



Hello ASEAN Delegates!

Welcome to MITMUNC X!

My name is Zoya Fan, and I am a junior here, studying biology (Course 7), Brain and Cognitive Sciences (Course 9), and minoring in German (Course 21G). This is my second year involved with Model UN. My sister, who is a senior in high school, is basically a superstar in her MUN club, so I thought I'd see what you all do. I learned a lot chairing the WHO at last year's MITMUNC, and I'm looking forward to a new, exciting committee.

I'd say my "hobby" is learning new languages. I speak Mandarin and Russian with my family, and I've studied Spanish, Latin, and German. I hope to learn Farsi or Arabic in the near future, and I'm currently learning French. Moreover, I grew up hearing stories of my parents' life in the Soviet Union, pre- and post- Gorbachev, as well as the dramatic changes during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. My extensive studies of language and culture, as well as interest in the theory of international relations, have afforded me an acute sense of the international system and human interaction in general.

I spent the last two summers working in a neuroscience lab in Berlin, Germany and conducting anthropology research with MISTI (a study-abroad/work-abroad program at MIT). My experience there coincided with the influx of refugees to that country. As a result, I had the privilege to hear many stories in first person and eye-witness a major international event, both in the accommodation and assimilation of the refugees. This has inspired me to extend my endeavors at MIT beyond biology and language and to involve myself in something that would recalibrate my academic interest with an internationally relevant perspective.

I hope that regardless of what you choose to study in college, you would not limit yourself to one specialization. Whether you major in the sciences, art, literature, or business, endeavor to align your studies with the world outside your campus. Although, I suppose your presence at this conference suggests that you are well on your way already!

My name is Stephanie, and I am a current sophomore studying mathematics with computer science and minoring in finance. I was born and raised in Singapore and also lived a year in Hong Kong before moving to New York City for high school, so South East Asia in general holds a very special place in my heart.

We look forward to hearing all of your awesome stances as representatives of countries neighboring my hometowns! We hope you find the following guides helpful in preparing your positions and also recommend that you do additional research to further understand the specifics of your country and its interests.

We look forward to hearing and mentoring your discussions related to the above mentioned topics, as well as learning a great deal from you all.

Enjoy your time at MIT! It's a special place, the likes of which are rare anywhere else.

Best wishes,

Zoya Fan and Stephanie Yuen
Chair – ASEAN
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Topic A: Effective Implementation of Women's Economic Rights Legislation in the Asia-Pacific Region

Introduction

The combination of globally significant economies and huge poverty demographics makes Asia and the Pacific regions a prime example of socioeconomic disparity. Importantly, gender inequality is increasingly a critical subset of the region's social issues. Historically, countries have formally committed to women's rights with the help of various UN organizations, including UN Women and ASEAN subcommittees, yet many countries still lack effective policy implementation, as a result of resource scarcity and legal issues.



While health rights, access to education, and violence against women continue to be prevalent issues, women's involvement in the economy is a particularly critical facet in all women's rights efforts. In terms of numbers, while women represent almost 50% of business owners in the Asian regions, unemployment rates are over double the global average. In fact, more women receive higher education than men, but still are severely underrepresented in the workforce: with a 30-40% wage gap across Southeast Asian nations, and a rate of female labor

below 50% in 5 out of 11 Southeast Asian countries.^{1 2} Furthermore, a recent report examined countries, which claimed to have legislation protecting equal pay for work of equal value. Results showed that half of these countries, in fact, did not have such mandates in place.² In general, while the majority of countries report existence of national macroeconomic policies targeting job-creation programs, micro-finance support, and business development programs, the degree of universal and systematic gender-responsiveness remains questionable.



The issue of women's economic rights reaches into a variety of sectors, including: child care, paid parental leave, breast-feeding provisions, migrant work, the informal economy, and

¹ Clarkson, Amanda. "The Long Road to Gender Equality in Southeast Asia." Opendemocracy.net, Open Democracy, 24 Aug. 2017, opendemocracy.net/5050/amanda-clarkson/long-road-gender-equality-southeast-asia

² United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific: perspectives of governments on 20 years of implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action* (Bangkok: United Nations, 2015), available from unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/B20%20Gender%20Equality%20Report%20v10-3-E.pdf

under-representation in leadership positions. Currently, the “unpaid care economy” is a major inhibition to women’s access and advancement in the economic work force as women are 3 times more likely to be contributing family workers. For example, studies in the Philippines show that women contribute over 84% of household childcare time.² The small percentage of women who do makeup the workforce are primarily in the lower-paying sectors of healthcare, agriculture, and education.

The Beijing +20 National Review Report stated: “Women are primarily responsible for work in the home and for childcare. These multiple responsibilities are not fully acknowledged or supported through government policy and this makes it more difficult for women than men to devote the time required to high level posts”.² The underlying issue is partly cultural, as traditional gender biases still pervade, and partly legislative. The former can be alleviated by raising awareness and addressing educational access. The latter must be solved by commitments to more specific legislation and effective implementation of existing positive legislation.



Another facet of economic gender inequality lies in the barriers to women’s entrepreneurship. Successful business development requires strategic and financial resources, not

only through microfinance systems, but also in access to large business loans. Policies supporting women's entrepreneurship in specific, and entrance into the work force, in general, contribute positive growth to the entire economy. Predictive studies by the Asian Development Bank show significant potential economic growth by increasing female labor force participation. An increase of just 57.7% to 66.2% would result in "30% growth in income per capita in just one generation." ¹

The UN Women Policy Advisor on Women's Economic Empowerment, Mr. Francisco Cos-Montiel, stated that "there is a need to strengthen public-private partnerships to emphasize responsible business practices that advance women economic empowerment, build evidence-based and sex-disaggregated data on gender analysis in the economy, build capacities of statistic organizations and ministries, and implement gender sensitive policies and legislations at all levels to advance and enhance women's interest in economy."³ This issue requires higher scrutiny and stronger commitments to implementation at economic, legal, political, and sociocultural levels.

UN ASEAN Involvement

In 1981, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) became a formal treaty of the UN General Assembly, as a "women's bill of rights" and was ratified by 188 countries. The CEDAW represents a commitment to "undertake

³ "Economic Opportunities and Rights for Women in ASEAN." UN Women | Asia and the Pacific, UN Women, 12 Nov. 2015, asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2015/12/economic-opportunities-and-rights-for-women-in-asean

legal obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights of women.” Women’s economic empowerment and leadership are two of five priorities areas included in the CEDAW.⁴

The UN Women organization, created in July 2010, collaborates with the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).⁵

Various existing UN organizations are currently working specifically to uphold women’s economic rights in the Southeast Asian region. The UN, particularly the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) has identified 3 focal points necessary to realize gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region: (1) comprehensive normative frameworks and institutions, (2) better partnerships and cooperation, and (3) greater budgets and funding. Furthermore, the ESCAP acknowledges deficits in entrepreneurship and self-employment, as well as a pay gap and occupational segregation in the gender demographic. The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), established in 2010, further assists and encourages ASEAN states in awareness, legislation reviews, and implementation of national and international tools in regards

⁴ “Focus Areas: CEDAW and Women's Human Rights.” UN Women | Asia and the Pacific, asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/cedaw-human-rights.

⁵ “About UN Women.” UN Women | Asia and the Pacific, asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women.

to rights of women and children.⁶ Specific to economic empowerment, UN Women supports: building entrepreneurship, asset-building, financial literacy, and better jobs.⁵

UN Women has already initiated several projects in the Southeast Asian region to promote female economic empowerment. For example, in the Lao Women's Economic Empowerment in Pakthae project, women have the opportunity to learn business management skills, as well as receive access to the international market in a cottage industry system. Following a different approach, the Institute for Labour Science and Social Affairs (ILSSA) conducted a report on the effect of Vietnam's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). The study found that younger women in the industrial sector and middle-age women in the services sector benefited the most. The resulting policy recommendations included "strengthening education and training opportunities for rural women, raising awareness of risks and rights in relation to migration and employment, promoting a greater understanding of gender equity among local officials, and increasing investment in job creation, self-employment and vocational training in rural areas."⁷ These country-specific case studies identify specific solutions which have successfully addressed gendered economic inequality in the Southeast Asian region.

BLOC Positions

⁶ "Effective Implementation of the Common Issues in CEDAW and CRC with Focus on Girl Child and Right to Nationality." ASEAN | One Vision One Identity One Community, 1 Feb. 2016, asean.org/effective-implementation-of-the-common-issues-in-cedaw-and-crc-with-focus-on-girl-child-and-right-to-nationality/

⁷ "Economic Opportunity." UN Women | Asia and the Pacific, asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/economic-opportunity

All countries in the ASEAN have ratified the CEDAW. However, the shaky commitment is a result of country-specific issues, mostly a lack of physical resources to implement policies of education, funding, and enforcement. Research your country's unique situation – starting from statistics showing economic inequality, what the UN/ASEAN has already begun, what challenges your country particularly faces, and recommendations for country-specific, as well as ASEAN-relevant actions.

Conclusion

As presented in the topic background and UN/ASEAN involvement, major issues facing advancement of economic equality for women in Southeast Asian nations include a lack of commitment to existing policies and ineffective implementation of legislation. Given the statistics, the many relevant social sectors (childcare, microfinance, access to business education, etc.), and already existing UN programs, consider the following discussion questions for debate and resolution building:

1. What issues/terms need to be specifically defined in legislation to ensure committed implementation? (example: define economic empowerment)
2. How can existing policies, such as the CEDAW, be made more country-specific? Why can this be more effective?
3. What socioeconomic sectors should be addressed by recommended new legislation?
4. What kind of incentives/regulation can be provided for countries to actually implement policies?
5. Where will funding for further empowerment projects come from?

Image Sources

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<http://adserver.bworldonline.com/webpics/articles/image/201603086c101.jpg>

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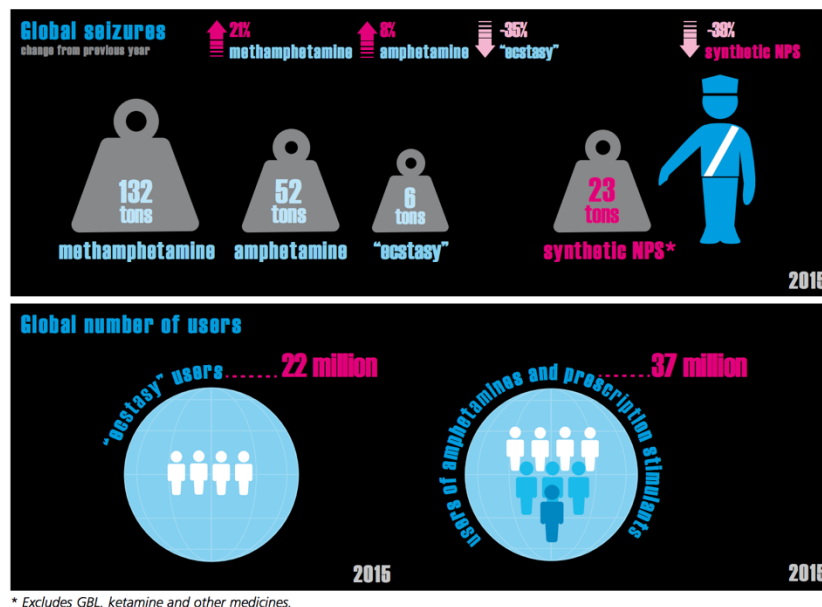
Topic B: The Issue of Drug Trafficking in South East AsiaIntroduction

Over the past few years, drug trafficking in South East Asia has been steadily increasing, following world trends.⁸ Currently, trafficking of heroin and metamphetmine generates over \$32 billion in a year and opium cultivation has increased by 167% since 2006. While the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has implemented a Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) program to collect data on emerging trends regarding these drugs, much work needs to be done to facilitate data collection and standardization between countries.⁹ Recently in particular, East and South East Asia have gained increasingly prominent roles in the global drug trade. According to the UNODC the recent surge of synthetic drugs produced in the regions is causing severe health issues around the world. Specifically, high purity methamphetamine and fentanyl produced in East and Southeast Asia are becoming increasingly popular in Canada and the United States where drug abuse rates have also been on the rise. According to Jeremy Douglas, the UNODC Regional Representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the reason for this growth in drug production and trafficking is that “These drugs

⁸ UNODC, "Synthetic Drugs from Asia are Fuelling Global Public Health and Crime Concerns," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, August 29, 2017, accessed November 23, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/vietnam/2017/08/smart-regional-workshop/story.html>.

⁹ UNODC, "Drugs and Precursors," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017, , accessed November 20, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/what-we-do/toc/drugs-and-precursors.html>.

are cheap to produce, powerful compared to other more traditional drugs, and easy to traffic and mix into existing drug markets. The profit potential for transnational organized crime is also far higher than for drugs like heroin.”¹⁰



The Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific under the World Tourism Organization divides the issues of drug trade into two key subsections: Rule of Law, focusing on illicit trafficking, governance and criminal justice issues, and Health and Development, focusing on reducing the demand for drugs, HIV/AIDS and sustainable livelihood issues.¹¹ Through a recent evaluation of the “Consolidation and Enhancement of the Border Liaison Office (BLO) Mechanism in East Asia” program, begun by the UNODC in 1999, it has become increasingly apparent that there is an urgency to improve cross-border data management systems, data

¹⁰ UNODC, "Synthetic Drugs from Asia are Fuelling Global Public Health and Crime Concerns," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, August 29, 2017, accessed November 23, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/vietnam/2017/08/smart-regional-workshop/story.html>.

¹¹ UNODC, "Synthetic Drugs from Asia are Fuelling Global Public Health and Crime Concerns," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, August 29, 2017, accessed November 27, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/vietnam/2017/08/smart-regional-workshop/story.html>.

collection and documentation and reporting of seizures and arrests.¹² This need for cross-border collaboration is becoming increasingly important especially in areas such as Vietnam, the home to the largest methamphetamine market with recent seizures exceeding the total for North America. Hoang Anh Tuyen, Deputy Director of the Standing Office on Drugs and Crime (SODC) of the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam states that “Methamphetamine use is on the increase across Viet Nam, not only among young drug users in major cities, but also industrialized areas, villages and communities. We will not be able to cope unless market demand is addressed and we make progress on trafficking into the country with our neighbours,” which emphasizes the need for countries in the region to work together in order to restrict access to drugs and limit distribution.¹³

Corruption

A major issue with monitoring and limiting illicit drug trade in South East Asia is corruption. Since corruption exists at all stages of drug distribution, it is a great enabler of organized crime.¹⁴ In fact, in countries such as Philippines, corruption has made possible for drug trade to flourish with the help of police officers under the façade of trying to limit drug trade. In the Philippines, death tolls due to the recent crackdown on drugs has risen to over 7,000, and according to BBC News, “For eight months President Duterte has been unrepentant as the death toll from his drug war has risen. He has repeatedly promised to support, even pardon, any police officers accused of unlawful killing, and been unmoved even by the clear evidence of

¹² UNODC, "Responding to Countries' Needs, UNODC Expands the Scope of Border Liaison Projects," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, October 11, 2010, accessed November 27, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2010/10/blo/story.html>.

¹³ UNODC, "Synthetic Drugs from Asia are Fuelling Global Public Health and Crime Concerns," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, August 29, 2017, accessed November 23, 2017, <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/vietnam/2017/08/smart-regional-workshop/story.html>.

¹⁴ UNODC, World Drug Report 2017, vol. 4.

police involvement in the drug trade, and the murder of important drug suspects in police custody.”¹⁵ Furthermore, in impoverished countries such as these, where corruption is part of everyday life, oftentimes children are forced to get involved with drug trade in order to supplement low family incomes and to fund basic needs. At Batasan Hills National High School in the Philippines, Tess Busadre, the head of the social studies department explains that most of the school funds go towards necessities such as electricity and water, meaning that teachers are paid meagre salaries of \$45,000 a year and thus resort to selling school materials or forcing students to essentially pay for passing grades to “make ends meet”. She further elucidates that “One of the reasons why we have dropouts, or problematic students, is that they can’t finance the projects that they have to submit.” Thus, students are essentially forced into either participating in drug trade or dropping out and depriving themselves of the education required for upward social mobility.¹⁶

The Problem with Heavy-Handed Approaches

To worsen the situation, it appears that approaches aiming to crack down hard on drugs are ineffective at getting to the root of the issue and are proving to be devastating to children. According to Amnesty International, “Many countries, including neighbors of the Philippines, have tried a heavy-handed approach to drugs. Again and again, such tactics have proven unsuccessful, devastating lives while failing to tackle the root causes of drug use and sale.

¹⁵ Jonathan Head, "Philippines to suspend drug war to clean up 'corrupt' police," BBC, January 30, 2017, accessed November 21, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38793008>.

¹⁶ Jonathon Kaiman, "In the Philippines, poverty and corruption fuel the drug trade," Los Angeles Times, February 28, 2017, , accessed November 21, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-philippines-corruption-2017-story.html>.

Poverty and its various manifestations are a problem you treat, not shoot at.”¹⁷ Bills associated with such an approach such as the one introduced in the Philippines on June 30th of this year target children instead of focusing on the adults manipulating these children. This particular bill proposes to allow children as young as nine years old to be responsible for drug related crimes in an attempt to stop “the pampering of youthful offenders who commit crimes knowing they can get away with it.”¹⁸ Similarly, in Indonesia, President Joko Widodo’s attempts to target drug dealers in the region with his recent shoot-on-sight orders has caused a lot of controversy. While lawmakers are backing his decision, human rights activists in the country are protesting this blatant disregard for human rights. According to Amnesty International, 60 people have been killed this year as compared to 18 from last year due to this new law.¹⁹

Conclusion

As explained in the background guide, reasons for the ongoing drug trafficking issue in South East Asia are the proliferation of corruption in the region and also ineffectiveness of harsh approaches to properly targeting the roots of the issue. Some questions to consider include:

1. How will countries unite to create a database and standardized system of collecting data about drug production, trafficking and abuse?

¹⁷ Jonathon Kaiman, "In the Philippines, poverty and corruption fuel the drug trade," Los Angeles Times, February 28, 2017, , accessed November 21, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-philippines-corruption-2017-story.html>.

¹⁸ Clare Baldwin and Andrew R.C. Marshall, "Duterte targets Philippine children in bid to widen drug war," Reuters, February 14, 2017, , accessed November 21, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-drugs-children-insight/duterte-targets-philippine-children-in-bid-to-widen-drug-war-idUSKBN15T1NB>.

¹⁹ Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, "Jokowi's tough stance on drugs stirs debate," The Straits Times, September 18, 2017, accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/jokowis-tough-stance-on-drugs-stirs-debate>.

2. Where will the UNODC get more funding to implement such a system (and should they ask affected countries such as the US and Canada to aid in helping decrease drug production in the ASEAN region)?
3. Are there systems/ incentives that can be implemented to decrease child involvement in drug trafficking (instead of allowing children of younger ages to be targeted for punishments)?

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