**Country:** Switzerland

**Committee:** CSW (Commission on the Status of Women)

**Agenda Item:** Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women

Switzerland is a landlocked country in Central Europe, officially known as the Swiss Confederation. It borders Austria, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, and Germany and has a total area of 41,277 square kilometers. The country has a population of about 8.7 million and its sex ratio is 98.53 males per 100 females. With a 25% foreign resident population, the country has one of the highest rates in all of Europe. This adds to the multicultural character of Switzerland. Switzerland, which is a federal republic that uses direct democracy system is currently run by President Alain Berset. While Switzerland does not have a legal capital, Bern is the administrative capital and Lausanne serves as the country’s judicial center. The country follows the neutrality approach by not involving itself in most foreign issues. Switzerland has the world's second-highest GDP. Approximately 74% of Swiss GDP is generated by the services sector, 25% by industry, and less than 1% by agriculture. Switzerland is a multilingual country with a decentralized education system. There is no free choice of school in compulsory education, and 95% of all students attend the neighborhood public schools. Therefore, students from diverse social, linguistic, and social backgrounds get an education at the same school. Switzerland does not offer public healthcare, instead citizens purchase their own private health insurance. This applies to both Swiss natives and international expats. Switzerland became a full member of the UN on 10 September 2002 and has been an active member ever since. One of the four UN Headquarters is located in Switzerland, Geneva.

The idea that men are superior to women has existed since the beginning of human history. This has led to negative consequences such as the emergence of the idea that women should only do housework and take care of children, the existence of gender equality in all areas, women not having some important rights such as education, health, voting, and the freedom of expression, also this inequality caused violence against women. As a result of numerous rebellions held by women, rights have begun to be given to women across the world. In this process, concepts such as gender equality, empowerment of women, and feminism has emerged. Over time, countries began to work to eliminate the inequality of men and women. UN has worked to promote gender equality for many years and included gender equality in their sustainable development goals. While addressing this issue, UN has faced some serious challenges. To address such challenges UN Women was created by the UN General Assembly in 2010. The source of these challenges come from how countries have different approaches to women. Countries’ view on women differs according to their religious beliefs, their government, their people, and their traditions. While in some countries women even can’t go out freely, in some countries women can even be elected as president. Still, UN and many countries are trying to overcome these differences in order to promote gender equality all over the world. There are both many developments and drawbacks on this topic. For instance, in New Zealand women has earned the right to vote in 1912, in Saudi Arabia women still cannot vote. Turkiye was the first country to sign the Istanbul Convention, which is a human rights treaty, but it is also the only country who have withdrawn from it. This shows that some countries may experience regressions in this regard.

Switzerland is a strong champion of gender equality and has been working to exterminate this issue for a long time. Switzerland believes that gender equality and respect for women’s rights are elemental and gender inequality is one of the main obstacles to sustainable development. Swiss women received the right to federal voting rights in 1971. Since 2011, Switzerland’s State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) has been encouraging business companies to “appoint more women to top-level positions” aiming to promote the empowerment of women. In 2022, 75.4% of women between the ages of 15 to 64 had a job in Switzerland, which is one of the highest rates in Europe. Switzerland works internationally to minimize disparities and promote women's rights through multilateral platforms, bilateral talks, and international cooperative activities. Switzerland also engages with UN Women on issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Switzerland, according to UN Women, was the third-largest government provider of regular resources and the seventh-largest government contributor overall. The Swiss government contributed a total of USD 190 million to UN Women between 2011 and 2020. The Swiss parliament passed a government plan in June 2019 calling for better participation of women at the top levels of large publicly traded corporations, affecting approximately 250 companies. According to the 2021 edition of the Global Gender Gap Report, Switzerland has achieved the narrowest gender gap score in its history. As the delegation of Switzerland, we believe that we can ensure gender equality by boosting women's access to education and health services, fostering women's empowerment, promoting work-life balance, eradicating gender-based violence, and expanding women's presence in politics and leadership. Although Switzerland has been working to promote gender equality for a long time, Switzerland thinks that gender inequality can only be overcome if countries work together and take prompt action. Therefore, Switzerland expects the UN's member nations and the CSW’s support on this issue. Switzerland looks forward to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

References

<https://www.internations.org/switzerland-expats/guide/healthcare#:~:text=Even%20though%20Switzerland's%20healthcare%20system,Swiss%20nationals%20and%20foreign%20expats>

<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/switzerland/overview#:~:text=In%20compulsory%20education%2095%25%20of,all%20attend%20the%20same%20school>

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/aboutswitzerland/en/home.html>

<https://delegatepal.com/>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/donor-countries/top-donors/switzerland>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/switzerland-global-gender-gap-parity/#:~:text=In%20the%202021%20edition%20of,of%20women's%20suffrage%20in%20Switzerland>.

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/SWITZERLAND-English.pdf>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Development/SR/visit-to-switzerland/foge_GE.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Switzerland>

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/swiss-gender-pay-gap-among-the-widest-in-europe/48077132>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>