

YUNMUN XXVIII

Dear Delegates,

I would like to formally welcome y'all to YUNMUN XXVIII. My name is Lilly Gelman and I will be acting as your committee chair for this year's conference. Currently a Junior at Yeshiva University, I am majoring in Biology (as well as minoring in writing) in pursuit of a career in Genetic Counseling. In addition to participating in YUNMUN, I also serve as the Junior Features Editor for *The Commentator* (Yeshiva University's student newspaper) and the Senior Editor for *Perspective* (Stern College's new online magazine). Outside of YU, I am an active member of the Bnei Akiva's National Board, the Hanhala Artzit and an avid reader of *The New Yorker*.

As many of you may have noticed, this year's committee name has been changed from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW). CEDAW is an international treaty ratified in 1980 focusing on internationally establishing gender equality and women's rights. The ratification of the treaty brought about the establishment of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (confusingly also referred to as CEDAW), created to ensure that the provisions of the treaty were adhered to by any and all signatories.

Beginning in 2008, the responsibilities of managing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were transferred from the United Nations to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, removing it from being a committee in the United Nations. CSW, however, remains a commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main organs within the United Nations. The Secretariat and I have decided to update the committee title in order to reflect the changes in the functioning of CEDAW within the United Nations, while maintaining the valuable discussion pertaining to women's rights brought about by the presence of CEDAW at YUNMUN.

Please note that the reputation of the committee as one that seriously discusses political, cultural, economic, and educational issues and opportunities for women remains intact. CSW, established in 1946, promotes gender equality, working tirelessly to identify and eliminate conflicts surrounding female advancement and well-being. You are the first group of YUNMUN delegates to the Commission on the Status of Women, and should feel honored and proud to be an active participant in this historic moment.

One of the main goals of [CSW](#) is to create global standards and policies advocating for gender equality. The challenge that arises is how we accomplish such a goal in a world where many countries' views on women are dictated by differing religious, cultural, political, and economic factors. In the time leading up to the conference you should be studying your country's position on, and history of dealing with, issues pertaining to women and gender discrimination.

Despite the fact that CSW is a crucial commission to the United Nations, we cannot require that countries abide by specific laws. In addition, it is not under our jurisdiction to impose sanctions as a motivation for countries to adopt specific practices. We can, however, assess and evaluate the status of women across the globe in order to generate programs and strategies that will best address the issues at hand. For more information on CSW's powers and some of its past accomplishments, please refer to the websites linked throughout the letter above.

If any questions or concerns arise in the weeks leading up to conference, feel free to email me at lgelman@mail.yu.edu. The topics we will be dealing with are nuanced and challenging, and each country has a position founded in their roots, history, and culture. I look forward to seeing how each of you represents his or her country and participates in what I know will be a meaningful and lively debate.

All the best,
Lilly Gelman
Chair, CSW
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