

**Houston Area  
Model United Nations  
Standard Committee**



**UNDP**

**Topic B**

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## Addressing the issue of displaced women in South Sudan

Committee Overview: (pasted from your 1st guide)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' (UN) global development network. As one of the United Nations' operational programs, UNDP is directly involved on the ground in over 170 countries, in order to help implement policies within its three main pillars: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience. In this context, UNDP works to promote and advance the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015. Finally, in an effort to enhance coordination between different UN program lines, UNDP also looks for a correct allocation of resources in order to maximize the efficiency of programs related to development in several countries by administering the UN Capital Development Fund. In all of their activities, the UNDP encourages the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women, minorities, and the poorest, and most vulnerable.<sup>1</sup> The UNDP embodies Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations (1945), which outlines the organization's responsibility to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" as prerequisites to peace. Originally, development activities of the United Nations consisted largely of providing technical advice through the UN Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and support for pre-investment projects through the UN Special Fund, created in 1949 and 1958 respectively, for the benefit of less developed countries.<sup>2</sup> To streamline these assistance programs, General Assembly resolution 2029 (XX) of 22 November 1965 consolidated the EPTA and the UN Special Fund to establish UNDP as of 1 January 1966.<sup>3</sup> Today, as the leader of the UN's "global development network," UNDP assists countries with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015).<sup>4</sup> As of 1 January 2015, UNDP adopted mandatory Social and Environmental Standards for all of its projects and programmes. These standards will strengthen UNDP's efforts for increased quality in its programmes and ensure social and environmental benefits for the people we serve. UNDP obtains funding from governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other sources. Donors contribute approximately \$5 billion to UNDP annually. The Executive 1 <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/about-us.html>

<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly Expanded programme of technical assistance for economic development of underdeveloped countries (A/RES/304 (IV)), 1949; UN General Assembly, Establishment of the Special Fund (A/RES/1240 (XIII)), 1958. <sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly, Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX)), 1965. <sup>4</sup> UN General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1), 2015; UNDG, The Sustainable Development Goals Are Coming to Life, 2016. Board decides on budgets and financial plans. Additional funding for individual projects and activities may be provided directly by organizations and governments, although UNDP remains the primary source

of funding. With projects in over 170 countries, UNDP tracks allocation of its budget according to theme: for example, 28.6% of expenses have been allotted to inclusive and sustainable growth, 24.9% to basic services, 17.3% to early recovery, 10.9% to democratic governance, 5.4% to risk reduction, 2.8% to thought leadership, and 1% to gender equality. Depending on the project, UNDP works with state governments, political entities on a national and community level, and non-governmental organizations to ensure accountability, efficiency, and trust.<sup>5</sup> As an assistance program, UNDP is “designed to support and supplement the national efforts of developing countries in solving the most important problems of their economic development, including industrial development.” Importantly, as emphasized by General Assembly resolution 59/250, national governments retain “primary responsibility” for development within their countries. UNDP’s work is carried out through its country offices, which are focused on helping countries develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities. To assist in these efforts, UNDP also administers and utilizes the UN Volunteers program and the UN Capital Development Fund. To function effectively across the globe, UNDP works to strengthen partnerships, build capacity, and coordinate the UN’s development activities.<sup>6</sup>

#### Background:

According to statistics from the UNHCR, compounded with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sudan, 2020 was one of the worst years for the people of Kivu, particularly displaced women from the region. Just in the past several months, thousands of women from South Sudan and refugees who had been living in the region have seen their male relatives killed in renewed fighting, forced to flee a region which many had once sought peace in from countries like Chad, Niger, and others.

Under Omar al-Bashir, the President of Sudan from 1989 to 2019, women were subject to the Wahabbi/strict Islamic interpretation of Sharia Law, and could be flogged for something as simple as wearing pants. They were shunned from many roles in society, including limitations on governmental participation, limitations in employment, and subject to the will of their *mahrams* or “male guardians” as interpreted in the Sudanese view of the Sharia. Apart from a lack of ability to participate, government participation for all during the rule of Omar al-Bashir was limited because of one party rule.

Independence of South Sudan was achieved in 2011 by accord with the Sudanese government, however, peace has been hard to attain. Just two years after their internationally-celebrated peace process with the central Sudanese government, proxies funded by governments of regional countries like Sudan, Chad, Uganda, and others began conflicting again, bringing several regions (particularly Unity, Jonglei, Western Bahr al Ghazal, Upper Nile, and Central and Western Equatoria states and the Pibor Administrative Region) into some of the most violent fighting that

they had ever seen, with the death toll from the conflict rising to an estimated 383,000 people, with many of those being women and young children.

After independence, the situation of women in South Sudan has only gotten worse, as international investment and opportunities are at an all time low since the country, not allowing women, many of which have been made widows by fighting, to lift themselves out of poverty. For women who do find safety in United Nations refugee camps, conditions faced by those women are less than desirable. Women lack access to proper supplies and resources like feminine hygiene products, obstetric services, midwives. This has significantly increased in intensity as North-Kivu region sees some of its worst fighting as order collapses in the country. An estimated 4.3 million South Sudanese, 80% of which are women and children, have been displaced by the conflict.

The long-standing cultural roles and traditions of the region make this even harder for those displaced women, where many of them cannot find jobs outside of subsistence farming. Their primary economic activities are also under attack by climate change, which has ravaged Sudan and, amongst millions of children, hurt women the most.

Coupled with lack of pre-existing national transportation, water, and gas infrastructures, the women who do have to flee their homes are faced with days to weeks without water, food, or resources, subjected to some of the hottest temperatures in Africa, unable to feed their families.

Women have also been the subject of some of the worst violence. As order does not permit proper policing, illegal, violent acts against women like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, rape, and targeted murders have occurred. Their children have also been targeted, as frameworks under South Sudanese law and proper policing do not allow for the punishment of many of the perpetrators due to the lawlessness and infighting by different rebel groups like the SPLA, SRF, SLA, and others.

Previous UN Action:

Since the birth of the young nation in 2011, the United Nations has been involved in South Sudan since the beginning. Several UN brokered peace deals have come and gone, bringing temporary stops to the heavy fighting, but not bringing lasting peace.

The United Nations administers services at several refugee and IDP camps in and around South Sudan, operating in Kenya, Uganda, and other regional nations to provide shelter to the millions of refugees. Recently, UN efforts in these camps have been primarily to provide education, health services, and integration into those regional nations to provide some sort of normalcy for those who have faced this conflict and survived.

In regards to UN action for women specifically, efforts have been made with financial aid to provide emergency gynaecology and obstetric services to the millions of women in the camps. However, UN personnel face difficulty in ensuring violence against women is prevented where resources are limited.

#### Conclusion:

While peace efforts are constantly ongoing, the situation of South Sudanese women, particularly refugees, is currently amongst one of the worst in the world. Further United Nations action in way of financing, peacekeeping, and other areas is needed to avert further humanitarian crisis.

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