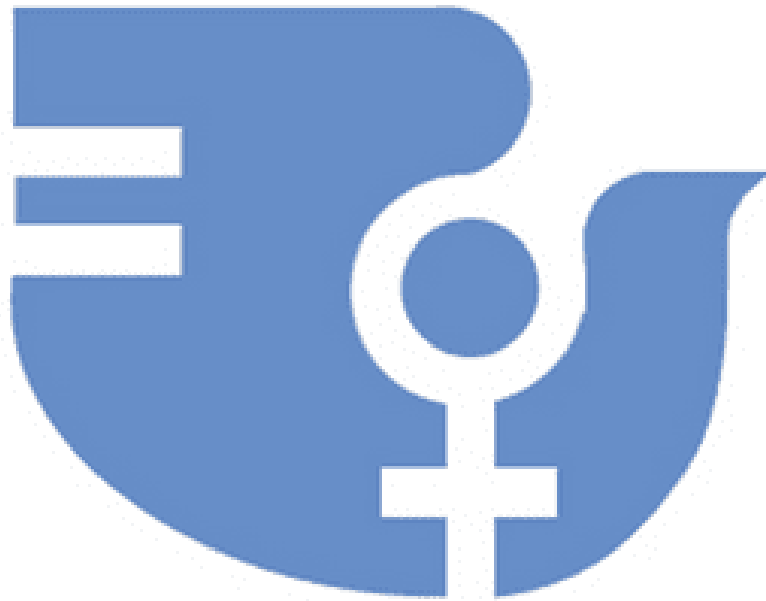


CSW: Commission on the Status of Women



UN Commission on the
Status of Women

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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Delegates, Club and Team Advisors, Parents, and Any Other MUN Folks,

It is my esteemed privilege to welcome you all to Davis Model United Nations Conference XXIII! My name is Brody Andrews, and I am honored to serve as your Secretary-General for the 23rd DMUNC. On the weekend of May 2-3, 2026, delegates will have the opportunity to engage in fruitful debate and cooperation, and hopefully, make lifelong connections.

As a senior at UC Davis, this will be my final DMUNC and my final Model UN Conference. I've been to over 30 conferences in the eight years I've been doing MUN but nothing I've gotten to do in my Model UN career has been as rewarding as DMUNC. Last year I got the opportunity to serve as the Director General of DMUNC XXII and it brought me so much joy to watch a massive number of future leaders bring their imaginative ideas to important debates. Thank you all for the opportunity to watch the magic unfold again, I truly cannot wait to see and be inspired by all of you in May.

I joined MUN my freshman year in high school and I could not be more grateful for the experiences it has brought me. Having been in your position I know how simultaneously nerve-wracking and exciting a MUN weekend can be. Whether this is your first conference or your 100th I'm happy you chose to come to DMUNC. In college, MUN has only become a larger part of my life. Not only has MUN afforded me educational and competitive opportunities, but it has also brought me lasting relationships with incredible people who continue to push and support me every day.

As someone who has done Model UN for so many years, I've had all the classic MUN experiences. Every author's panel, crisis update, closing ceremony celebration, and moderated caucus speech led me to DMUNC and I couldn't be happier. As graduation looms large, I want to remind all of you of the amazing joys that MUN can bring and all of the exciting things college has in store for all of you. When you love MUN, it loves you back. The skills you will improve, friendships you will form, and knowledge you will gain from even one MUN conference is enough to make having to explain what a crisis committee is to your non-MUN friends worth it.

I have had the honor of serving as the Director General of DMUNC XXII and as the crisis director for DMUNC XXI's The Muppets committee and DMUNC XX's Star Wars JCC on the Rebels side. With three DMUNCs and countless more conferences under my belt, I feel confident that my experience and passion will help make DMUNC XXIII a truly memorable conference. However, none of this would be possible without the hard work of the CONSEC and staff members who have worked tirelessly for months to prepare for DMUNC XXIII. Running DMUNC is in *no way* a one person job and I am eternally grateful to every single DMUNC staff member. My greatest thanks goes to my Director General Mae Tyson who has stepped up at every turn in extraordinary ways. Thank you Mae, CONSEC, head chairs, crisis directors, and all the DMUNC staff.

Delegates, we have been planning this weekend since August of 2025 and we're so excited for you to enjoy it. I encourage you to read through your committee background guides thoroughly and formulate collaborative resolutions. I look forward to the thought-provoking ideas that each of you will bring forth to your respective committees. Good luck! We truly can't wait to share this with you.

Sincerely,

Brody Andrews | Secretary-General

Davis Model United Nations Conference XXIII

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LETTER FROM THE HEAD CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

It is my great honor to welcome you to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at this year's conference. I am truly excited to serve as your Head Chair and to guide discussion on two timely and impactful topics that address women's rights in both digital spaces and humanitarian crises. I hope that as you read through this background guide, you find the context, guiding questions, and suggested areas of focus helpful as you begin preparing your position papers.

Topics such as gender inequality, online harassment, reproductive healthcare, conflict, and humanitarian crises directly affect millions of people around the world. Discussions may touch on injustice, violence, and discrimination, and it is essential that all delegates approach these conversations with empathy, maturity, and respect. There will be zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, harassment, or disrespect within this committee space. While debate and competition are natural parts of Model United Nations, I encourage you to challenge one another respectfully and use diplomacy to bring out the strongest ideas.

I strongly encourage all delegates to thoroughly review this topic guide and to conduct further research specific to your assigned country, including its policies, cultural context, and international stance. Strong preparation will allow for richer debate and more effective resolutions.

Lastly, remember to enjoy the experience. Model UN is a space to grow as a speaker, negotiator, and global citizen. Awards are based not only on individual performance, but on collaboration, leadership, and contributions toward viable solutions. Support one another, engage thoughtfully, and strive to make this committee both productive and welcoming for everyone involved. I wish you the best of luck throughout the conference, and I look forward to seeing your dedication, diplomacy, and innovative thinking come to life.

Warm regards,

Jennifer Nguyen | *Head Chair*

INTRODUCTION

TOPIC A

Spanning from the 20th century to today, the Digital Age has reshaped how societies learn, work, and communicate. While technological innovation has opened pathways for economic growth and global connection, it has also deepened existing inequalities. Across many regions, unequal access to digital tools and education leaves women disproportionately excluded from opportunities that technology can offer. Women's access to the Internet and mobile phones are drastically disadvantaged, making up to only 85% of men on average, leaving 1.7 billion women without access to the Internet (Wacjman). These divides are not solely the result of economic barriers, but also stem from long-standing patriarchal norms that restrict women's technological participation and digital autonomy.

This digital gender gap manifests in both access and skills. In numerous countries, women are 25% less likely than men to know how to use information and communication technologies (ICT) for basic tasks such as simple spreadsheet formulas (Global Education Monitoring Report). These disparities widen even further in advanced fields. Despite the rapid influence of artificial intelligence, women make up only 12% of AI researchers, limiting diverse perspectives in the development of emerging technologies (Simonite). Corporations at the head of technological advances similarly face the lack of diversity and gender ratio, for example, at Google, only 25.9 percent of technical roles are filled by women (Statista Research Department). Such inequalities contribute to persistent underrepresentation of women in STEM and technical professions, reinforcing stereotypes about gendered roles in the digital workforce.

Beyond access and representation, digital spaces also pose significant risks. Online platforms have increasingly become environments where gender-based violence and discrimination are amplified. Worldwide, up to 58 percent of women and girls report being targeted by violence online, ranging from harassment and hate speech to cyberstalking, doxxing, extortion, and the non-consensual sharing of images (United Nations). Newer threats, such as AI-generated abuse, deepfakes, and algorithmic gender bias, further endanger women's safety and undermine their credibility in public discourse.

These challenges are intensified by harmful online narratives, such as misogynistic influencers, "manosphere" commentary, and conservative digital movements that reinforce traditional gender roles (McCullough). Social media algorithms often amplify this content, worsening portrayals of women and shaping public attitudes in ways that diminish their voices. As digital technologies continue to expand into every aspect of life, addressing gender inequality in the digital age becomes essential to ensure that global digitalization is inclusive, equitable, and safe for all.

TOPIC B

Armed conflicts, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks disrupt entire health systems. They destroy facilities, displace communities, and limit access to lifesaving care. In these unstable environments, the people most affected are often those with the least protection: adolescent girls and young women, pregnant women, and children (Okeke). Healthcare becomes difficult, sometimes impossible, to access as hospitals collapse, supply chains break down, and medical personnel flee areas of danger. Estimated to 840 million globally, it has been reported that 1 in 3 women have experienced partner or sexual violence during their lifetime, this figure that increases significantly in conflict zones (World Health Organization). Yet in 2015 only 0.5% of humanitarian funding went to gender-based violence support (UN Women).

A major concern in humanitarian crises is the steep decline in maternal, neonatal, and reproductive healthcare. Sixty percent of preventable maternal mortality occurs in settings of conflict, displacement, or natural disasters, highlighting the deadly consequences of inaccessible care. Every day, 507 women and adolescent girls die from pregnancy and childbirth complications in emergency settings, often because they cannot reach prenatal care, skilled birth attendants, or emergency obstetric services (UN Women). In South Sudan, for example, fewer than 20% of births are attended by skilled healthcare personnel, contributing to one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates (Okeke). Access to contraception, and safe post-abortion care also sharply decreases, leaving women with little control over their reproductive health and exposing them to further harm. In refugee camps in sub-Saharan Africa, only 30% of pregnant women receive the recommended four antenatal visits, demonstrating how displacement dramatically lowers even basic standards of care (Okeke). These absences produce consequences as children face threats of malnutrition, disease outbreaks, and long-term developmental delays.

Crises also magnify gendered economic and social inequalities. Women—overrepresented in agriculture and informal labor—face severe economic losses when these sectors collapse. In the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, over 70% of those who died in one Indonesian province were women, reflecting both social vulnerability and cultural barriers to mobility. After the 2015 Nepal earthquake, 2 million women and girls of reproductive age were affected, including 126,000 pregnant women requiring urgent health services (UN Women). Natural disasters often force women to make dangerous sacrifices: eating less so children can eat, dropping out of work to provide care, or, in extreme cases, families resorting to child marriage as an economic survival strategy (UN Women). These intersecting risks demonstrate how equitable healthcare access is a medical necessity and a protection against long-term social and gender inequality.

KEY TERMS

Digital Gender Divide: The gap between men and women in access to digital technologies, internet use, and digital literacy, often caused by systemic inequalities.

Online Gender-Based Violence: Any act of gender-based violence committed, assisted, or amplified by digital technologies—such as cyberstalking, doxxing, image-based abuse, threats, and misogynistic harassment.

Image-Based Sexual Abuse: The non-consensual creation, distribution, or threat of sharing intimate images (e.g., revenge porn)—a form of digital violence disproportionately affecting women.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): People forced to flee their homes due to conflict or disaster but who remain within their country's borders, often lacking stable access to healthcare and protection.

Maternal Mortality Ratio: The number of women who die from pregnancy- or childbirth-related causes per 100,000 live births—a key indicator of health system stability.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at individuals based on gender, including sexual violence, intimate partner abuse, and exploitation—heightened in crises due to instability.

Mobile Health Clinics: Portable medical units deployed to conflict zones or disaster areas to deliver essential healthcare where infrastructure is damaged or inaccessible.

Topic A: Gender Inequality in the Digital Age

Historical Context

The Rise of the Internet and the World Wide Web (1990s)

The public launch and global spread of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s transformed how information is shared, consumed, and created. However, because technology industries were historically dominated by men, early digital spaces were designed within patriarchal assumptions. As a result, digital tools, platform policies, and early online cultures often reflected male-centered perspectives, leaving women and marginalized groups underrepresented and more vulnerable to discrimination and harassment (Misa).

Hunter Moore and the Rise of Revenge Porn — *Is Anyone Up?* (2010)

In 2010, the website *Is Anyone Up?*, operated by Hunter Moore, became infamous for hosting non-consensual nude images, doxxing victims, and encouraging online harassment—often targeting young women (Vice). The site demonstrated how the Internet could be weaponized to extort, humiliate, and stalk victims, many of whom had their private images stolen through hacking. This incident became one of the earliest mainstream examples of “revenge porn,” exposing the lack of legal protections for victims and revealing how digital platforms, when unregulated, reinforce patriarchal power and normalize abuse against women.

Social Media Feminist Activism and Digital Resistance (#MeToo and More) (2017–Present)

Originated in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a social activist to empower young women of color in face of sexual abuse, the #MeToo movement went viral in 2017, marking a turning point in online feminist activism. Social media—across multiple platforms—allowed millions of women to share experiences of sexual harassment and assault, challenging cultures of silence across industries. This movement faced criticism by people disregarding and making light of the experiences and survivors had to face further cyber-attacks and harassment. Nevertheless it became a tool for empowerment, collective action, resistance to systemic gender inequality and continues to have a lasting impact on social media activism (Wang).

Gender Bias in Digital Design and AI Technologies (2010s–Present)

As artificial intelligence, automation, and voice assistants became widespread in the 2010s, research revealed that many technologies reproduced gender stereotypes. Female-voiced assistants like Siri and Alexa have been popularized and aids to reinforce ideas of women as submissive or helpful (Danielescu). On the other hand, large language models frequently displayed sexist or misogynistic biases learned from training data (Gross). Because women remain underrepresented in AI development and STEM fields more broadly, these biases reflect structural inequalities in who designs and controls the digital world. This embeds discrimination directly into technology, shaping how millions of users interact with digital tools every day.

COVID-19 and the Digital Gender Backslide (2020–2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically widened gender inequalities in digital and economic spaces. In September 2020 alone, 865,000 women left the U.S. workforce—four times more than men, as caregiving responsibilities intensified. Within the tech industry, 47% of women reported career delays, and 25% considered leaving the workforce entirely, while men received promotions at three times the rate of women (Women Tech Council). Although remote work eventually created long-term opportunities for flexibility, the immediate impact of the pandemic highlighted how crises deepen gender divides and push women further out of the digital economy.

The Rise of the Manosphere and Digital Misogyny (2020s)

The 2020s saw the explosion of online “manosphere” communities, conservative influencers, and misogynistic commentary that targeted women with harmful stereotypes. Platforms amplified content promoting “traditional roles,” victim-blaming, or anti-feminist messaging, reaching millions of young men and boys (Carmo). This digital ecosystem contributed to widespread misinformation about gender, normalized harassment, and shaped public attitudes in ways that undermined women’s safety and credibility. These influences demonstrated how modern social media algorithms often reward provocative, harmful narratives—further entrenching gender inequality in the digital sphere.

Past U.N Involvement

The Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action (1995)

Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) is considered the most ambitious global blueprint for achieving gender equality. It introduced 12 critical areas of concern including “Women and the Media,” explicitly recognizing how media systems perpetuate stereotypes and marginalize women’s voices. Although created before the digital age took off, the BPfA laid the groundwork for understanding how emerging technologies can reinforce patriarchal norms, enabling issues such as online harassment, victim blaming, and exclusion of marginalized groups. A follow-up Political Declaration in 2000 reaffirmed its commitments (UN Women).

Commission on the Status of Women – CSW 67 (2023)

CSW 67 focused on “Innovation, technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality” (UN Women). It directly addressed how digital spaces reproduce gender discrimination, including online violence, cyberstalking, revenge porn, and algorithmic bias that harms women and marginalized groups. Member states identified challenges such as male-dominated tech industries, unequal access to digital resources, and the feminization of AI assistants. The session emphasized the need for digital safety, inclusive tech design, and regulation of online harms.

Generation Equality Forum – Paris (2021)

Co-hosted by UN Women and the Governments of France and Mexico, the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) launched the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality (UN Women). This initiative recognized how digital platforms can simultaneously empower women and amplify misogynistic abuse, revenge porn, and gendered disinformation. The Forum mobilized financial commitments to close the digital gender divide, address tech-enabled gender-based violence, and promote women’s leadership in STEM and AI development—acknowledging that patriarchal structures still shape technology design.

UN Efforts Against Online Gender-Based Violence (2000s–Present)

Since the 2000s, the UN has issued multiple resolutions and campaigns addressing cyber-harassment, revenge porn, digital stalking, and online hate speech targeting women (UNGA, UN Women). Through frameworks like the UNiTE campaign (16 Days of Activism), UNESCO digital literacy initiatives, and the UNDP Digital Strategy, the UN emphasizes how patriarchal digital infrastructures enable harassment, non-consensual intimate image distribution, and victim blaming.

Topic B: Equitable Access to Healthcare in Conflict and Humanitarian Crises

Historical Context

The Yugoslav Wars and Their Lasting Healthcare Disruption (1991–2001)

The breakup of Yugoslavia severely disrupted what had once been a relatively equitable, universal health-care system, leading to widening gaps in access to care—especially for vulnerable groups, including women (Kunitz). As the economy collapsed and war destroyed infrastructure, medical supplies became scarce, maternal and child health services weakened, and preventive care declined, causing infant mortality to rise again and leaving many women without reliable prenatal or reproductive care. Displacement and the targeting of civilians further limited women’s ability to reach hospitals or receive essential services. After the war, new costs created additional financial barriers, meaning that poorer households and marginalized women faced even greater obstacles to equitable healthcare.

The Congo Civil War (1998–2003)

During the Congo civil war, women bore a disproportionate share of the humanitarian consequences, as conflict-driven displacement and the collapse of essential services deepened gendered vulnerabilities. In December 1998, nearly 250,000 people—many of them women and children—were forced to flee into forests, where they remained for months without access to aid (UN Women). Health assessments conducted in May 1999 revealed emergency-level mortality rates more than five times higher than normal, reflecting both the violence and the severe lack of food, shelter, and healthcare. Broader conflict data show that women made up a quarter of direct conflict-related deaths in 2000, with 25,000 women aged 15–29 dying from war-related causes that year alone. In eastern DRC between 1998 and 2001, an estimated 2.5 million excess deaths occurred, the vast majority from disease and malnutrition rather than direct violence, and 40% of household-reported violent deaths were women and children, highlighting the acute gendered impact of conflict on health, safety, and survival (UN Women).

Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (2014–2016)

During the West African Ebola outbreak, women faced severe forms of stigma that deeply limited their access to care. Many women avoided health facilities altogether because they feared being infected or judged as carriers of the virus, while health workers themselves—who were dying at high rates due to occupational exposure—were also stigmatized, further eroding trust in the system. Pregnant women were affected the most. Since childbirth involves significant contact with bodily fluids, many were refused essential services, increasing

their vulnerability. The overall mortality rate of Ebola in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea reached 74%, but among pregnant women, fatality rates rose above 84%, with almost no fetal survival reported across multiple studies (Strong).

The COVID-19 Pandemic (2020–2022)

COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates preexisting inequalities faced by forcibly displaced people by amplifying vulnerabilities related to health, livelihoods, education, and safety. Refugee and IDP communities are often crowded, under-resourced, with limited access to healthcare making pandemic-related disruptions intensify. Displaced women are disproportionately burdened with unpaid care work, face greater obstacles to earning income or educating girls, and may turn to negative coping mechanisms such as early marriage or exploitation (Cone). Meanwhile, sexual and reproductive health services are often interrupted, hygiene and sanitation infrastructure remains inadequate (hindering basic COVID prevention), and movement restrictions deeply increase the risk of gender-based violence including domestic abuse.

The War in Ukraine (2022–Present)

The war in Ukraine has had a severe impact on sexual and reproductive health. Conflict and displacement have disrupted healthcare systems, leaving pregnant people, surrogate mothers, and newborns with limited access to essential medical care. Maternal health services, contraception, abortion care, and post-sexual-violence support have been severely restricted, increasing risks of complications, unplanned pregnancies, and untreated trauma. The destruction of hospitals and clinics, combined with population displacement, has made it extremely difficult for vulnerable groups to obtain timely and safe care. Overall, the war has created urgent health crises for women and other vulnerable populations, compounding the dangers of pregnancy, childbirth, and reproductive health during conflict (Kismödi).

Past UN Involvements

In Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp, UN Women operates the largest female-focused cash-for-work program, providing 164 jobs daily in a context where most other opportunities primarily target men. Through Oasis Centres and safe spaces, over 16,000 women and community members receive access to income opportunities, education, and psychosocial support.

In Cameroon, UN Women created eight Women Cohesion Spaces serving refugees, internally displaced women, and survivors of Boko Haram. These safe havens provide psychosocial care, economic kits, cash transfers, and skills training to help women rebuild livelihoods in fragile environments.

During the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, UN Women coordinated gender-integrated response efforts by supporting sex-disaggregated data collection, training health workers, and partnering with local radio and traditional leaders to raise awareness. They also assisted women economically impacted by market closures in Liberia and Sierra Leone, working with governments to restore livelihoods and reduce gender inequalities heightened by the crisis.

Following Nepal's 2015 earthquake, UN Women established women-run multi-purpose centers and information hubs that supported over 42,000 affected women, including widows, disabled women, and Dalit women. These centers provided trauma counselling, legal referrals, livelihood information, and community-based awareness campaigns.

After the 2012 Fiji floods, a UN Women gender review revealed gaps in the national disaster response. This led to extensive gender-focused training, the creation of Standard Operating Procedures for GBV in emergencies, and the development of Guidelines for Evacuation Centers to ensure women's protection in future disasters.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER Topic A

Q1: What policies or regulations could governments and tech companies implement to reduce online gender-based violence (e.g., cyberstalking, revenge porn, harassment)?

Q2: How can social media activism and digital literacy programs empower women and marginalized groups in digital spaces?

Q3: To what extent should international organizations like the UN enforce gender-inclusive practices in AI, digital platforms, and media industries?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER Topic B

Q1: How can humanitarian programs effectively address gender-based violence and provide psychosocial support in emergency settings?

Q2: To what extent should cash-for-work programs, mobile clinics, and safe spaces be prioritized for women and vulnerable groups in crisis zones?

Q3: How can international frameworks be strengthened to protect women's health rights during conflicts and disasters?

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