

Delegation from
The Student World Assembly (NGO)

Represented by
LaGuardia Community College

Position Paper for United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The issues before the Economic and Social Committee are: Creating Sustainable Livelihoods to Eliminate Poverty; The Advancement of Women in a Globalized World, and Population and Sustainable Development in the 21st Century. The Student World Assembly (SWA), a non-governmental, non-partisan organization, fully supports the implementation of national and international resolutions in partnership with States, NGOs, and civil societies to formulate development plans which address these issues. It affirms micro- and macro-levels of affirmative action by States and NGOs in realizing the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Program of Action by the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD).

I. Creating Sustainable Livelihoods to Eliminate Poverty

The SWA realizes that sustainable livelihood is essential in alleviating the status of populations from poverty. It sees that this can be achieved primarily through secure food provisions, use and protection of natural resources, secure employment opportunities and conditions, and education. The SWA therefore fully supports the MDG objectives to relieve half of the population who live on less than US\$1 a day. To achieve this, it advocates seeking strategies to help local communities from grassroots level. The SWA believes that when transferred knowledge and skills are adapted to local cultures, a smooth transition into the globalized world will be enabled.

The SWA believes that the depletion of natural resources will lead to catastrophic consequences for future generations. It calls for more action toward monitoring and protecting the environment. The SWA policies are directed towards this, and enabled by its information-sharing network structure. It supports the creation and dissemination of environment-friendly education, especially through indigenous consultations and by utilizing the capacities of its worldwide chapters.

The SWA promotes and supports business sustainability. It sees that this will provide secure and fruitful employment. It also supports micro-financing for developing infant industries and employment opportunities at a local level. The SWA believes that women can be particularly empowered through such initiatives.

The SWA motto is "Educate, Participate and Take Action." Its very structure is designed to enable students around the world to participate in social, political, and economical development. Grassroots democracy enables its constituency to identify pressing local issues and to find their voice in challenging them. In advocating for fundamental education rights from the grassroots level, the SWA also draws attention to the need to recognize and invest in local wisdom that will ensure that local cultural knowledge is sustained.

II. The Advancement of Women in a Globalized World

The SWA affirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 1) that "all are born free and are equal in dignity and rights." It also reaffirms the goals, objectives and commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action. The SWA believes women's empowerment at all political, economical, and social levels is beneficial to their families, communities and nations. Education and policy making to ensure a healthy population growth and the nurturing of educated informed citizens are core principles that the SWA stands for.

The SWA recognizes that basic living standards are essential to survival, but acknowledges that many women in the world do not have access to these. It therefore recommends that international poverty eradication measures be closely developed alongside gender equality initiatives.

The SWA believes that all women, regardless of race, culture, sexuality or religion must have access to reproductive health care and education. Alongside this, it also recognizes cultural differences and appreciates they are essential to human development. Reproductive and sexual healthcare including family planning, therefore, must integrate cultural customs. Programs to reduce infant and maternal mortality must also be given a priority.

The SWA also draws attention to the plight of so many women in Africa in their fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS. It has made a priority of education and discussion about HIV/AIDS and will seek further strategies to address this problem when it focuses on this as the main theme at its International Convention this year.

III. Population and Sustainable Development 21st Century

The SWA affirms the right of all human beings to dignity. Given that poverty is on the rise in the developing countries, the creation and development of sustainable livelihoods is a matter of urgency. An affordable population growth in a sustainable environment should implement the Rio Consensus and its Agenda 21. Promoting policies and training programs that address the socio-economic consequences of population growth should be a priority in the global South. In the North, population aging and social security policies that take into consideration the vulnerability of elder citizens should be encouraged.

The SWA supports policies that are sensitive to cultural and economic particularities. Sustainable development should provide equal gender opportunities for access and ownership of the land for farmers. It should also support means of production through access to loans for farmers in rural areas. The SWA encourages fair trade between nations, but emphasizes the importance of the consumption of local products. To ensure effectiveness and biodiversity, the use of technologies must integrate the culture to avoid the pollution of the environment. The SWA therefore advocates a holistic approach to creating sustainable development strategies for the 21st Century.