

MINNESOTA YMCA MODEL UNITED NATIONS



2023 DELEGATE STUDY GUIDE

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Dear Delegates,

I am thrilled to be sharing the 2023's Model United Nations topics with you. This year, the vision behind this study guide was to showcase different topics to stimulate thinking outside our comfortable, Western, viewpoint. Throughout Youth in Government programs, we often examine issues through the lens and context of Minnesota and the United States. From topics involving global coups, to colonies in the modern world, and even to concerns about feeding the world and reproductive rights, the goal behind everything is to help you examine issues where American and Western values conflict with other values, and help you navigate these difficult conversations in a respectable manner.

The study guide has a variety of resources for you to use to prepare yourself, and other members of your delegation, for the upcoming conference. The more information and knowledge you have in hand when you arrive at the first day of Model UN, the more efficient and proactive you can be when creating resolutions and sparking debate in your committee groups. Many issues intersect and overlap with each other, so please lean on other members in your country group and delegation to research and better understand these topics. Discussing issues with delegates who hold a different perspective, or are examining it through a different lens, will help round out your perception of each issue and provide you with a more holistic understanding in preparation for the conference. All of this will help your committee to create wonderful resolutions for very complex issues. I want you all to be able to come away from this Model UN with a greater understanding of each issue and all the perspectives it can be seen from, especially striving to branch out from the Western viewpoint of the world.

I hope that you find this study guide to be useful on your journey to the 37th Minnesota YMCA Model United Nations! Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or help that you may need. I am excited to see you all succeed and enjoy the conference this year. Please enjoy your time of preparation—it is just as important as your attendance at this conference! As always, remember you get out of this conference what you put into it. I wish you all a rewarding and impactful Model United Nations.

With anticipation,

Madeline Moher

Secretary-General of the 2023 Model UN Conference



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SECURITY COUNCIL



2023 TOPICS

Global Coups
Weaponized Food



2023 TOPIC: GLOBAL COUPS

Topic Summary and Background:

On October 26th, 2021, UN Secretary General António Guterres urged the Security Council to “act effectively to deter and handle” the increasing rate of coups. UN Secretary General Guterres highlighted three possible reasons for the increasing rate of coups worldwide. One reason highlighted was the strong geopolitical divides amongst countries. He also noted that the Security Council, “difficulties in taking strong measures.” Lastly, UN Secretary General Guterres, noted the impact, which COVID-19 has had on economies and society have created “an environment in which some military leaders feel that they have total impunity, they can do whatever they want because nothing will happen to them.” He went on to say: “My appeal, obviously, is for – especially the big powers – to come together for the unity of the Security Council in order to make sure that there is effective deterrence concerning this epidemic of coup d’états,” Guterres said. “We have seen that effective deterrence today is not in place.”

Within the members of the Security Council, there is not an agreement about how far the Security Council should go when responding to an international coup. Countries such as China and Russia believe that the Security Council should stay out of the internal politics of a member country and do not believe in responding in the form of UN sanctions against coup plotters. Diplomats of Western countries believe that China and Russia do not use proposed statements such as “condemn” when referring to a military takeover. Finally, non-Western diplomats have brought up the point that Western countries use a double standard when looking at how to respond to a military takeover.

Diplomats who believe the Council can do a better job preparing for similar future challenges tend to focus on more modest goals, emphasizing that the Council should keep a closer eye out for warning signs of military takeovers rather than handling them after a takeover has begun. On the other hand, states who believe the Security Council should deter or reverse a coup might see the coup as a platform for public diplomacy about the crises.

Within the Security Council, there is no adopted practice when dealing with coups d’état. Responses are varied and have ranged from everything from a press statement to a presidential statement, and in one such case a resolution which imposed sanctions.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

“Uniting for Peace” is a resolution the General Assembly passed in 1950, which states that if the Security Council fails to exercise its responsibility concerning a threat to international peace and security due to a “lack of unanimity of the permanent members,” the General Assembly will “consider the matter immediately to make appropriate recommendations to members for collective measures.” The Uniting for Peace Resolution says that if the General Assembly is not in session at the time, it may meet in an “emergency special session,” and that such a session can be requested by a majority of either the Security Council or the General Assembly. A Security Council resolution calling for an emergency special session of the General Assembly is a procedural resolution and thus not subject to the veto. As such, the Uniting for Peace Resolution describes a procedure by which a concerned majority of the Security Council may effectively transfer a matter to the General Assembly when the veto of one of the Council’s five permanent members prevents the Council itself from taking substantive action.

The resolution adopted after the April 2012 coup in Guinea-Bissau remains among the Council’s most robust responses in Africa and established a travel ban that would be applied against leading officers involved in the coup. In a briefing to the UN General Assembly in February 2021, the UN Special Envoy on Myanmar said: “If the numerous discussions here at the General Assembly and in the Security Council continue to fall short of a forceful and timely response, perhaps existing structures are indeed in need of reforms, in keeping with the times.”

Why This is Important:

Overthrowing a standing government is no new idea. Still, the increased rate of coups and violence has become what U.N. Secretary General António Guterres has described as “an epidemic of coup d’états.” Historically, the Security Council has not been proficient to responding to coups. Oisin Tansey is an expert in international diplomacy around military takeovers. He has observed that since the end of the Cold War, the Security Council has responded to less than a quarter of the international coups which have occurred. This has led him to label the Security Council’s response actions as “high selective” as they respond to some military coups but ignore others.

Issues to be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. When is a coup a natural part of a sovereign national governance versus warranting UN intervention?
2. How, or should, the UN recognize a new government in a country after a coup?

3. Should leaders who take power through armed insurrections be barred from addressing the United Nations?
4. How can the Security Council act effectively in situations where the personal interest of council states conflicts?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-07/in-hindsight-the-security-council-and-unconstitutional-changes-of-government-in-africa.php>

Websites

<https://www.justsecurity.org/74936/un-security-council-wont-respond-to-myanmars-coup-but-the-general-assembly-can/>

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/response-myanmar-coup-shows-need-un-reform>

<https://www.globalissues.org/news/2022/02/04/29995>

2023 TOPIC: WEAPONIZED FOOD

Topic Summary and Background:

Although the adoption of Resolution 2417 (2018) began the fight against food being used as a weapon, it is still crucial that we address the other impacts of food insecurity caused by conflict.

Agriculture is one of the keys to lasting peace and security, but the last five years have witnessed another spike in global levels of acute hunger. According to QU Dongyu, the director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “Between 2018 and 2021, the number of people in crises who live in countries where conflict was the main driver of acute food insecurity increased by a staggering 88 percent to over 139 million.”

Margot van der Velden, head of the Emergencies Department at the World Food Programme (WFP) notes that, “Conflict and insecurity are the main drivers of hunger, and in Ukraine, their combination is causing the fastest-growing humanitarian crisis in the world. If it continues unabated, up to 323 million people could face acute hunger in 2022. We need better regulations; there is still much to be done to integrate peace-building objectives into the creation of resilient food systems.”

Why This is Important:

“When war is waged, people go hungry,” said António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations stated as he addressed the Security Council in 2022. As noted by Guterres, sixty percent of the world’s undernourished people live in areas affected by conflict, and “when this Council debates conflict, you [the people] debate hunger,” he stressed. Furthermore, “and when you fail to reach consensus, hungry people pay a high price.”

A global food crisis, already impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, is being driven to famine levels worldwide by the war in Ukraine and the resulting lack of grain exports. As a result, the world is witnessing an increasing number of people living in food insecurity. Many of the current food crises are affected by or have an impact on violent conflicts. The most visible impact of violent conflicts on food security is the destruction of agricultural land, irrigation schemes, and infrastructure. In addition, displacement, and mass starvation due to violent conflict have adverse and often long-term effects on the food security of affected populations. Chronic food insecurity, in turn, can

become a decisive factor in prolonging or intensifying violent conflicts, instigating a vicious circle of violence and hunger.

In the past 60 years, hunger and famine have not been caused by inadequate food. Hunger and famine, like conflicts, are the result of political failures. Governments and international institutions have failed to listen to the most vulnerable communities and respond to their demands. Governments and international institutions have failed to cooperate and coordinate. This is why we are facing the threat of more famine and more armed conflict.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

Since 2018, new commissions have been created to investigate the use of starvation in specific cases. Also, there is growing engagement by the Human Rights Council and Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in conflict and hunger issues. In addition, the International Criminal Court's statute was amended to extend the Court's jurisdiction to the use of starvation in non-international conflicts.

Adopting Resolution 2417 (2018), Security Council Strongly Condemns the Starving of Civilians, Unlawfully Denying Humanitarian Access as Warfare Tactics. Unanimously adopting resolution 2417 (2018), the Council drew attention to the link between armed conflict and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine. It called on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians and on taking care to spare civilian objects, stressing that armed conflicts, violations of international law and related food insecurity could be drivers of forced displacement. Underlining the importance of safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflicts, it also strongly condemned the unlawful denial of such access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival — including willfully impeding relief supply and access for responses to conflict-induced food insecurity.

Issues to be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. What should the UN be doing to ensure the safe flow of food (when should they intervene and how)?
2. How does the UN respond to the overt destruction of agricultural land in conflicts?
3. Should we be reframing how we view weaponized food insecurity? If so, how?
4. What is the response to disruption weaponized food insecurity causes in the global market?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k10/k10mipv1u3>

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14894.doc.htm>

<https://www.wfp.org/stories/day-un-barred-using-hunger-and-starvation-weapons-war>

<https://press.un.org/en/2018/sc13354.doc.htm>

Website

<https://www.justsecurity.org/83173/framing-the-problem-of-hunger-and-conflict-at-the-un-security-council/>

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL



2023 TOPICS

**Economic Colonization
Water Scarcity & Accessibility**

2023 TOPIC: ECONOMIC COLONIZATION

Topic Summary and Background:

Prior to World War II, many countries around the world were colonized, meaning that a more powerful country took control over a less powerful country's government. As part of colonialism, the colonizing country would have control over the colonized country's economy, government, and people. During the 1950s and 1960s, many countries around the world which were under colonial rule began to gain independence. As countries gained their independence, a new form of colonialism began called neocolonialism.

Neocolonialism is when a country with power (usually a developed country) makes economic and political policies to indirectly maintain its influence over another country. An example of Neocolonialism is through loans. Powerful countries will be giving loans to a less powerful country, knowing that the less powerful country cannot pay back the loan. Other examples of neocolonialism powers include trade agreements where the more powerful country benefits greatly from the agreement over the less powerful country. Some of these benefits include forcing the use of a foreign currency and to dominate the banking policies and departments of the less powerful country. Politically the less powerful country might feel that they must agree with the policies of the more powerful country on an international level. Multinational companies, companies who operation in more than one country, also practice neocolonialism by placing factories in areas where labor costs are lower, or tax rates are lower.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

In Africa, corporations set up, particularly those from Europe and America, reveal economic exploitation and cultural domination. Today, more than one million Chinese are African residents, and Chinese investment in Africa exceeds 40 billion dollars. The United States is another country heavily invested in similar economic measures. In addition, growing countries such as China and India need to secure access to fuel and food to provide for their citizens, and neo-colonialism has been shown to allow them the influence to exchange access to these resources.

On May 18, 2015, former UN Secretary-General Ban K spoke at the Caribbean Regional Seminar on Decolonization. In his speech, former UN Secretary-General that, "since the birth of the United Nations, more than 80 nations once under colonial rule, with some 750 million inhabitants, were now sovereign Member States." He also stated that, "The international community had an obligation to ensure that a full measure of self-government was achieved in the remaining Territories" and encouraged all the countries in attendance

to continue working towards the fulfillment of the “noble goal” before 2020, which would mark the end of the Third International Decade of decolonization.

During the 1950s and 1960s, An All-African People’s Conference (AAPC) was formed by political groups from the different countries in Africa which were under colonial control. It was at 1961 conference where neocolonialism was given an official definition. The official definition stated, “the deliberate and continued survival of the colonial system in independent African states, by turning these states into victims of political, mental, economic, social, military, and technical forms of domination carried out through indirect and subtle means that did not include direct violence.”

Previous resolutions, such as Resolution 1514 called for the unconditional end to all forms of colonialism while other resolutions such as Resolution 43/47 Resolution 55/146, declared international decades for the end of colonialism. The General Assembly adopted Resolution 65/119 in 2010, which declared 2011-2020 the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Why This is Important:

Many former colonized states are structurally and economically weak, and superpowers often attempt to impose policies upon these states to their benefit. The Oxford English Dictionary defines neo-colonialism as a word which describes when former dependency uses pressures such as economic, political, cultural, or other to influence other countries. Our focus will be on the economic aspect. As decolonization spread throughout the world and countries gained their independence, many countries chose to join the United Nations. Even as independent nations, the colonizer’s influence is still present in the day to day lives of the people to live in the country. The economic systems created and implemented by the colonizing countries have allowed for continued exploration in the smaller countries. Many countries and organizations have become involved in this issue. Still, such powers have failed to solve the problem entirely, signaling that a massive group effort may be expected for us to overcome this worldwide matter.

Neo-colonialism can be damaging to a country because it does not allow the country to develop in way that benefits them nationally, but also within their geographic region. It has also been stated that the economic exploitation of a country, which is a part of neo-colonialism, also leads to cultural domination of the people within the country.

Issues to be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. How can we better distinguish economic support and free trade against economic colonization?
Should countries and corporations be subjected to different standards regarding their financial involvement?
2. How do we counteract current instances of eco-colonialism? How do we support nations already affected/reliant?
3. What are the major factors that make countries vulnerable to eco-colonialism?
4. How can local governing be strengthened in countries that are being subject to Eco-colonialism to eradicate future dependency?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIq061CTxvs> (United Nations video)

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en>

Websites

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Introduction_to_Sociology/Book%3A_Sociology_\(Boundless\)/08%3A_Global_Stratification_and_Inequality/8.03%3A_Stratification_in_the_World_System/8.3A%3A_Colonialism_and_Neocolonialism](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Introduction_to_Sociology/Book%3A_Sociology_(Boundless)/08%3A_Global_Stratification_and_Inequality/8.03%3A_Stratification_in_the_World_System/8.3A%3A_Colonialism_and_Neocolonialism)

<https://www.e-ir.info/2018/12/02/china-in-africa-a-form-of-neo-colonialism/>

<https://trevormolaq.medium.com/neo-colonialism-in-the-modern-age-39138aaf2d82>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIGZb0D-IY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzHbLOByeLY> – (Crash Course Geography) first 5 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaoX5xsq-EU> (short definition of neo-colonialism)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ4_xBjUEtw (A.P. Human Geography Mr. Sinn)

2023 TOPIC: WATER SCARCITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Topic Summary and Background:

Water scarcity exists where the demand exceeds the supply, and available water resources are approaching or have exceeded sustainable limits. Water scarcity can either be physical or economic. Decades of misuse, poor management, over-extraction of groundwater, and contamination of freshwater supplies have also exacerbated water stress. In addition, countries are facing growing challenges linked to degraded water-related ecosystems, water scarcity caused by climate change, underinvestment in water and sanitation, and insufficient cooperation on transboundary waters. Inherently, water is poorly managed, wasted, and polluted, and the uneven distribution of this necessity proves to be a major problem in the international community. For example, Pakistan is facing a severe water shortage, with experts saying the country could run out of water by 2040 if authorities do not take long-term measures to deal with the problem. Furthermore, the Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that by 2025, 800 million people will be living in countries with absolute water scarcity and that two-thirds of the world's population could be under stress conditions.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that, for the fulfillment of the human right to water, water must be sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable. 'Enough' means that there must be enough water to fulfill the needs of a human in a day, which is between 50 and 100 liters per day. 'Safe' means that the water must adhere to the WHO guidelines for clean drinking water, absent of chemicals or sickness-inducing contents. Furthermore, WHO says that, "water must also be of an acceptable color, odor, and taste to ensure that individuals will not resort to polluted alternatives that may look more attractive." Water needs to be accessible to all, and water needs to be affordable. Water is a human right, and not being able to pay for it is not essential to whether a human being has enough water.

UN-Water is a United Nations body that addresses water-related movements to contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development goals. UN-Water is responsible for collecting information about water sanitation measures in various regions, compiling reports to inform others on steps that can be taken to preserve and purify water, maintaining ad hoc task forces, and planning World Day for Water to raise awareness regarding water sanitation.

Why This is Important:

The ability to access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene is the most basic human need for health and well-being, and water scarcity holds significant implications for all citizens around the globe, even those who do not live in water-scarce nations. Around 1.1 billion people around the world have limited access to clean, purified water, whereas 2.4 billion people do not have access to *any* water sanitation facility. The demand for water is rising due to rapid population growth, urbanization, and increasing water needs from agriculture, industry, and energy sectors.

To provide clean, fresh water, it is necessary for water resources to be easily affordable and available to people. If water is not adequately purified and distributed, individuals will be more prone to diseases and illnesses. At the current rates of progress, 1.6 billion people will lack safely managed drinking water, 2.8 billion people will lack safely managed sanitation, and 1.9 billion people will lack basic hand hygiene facilities in 2030, according to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. With unprecedented pressure on these renewable but finite water resources, the United Nations needs to work to combat water scarcity moving forward.

Issues to be Addressed in a Resolution:

- 1) How does water accessibility happen? Does water accessibility happen equally/equitably?
- 2) How do we help countries have the means to implement necessary improvements and invest in new sources of water supply?
- 3) How does the privatization of water supplies and infrastructure impact the human right to safe drinking water?
- 4) With safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right, what responsibility do States, and the private sector have to protect the natural environment and their natural water supplies?
- 5) How do we increase the efficiency of water use?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/water>

<https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/water-scarcity>

Websites

<https://unqlobalcompact.org/take-action/20th-anniversary-campaign/we-must-act-now-to-avert-global-water-crisis>

<https://www.unicef.org/media/95241/file/water-security-for-all.pdf>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/worrying-insights-un-s-first-ever-assessment-water-security-africa>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCKsU4bPFOQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/sNeruPqUIac>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyzvcrZluf0>

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



2023 TOPICS

**Protecting Human Rights on the Internet
Ukraine Refugees**



2023 TOPIC: PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE INTERNET

Topic Summary and Background:

Recently, activism on the internet, through means such as social media platforms, has been an instrumental tool for change. As the Internet has been increasingly used to share information, some governments across the world have restricted access to maintain control. The spread of misinformation and hate speech have also provided reasons for government intervention on the internet. Mass surveillance is also a form of censorship, since many activists actively self-censor when they know that the authorities are listening in on all their communications.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

The Internet Rights & Principles Dynamic Coalition (IRPC) was formed in 2008 at the International Governance Forum. The IRPC is made of individuals and organizations from across the world. The goal of the IRPC is to work to uphold human rights in the online environment. The IRPC is based at the UN Internet Governance Forum. The UN Internet Governance Forum is forum for government, business, and civil society groups to gather to in one space to talk about common points of concern that fall under the category of internet governance.

In July 2016 the U.N. issued a declaration, cementing this view. The resolution indicates the importance of "applying a comprehensive human rights-based approach when providing and expanding access to the internet and for the internet to be open, accessible and nurtured". Executive Director of civil liberties group Thomas Hughes spoke on the declaration said, "the resolution is a much-needed response to increased pressure on freedom of expression online in all parts of the world."

Why This is Important:

As the world continues to become more reliant and interconnected through the Internet, we must take the time to consider the ways in which the role of human rights intersects with the growing online environment. In the ever-changing environment of the online community, it is important to develop a set of rules and regulations to navigate the rights of people on the internet, and more so, how to protect these rights in this developing space. Creating a structure revolving around how the International Bill of Human Rights should account for and be applied to these changing dynamics of the internet is a growing issue for the UN to address.

Issues to be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. To what degree can sovereign nations decide what is allowed to be shared through the internet?
2. How can the UN negate human rights abuses on the internet?
3. How do we censor our hate speech and things that go against human rights without violating the rights of others in the process?

Resource:

UN Resources

<https://www.article19.org/resources/un-human-rights-council-adopts-resolution-on-human-rights-on-the-internet/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Opinion/Communications/InternetPrinciplesAndRightsCoalition.pdf>

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/government-policy-internet-must-be-rights-based-and-user-centred>

Websites

https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/global5?qclid=CjwKCAiA68ebBhB-EiwALVC-Nr8Tx3wuB85fbr4KQSDNvQzzD9TONn0qUfsHiH0T7UYw2ut_7zbRoxoCx6oQAvD_BwE

[COVID-19 exposes why access to the internet is a human right | OpenGlobalRights](#)

[Why Internet Access Needs to Be Considered a Basic Human Right \(globalcitizen.org\)](#)

Videos

[Is The Internet A Right Or A Privilege? - YouTube](#)

2023 TOPIC: UKRAINE REFUGEES

Topic Summary and Background:

According to the United Nations, it is estimated that 12 million people inside Ukraine will need relief and protection. The United Nations also believes that over 4 million Ukrainian refugees who live in countries neighboring Ukraine may need protection and assistance. In response, The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is delivering core relief items, such as emergency shelters, thermal blankets, and sleeping mats, as well as providing specialist protection services for children traveling alone and people with disabilities. As the crisis continues to unfold, different organizations have taken different responses striving to assist and combat the growing crisis. Ultimately, refugee crises impact countries across the world differently and unequally, which is why the UN must assist these countries taking in this new influx of refugees as well as assist these new refugees themselves.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

According to The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website, “The UNHCR is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for people forced to leave their homes because of conflict and persecution.” One goal of the UNHCR is to lead action on an international level to protect people who are members of forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. The UNHCR mandate is to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and to resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its main purpose is to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of refugees. On March 4, 2022, the European Union (EU) activated the temporary protection direction, with hopes to alleviate pressure on national asylum systems and to allow displaced persons to enjoy harmonized rights across the EU as well. This unprecedented emergency implementation has allowed Ukrainian refugees to reside, seek employment, and attend school in the EU for three years, with no official approval necessary.

Why This is Important:

The war in Ukraine is constantly evolving, and the escalation of this international armed conflict has forced millions of people to flee their homes to seek safety, protection, and assistance. As the crisis unfolds, the UN is delivering emergency aid and assistance to people across Ukraine and neighboring areas — particularly women, children, elderly people, and those with disabilities. The current crisis in Ukraine has created the greatest refugee surge to countries who are part of the Organization for Economic-Co-operation

and Development (OECD) countries since World War II. Since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia began in February 2022, it has led over 5.3 million refugees across Europe. In March 2022, the United Nations estimated that nearly one Ukrainian child per second had become a refugee, translating to over two million children by the end of March.

In search of safety and a better life, these refugees are risking everything to escape conflict, often leaving with nothing but the clothes on their back. Many refugees, especially children, have experienced trauma related to war or persecution that may affect their mental and physical health long after the events occurred. As the war in Ukraine continues to unfold, it is forcing more people to flee their homes in search of safety and exacerbating the growing refugee crisis.

Issues to be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. Should there be established quotas for how many Ukrainian refugees should countries take in? How can we assist these host countries receiving the extra influx of refugees during this crisis?
2. Looking at prior refugee crises, how can we learn from these and use to address the long-term impact of the Ukraine refugee crisis?
3. How can the UN better assist with resettlement of refugees from Ukraine, and what would that look like?
4. While emergency initiatives have been taken to assist with the refugee crisis, what are the long-term ramifications, and how can the UN most effectively assist these countries and refugees through this process?

Resources:

United Nations Websites

[Ukraine refugees: Eager to work but need greater support | UN News](#)

[UN agency urges EU to build on Ukraine refugee experience – EURACTIV.com](#)

[How the UN is Supporting the People of Ukraine | unfoundation.org](#)

[Ukraine Emergency: Aid, Statistics and News | USA for UNHCR \(unrefugees.org\)](#)

Websites

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

[EU solidarity with Ukraine - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

Videos & Podcasts

“The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis & UNHCR Intervention” Podcast

https://ia902207.us.archive.org/28/items/yayboke-pod/Yayboke_pod.mp3

ABC News Story

[UN reports over 2 million refugees have fled Ukraine - YouTube](#)



GLOBAL FORUM



2023 TOPIC

Feeding the World



2023 TOPIC: FEEDING THE WORLD

MISSION OF THE GLOBAL FORUM

The Global Forum is an official body of the United Nations. Since its organization in 1999, the Global Forum has served as a sounding block for governments across the world to come together and take a deep dive into specific topic areas. Since the first Forum on “Reinventing Government”, other topics taken into consideration have been “Building trust in Government”, and “E-Government”. The Global Forum mainly tackles the workings of government and how they can do more for citizens in accordance with the values of the UN, but also on how to make the government more accessible to average citizens. The Global Forum is held on location throughout the world to bring together leaders in settings that provide context for the mission at hand. The Forum also looks through the lenses of committees, such as economics and education, to see solutions at different levels of the problem.

Global Forum is calling upon member nations to work through challenges to find permanent solutions to the topic, which will be looked at by the eyes of several committees: Economics, Education, Diplomacy, Human Condition, and Security. Each of these committees will look through their own, respective lenses to address the problem.

To that end, Global Forum functions differently than the Organs and Committees. Its work requires thinking and working together, like Organs and Committees, but Its outcomes are very different. This group will work using different processes to examine the year’s topic through 5 different lenses and will Issue a deep-dive report with Its recommendations on how the world can address the topic. The report will be presented to the conference at the closing session and published for everyone to read post-conference.

Topic Summary and Background:

The world is currently facing a food crisis of unprecedented proportions. With a crisis largely driven by conflict, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 brought increasing challenges to the table. Amidst this global food crisis, as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night, and the number of those facing acute food insecurity has soared—from 135 million to 345 million—since 2019.

The number of people going hungry and suffering from food insecurity had been gradually rising between 2014 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis has pushed those rising rates even higher, and has also exacerbated all forms of malnutrition, particularly in children. The war in Ukraine is further disrupting global food supply chains and creating the biggest global food crisis since the Second World War.

The United Nations defines hunger as an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. Within the UN, food is at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN's development agenda for the 21st century. The UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 is about creating a world free hunger by 2030, stating that the goal is to "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture." Furthermore, the World Food Program (WFP) aims to bring food assistance to more than 80 million people in 80 countries, and is continually responding to emergencies, helping to prevent hunger in the future as well. Despite some progress, most indicators are not on track to meet global nutrition targets. The food security and nutritional status of the most vulnerable population groups is likely to deteriorate further due to the health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 report.

The United Nations Secretary-General also launched the Zero-Hunger Challenge in 2012 during the Rio+20 World Conference on Sustainable Development. The Zero Hunger Challenge was launched to inspire a global movement towards a world free from hunger within a generation. Furthermore, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) main purpose is to make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, health lives. Achieving food security for all is at the heart of the efforts of FAO.

GLOBAL FORUM COMMITTEES

Economics

Globally the need for food is extremely high, but the number of resources to meet that need is at its lowest. The World Food Program (WFP) requires \$22.2 billion to reach 160 million people in 2022. The WFP's monthly operating costs are \$73.6 million above their 2019 average—a staggering 44 percent rise. However, with the global economy reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap between needs and funding is bigger than ever before.

Investment in agriculture and rural development to boost food production and nutrition is a priority for the World Bank Group. This group works with partners to improve food security and build a food system that can feed everyone, everywhere, every day. Furthermore, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has focused exclusively on rural poverty reduction, working with poor rural populations in developing countries to eliminate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, raise their productivity and incomes, and improve the quality of their lives.

Feeding the world requires the financial assistance to launch this initiative. *In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the global economy, how can the UN work to offset the increasing needs through different economic and financial organizations and systems?*

Education

Education plays a significant role in food security as well. The United Nations recognized when developing the Sustainable Development Goals, that education would be the foundation on which the success of all these goals is built, especially the goal regarding food security. School feeding programs have demonstrated the potential to improve literacy outcomes by reducing short-term hunger, improving attentiveness, and increasing attendance. Inherently, the investment in education may also be an investment in food security for many places.

How can education and schools ensure food security for children/those in the education system? How can different educational systems play a role in helping assist with food security/insecurity? How can we reduce disparities in education in conjunction with disparities in food security and nutrition?

Diplomacy

Food is a factor in international diplomacy and has always been a key issue in politics and international relations, influencing directly or indirectly diplomatic relations. Food diplomacy is crucial to mitigating the effects of the food crisis. In conjunction, effective political diplomacy is needed to prevent and resolve conflict, which is ever connected in fueling the food crisis issue. More than enough food is produced around the world to feed the global population, but as many as 811 million people still go hungry.

Increased diplomatic relationships and energy can help spark movements to address these issues. For instance, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, told the UN General Assembly that, "One year ago, the international political situation was bad. It was bad because there was no multilateral response to the food crisis." Fakhri also added, "I can tell you, in last year's resolution on the right to food you gave the world hope...it was like you gave the world the green light it needed to dedicate more political and diplomatic energy to addressing the food crisis." With governments reaffirming their commitments to the right to food, it helps inspire and galvanize the world to cooperate and tackle the food crisis together. Ultimately, this food crisis of unprecedented measures cannot be resolved without high levels of diplomatic cooperation throughout the UN and countries across the world working together in unity.

What steps should the UN take to ensure and establish higher levels of "food diplomacy" across countries? What would that look like? How can increased, or new, levels of diplomacy help counteract the food crisis?

Human Condition

Since humans have lived on this planet, food has been central to our social being. The production, consumption, and narrating of the meaning of food has been, and continues to be, fundamental to every family, community, ethnic grouping, religion, nation, and civilization across the world.

Food is a way we as humans can define ourselves socially and culturally and remains important as to how we define ourselves in our different societies. For example, the United States would be able to survive and bounce back during a potato famine, but for a country such as Ireland, where the potato is a staple food in their culture or diet, a potato famine is devastating. The relationship between food security and human security is incredibly interconnected and relies on the idea of the right to adequate food as a fundamental human right, leaving no person behind.

How is food a human right? How can the UN and countries in the UN work to acknowledge and ensure food as a basic human right amidst the food crisis? Does defining food as a basic human right change how we look and understand food and a food crisis?

Security

Conflict is still the biggest driver of hunger, with 60 percent of the world's hungry living in areas afflicted by war and violence. Events in Ukraine are further proof of how conflict feeds hunger, forcing people out of their homes and wiping out their sources of income. The ripple effects of the Russian-Ukraine conflict are driving rising prices of food, fuel, and fertilizer. In May 2022, the UN Security Council met to decry the use of food as a weapon of war, saying that, "Let there be no doubt: When this council debates conflict, you debate hunger. When you make decisions about peacekeeping and political missions, you make decisions about hunger. And when you fail to reach a consensus, hungry people pay a high price," UN Secretary General António Guterres told the Security Council. The war in Ukraine is further disrupting global food supply chains and is creating the biggest global food crisis since the Second World War.

How can the United Nations ensure the prevention of weaponized food insecurity during crises? What does food security look like, and what steps can the UN take to ensure this amidst growing conflicts?

RESOURCES

UN Articles

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/food>

<https://unric.org/en/i-am-hungry-what-does-it-mean/>

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/feeding-world-sustainably>

<https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/covid-19-and-higher-education-addressing-food-insecurity-through-community>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1131127>

UN Sustainable Development Goals

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/#:~:text=Sustainable%20Development%20Goal%20%20is,million%20more%20than%20in%202019.>

World Food Program Articles

<https://www.wfp.org/global-hunger-crisis>

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/wfp-scales-support-most-vulnerable-global-food-crisis>

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/war-ukraine-drives-global-food-crisis>

Weaponized Food Article

<https://www.devex.com/news/un-security-council-decries-weaponized-food-crisis-russia-passes-blame-103257>

The Hunger Project Article

<https://thp.org/what-we-do/issues/education/>

News Articles

<https://www.onuitalia.com/2022/09/15/food-security-italy-at-the-un-for-food-diplomacy-crucial-to-mitigate-food-crisis/>

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/development-policy/news/un-report-women-s-education-key-to-food-security/>

World Hunger Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ke06QUfOeTE>

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



MONDALE GA COMMITTEES

(Grades 9 – 12)

Political & Security

Economic & Financial

Social, Humanitarian & Cultural

Legal

Special Political

Administrative

ANDERSON GA COMMITTEES

(Grades 7 – 8)

Political & Security

Economic & Financial

Social, Humanitarian & Cultural



POLITICAL & SECURITY COMMITTEE



2023 TOPICS

**Journalists in Conflict Zones
Election Legitimacy & Oversight**

2023 TOPIC: JOURNALISTS IN CONFLICT ZONES

Topic Summary and Background:

While international humanitarian law provides journalists the same protections as civilians in war, but there are still increased risks when the countries involved in the conflict do not follow the same standards. Impunity (the exemption from punishment or consequences of an action) for crimes against journalists runs rampant. This continuous lack of punishment only fuels further violence against the press, especially when the free flow of news is increasingly valuable. Impunity leads to more killings of journalists it is often a symptom of worsening conflict and the breakdown of both law and judicial systems. Between 2006 and 2020, over 1,200 journalists were killed around the world. In those instances, 9 out of 10 cases remain unresolved. The lack of protections for journalists in conflict zones prevent them from fully being able to perform their job and successfully report freely. This trend often forces journalists to engage in self-censorship because they fear for their life.

Why This is Important:

Today, it is not just what happens around the world, but what gets noticed by the public, that matters. Journalists play a crucial role around the world, shaping international and domestic agenda by recording events and bringing them to the forefront of public attention. While journalists can shine a spotlight on the reality of warzones, this role often comes with a price. War reporters today face a significant number of challenges in the field, from dangers to their own personal security, to working in a high-risk environment. The importance of press coverage of armed conflicts, especially, cannot be overstated.

Journalists on duty in the battlefield face extreme danger, sometimes like that faced by members of the armed forces. In armed conflicts, journalists are often subject to attacks, kidnapping, and torture, but these crimes frequently go unpunished. Women journalists also disproportionately face more attacks than male journalists. While in the field, women journalists are being affected by more gender-specific violence. Overall, the safety of journalists is one of the cornerstones of freedom of expression, and countries must work together to ensure the protection of these people.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

The UN has found protecting the rights of these journalists increasingly difficult, though it has made important progress. The United Nations Security Council passed a 2006 resolution that condemned attacks on journalists and associated media personnel and called for an end to the lack of punishment for these crimes. The UN has also established a "Plan of Action" on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The plan aims to

create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, thus strengthening peace, democracy, and sustainable development worldwide. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) has also proclaimed November 2nd as the 'International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.' While the UN has increasingly called for an end, this issue persists, risking the lives of journalists worldwide.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. What does, or should, protection of journalists look like in conflict zones?
2. What is a conflict zone?
3. How can/should journalists be distinguished in war zones?
4. How can the UN ensure judiciary action for these crimes against journalists? How should international courts and states strive to end impunity?
5. What measures should states put in place to enhance the safety of journalists and enable them to carry out their profession?

Resources:

Videos

<https://youtu.be/VuQTq2Ej6q8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=th7h4ifyimU>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0C_oD6cbJD0

UN Articles

<https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/reporting-front-lines-keeping-journalists-safe-war-zones>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/not-a-target-the-need-to-reinforce-the-safety-of-journalists-covering-conflicts>

<https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/un-plan-action>

Websites

<https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/safety-women-journalists>

<https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists>

<https://ipi.media/impunity-for-crimes-against-journalists-remains-high/>

<https://casebook.icrc.org/case-study/protection-journalists#:~:text=Article%2079%20formally%20states%20that,civilians%20under%20international%20humanitarian%20law.>

2023 TOPIC: ELECTION LEGITIMACY & OVERSIGHT

Topic Summary and Background:

As global democracy weakens, so does electoral legitimacy. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, half of democratic governments around the world are in decline, with problems such as distrust in the legitimacy of elections and the undermining of credible elections contributing to the problem. In conjunction with the decline in democracy, authoritarian and hybrid regimes are solidifying their presence on the world stage. Hybrid regimes are governing systems that combine attributes of both democratic and authoritarian governments and are categorized by regular electoral fraud that prevents them from being a free and fair democracy. Although these governments hold elections, they utilize democratic characteristics such as holding elections to disguise themselves as a fair and free democracy, which can be seen in Viktor Orbán's Hungary. Overall, as the downward trend in democracy continues across the world from electoral fraud and illegitimacy to faltering confidence in elections, the issue of electoral illegitimacy and oversight increases.

Demand for United Nations electoral assistance is growing, as is the duration and complexity of operations. Electoral observation, once a core activity in early United Nations support, is now rare, and technical assistance has grown exponentially. The UN is a trusted impartial actor providing electoral assistance to approximately 60 countries each year.

Why This is Important:

Democracy is a core value of the United Nations. While the UN does not advocate for a specific model of government, it does promote democratic governance as a set of values and principles that should be followed for a greater participation, equality, security, and human development. Elections are an essential component of democracy, and they allow the citizens of a country hold their government accountable for their actions. Elections also allow for a peaceful transition of power within the government. The most fundamental principle defining credible elections is that they must reflect the free expression of the will of the people. To achieve this, elections should be transparent, inclusive, and accountable, and there must be equitable opportunities to compete in the elections. Unfortunately, elections often fall short of these ideals. This can be seen through voter discrimination, electoral fraud, digital election interference/cyberattacks on elections, the spread of misinformation in the confidence of electoral legitimacy, and many other issues that prevent the execution of free and fair elections. When elections and electoral legitimacy are weakened through these measures, it prevents people the chance to properly elect a representative government, ultimately weakening the core of democracy.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. How does the UN determine a standard for electoral legitimacy? What would that look like?
2. When it comes to elections in hybrid and authoritarian regimes, should the UN be permitted to intervene to ensure fair and free elections?
3. At what point should the UN step in to prevent electoral illegitimacy?
4. How can the UN work to combat other factors of electoral illegitimacy, such as technical electoral interference or misinformation with confidence in elections and democracy?
5. How can the UN assist with combating the global decline in democracies?

Resources

Videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r11ebp_wclY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1tXjJobjfs>

Freedom House Resources

[Explore the Map | Freedom House](#)

[Digital Election Interference | Freedom House](#)

UN Resources

[OHCHR and elections and human rights | OHCHR](#)

Websites

[Supporting Free and Fair Elections | Democracy, Human Rights & Governance | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](#)

[Elections: a global ranking rates US weakest among liberal democracies — The Electoral Integrity Project EIP](#)

[Global Democracy Weakens in 2022 | International IDEA](#)

[Hybrid Regime - ECPS \(populismstudies.org\)](#)

[Elections and Government Legitimacy in Fragile States \(giga-hamburg.de\)](http://giga-hamburg.de)

[Misinformation is eroding the public's confidence in democracy \(brookings.edu\)](http://brookings.edu)

[Understanding and Responding to Global Democratic Backsliding - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL COMMITTEE



2023 TOPICS

**Compensation for Colonialism
Global Debt Crisis**

2023 TOPIC: COMPENSATION FOR COLONIALISM

Topic Summary and Background:

The immense economic inequality we observe in the world today did not happen overnight or even in the past century. It is the outcome of a multitude of historical processes, one of the most important of which has been European colonialism. The definition of colonialism is, “control by one power over a dependent area or people.” When a country is colonized, the people in the colony are concurred and the concurring country will force their language and the values of their culture on the concurred people. Because of the pervasiveness of these colonial legacies, many postcolonial states have called on their former colonial powers to issue reparations to make amends for these past injustices and help them solve subsequent problems that have emerged as a result of colonialism. Reparations have become a common legal means of recognizing and addressing the impact of crimes against individuals, groups, and even entire countries. Over the years, reparations have taken on many forms depending on the context but typically constitute a combination of formal apologies, financial compensation to the victims, and an establishment of social/economic programs to address problems that have emerged as a direct result of these crimes and to prevent future occurrences

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

When the United Nations was founded in 1945, around 750 million people, nearly a third of the world’s population, lived in Territories that were dependent on colonial powers. Today, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remain, and fewer than 2 million people live in them. Despite this wave of decolonization, the effects of colonization are still felt in many countries to this day. Colonialism’s impact is still felt today in the most racist attitudes against descendants of colonized peoples and in the poverty and underdevelopment in many postcolonial states. In a joint initiative over recent years, African countries are renewing their efforts to obtain reparations from European countries for the transatlantic slave trade and other colonial-era wrongs committed centuries ago. Although there has been very little progress, Germany agreed in 2021 to pay Namibia \$1.3 billion in reparation for a genocide committed during its colonial-era occupation of the country.

Overall, the United Nations can play an important role in the debate on whether former colonial powers should issue reparations to postcolonial states. Although the UN cannot force any binding decision regarding reparations on its member states, the UN is in a strategic position to bring the discussion of colonial reparations to the world stage.

Why This is Important:

Throughout history, large empires have risen and fallen, colonizing over half the world, and hugely impacting history. Colonial powers have created a monumental shift globally. In the wake of their removal, many past colonies have struggled to recover financially, culturally, and politically, costing their citizens an enormous decrease in living standards. Reparations have become a standard legal means of rectifying past injustices against an individual, group, or entire country. The practice of colonialism, which has dominated the modern era, resulted in some of the most brutal injustices against colonized peoples. Nevertheless, the legality of postcolonial reparations has been brought into question by most former colonial powers. It's argued that colonialism and actions taken under colonial rule were not explicitly illegal at the time they were committed and, thus, cannot be judged by today's legal standards. Furthermore, too much time has passed since these crimes were committed, and current governments and their people cannot be held accountable for the actions taken by governments during the colonial era. Compensation for colonialism remains a divisive topic on the world stage as developing countries still struggle with the lingering effects of colonialism.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. If there were any reparations from colonial powers, what would they look like? What would those conditions/circumstances look like?
2. Are current governments responsibly and should be held accountable for previous actions of colonialism?
3. To what extent are nations/former colonial powers expected to be held accountable for their pasts? Should these countries be paying a tax to these nations?
4. Should developed nations be made to create infrastructure for their former colonies, or would these practices cross into dangerous colonial territory once again?
5. Is there a way for these former colonial powers and developed nations to help these developing, colonized countries rebuild in other ways?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/10/un-human-rights-expert-calls-states-make-reparations-colonialism-and-slavery>

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization>

Websites

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/27/world/americas/colonial-reparations.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/28/arts/design/france-benin-restitution.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/28/world/europe/germany-namibia-genocide.html>

<https://www.dw.com/en/africa-revives-push-for-colonial-era-reparations/a-62710366>

<https://equalshope.org/index.php/2022/01/13/the-role-of-aid-in-reparations-for-the-harm-of-colonialism/>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/colonialism>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzHbL0ByeLY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp3CIAYqyp8>

2023 TOPIC: GLOBAL DEBT CRISIS

Topic Summary and Background:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank jointly strive to foster debt transparency and support countries in strengthening their capacity to report and manage their debt. The presence of the World Bank and IMF in developing countries date back as early as the 1960s. Having similar structure and membership, both institutions attempt to provide more stability and certainty for the globalized world economy by providing technical and financial assistance to developing countries and to those nations struggling with economic and financial difficulties. Although the IMF claims that poverty reduction is one of its objectives, some studies show that IMF borrower countries experience higher rates of poverty. The most important function of the IMF is its ability to provide loans to member nations in need of a bailout. Many critiques of the IMF argue that the loan arrangements when lending money contain conditions and structural reforms that contribute to more people getting trapped in the cycle of poverty. These conditions include prescribed economic policies, to which borrowing governments must comply. Overall, the IMF and World Bank play a significant role in the global economy and assisting with both short-term and long-term goals for economic growth and prosperity but is also plagued with critiques that these organizations do more harm than good for many developing member countries.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

The IMF was created after World War II to manage the global exchange rates and international payments. In 1973, fixed exchange rates collapsed causing the IMF to take more active role. The IMF now intervenes in debt crises in developing countries and developed countries such as Greece. It is also responding to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. Debt relief is part of a larger effort to address the development needs of low-income countries. The IMF and World Bank launched the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in 1996 to ensure that no poor country faces an unmanageable debt load. In 2005, to accelerate progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the HIPC Initiative was supplemented by the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. This allows countries completing the HIPC Initiative process to receive 100 percent relief on eligible debts by the IMF, the World Bank, and the African Development Fund.

Why This is Important:

Over the last decade, developing countries have experienced the largest and fastest period of debt accumulation in the past 50 years. A debt crisis is a situation in which a country is unable to pay back its government debt. In addition, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have caused global debt to soar, reaching unprecedented levels in recent

years. Although significant steps have been taken to prevent the debt crises across the world sparked by the pandemic, they have not been sufficient to restore economic stability in many developing countries. As debt burdens rise, developing country governments end up in a vicious cycle, unable to invest in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and grow their economies, making it even harder to pay their debts.

The UN Development Program (UNDP) declares that the 54 countries with severe debt problems include 28 of the world's top 50 most climate-vulnerable nations. According to the UNDP, without action, poverty will rise, and desperately needed investments in climate adaptation and mitigation will not happen. "Debt relief would be a small pill for wealthy countries to swallow, yet the cost of inaction is brutal for the world's poorest. We cannot afford to repeat the mistake of providing too little relief too late in the managing of the developing debt burden," said Achim Steiner, the UNDP Administrator. Inherently, the looming global debt crisis poses a dangerous ripple effect onto other prominent international issues, with combatting the climate crisis at the forefront.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. What role should more developed nations play in assisting in the global debt crisis?
2. Is every nation responsible for helping with this, and are nations responsible in the same, equitable way?
3. What would a global debt deal look like? What roles do wealthier nations, developing nations, and the IMF and World Bank play into it?
4. How do which countries contribute to creating IMF policies impact how the organizations function, and how does that impact the global debt crisis?
 - a. Ex: Power imbalances and representation of the global north versus the global south in these organizations

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129427>

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/debt-and-covid-19>

<https://unctad.org/news/world-leaders-call-stronger-multilateral-solutions-debt-crisis>

<https://unctad.org/news/world-leaders-call-stronger-multilateral-solutions-debt-crisis>

<https://www.undp.org/press-releases/50-percent-worlds-poorest-need-debt-relief-now-avert-major-systemic-development-crisis-warns-un-development-programme>

Videos

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WG72yk60tbA>

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Websites

<https://www.idos-research.de/en/the-current-column/article/why-developing-countries-are-facing-a-renewed-debt-crisis-1/>

<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/12/12/riding-the-global-debt-rollercoaster>

<https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2022/IMF-World-Bank-New#:~:text=Their%20approaches%20to%20achieving%20this,economic%20development%20and%20poverty%20reduction>

<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/377151575650737178-0050022019/original/DebtChapter1.pdf>

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN, & CULTURAL COMMITTEE



2023 TOPICS

**Digital Divide in Education
Reproductive Healthcare and Access**

2023 TOPIC: DIGITAL DIVIDE IN EDUCATION

Topic Summary and Background:

According to a United Nations Development Programme article published in 2021, “Around 60 percent of the world’s population is now online, but most of these people are in developed countries. In less-developed countries, only one in five people are online.” Broadband (or high-speed) internet access is a powerful tool used to connect the world, which is available, accessible, relevant, and affordable, but also that is safe, trusted, user-empowering and leads to a positive impact. Unfortunately, there are billions of people in the developing world still without Internet access.

The digital divide is a term given to the gap between people who have sufficient knowledge of and access to technology, and those who do not. In education, this divide is often referred to as the “homework gap” because of the challenges that students in technology-deficient circumstances face. These challenges were largely highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic when classrooms were pushed into the online environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the already pre-existing risks to academic success. It also brought to light the inequalities, which have been negatively impacting children, especially the most vulnerable such as children living in low income, females, and those with disabilities. The impact has also been devastating on refugee learners, who often do not have adequate access to digital infrastructure, devices, or connectivity.

The digital divide is continuously sustaining the inequalities between countries and communities worldwide. For example, worldwide, 58 percent of school-age children from the richest households have an internet connection at home. That is compared 16 percent of students from the poorest households who have internet connection at home. The situation is also similar between urban and rural populations as well as high and low-income countries. The UN must work to bridge these inequalities and make education a possibility for children across the world, working to educate future generations.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

The United Nations is aligned behind Secretary-General António Guterres’s support for universal connectivity by 2030, as highlighted through the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has also worked on extending connectivity to remote areas and vulnerable populations for many years and supports

digital livelihoods for women. Furthermore, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development has launched new framework of targets to achieve for 2025, in support of “Connecting the Other Half” of the world’s population. These targets seek to expand broadband infrastructure and Internet access and use by populations around the world, in support of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations.

Why This is Important:

Digital technology is advancing at an incredibly rapid pace across the world—but it is not happening evenly. Worldwide, there are 1.3 billion children ages 3-17 do not have internet connection in their home. For those with no internet access, education can be out of reach since students will miss delivery of educational content and miss learning digital skills needed for our evolving worldwide economy.

This massive number is “more than a digital gap—it is a digital canyon,” said Henrietta Fore, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director. To educate the future generation of the world more equitably, we must bridge this digital divide and expand broadband internet access in this growing technological age.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. What are the different digital needs within a country?
2. How can the UN accommodate different digital needs and help more equally and equitably spread long-lasting technological advancements?
3. In pandemic recovery efforts, how can we transform both education and broadband internet access in less-developed countries?
4. Given the current Ukraine refugee crisis, how can we also include and repair the digital divide for refugee learners?
5. How can we ensure broadband internet access for all? What would that look like?
 - a. Is broadband internet access a necessity for economic and human development?

Resources:

United Nations Articles

[Enabling Quality Remote Learning During the Pandemic | United Nations](#)

[A ‘digital canyon’: 1.3 billion school-aged children can’t log on to internet at home | UN News](#)

<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures/61b743ef4/connected-education-refugees-addressing-digital-divide.html>

[Connecting for Inclusion: Broadband Access for All \(worldbank.org\)](https://worldbank.org)
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/09/509292>

Videos

TEDx Talk

[Bridging the Digital Divide | Jim Sevier | TEDxGreenville - YouTube](#)

Digital Divide Video

[The Digital Divide, Explained - YouTube](#)

Podcasts

[The Harvard EdCast: The Digital Divide and Remote Learning on Apple Podcasts](#)

[OECD: COVID-19 and the growing digital divide in education on Apple Podcasts](#)

2023 TOPIC: REPRODUCTIVE HEATHCARE AND ACCESS

Topic Summary and Background:

The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have both indicated that women's right to health includes their sexual and reproductive health. The United Nations has stated that a women's sexual and reproductive health is related to multiple human rights. These rights include the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to health, the right to privacy, the right to education, and the prohibition of discrimination. Globally, though, 4.3 billion people of reproductive age will not have access to at least one essential reproductive health intervention over the course of their lives. These essential reproductive health interventions can include items such as education against gender-based violence, sexual infection education, and cervical cancer screen and treatment among other interventions.

Because of this, country states have the responsibility to protect, respect, and fulfill the rights related to women's sexual and reproductive health. According to the Special Rapporteur, the right to reproductive health means that women are entitled to reproductive health care services and facilities which are, "...available in adequate numbers, accessible physically and economically, accessible without discrimination, and of good quality."

Even with the obligation set forth by the Special Rapporteur, there are frequent violations of woman's sexual and reproductive rights. Example violations may be denial of access services that are only required of women, poor quality services, forced sterilization, forced virginity examinations, having a woman's access to services be approved by a third party, and early marriage.

Previous Steps/Historical Background:

The UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 is to, "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages is essential to sustainable development." Sexual and reproductive health care is essential to fulfilling universal health coverage and is included in the Sustainable Development Goals, which commits countries to provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2030. The global community has recognized sexual and reproductive rights as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Why This is Important:

The United Nations played a key role when defining reproductive rights, which include the right to life, health, non-discrimination, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, and access to information. By 2030, the United Nations has stated that all countries should meet the goals of ending gender-based discrimination, reducing preventable maternal mortality, and ensure access to reproductive health care. When a woman's sexual and reproductive health are violated, it is often because of the society's beliefs and values around women's sexuality. Often the value of a woman is based on patriarchal concepts of a woman's role in the family.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. Can the UN require a global standard for reproductive services and access?
 - a. Can the UN provide reproductive services in countries that do not support them?
 - b. What would a global standard for reproductive services and access look like?
2. How does the UN support people seeking access to reproductive related healthcare in states that regulate against it?
3. What role does the UN play when it comes to education and de-stigmatization?

Resources:

UN Articles

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdq-3-good-health-well-being>

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-cornerstone-sustainable-development>

<https://www.who.int/news/item/19-07-2022-universal-access-to-sexual-and-reproductive-health>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHly04e7Y50>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2GK90nzEfQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snc-fAesIH4>

LEGAL COMMITTEE



2023 TOPICS

International Drug Policy
Rights of Children with Incarcerated Parents



2023 TOPIC: INTERNATIONAL DRUG POLICY

Topic Summary and Background:

Drug laws across the world vary greatly and can pose issues related to international travel. For example, American athlete Brittney Griner was arrested in Russia in early 2022 for the illegal use of marijuana. Despite being granted permission in the U.S. by a U.S. doctor to use medicinal cannabis to relieve pain from her many injuries, and never failed a drug test, the contradicting drug laws in the U.S. and Russia have greatly impacted this American basketball star, and many others worldwide.

Although some countries are now implementing decriminalization strategies, the global standard of prohibition, thus a shift towards decriminalization, would fundamentally change the practice and approach to drugs that have been standard for decades, uprooting many commonly held beliefs regarding drug use. Regardless of the issue's divisiveness, drug control remains high on the international agenda due in part to the illicit nature of the trade and the high number of drug users.

Why This is Important:

For decades, the United Nations has been plagued by the goal of 'achieving a society free of drugs' (or 'drug abuse'). This notion has underpinned incredible harm as governments worldwide have strived to eradicate drugs through extreme measures, for example, overly harsh sentencing for people fighting addiction. Despite these efforts, the global market for illegal drugs continues to grow. In parallel, the human cost of the international 'war on drugs' continues to increase exponentially, creating a crisis of mass incarceration, overdose deaths, extrajudicial killings, and a litany of human rights violations that have impacted some of society's most marginalized. In many parts of the world, drug laws are part of the damaging legacy of colonialism, driving incarceration, widening the criminal legal system's net, and worsening public health and welfare outcomes such as HIV and hepatitis infections and drug-related deaths.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

In a 2022 news article from the United Nations, it was stated that, "UN human rights experts* have called on the international community to bring an end to the so-called "war on drugs" and promote drug policies that are firmly anchored in human rights."

Currently it is estimated that more than 30 countries and 50 jurisdictions worldwide have adopted a form of decriminalization of drug possession for personal use. Worldwide, there

are still 65 countries which still criminalize the possession of drugs. A recent study by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention illustrates how criminalization can contribute to arbitrary detention, prison overcrowding, and hindering access to treatment.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

- 1) How do we address discriminatory practices in drug control?
- 2) To what extent can an international drug policy affect independent nations' practices?
- 3) Should there be an international drug policy, and if so, how would that be defined and what would it look like?
- 4) What would be considered as drugs? Are there different classifications internationally? How are these standards established for an international policy?

Resources:

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEBH3XO6F4U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do-RCrOrkpY>

Websites

<https://idpc.net/blog/2022/12/drug-free-world-no-more-historic-resolution-at-the-un-spells-end-of-consensus-on-drugs>

<https://transformdrugs.org/drug-policy/global-drug-policy>

UN Articles

[Aligning Drug Policies with Human Rights | OHCHR](#)

[UN system common position on international drug control policy through effective inter-agency collaboration - International Drug Policy Consortium \(IDPC\)](#)

2023 TOPIC: RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH INCARCARATED PARENTS

Topic Summary and Background:

Often, political policies are crafted and aimed at reducing crime and eradicating issues such as gun violence and predatory offender registries. While these are not seen being formulated around family well-being and child safety, statistics on incarceration show that half of the people in prison in the United States are parents to minors. Inevitably, mass incarceration has major effects on families and family structure, and policies surrounding issues of incarceration, poverty, and many more are intertwined and connected to these issues of children with incarcerated parents. All stages of the criminal justice process, from the initial arrest to resettlement, have the potential to impact negatively on these children's lives. Mirroring patterns for adults, children in families with incomes below the poverty line are three times more likely to experience parental incarceration. Research suggests that the incarceration of a parent can put a strain on the parent-child relationship and increase the risk for child delinquency, poor academic achievement, and social and emotional problems, while also disproportionately affecting children of color because of racial and ethnic disparities in incarceration rates.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was the first legally binding code of child's rights, and was adopted by the General Assembly in November 1989, and details a child's implicit right to maintain contact with an imprisoned parent. This was signed by all member states, and only the United States and Somalia have not ratified the convention. A key example of previous steps taken is that of the 2014 Italian Memorandum of Understanding on Children with Imprisoned Parents, which covers decisions regarding judicial authorities who are encouraged to consider the rights and needs of any underage children of an arrested or detained person with parental responsibility and giving priority to alternative measures to pre-trial detention. Furthermore, the Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents was established to continue to raise awareness about these children among UN treaty bodies and aims to provide a link between those working directly with children of incarcerated parents and the UN.

Why This is Important:

Children of incarcerated parents are forgotten victims of imprisonment. With over four million children across the United States and Europe experiencing parental incarceration, their rights and safety are of great importance. The children of our future need an appropriate and balanced understanding of the world to become great leaders and citizens of their respective nations. Parental incarceration has shown to be devastating to children's mental health, behavior, homelessness, and intergenerational inequalities. In

most studies of the childhood experience, parental incarceration is often considered an adverse childhood experience. Studies have documented that difficulties include psychological distress, confused explanations given to children, immediate and drastic changes of childcare arrangements, difficulties in maintaining contact with parents, formidable cognitive and health-related challenges, as well as loss of family income and enormous stigma associated with parents being incarcerated. This often predicts home and school moves for the children. In every single one of these difficulties, none of them can be controlled by the child, so where do we find their rights?

Do they have any?

Ideas for discussion that could be addressed in a resolution:

1. These children are often overlooked by criminal justice systems to fail to see them as rights holders, so how do we define these rights in these systems?
2. Should communities create family supporting projects that encourage contact with parents and children when separated or is the role of the government to provide a method of communicating with parents throughout their incarceration?
3. How can the United Nations be involved in creating a more positive atmosphere for children who lack rights when their parents become incarcerated?
4. Is there a solution where the UN is not directly involved, but can lead? What would that look like?
 - a. How do non-profit organizations and governments fit into these situations and work together?
5. How can we ensure that children worldwide are equally and equitably able to enact their rights when their parents are incarcerated? How can we establish, and furthermore, protect these rights going forward?

Resources

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7u7pnllKDlc>

Websites

<https://childrenofprisoners.eu/the-memorandum-of-understanding-on-children-with-imprisoned-parents/>

<https://childrenofprisoners.eu/1989-un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child/>

<https://childrenofprisoners.eu/the-issues/>

<https://www.justicestrategies.net/coip/blog/2017/05/children-incarcerated-parents-united-states-what-we-know-and-what-we-still-need-le>

https://childrightsconnect.org/working_groups/children-of-incarcerated-parents/

<https://www.texastribune.org/2018/12/07/family-incarceration-texas-prison-system/>

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE



2023 TOPICS

**Environmental Impact of Pharmaceutical Industry
Floods and Rising Sea Levels**

2023 TOPIC: Environmental Impact of Pharmaceutical Industry

Topic Summary and Background:

There is lots of evidence the effects that pharmaceuticals have on the environment. Even though there are large amounts of documented evidence, pharmaceuticals are weakly regulated on the international environmental stage. Entering the environment during many different stages, pharmaceutical products pose the threat of discharging antibiotics into the environment. Pharmaceutical products also produce waste products. One such waste product is Environmentally Persistent Pharmaceutical Pollutants (EPPPs), which are non-degradable. EPPPs negatively impact the animals and plants in the environment. In 2015, the 15 largest pharmaceutical manufacturers released 55% more carbon dioxide equivalents for every million dollars of revenue than the automotive sector. To minimize these risks, there needs to be better global standards around the pollution caused by the production of and the pharma product itself.

Previous Steps Taken/Historical Background:

Fifteen major pharmaceutical and medical technology companies have worked together on the United Nations Framework Convention to the Climate Change (UNFCCC) Race to Zero emissions-cutting initiative. The goal of the UNFCCC is to cut the emissions that are produced during the entire creation process by adopting renewable energy strategies. Examples of strategies that they are putting into place include zero-emissions buildings and transportation along with making low-carbon pharmaceuticals. The United Nations Environment Program is working world wide to help identify EPPPs, locations which are considered hotspots, and for better disposal methods of any unwanted medicines. Students are also being conducted by the United Nations Environment Program to learn about the impact that EPPPs have on the ecosystem and the wildlife within it.

Why This is Important:

During the last 30 years, many international organizations and the pharmaceutical industry itself have noticed the negative impacts that pharma products have on the environment. As a result, there is a growing recognition and rise of concern about the impacts on human health and the environment when pharmaceuticals and chemicals are not managed appropriately, especially for those living near production plants whose water and food sources are contaminated with waste pharma products.

Ideas for discussion that could be addressed in a resolution:

1. What standards, if any, should the UN establish to produce pharmaceuticals?

2. How can the United Nations work to reduce the environmental impact of the pharmaceutical industry?
3. Can the UN regulate 'big pharma' or the pharma industry?
4. What environmental regulations can, or should, be established, and how does that impact independent nations?
5. How does this play into the role of climate change in the world, and how does this fit into the context of pre-existing global environmental policy?

Resources

UN Resources

<https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/emerging-issues/environmentally-persistent-pharmaceutical>

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/drugged-waters-how-modern-medicine-turning-environmental-curse>

Website

<https://www.forvis.com/article/2022/06/environmental-impact-pharma-sector>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAc4qExVGNq>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_Ss5RDJU_I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVW85UXNooM>

2023 TOPIC: Floods & Rising Sea Levels

Topic Summary and Background:

As we start to see more and more of the repercussions of climate change, the UN must begin addressing the fallout. Increased natural disasters, like the extreme flooding in Pakistan, are devastating to a nation and its people, especially developing ones. Furthermore, the smaller island nation of Tuvalu is pushing for underwater sovereignty as the country has slowly sunk underwater. Not only has this deeply impacted the country's existence and identity as a country but has created larger issues regarding migration and an increased influx of refugees from these sinking states. Rising sea levels and flooding are and will continue to, displace millions of people, and devastate national infrastructure. Developing nations will feel the brunt of these changes and need more support to rebuild themselves from these losses.

Previous Steps/Historical Background:

The head of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and nine other international organizations wrote a letter to world leaders issued ahead of the COP26 UN climate change conference. They stated in the letter that, "Climate change is dramatically affecting the water cycle, making droughts and floods more extreme and frequent and decreasing the natural water storage in ice and snow. Rising temperature and variability in flow patterns of water bodies also strongly affect water quality both in surface and groundwater,"

Outlined in the letter, were several priorities and recommendations. One of the priorities was for nations to identify on the national and regional level resilience planning. Resilience planning is the act of identifying a potential problems, hazards, and threats and then create adaptation and recovery plans. The idea behind resilience planning is to have a community's vital services either keep in place during the hazard or be able to resume quickly. Some of the recommendations outline in the letter included supporting technical, scientific, and political cooperation to promote being proactive to flood and drought management.

One such example is to have countries using and protecting natural buffers. The use of natural buffers does not cost a lot of money and it keeps flooding, extreme weather and erosion. The vegetation used in natural barriers helps regulate the flow of water and binds the soil in flood plains, river banks, and coastlines.

Why This is Important:

Climate change is intensifying the water cycle. This brings more intense rainfall/affects rainfall patterns, and therefore it increases flooding, as well as causing more intense drought in many regions. Coastal areas will see continued sea level rise throughout the 21st century, contributing to more frequent and severe coastal flooding in low-lying areas and coastal erosion. Extreme sea level events that previously occurred once in 100 years could happen every year by the end of this century. The continuing rising of sea levels can threaten communities, the infrastructure in that community, coastal environments, and the aquifers.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

- 1) What support should be provided to countries suffering from flooding and rising sea levels?
- 2) How do we address the possibly long-term refugee issues caused by displacement and (permanent) loss of land?
- 3) What are climate refugees, and how are they defined? How does that impact current migration and refugee laws/status?
- 4) How do we address the possibility of countries going underwater, and how does that affect their identity and sovereignty as a state in the global community and especially the UN? Do countries need to have land above sea level/not underwater to be a member of the UN?

Resources

UN Resources

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/small-islands-rising-seas>

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/climate-change>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1127051>

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-countries-can-better-cope-flood-risk>

Websites

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/12/06/ipcc-chair-speech-opening-icomos-ipcc-unesco-cosponsored-meeting/>

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBBsv0QyscE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hW9EAkqu6aY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuvY5YG5zA4>



ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE



2023 TOPICS

Colonies in a Modern World
Female Representation in the United Nations

2023 TOPIC: Colonies in a Modern World

Topic Summary and Background:

The role of the United Nations in decolonization is based on the principle of “equal rights and self-determinations of peoples,” according to Article 1(2) of the UN Charter. Decolonization has been a goal of the United Nations since its birth, but global cooperation is still central to completely resolving this issue. The UN Special Committee on Decolonization was formed in 1961 and is devoted to monitoring the issue and its progress, focusing on the 17 non-self-governing territories, or NSGT. The UN Charter has defined these NSGT as a territory “whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government,” but not all modern-day colonies are on the UN’s NSGT list. For example, in 1945, Puerto Rico was originally under the list of non-autonomous territories, until 1951 when the United States Congress authorized Puerto Rico to draft its own Constitution and create its own local self-governing institutions. Despite this, many claim that Puerto Rico is still a colony as a U.S. territory, as the citizens of Puerto Rico do not have any voting representation in the U.S. Federal government, and the territory lacks international UN representation. Inherently, the consequence of colonialism is still being felt to this day, especially in smaller territories and developing countries.

Previous Steps/Historical Background:

The Trusteeship Council was one of the United Nation’s six main organs. It originally was established in 1945 to administer and support the transition of ‘trust territories’ from colonies to sovereign nations following World War II. There were originally 11 Trust Territories, all of which have either become independent States or have voluntarily joined a neighboring State. The Council suspended its activities in 1994, when the last of the original trust territories gained its independence. While this terminated the Trusteeship’s operation, the council is not formally dissolved and still exists despite not being active. In 1990, the General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000) and has since declared 2021-2030 as the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Why This is Important:

When the United Nations was established in 1945, 750 million people—almost a third of the world’s population then—lived in Territories that were non-self-governing and were still dependent on their colonial powers. Since then, more than 80 former colonies have gained their independence. Today, there are 17 non-self-governing territories remaining, and fewer than 2 million people live in them. Although the world has made significant efforts towards decolonization, many global powers still hold claim to their last few territories.

The passing of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, 2022, ended her 70-year reign over the British monarchy and the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. Now that the Queen has passed, the symbolic loyalty connected to her has disappeared and nations are questioning if they should finalize their decolonization process and bid farewell to British rule. As more nations move towards becoming a republic and renouncing the Monarchy, it brings the discussion of other modern-day colonies such as dependencies and territories into the spotlight, such as Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Guam. This raises the question as to how and if the United Nations should assist these countries, and if they should revive their former Trusteeship Council to assist in the role of decolonization.

Ideas for discussion that could be addressed in a resolution:

- 1) How can the UN distinguish when, and where, to assist with the decolonization process in these territories, and what would that look like?
 - a) Following the decolonization process, how can the UN assist these states to ensure full independence and help these newly fledged states maneuver this?
- 2) Should the UN Trusteeship Council be revived to help assist these states with completing the decolonization process?
- 3) Is the Trusteeship Council/the United Nations obligated to help support states seeking to become their own republic?
- 4) How do colonial powers/governments play a role into preventing the full decolonization and self-determination of these territories? How can the UN assist these territories in this situation?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/about>

<https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsqt>

<https://www.un.org/en/ccoi/trusteeship-council#:~:text=The%20Trusteeship%20Council%2C%20one%20of,from%20colonies%20to%20sovereign%20nations.>

https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/sites/www.un.org.dppa.decolonization/files/10_faqs_un_and_decolonization.pdf

Videos

<https://youtu.be/ylq061CTxvs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdPOT3IEZ5o>

<https://youtu.be/ZhFLfn9uPBY>

Websites

<https://globaledge.msu.edu/blog/post/57071/barbados-becomes-a-republic--what-that-means-for-the-future>

<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/oia/territories-states.html>

2023 TOPIC:

Female Representation in the United Nations

Topic Summary and Background:

According to a UN Study from 2021, the representation of women in the professional and higher categories in the UN system has increased from 44.2 percent to 45.3 percent in 2019. More progress is still needed towards advancing the representation of women at all levels across the UN system. The highest representation of women at the UN is found in entry level positions and the number greatly decreases in mid to senior management level positions. These decreases indicate that there are blockages in the pipeline that hinder career advancement of women within the UN. The COVID-19 pandemic has created and compounded challenges for gender equality efforts. Creating and enabling working environments remains vital in supporting the goal of gender equality by fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace that attracts, recruits, and promotes women.

Previous Steps/Historical Background:

UN Women is the UN organization that strives to deliver programs, policies and standards that uphold women's human rights and ensures that every woman and girl lives up to her full potential. UN Women is mandated to lead, coordinate, and promote the accountability of the UN system for women's equal representation. The UN Charter also stipulates that there will "be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in every capacity and under conditions of equality in the system's principal and subsidiary organs." The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights reinforces this principle, stating that there can be no distinction or discrimination based on gender.

Why This is Important:

Gender equity is fundamental human right which is necessary piece in creating a foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. During the last few decades, progress towards gender equality has been made. Unfortunately, the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by the year 2030.

Sustainable Development Goal 5.5 is, "To ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life." In order to achieve this we need to evaluate and support the ways in which we include women in the conversation at the international and peacemaking level. As a standard-setting organization, the UN has a particular responsibility to lead by example in ensuring the equal and active participation of women at all levels of the UN system. This is also necessary for integrating a gender perspective into UN policies and programs.

While female representation and equality has made significant progress, the ultimate question continues to loom over the United Nations. When will there be a female Secretary-General? If the UN expects to assist every country with achieving their gender equality goals by 2030, the efforts must begin in the UN's own house.

Ideas for Discussion That Could be Addressed in a Resolution:

1. What would an inclusive workplace for women in the UN look like? How can states actively contribute to including women in the conversation at every level?
2. How can we ensure that women from all backgrounds and identities are equitably supporting in the UN system?
3. How can we work to support and increase female representation in higher positions of the UN?
4. How can individual states work to better support female representation in the UN on their end?

Resources:

UN Resources

<https://www.unwomen.org/en>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/gender-parity-in-the-united-nations>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/07/improvement-in-the-status-of-women-in-the-united-nations-system-2021>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

<https://un-women.medium.com/gender-equality-and-the-un-general-assembly-facts-and-history-to-know-75fc32b35dd3>

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2016/Status-of-women-in-the-United-Nations-system-2016-en.pdf>

<https://www.ungeneva.org/en/topics/gender>

<https://un-women.medium.com/gender-equality-and-the-un-general-assembly-facts-and-history-to-know-75fc32b35dd3>

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2016/Status-of-women-in-the-United-Nations-system-2016-en.pdf>

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J08uwUXv9pU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFsXqOoxJNA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaukuplWOL0>

RESEARCHING FOR THE MODEL UN SESSION

One of the best ways to get the most recent information on the country that will be represented at the Model United Nations is by researching your topics through the UN website. The United Nations maintains a host of links to member nations as well as many other sources of helpful information.

www.un.org

There are also resources on the [YIG website](#). Find our "[Model UN Resources](#)" webpage.

www.mnyiq.org

