 1954 at the World Population Conference, in Rome, and as soon as the international community became alarmed by it and different solutions and approaches started to rise, another aspect had become the focus of the time: human rights, more specifically reproductive rights. The International Conference on Human Rights held in 1968 in Tehran marked the first step made by UN Member States towards recognizing the explicit link between population control and the advancement of human rights. While the main idea suggested at the Conference in Tehran was that population growth represented a "problem", an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights, the Bucharest World Conference on Population in 1974 highlighted a slightly different approach supporting and promoting the right of all "couples and individuals" to decide upon the number and spacing of their children. A year later, the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico brought a wave of feminist criticism and several women's rights organizations denounced coercive practices in contraceptive research and practices and based the right to reproductive choice on a notion of bodily integrity and control.



The controversy around human rights and their correlation with population growth continued for decades and issues such as abortion or some countries' birth control policies brought the focus entirely on reproductive rights and their importance. During the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, the particular topic of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) was tackled by representatives of the Member States, together with many women's rights activists and organizations that underlined the importance of promoting and protecting the dignity and human rights of women. This resulted in the elaboration of a Programme of Action that addressed the situation of women and their rights, but a notable shift was actually brought a year later at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. Fertility control, safe sex, pregnancy free from coercion, discrimination and violence were now part of the population control talks. The conference ended not only with delegitimizing top-down governmental efforts that ignored or violated women's human rights, but also by recognizing that policies on development in fact could not succeed without ensuring human rights.

After this point, it was clearly understood that sexual and reproductive rights were constituting a cornerstone of sustainable development. Therefore, until early 00's a lot of efforts were made in regards to the implementation of the Programme of Action and many nations made considerable progress. But the international community was soon to realize that

progress was not something that every country achieved, in fact the places where it was most necessary were still having the same issues.

- **Key terms**

Reproductive health - state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. It implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

Family planning - the practice of controlling the number of children one has and the intervals between their births, particularly by means of contraception or voluntary sterilization

Contraception - the deliberate use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy as a consequence of sexual intercourse

Unsafe abortion - procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking minimal medical standards or both

Sexual diseases - various diseases or infections that can be transmitted by direct sexual contact including some (as syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and genital herpes) chiefly spread by sexual means and others (as hepatitis B and AIDS) often contracted by nonsexual means

- **Legal framework**

1. *Declaration on Population by World Leaders (Human Rights Day, 10 December 1966)*

(The Declaration on Population from 1966 is the first document where the issue of family planning is brought into discussion, not individually but rather in relation to the issue of population growth: “The majority of parents desire to have the knowledge and the means to plan their families; that the opportunities to decide the number and spacing of children is a basic human right.”)

2. *Proclamation of Tehran (International Conference on Human Rights, 22 April to 13 May 1968)*

(Family planning is one of the aspects mentioned in the Final Act of the Tehran Conference on Human Rights, marking the first mention of reproductive rights as a set of human rights. Resolution XVIII on the Human Rights Aspects of Family Planning underlines the necessity

for education in regards to each couple's or individual's reproductive activity, and reaffirms their right to decide freely the number and spacing of children.)

3. *Programme of Action (International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994)*: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/event-pdf/PoA_en.pdf

(Perhaps the most important and comprehensive document to tackle reproductive rights, the Programme of Action was the first report where they were given a concrete definition and issues were divided in categories. Discrimination, coercion or violence were some of the concerns related to reproductive rights that were brought to the world's attention and discussed for the first time. The Programme constituted a base for the further development of the reproductive health topic and it was modified several times in the next few years after its release.)

4. *Platform for Action (IV World Conference on Women, 1995)*

(The Platform for Action is a document reaffirming the fundamental principles underlined in the Programme of Action and developing the matter of reproductive rights. It is aimed at achieving greater equality and opportunity for women and it classifies the issues related to reproductive health in eight categories: 1. Safe motherhood, 2. Child and infant health, 3. Family planning, 4. Sexual diseases, 5. Reproductive health problems of elderly women, 6. Control and treatment of the problem caused by abortion, 7. Preventing and treating infertility, 8. Adolescence health.)

5. *United Nations Resolution 2011/1 on Fertility, reproductive health and development*: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/pdf/commission/2011/documents/CPD4_4_Res2011-1b.pdf

(United Nations' Resolution from 2011 also reaffirms the importance of respecting and implementing the Programme of Action on an international level, suggesting Governments to contribute and develop solutions in this regard. The resolution also tackles gender equality and the role of health systems in regards to maternal deaths and other issues related to reproductive health. Moreover, the resolution stresses on education as one of the key issues of the matter, encouraging states to provide sexual education for the youth, so as to reduce the rate of adolescent pregnancies.)

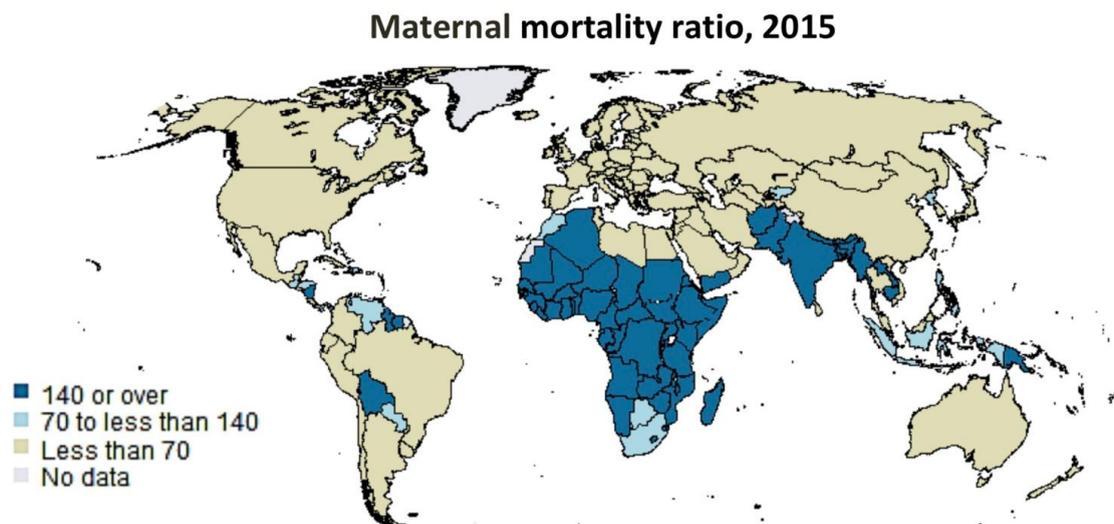
- **Current situation**

Last years have brought a series of events suggesting the idea that the fight for reproductive rights is just starting and that the situation is way worse than what we believed, this being concretely proved by a lot of recent studies and statistics show that reproductive

rights are one of the major concerns of our times. The United Nations has previously announced that without establishing a clear and effective way to achieve the targets related to reproductive rights, it would be impossible to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, as they contain a notable number of clauses relating to this issue. It is now known that developing nations have the biggest problems, as well as the smallest amount of resources for fighting them.

Maternal deaths

According to the World Health Organization (2016), approximately 830 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Although maternal deaths have been declining over the past decades, they remain an issue, particularly in the less developed regions. The maternal mortality ratio—defined as the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births—is highest in sub-Saharan Africa (546 per 100,000 live births), followed by Oceania (187 per 100,000 live births). By comparison, the maternal mortality ratio in the more developed regions is 12 per 100,000 live births.

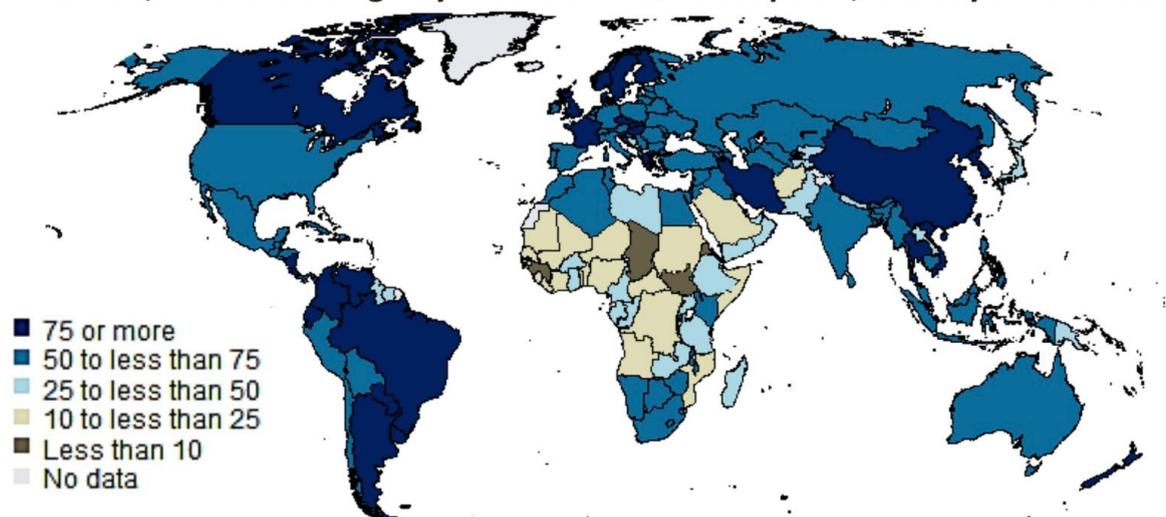


Three out of four Governments (76 per cent) have adopted one or more policy measures in the past five years to reduce the number of newborn or maternal deaths. Africa is the region with the highest share of Governments with at least one measure to address newborn or maternal mortality (100 per cent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (90 per cent) and Asia (75 per cent).

Contraceptive services and family planning

The United Nations Population Division (2017a) estimates that globally in 2017, 63 per cent of women of reproductive age (15-49) who are married or in-union were using some form of contraception. Contraceptive use varies greatly by region, ranging from a low of 36 per cent in Africa to a high of nearly 75 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Various kinds of restrictions on access to contraceptive services exist, including requirements regarding the age and marital status of the person seeking access to contraceptive services, and requirements for parental consent, as well as restrictions on access to emergency contraceptive pills or sterilization.

Percentage of women aged 15 to 49, among those who are married or in a union, who are using any method of contraception, latest year available



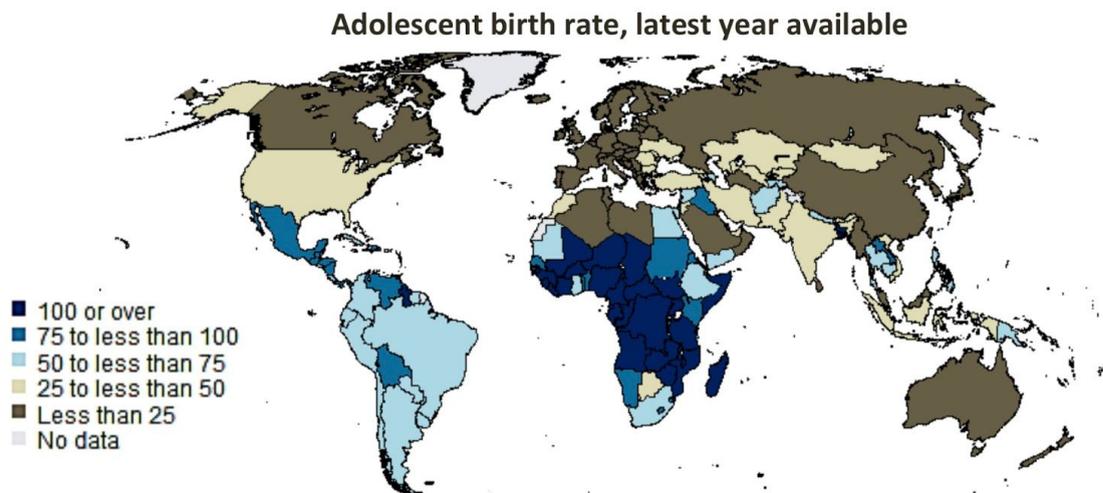
Data source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017b).

Globally, 84 per cent of Governments provide direct support for family planning, meaning that family planning services are provided through government-run facilities or outlets. Although access to family planning has increased in recent decades, the United Nations Population Division (2017a) estimates that, globally, 12 per cent of women of reproductive age have an unmet need for family planning, meaning they want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception. Many of the countries with high levels of unmet need for family planning are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Adolescent childbearing

Women who are very young when they have their first child are more likely to suffer complications during pregnancy and childbirth. They are also at much greater risk of maternal death. Further, the children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and

mortality. Reducing adolescent childbearing through universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services can have important social consequences both for adolescent girls and for the children they bear.



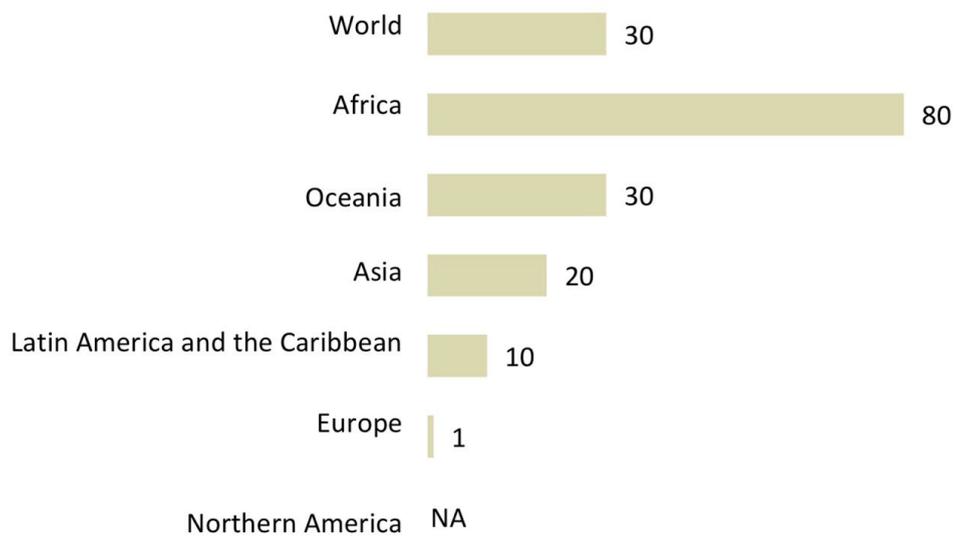
Data source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017c).

Childbearing among adolescents is often highest in the countries or areas where marriage occurs at very young ages. Raising or enforcing the minimum age at marriage can help to reduce the incidence of adolescent births. Child marriage is most common in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Unsafe abortion

In the last decade, even though some countries have restricted their abortion laws and policies (e.g. El Salvador and Nicaragua), there is a tendency towards liberalization in this field. Accurate information on the number of induced abortions performed under unsafe conditions is difficult to obtain, particularly in countries where abortion policies are restrictive, but a study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that approximately 19 million unsafe abortions are conducted each year, performed by ill-trained persons, resulting in an estimated 68,000 deaths per year.

Maternal deaths due to unsafe abortion per 100,000 live births by region, 2008



Data source: World Health Organization (2011).

Worldwide, it is estimated that about 1 in 10 pregnancies is terminated through an unsafe abortion (WHO 2011). The stance of the United Nations in this regard is that “the legal status of abortion is the sovereign right of each nation”, but it is also acknowledged that outlawing abortion does not prevent women from terminating their unwanted pregnancies, at the same time increasing the risk to their health.

- **Points to be addressed**

1. How can the Programme of Action be implemented in less developed nations?
2. What are the measures that can be implemented to reduce unsafe abortion in the regions registering the highest rates?
3. How can the international community achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 which aims to reduce maternal mortality by 2030?
4. Is education a key factor in issues such as unsafe abortion or adolescent pregnancy? How can sexual education be promoted and introduced in developing nations?
5. How can adolescent pregnancy be reduced in regions with a high rate of child marriage?

- **Further research**

<https://reproductiverights.org/sites/default/files/documents/V4Repro%20Rights%20Are%20Human%20Rights%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.unfpa.org/news/reproductive-rights-realized-too-few-women-and-girls>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/wrgs/pages/healthrights.aspx>

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/reproductive-rights>

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NHRIHandbook.pdf>

<http://srhr.org>

https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/fatchr/Final_Act_of_TehranConf.pdf

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/sexual-reproductive-health-rights/>

http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/322275/Action-plan-sexual-reproductive-health.pdf?ua=1

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/women's-reproductive-rights-are-human-rights>