

Committee: UNCSW

Topic: Promoting the role of women and youth in Government with special emphasis on pandemic

Country: France

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The COVID-19 global health emergency and its economic and social impacts have disrupted nearly all aspects of life for all groups in society. People of different ages are experiencing its effects in different ways. For women and youth, the COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks in the fields of education, employment, mental health and disposable income. Moreover, while they will shoulder much of the long-term economic and social consequences of the crisis, their well-being may be superseded by short-term economic and equity considerations. Globally there are 27 States in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses. They have a right to engage in civil society, vote in elections, be elected to government office, serve on boards, and make their voices heard in any process. The focus on youth, in terms of their engagement in the political arena, is a relatively new priority but extremely timely. Energy is high among them and they do not want to follow the traditions and customs of the previous generations. Their approach to everything is logical, and they question the radical thinking of the elders. In order to respond to the needs of young people, and to guarantee that their basic human rights are recognized and enforced, young people's active and meaningful participation in their societies and in democratic practices and processes is of crucial importance.

COVID-19 brings into sharp focus the gendered aspect of pandemics, and the knock-on effects of the outbreak and response on the SDGs. It explores the socio economic and political implications of COVID-19 on women and gender across five of the Goals: SDG 1 (poverty), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 10 (reduced inequalities). Inclusive practices and solidarity movements such as **UN Women's 'HeforShe'** are fundamental to how access to health services is influenced by gender norms in societies, as well as by women's political power, location (rural/urban), ethnicity, citizenship and economic status, at the core of these targeted areas are women. The **World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)** calls on governments to ensure that their services meet the needs of young people. Under the current circumstances, it is especially important that youth are heard alongside other community voices in the rollout of health and non-health interventions in response to COVID-19.

Confronted with these problems, France is enhancing the coherence and effectiveness of gender actions in its development assistance policies and external action. **The 3rd International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018-2022)** is a steering tool designed to coordinate France's efforts to improve the situation of women around the world. Everything starts with a good example and the Ministry has therefore decided to increase its work for gender equality and parity within its teams and those of its agencies. These include Increasing the number of women in management and ambassador positions, raising awareness and providing training on gender issues for all employees and systematically including gender equality in the strategies and actions of the 12 agencies supervised or co-supervised by the Ministry. France is going to promote **youth civic action**, building capacity of associations in developing countries – particularly youth movements – as well as the exchange and sharing of experience by French and foreign civil society stakeholders

France feels that important subtopics that must be addressed are women's lack of representation in politics and political decision-making. To address women's lack of representation in politics, countries can be encouraged to ensure inclusion of women candidates and create recruitment and training programs to introduce young women to politics. France believes that there is a need and potential to extend the use of the **online debate** as it plays a central role for governments seeking to efficiently inform, communicate and engage with youths.