



JAPAN
METROPOLITAN
MODEL
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Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

Background Guide Topic:
Solving Domestic Violence
Caused by COVID-19



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Director's Note

Dear Delegates,

Thank you for applying for the Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations. My name is Lina Domukai, and I will be directing the Economic and Financial Affairs Council. In this committee, we will be discussing domestic violence caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I am currently a second year student attending Senzoku Gakuen High School. I have lived abroad for seven years. I am excited to lead this committee and hear various ideas about this topic.

My first experience with MUN was five years ago. In my first ever conference, I was overwhelmed by the active discussions performed by the more experienced delegates. I began to feel that I did not have the confidence nor the experience to be able to participate in the conference and felt intimidated by the other delegates. I became reluctant to attend conferences. In the following year, knowing how conferences work, I was able to gradually feel the excitement of attending conferences. Two years ago, I had the privilege to attend a conference in New York and engage in other conferences as a member of the staff.

Although it can be intimidating to speak in front of a large crowd, gathering information on a topic and knowing your nation's stances well will boost your confidence. I wish for delegates to step outside their comfort zone for a meaningful experience. This year's topic on domestic violence caused by COVID-19 is a contemporary issue. Although it may seem difficult, as there is less historical information published regarding this topic, it creates an opportunity for delegates to come up with new and unique ideas.

Finally, I am looking forward to an active conference with novel and unique ideas, rewarding hard-working delegates with new skills and unforgettable experiences. I wish you the very best.

Sincerely,



Lina Domukai
Director the Economic and Financial Affairs Council
Senzoku Gakuen Model United Nations Club
Japan Metropolitan Model United Nations 2020

Introduction

Since the Coronavirus outbreak began, there has been a major increase in domestic violence cases reported globally, and the United Nations (UN) is highly concerned about this rapid escalation. Domestic violence is not just a recent problem but has been continuously addressed at global conferences. The UN believes that solutions to combat the occurrence of domestic violence due to coronavirus (COVID-19) must be issued promptly for the safety and human rights of all people.

The vast majority of domestic violence victims are women. "It is estimated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence committed by an intimate partner, or sexual violence committed by a non-partner at some point in their lives."¹ Because eliminating gender inequality is the fifth goal of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), delegations are recommended to keep these goals in mind as well when researching current cases of domestic violence.

Income affects many cases of domestic violence as well. Low-income families are significantly more likely to have to contend with domestic violence, as poverty can act

¹ The United Nations, "Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" 2019, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/> Accessed 12 Aug. 2019.

² DOMESTIC VIOLENCE and COVID-19. (2020, May 6). Retrieved November 1, 2020, from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/domestic-violence-and-covid-19>
Isham, L., & Bradbury-Jones, C. (2020). The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence. Retrieved November 1, 2020, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/jocn.15296>

as a fuelling factor in this type of conflict. Income support, as it is a major factor regarding domestic violence, should be a topic to focus on when thinking about this topic.

History of the Committee

After the The Paris Treaty was established, the European Coal and Steel Community first started off (ECSC) for the purpose of a market for coal and steel and was founded in 1952. This was the first treaty to be signed upon many European countries until its expiration in 2002. Since the establishment of the ECSC, many summits were held amongst European countries and In 1974, the European Council was created with the intention of establishing an informal forum for discussion between heads of state or government. ECOFIN is a Council of the European Union and is a council, responsible for EU policy in economic policy, taxation issues and the regulation of financial services. Ecofin is also in charge of EU's annual budget and takes care of the legal aspects of the Euro.

Current Situation

Research ² has shown that domestic violence spikes when households are

UN Secretary-General's policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on women. (2020). Retrieved November 01, 2020, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>
EVAW COVID-19 briefs. (2020). Retrieved November 01, 2020, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/series-evaw-covid-19-briefs>
COVID-19: Emerging gender data and why it matters. (2020, June 26). Retrieved November 01, 2020, from

placed under restriction and control. A variety of factors contribute to both the physical and psychological health risks including isolation and loneliness, the closure of many schools and businesses, economic vulnerability, and job losses.

Many women are trapped at home with their abusers, having nowhere to seek safety due to lockdowns during this pandemic. Women are in special need to be looked after and taken care of, as they are at a heightened risk of violence. Being stuck under the same roof as the abuser, it becomes more and more difficult for women to reach out for help to the police. The situation inside the house makes the victims more anxious. Moreover, domestic violence is not a largely visible problem from the perspective of police. Therefore, victims forced to stay inside the house have nowhere to expose their concerns and suffering.

As reported domestic violence cases are on the rise, more domestic violence shelters are urging help. In some countries, violence reports and emergency calls have risen up to 25 percent since social distancing was carried out. There is an urgent need to enlarge the space for domestic violence shelters in this situation where the number of people seeking help is growing day by day.

Moreover, medical facilities and organizations are in need of support as well. During the pandemic, specialists such as therapists, advocates, and of course, medical staff, are more crucial than ever. They provide support and care for victims, understanding their danger and

fear. Women's advocate groups seek ways to help abused women access help without the notice of their abuser. However, some people are not able to access refuges due to a lack of financial independence and other circumstances. This highlights the need to provide different types of support and to recognize that currently many people are simply not able to access help or care whilst social restrictions are in place and, which has an impact on their safety and health. It is necessary to come up with different services to make available to victims who wish to call for help without difficulty. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that reported cases of violence are known to be a much smaller percentage than of actual incidents, meaning that there are far more incidents that we just do not take the notion of. Encouraging the reporting of domestic violence should also be a priority.

Domestic violence caused by COVID-19 is not something people pay as much attention to, given the urgency of the medical response. However, the situation cannot get better by ignoring the issue.

Subtopics

Gender

Cultures around the world introduce different gender standards and legal protection. These differences create more or fewer cases of domestic violence. Committee members should be aware of the cultural norms of the country they represent. Different regions might call for different action to be taken. Policy proposals and rejections should be based on a country's

standard. Some example countries are selected to demonstrate variables between policy.

Iceland

Iceland is rated the world's most gender gap free country³. However, two women were purportedly killed by family individuals within weeks of the country's halfway lockdown. This is a critical spike for a nation of 360,000. Moreover, because cases reported often exclude mental abuses, there is a higher chance that more women are experiencing domestic violence than shown cases. Thus, Iceland, despite being a country that respects women's rights, is struggling to reduce domestic violence cases caused by increased time at home and lockdowns during the pandemic.

Thailand

According to studies, 22.9% of women in urban areas of Thailand have reported physical violence. The country's pre corona domestic violence cases compared to other countries was average. COVID-19 however is making domestic violence cases rise sharply within the country⁴. For instance, recently a⁵ woman who was physically assaulted before the virus filed a divorce with her husband. However, before she could separate with her husband Thailand went into lockdown, escalating the number of his beatings and threats. Cases like this are increasing in Thailand, therefore, COVID-19 has risen its cases of domestic violence.

³ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/social-policy-and-society/article/mothering-and-gender-equality-in-iceland-irreconcilable-opposites/A4B122C4F3775312724E1D178976C>

⁴ <https://th.boell.org/en/2020/07/01/covid-19-domestic-violence>

⁵ <https://www.ucanews.com/news/thai-virus-lockdown-brings-rise-in-domestic-violence/87981#>

South Africa

South Africa has one of the highest incidences of domestic violence in the world. Every day many women are sexually assaulted, abused, threatened by their partners at their own home. Moreover, South Africa sadly has the most cases of domestic violence in the world. The Domestic Act was introduced in 1998 with the purpose of affording women protection from domestic violence in South Africa. However, COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation of domestic violence in South Africa. The mutilated body of a 42-year-old woman was found only within the first week, and a heavily pregnant woman was hanged up on a tree by her husband. As a country with the highest femicide rate, the increasing number of domestic violence cases is alarming amongst South African citizens.

Income

This section introduces cases from several countries as an example of how income can be seen as a contributing factor of ongoing domestic violence caused by COVID-19.

Australia

In Australia, income impacts the amount of government support that is presented when stepping away from one's family to escape from domestic violence.⁶ The utility of government crisis payments, which are supplied under extreme cases of severe

⁶ Keck, M. (2020, July 15). Strongest Evidence Yet Shows Violence Against Australian Women Has Skyrocketed During COVID-19. Retrieved November 01, 2020, from <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/domestic-violence-australia-covid19-evidence/>

financial hardship, can be paid to support a person leaving a violent relationship, but is unavailable to victims of family and domestic violence who are not receiving income support but nonetheless are experiencing severe financial hardship

resulting from their efforts to leave a violent relationship. Moreover, research shows that more than one in ten Australian women have experienced abusive and threatening behaviors caused by COVID-19.

Therefore, debate about compensation decided by income is ongoing in the hope to solve domestic violence problems in Australia.

Brazil

In Brazil, reduction of income has contributed to domestic violence during COVID-19. Brazil estimates domestic violence reports have jumped 40–50 %, indicating reports of domestic violence are on the rise.⁷ When partners used alcohol and drugs, they were more vulnerable to domestic violence. Research done by the Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry states that “Stress from the COVID-19 pandemic and the boredom associated with confinement can be risk factors for alcohol and drug use/abuse. These substances may be

consumed to relieve negative feelings such as lack of control, financial worries, and fear of death.” The intensification of the current situation can cause people to become worried about their income, leading to more domestic violence in order to release anxiety and stress.

Bhutan

In Bhutan, women are likely to be working poorly paid jobs without benefits, such as domestic workers, casual laborers, street vendors, and in small-scale services like hairdressing.⁸ The difference in careers compared to men, and the income difference contributes to more domestic violence cases by men during COVID-19. As more women are made unemployed, many also face an increase in care work due to school closures, overwhelmed health systems, and the increased needs of older people. Women earning less money are required to do more domestic work. Therefore, Bhutan struggles to solve domestic violence due to a disparity in income.

Disabilities

This topic introduces the psychiatric disorders that were not present from birth. Some examples are depression, anxiety,

How well does Australia’s social security system support victims of family and domestic violence? (2018, August). Retrieved November 01, 2020, from https://eiaustralia.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NSSRN_Report2018_FamilyViolence_SocialSecurity_sm.pdf

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⁷ Campbell, A. M. (2020, April 12). An increasing risk of family violence during the Covid-19 pandemic: Strengthening

community collaborations to save lives. Retrieved November 01, 2020, from

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7152912/> Telles, L., Valenca, A., Barros, A., & Silva, A. (2020, June).

Domestic violence in the COVID-19 pandemic: A forensic psychiatric perspective. Retrieved November 01, 2020, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341809085_Domestic_violence_in_the_COVID-](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341809085_Domestic_violence_in_the_COVID-19_pandemic_a_forensic_psychiatric_perspective)

[19_pandemic_a_forensic_psychiatric_perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341809085_Domestic_violence_in_the_COVID-19_pandemic_a_forensic_psychiatric_perspective)

⁸ Guterres, A. (2020, May 2). UN Secretary-General: COVID-19 risk to women 'could harm us all'. Retrieved November 01, 2020, from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/UN-Secretary-General-COVID-19-risk-to-women-could-harm-us-all2>

and PTSD. Mental illnesses (although not necessarily) can increase the risk of abusive behaviours.⁹ COVID-19 is also triggering mental illness as it can cause stress due to sudden change in lifestyle, financial distress and the fear of the unknown.

South Korea

In 2017, the South Korean government released a report stating that one in four South Koreans experience mental disorders at least once in their lifetime with only one out of ten citizens suffering from mental illnesses receiving proper treatment.¹⁰

According to a survey conducted by the National Youth Institute Policy, South Koreans receive high pressure from society to be successful in life from youth to adulthood. The survey showed that nearly 34 percent of South Korean adolescents have considered suicide due to academic pressure.¹¹ This is a significant factor causing the risk of adapting mental disabilities to increase.

Data from the government showed that out of all the reported domestic violence from 2014 to 2019, “only 13% saw arrests, 8.5% resulted in an indictment, and just 0.9% drew an actual prison sentence.”¹² The nation’s law stating that it is wrong to critically punish those with mental

disabilities may be causing the justification of domestic violence.

Jamaica

A 2008 survey conducted by the Jamaican government, showed that around twenty percent of the citizens have a mental illness,¹³ the most common being depression and anxiety. However, many experts studying mental illnesses, and those working in the psychiatric field, strongly believe that many more citizens are, in reality, depressed.

Jamaicans view mental illnesses negatively and those with mental disabilities are at many times discriminated against. Due to this, many Jamaicans are reluctant to speak up when developing symptoms of mental illnesses, leading to the escalation of these symptoms. Organizations such as UNICEF are working to help those who are crying for help yet are unable to address the situation to others. Due to the ongoing pandemic, many Jamaicans are put under stress due to the tight restrictions. Amongst these, financial stress is a major factor causing Jamaican’s mental state to deteriorate.

Russia

Due to the influence of the former Soviet Union, many young Russians are afraid to

⁹ Abuse and Mental Illness: Is There a Connection?: The Hotline. (2019, April 12). Retrieved September 06, 2020, from <https://www.thehotline.org/2015/05/06/abuse-and-mental-illness-is-there-a-connection/>

¹⁰ Jung, S., & Jun, J. (2020, April). Mental Health and Psychological Intervention Amid COVID-19 Outbreak: Perspectives from South Korea. Retrieved September 06, 2020, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7105405/>

¹¹ Herald, T. (2019, July 24). Nearly 34% of S. Korean adolescents have thought about suicide over academic pressure: Poll. Retrieved September 06, 2020, from <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190724000749>

¹² South Korea shocked by abuse of 'marriage migrants'. (2019, July 10). Retrieved September 06, 2020, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-48917935>

¹³ Depressed & in denial - Up to 50% of Jamaicans living with depression failing to seek medical help. (2017, May 21). Retrieved September 06, 2020, from <http://jamaicagleaner.com/article/news/20170521/depressed-denial-50-jamaicans-living-depression-failing-seek-medical-help>

speaking to their guardians about their mental illnesses. However, recently, due to SNS, young Russians are able to freely speak up about their condition and connect with others suffering from the same situation.¹⁴

In Russia, the psychiatric field, out of all medical fields, is considered unimportant. Due to this, the psychiatric field is struggling financially, hindering the support to those with mental illnesses.

Tips From The Chairs

It is vital to have accurate information from reliable sources for delegates to be engaged in the conference. Make sure to consult various sources covering multiple aspects as the conference will be discussed through different points of view regarding the topic. It is helpful to research other nation's stances and find a nation that you would like to work with beforehand. However, bear in mind that the research on your own nation is the top priority.

The chairs would recommend delegates to practice the opening speeches before the conference. This will cause the delegate to gain more confidence and time management skills. Make sure to speak in a loud clear voice so as to be heard by all nations. If not, the chairs may have to ask the delegate to speak up.

The chairs would also like to recommend delegates to bring in a copy of their position papers along with some clauses. This will become helpful when writing the resolutions.

Finally, make sure you have enough preparation so that you can actively participate and gain the best MUN experience.

Chair Recommendation

Delegates must stay persistent with their nation's stance. Before the conference, research well and know your nation's stance. As the conference escalates, some delegates may start to get off track from their nation's stance and start to think from a global perspective. Although this is indeed important, please remember that the UN is a place where delegates discuss global matters from their own nation's stance and not from an international view. It is important for delegates to prioritize their own nation's needs first, then consider the needs of other nations for the best outcome.

This conference is aiming to eliminate domestic violence caused by COVID-19. This is undeniably, an ongoing topic needing immediate solutions. When thinking of a resolution, delegates should bear in mind as to how severe the pandemic is in one's nation.

Questions to Consider

- How has the pandemic influenced the domestic violence rates in your nation?
自国の家庭内暴力はパンデミックはどのような影響を受けましたか？

¹⁴ Perera, L. (2020, September 06). Young Russians Are Taking Care of Their Mental and Physical Health. Retrieved September 06, 2020, from

- What major factors contribute to mental illnesses in your nation? What policies have been proposed in order to combat mental illness and its relationship to domestic violence?

自国で精神的病気を引き起こしている主な要因は何ですか？

- What actions has your nation taken so far to address the rate of domestic violence? What services exist to intervene in abusive situations? How has the pandemic affected these?

自国は今までどのような取り組みを行ってきましたか？

- How does culture affect the rate of domestic violence? What cultural

position would your country take on preventing domestic violence?

自国の文化はどのように家庭内暴力の割合に影響を与えていますか？

- How has your nation's financial state affected the domestic violence rates? What financial policies help address the problem of decreased women labor and mass unemployment?

自国の経済的状況はどのように家庭内暴力の割合に影響を与えていますか？

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