

UNISMUNC XI



Committee: United Nations
Commission on the Status of Women
Topic: Sex Work and Prostitution

Committee Type: GA

December 7, 2025



Chair: Anna Wagener

Dias: Sachie Windsor

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Conference Schedule

Registration

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Opening Ceremonies

9:00 am - 10:00 am

Committee Session I

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Lunch Break I

12:00 pm - 1:15 pm

Lunch Break II

1:15 pm - 2:30 pm

Committee Session II

2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Closing Ceremonies

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Conference Policies

UNISMUNC XI aims to foster debate, bringing students the opportunity to explore a range of topics and encourage collaboration and teamwork between delegates. Be that as it may, UNIS stresses the importance of respectful language as UNISMUNC XI will see delegates debating topics that, at times, may be heated or passionate. MUNEX encourages you to remember to stay respectful and mindful of the other students around you. We are so excited about this conference and trust that no issues will arise. The following expectations and policies are designed so that every delegate gets the most out of UNISMUNC.

Attire:

The Dress Code for UNISMUNC is formal Western business attire, and all delegates are expected to comply with this. Exceptions can be made for character purposes in crisis committees at the discretion of the chair. If you have an idea for an outfit for a crisis committee that does not fall into the parameters of traditional Western business attire, please ask your chair for permission before wearing the outfit.

Committee Assignments:

Committee assignments will be made on a first-come-first-served basis based on preference as communicated by the delegation's advisors (or individual delegates in the case of independent delegates), in order of receipt of preference. Before being assigned to a committee, payment must be received. If payment is not submitted in a timely manner, delegations face the risk of not receiving committee assignments of their choice.

Expectations in Committee:

As you engage in debates, we ask that delegates maintain politeness and respect at all times. While we recognize that you are representing your country's views, it is essential to express these perspectives without crossing the line into disrespectful or confrontational behavior.

Please respect one another when delegates are giving speeches. Only one delegate may speak at a time during moderated caucuses. To speak during a moderated caucus, you must raise your placard and wait to be recognized by the chair. During speeches, no ad hominem attacks will be allowed; should they occur, the subject will have the right to reply. Remember to be cognizant of your words and actions, and to listen to everyone's views and positions.

The Committee Chairs and Secretariat members are responsible for determining disruptive behavior.

Examples of disrespectful behavior may include, but are not limited to:

- Speaking without being recognized,
- Use of cell phones,
- Note-passing unrelated to the committee,
- Use of technology when not allowed,
- Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of other delegates.

The pre-writing of any resolution/directive clauses, crisis notes, or speeches is strictly forbidden and will be penalized. This does not include opening remarks. This does not include any writing during the lunch break, as UNISMUNC committees standardly operate with 'working lunches'.

UNISMUNC has a zero-tolerance policy for any plagiarism. This includes position papers, speeches, and resolutions. Improper citation of quotes and references may result in disqualification from awards or further disciplinary action at the discretion of the chairs.

Pricing:

Please see the registration section for more information. Details on committee assignments are below.

Spectators:

Please be aware that UNISMUNC X does not allow unregistered spectators. Student spectators are strictly prohibited. All advisors and delegates must be registered and pay the required fee(s). Non-compliance with this policy will result in exclusion from future invitations. We expect all

participating delegations to respect this policy. The Secretariat reserves the right to have any unregistered spectators removed from committee chambers and escorted off of the premises if necessary, as they see fit.

Technology:

All crisis committees are strictly no-tech. Neither laptops nor cell phones will be permitted during committee sessions in crisis committees.

General Assembly (GA) committees allow technology exclusively for the purpose of resolution writing. Delegates will be permitted to use their laptops to work on resolutions during unmoderated caucuses and outside of the committee chamber when allowed by the chair. It is, however, not permitted to use technology when a fellow delegate is speaking or during committee chambers during moderated caucuses. This includes your own speeches, so please write any notes by hand or have your opening remarks printed before the conference.

Awards Criteria:

UNISMUNC Chairs, Diases, and, in the case of crisis committees, Crisis Directors will work together to holistically evaluate delegates based on their performance throughout the entire day of debate. This includes:

- speeches given during moderated caucuses,
- performance during unmoderated caucuses (not only making one's voice heard but also including everyone in the discussion),
- writing/presenting resolutions/directions, especially those that pass,
- in crisis committees, as well as the detail and sophistication of crisis arcs.

Letter From Chair

Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to the UNISMUNC XI United Nations Committee on the Status of Women. As our love for Model United Nations. I am honored to serve as your chair and to lead this committee in exploring one of the most debated and ethically complex issues facing the global community today: the legality and impact of sex work and prostitution.

Throughout history, sex work has existed in nearly every society, yet governments and cultures continue to disagree on how it should be understood, regulated, or abolished. Our committee will dive into these different perspectives, consider the impact of different legal models, and confront the challenges of human trafficking, public health, gender based violence, and personal choice. Whether your county criminalizes prostitution or decriminalizes it, this committee requires us to think critically, compassionately, and globally.

As delegates, your role is to represent your assigned/chosen country's policies and perspectives, even if they differ from your moral/personal beliefs. You will need to balance ethical and legal arguments, weigh human rights concerns, and build consensus across diverse blocs. Our discussions may be complex or even uncomfortable at times, but I am confident that each of you will approach this with maturity, respect, and curiosity.

A little about me is that I am Anna Wagener, a 16-year-old junior. I began participating in Model UN in 2023 (as a freshman), and this will be my first time chairing at UNISMUNC; I couldn't be more excited. Growing up in a city like New York, surrounded by diversity and strong differing opinions, has shaped me into a curious and outspoken person. I aim to create a space where every delegate feels empowered to speak with confidence and engage in debate with both empathy and clarity.

I know MUN can feel intimidating at times, especially with such a complex topic like this. But let's remember we're here to learn, to grow, and to represent the voices/opinions of countries around the world. You don't have to have all the answers, but what matters is you come with an open mind, prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue and work together towards creative and realistic solutions. My dias Sachie Windsor, and I will be here to support you throughout the day. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions about committee procedure, position papers, or if you just need help to find your voice in debate.

Please submit your position papers by _____ 2025. We cannot wait to meet you in December and see the incredible ideas and perspectives you will bring to the table

Best Regards

Anna Wagener

27awagener@unis.org

Sachie Windsor

27swindsor@unis.org

A Brief Overview of the Committee

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the main international body within the United Nations that focuses on promoting gender equality and empowering women. It operated as a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and it was established by ECOSOC resolution 11 on June 21st, 1946.

The CSW works to protect the rights of women and girls around the world. It helps to set global standards on gender equality, shows the challenges women face, and encourages progress in areas such as education, health, political participation, and economic opportunity.

In 1996, ECOSOC expanded the CSW's responsibilities through the resolution 1996/6. This resolution designated the CSW as a central body for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It also charged the commission with the task of integrating a gender perspective across all UN activities.

Each year, the CSW has a 2-week session at the UN headquarters in New York. Bringing together all of the representatives from UN member states, civil society organizations, and UN bodies. They discuss progress and gaps in the performance of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (a major international policy document on gender equality), and the 23rd special session of the GA (General Assembly) held in 2000, as well as new issues that impact gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Member States agree on additional actions to speed progress and promote women's and girls' rights in political, economic, and social areas. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC to follow up.

Committee Procedure

Moderated Caucuses are structured discussions where delegates sign themselves up to give short, regulated speeches. The speaking time and topic of discussion are set when the motion is proposed, and delegates take turns to speak.

Unmoderated Caucuses are divided between a regular unmoderated caucus and a gentleman's unmoderated caucus, where everybody remains seated. A regular unmod entails a period free of structured, regulated debate, where delegates can mill about the committee and work with their blocs.

Some actions that are carried over from the usual committee procedure:

- Point of Order
- Point of Information
- Appeal to the Chair
- Suspension of Debate
- Adjournment of Debate
- Closure of Debate
- Roll Call Vote
- Set the Speaker's Time

Written Papers

Resolutions: A piece of writing that outlines possible solutions to a problem and allows the committee to take action. Hopefully, towards the end of the committee blocs will work together to write a resolution that can be debated and possibly passed.

Working Papers: The drafts of resolutions, i.e., resolutions before they are voted on by the committee – committee blocs work together to write these, brainstorming and fully outlining detailed solutions to the issues at hand. Then, they are voted on and formally become resolutions.

Topic Background

Since the beginning of civilisations, sex work has existed in one form or another, often referred to as the world's earliest profession. Historical records show evidence of prostitution as early as 2400 BCE in Mesopotamia, where sexual services were exchanged for goods, money, or protection. While some aspects of the trade had been voluntary and consensual, others have been exploitation, coercion, and abuse. In the current time, the size of sex work has increased due to digital platforms, migration, and globalization, making it controversial and a deeply complex issue.

The United Nations(UN) defines sex work as the unforced sale of sexual services for money or goods between consenting adults. Sex work includes street prostitution, escort services, telephone sex services, pornography, exotic dancing, and others. However, the term prostitution (which means the same thing) is often used in legal and public conversations.

Sex work has a long history. In Ancient Greece, it was socially accepted, with government-sponsored brothels. During the Medieval period in Europe, religious norms led to widespread bans. Due to urbanization in the late 18th century, temporary increased tolerance, but concerns about STIs led to regulation, such as Britain's Contagious Diseases Act (1864).

In the 20th century, governments increasingly banned prostitution due to moral, social, and public health concerns. Examples include the U.S. Mann Act (1910), which prohibited interstate travel for prostitution, framing it as “white slavery”. Prostitution was widely banned in many nations.

At the end of the 20th century, the potential benefits of legalization prompted policy changes. The Nordic approach (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) began in Sweden in 1999, which criminalizes the purchase of sex work while decriminalizing the sex worker. Other countries, including Germany, New Zealand, and Taiwan, legalized or decriminalized the position. Despite these efforts, challenges and debates about legal frameworks persist.

Current Situation

Current Forms of Sex Work

Sex work today takes many forms beyond traditional prostitution. Webcamming, where individuals live-stream sexual activities, has grown substantially. Another example is the “mail-order bride industry”, where women are advertised for marriage, sometimes leading to coercive agreements. It is estimated that 100,000 to 150,000 women are involved worldwide.

More broadly, sex work refers to the exchange of sexual services, performances, or content for material gain (typically money). Prostitution is one form of sex work, but others include stripping, escorting, nude modelling, and pornography. The online pornography industry alone generates nearly \$100 billion, making it the most common form of sex work in our current times.

Human Trafficking

Currently, the prohibition of sex work often increases human trafficking, as unregulated markets are more vulnerable to exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of women and children are trafficked annually, with approximately 80% exploited sexually. Victims often under 24 face coercion, deception, and abuse.

Even wealthy countries, including Italy, Germany, France, and the United States, are major destinations for trafficked individuals. Victims frequently cannot access law enforcement due to fear, financial dependence, or language barriers. Corruption and economic incentives further exacerbate this global issue, which constitutes a form of modern slavery..

Sexual Assaults and Rape in Relation to Sex Work

Sex workers experience disproportionately high rates of sexual assault and rape. In the U.S., a rape occurs every 107 seconds, but only 68% are reported. Teenagers and sex workers face added barriers to reporting due to criminalization and social stigma.

Rape culture, the normalization of sexual violence, remains a global problem. Media, politics, and social norms often reinforce harmful gender roles, making women and marginalized individuals more vulnerable.

Bloc Positions

In this committee, bloc positions reflect regional legal frameworks and cultural attitudes. The Western Bloc features diverse approaches: some countries fully legalize and regulate sex work with labor protections, while others follow the Nordic model, criminalizing buyers but not sex workers, and a few maintain partial restrictions or have decriminalized it without regulation. This variety enables detailed debate on balancing individual freedom, societal concerns, and worker protection.

African and Middle Eastern Bloc

The African and Middle Eastern Bloc is predominantly prohibitionist, with most nations criminalizing both the sale and purchase of sex. Enforcement and prevalence, however, vary significantly across the region, and a small number of countries have adopted the Nordic approach, focusing on protecting sex workers while penalizing buyers and organized prostitution. Delegates in this bloc may emphasize traditional or moral perspectives, as well as the challenges of enforcement and public health.

Latin American Bloc

The Latin American Bloc generally favors the legalization and regulation of sex work. Many countries in the region recognize prostitution as a legitimate profession and have implemented laws that remain illegal in practice despite widespread prevalence. Delegates here may advocate for policies that balance workers' rights, public health, and societal acceptance.

Asian Bloc

The Asian Bloc exhibits a wide range of approaches, including partial legalization, abolitionist policies, prohibition, and full regulation. Cultural, legal, and religious factors heavily influence these policies, leading to considerable variation across the region. This diversity makes the Asian Bloc less uniform but allows for multiple potential alliances depending on the policy approach being debated.

Questions to Consider

- Should prostitution be decriminalised, legalized, or abolished worldwide?
- How can countries balance the fight against human trafficking with the protection of sex workers' lives?
- What role should the UN play in developing a consistent international framework on prostitution?
- What social, economic, and structural factors contribute to individuals entering sex work, and how can policy interventions effectively address these root causes to reduce vulnerability and expand alternative opportunities?

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