

SocHum

MITMUNC III, 2011



Committee Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

Firstly, congratulations on participating in MITMUNC 2011. This is the second MITMUNC for both Jaclyn and me; last year, we were both chairs at the conference, and had a wonderful time. We saw fierce debate, interesting compromises, and excellent resolutions, and that is just what you should expect from SOCHUM this year.

We are really excited to chair the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee and the interesting topics that fall under its jurisdiction, namely, the two that we have selected for this conference. By picking more unusual topics, we hope to give you the chance to research, think about, and discuss crucial world issues that you may not have seen in Model UN before.

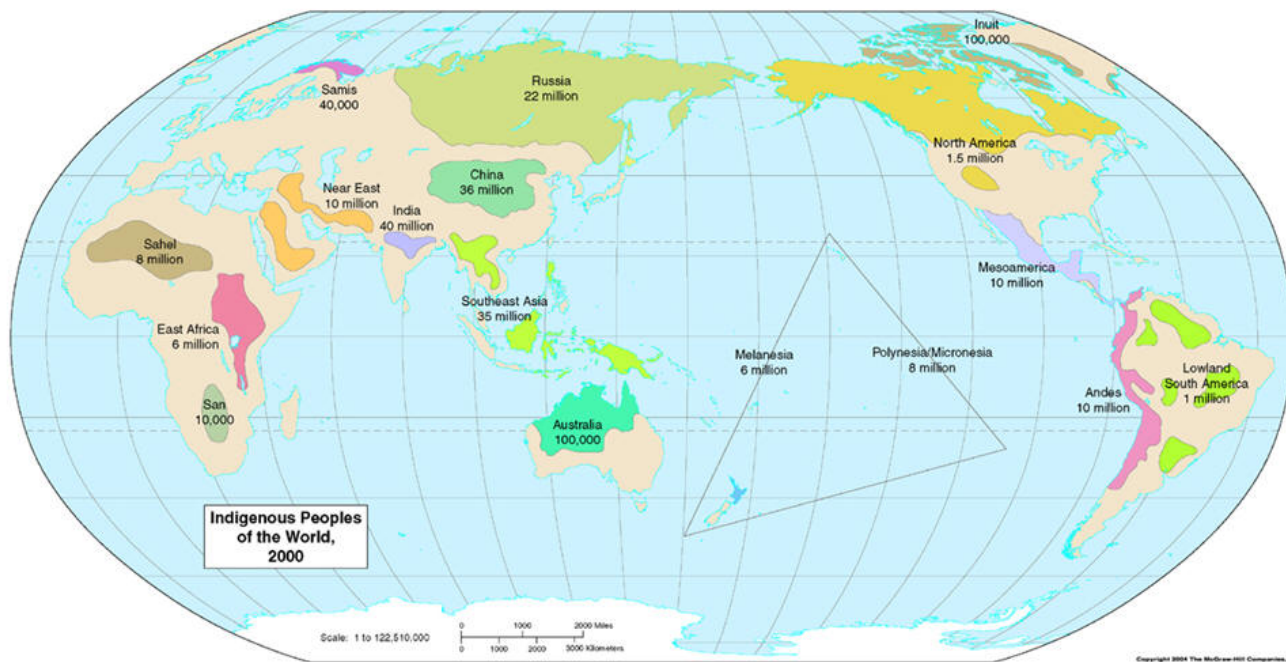
Now for a little bit about us. Jaclyn is a Sophomore in Course 1, Civil and Environmental Engineering. She is from Holbrook, NY and loves acting and Dr. Pepper. I am also a Sophomore, but in Course 6, Electrical Engineering and Computer

Science. I am from Manhattan, New York, and I also enjoy ice skating and going to the movies.

As you prepare for MITMUNC this year, there are just a few things we would like you to keep in mind. Firstly, think outside the box. Just because a solution has not been reached yet, that doesn't mean there aren't exciting areas and ideas to explore. Secondly, remember to compromise, and figure out which nations can help. And lastly, have fun! This conference will be infinitely more interesting if you really get into character.

We can't wait to meet you all.

Arianna Moshary



This year, our discussion topics are:

Indigenous People's Rights

Drug Trafficking

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

Introduction

Historically, indigenous peoples have always faced higher levels of poverty, lower levels of education and literacy, less land ownership, and a huge disparity in health and health care with the rest of the world. At approximately 350 million people, they make up 5% of the world's population; a five percent that regularly sees discrimination, unjust violence, and displacement from their lands. These, together with many other disparities and injustices and a widespread lack of national-level legal protection lead frequent violations of the human rights of indigenous peoples—rights that the United Nations has declared are “universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated.”

The difficulties faced by the indigenous peoples of the world are leading to erosion and even complete loss of many rich indigenous cultures that the United Nations values highly. These unique cultures are valuable not only to the indigenous peoples, but also to the entirety of humankind, as cultural diversity enriches the cultural life of all peoples.

The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee is tasked with overseeing and promoting indigenous peoples' basic rights as well as preserving their cultural world heritage. While there has been some success in the area in the last two decades, there are still some very significant barriers that will have to be addressed before the indigenous peoples' rights will be up to par and their cultures will be safe.

Background Information

One of the most significant problems facing indigenous peoples is displacement and eviction from their homelands. This displacement has a multitude of negative consequences: not only is it related to violence against indigenous peoples, but also makes it hard for indigenous peoples to come up to acceptable levels in health and healthcare, education, security, and preserving their cultures. The militarism against indigenous groups ranges from armed conflict to sexual assault, and from the trashing of their sacred lands to the targeted killings of important spiritual and cultural leaders. Furthermore, these displaced groups

often end up in situations where they have little or no access to food and water, medical supplies, or real shelter.

Militarism is not the only problem creating a struggle for survival for indigenous groups. Climate change and environmental disasters also strike indigenous groups particularly harshly. These environmental changes often make the traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples no longer viable, and droughts and floods wreak havoc on their agriculture, often leading to malnutrition. Globalization has also been found to be having strong negative impacts on indigenous communities. The national fiscal policies enacted in an effort to increase globalization often pay little to no attention to the impact that they will have on indigenous groups. Some of the effects have been lowered wages and worsened working conditions and exploitation of indigenous peoples' lands. These then in turn lead to social problems like increased drug use and poverty.

With all of these dangers facing indigenous peoples, it's no wonder that their welfare and cultures are in jeopardy. Addressing these and other issues has thus far been hard for the United Nations because there are few UN-wide standards and guidelines of how to treat and coordinate with indigenous groups. Furthermore, there exists no judicial body for indigenous groups to turn to. In nations in which they are persecuted, the legal establishments often serve as a tool for their oppression. Internationally, there exists no sufficient forum for indigenous peoples to voice their concerns and grievances.

All of these issues are part of the cause of the erosion of indigenous cultures, but there are others as well. A major issue that this committee is concerned about is rapid rate of extinction of minor languages. World-wide, there are about 6500 languages, 4000 of which are estimated to be indigenous. World languages are currently disappearing at an alarming rate; by the end of the century, an estimated 90 percent of these languages will no longer be spoken. Even right now, there are many languages spoken fluently by less than 50 people that are in immediate danger of disappearing. The problem with the loss of these languages is the accompanied loss of the cultures they describe. Many traditions and pieces of traditional knowledge stand to be lost if the current trend continues, because they are told and passed down only in these languages. This includes not only cultural knowledge, but also biological knowledge—many

pharmaceutical countries are researching the indigenous knowledge of plants for healing. The issue is that many of these languages are no longer being passed down from generation to generation—so the UN will have to take specific measures to preserve these languages.

The most important recent development in the work towards improving the conditions of the world's indigenous people was the creation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in 2007. This has prompted several member nations to readjust their position toward their indigenous peoples—including recognizing them and establishing initiatives for their betterment. The United Nations also established the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) which deals specifically with indigenous peoples issues. Clearly, there is still much to be done. Part of the problem is that there is just not enough comprehensive information and statistics from which to clearly assess and address the problem. A full solution to the issue will have to address this as well.

Country Blocs

Every country has a different stance on the problem of the indigenous peoples' rights and the preservation of their cultures. Some countries (Canada, Australia, Japan) have taken strides towards righting the wrongs done to indigenous peoples in their region. Each country also has a different racial make-up with widely varied numbers of indigenous peoples. Still other countries have a majority of indigenous peoples, like Guatemala and Bolivia. Each delegate should examine their country's present policies towards indigenous peoples, their historical relations, and their indigenous diversity

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Drug Trafficking

Introduction: Why drug trafficking?

Illegal drug trafficking is a global issue for a number of reasons. The trade extends to all parts of the world with the trade of substances such as heroine, cocaine, marijuana, and opium. The opium trade in particular has increased nearly 80% in the past 11 years, while cocaine experienced a shift in its market, but no decline. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates 3.5-5.7% of the world population between ages 15 and 64 has used drugs at least once in the past year, while the increase in global population enlarges the potential market for illicit drugs each year. As use increases, drug related crimes and health issues related to drug use also increase.

Figure 1. Statistic of global drug use in people aged 15-64

(PLEASE SEE END FOR ALL FIGURES)

Figure 2. Drug trade routes of opium poppy and coca reveal worldwide connections

Drug trafficking is a crime itself, and drug related crimes are also a problem. Developing countries are at particular risk from the trafficking as the income from drug trade can rival or surpass that of the government of the country. The trade has close ties to organized crime. Drug related crimes are those committed under the influence of a substance, to support drug use by obtaining money or drugs, as part of the supply, distribution and use of drugs, or in violation of laws. Drug related crimes occur in every region of the world, with high counts of over 100,000 drug related crime per year in Germany, France, U.K., and Canada between 2003-2008.

Figure 3. Drug related crimes are shown to be greater than other crimes, as well as increase over the years.

Health effects of the drug trade are also a major concern. The most widely known disease spread from drug use is HIV/AIDS. HIV can be transmitted from use of a shared needle during injection drug use (IDU), and results in decline of the immune system, usually ending in opportunistic infections and cancers before death. It has caused millions of deaths and left millions more orphans. Long-term drug dependence can result in terrible consequences as well. There is always the risk of overdose, and each drug has its own individual consequences. For instance, opiates, barbiturates, and other central nervous system depressants can result in drowsiness, respiratory issues, and a decrease in the

difference between an effective dose and a lethal one. Cannabis can result in loss of motor skills and attention span on the short term, and effects like those of smoking on the respiratory system in the long run. Allowing illicit drug trade to continue allows the chance for more people to become a part of it and be affected by drugs.

Figure 4. Trend of HIV/AIDS acquisition in Central Asia via drug injection

UN Policies

In 1998, the goal of the General Assembly was to eliminate or significantly reduce illegal drug production and abuse over 10 years. Despite efforts to do so, the attempt was unsuccessful, and they have created a new objective of completing the same goal by 2019. Part of counteracting the illegal drug trade lies in individual nations; if countries can lower their own level of drug trafficking, the global levels would be greatly decreased. However, the UN has recognized that countries without a strong enough economy and government may not have enough power to make any headway into the problem. They proposed increased seizures of illegal drugs, and the inclusion of current national efforts in the international strategies of countering drug trade.

Figure 5. An increase in cocaine use among adults has been seen in Europe over the past few years

In October of 2010, the Third Committee of the GA met to discuss organized crime, corruption, and drug trafficking and their connection. They agreed that tackling the problem was too much for a country by itself, but with renewed international cooperation, it would be possible. Also, by combating the illegal drug trade together, the effort to combat international crime could be greatly aided.

The UN has increased seizures of illegal drugs over the past few years, especially in opium and heroin. Countries are seizing the drugs at the source, before they can get into the global market. With increased seizures, fewer drugs will get into the market, resulting in higher prices for the supply still circulating the market. This in turn lowers the demand for these higher-priced drugs.

Figure 6. Percentage of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) seized per area

June 26th is known as World Drug Day, a campaign sponsored by the UNODC to raise awareness of drug abuse and its effects on teens and young adults in particular. Events occur worldwide to promote the education of people in the health risks of using drugs.

What to Consider

Your goal as delegates is to determine how best to counteract global drug trafficking. As you research, consider the following. How does your country approach internal drug trafficking? What about international drug trafficking? What drugs, if any, is your country known for trading? Are there any redeeming qualities of illegal drug trade? Keep in mind social and economic costs of either taking action to fight drug trafficking, or to let it continue in its current state.

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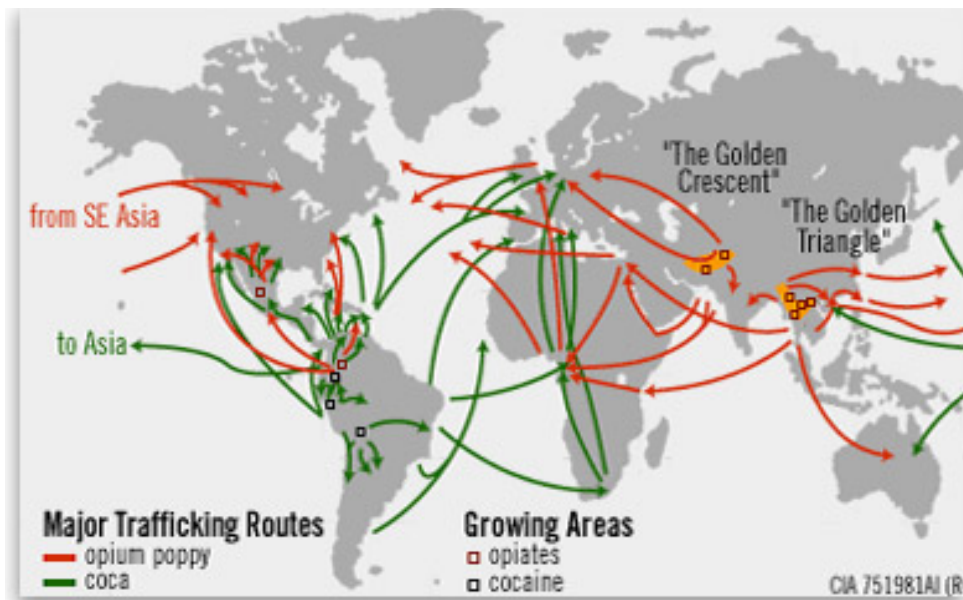
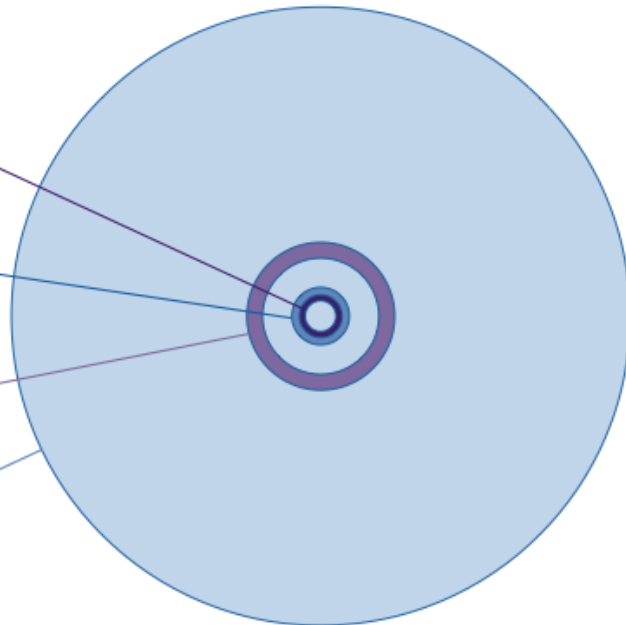
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Number of people who inject drugs
aged 15-64 years : 11-21 million persons

Number of "problem drug users"
aged 15-64 years : 16-38 million persons

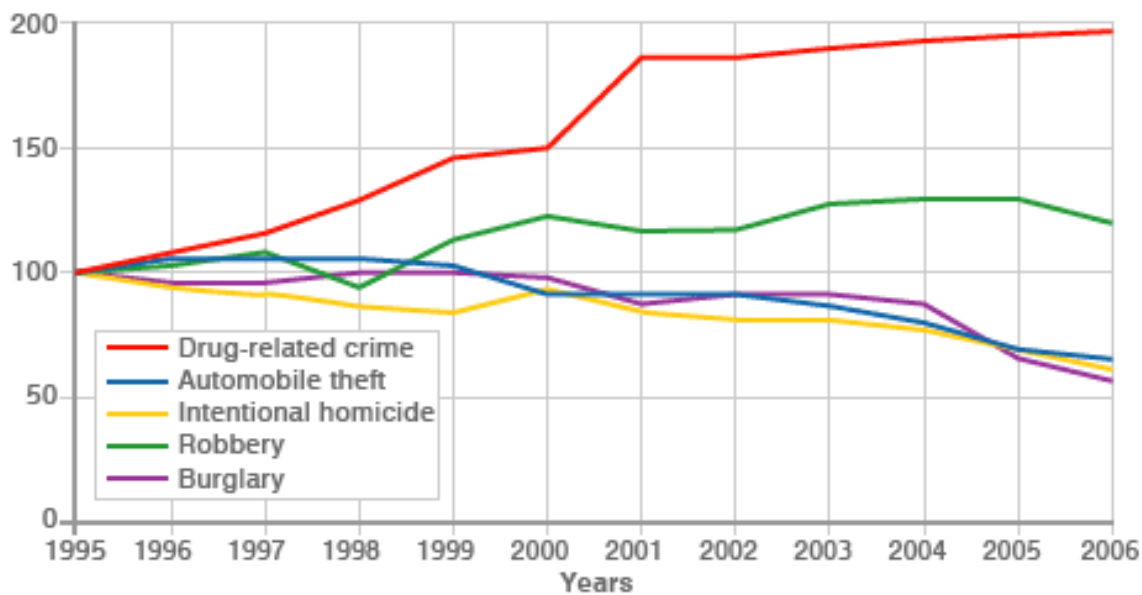
Number of people who have used drugs
at least once in the past year aged
15-64 years : 155-250 million persons

Total number of people aged 15-64 years
in 2008: 4,396 million persons



Trends in selected types of police-recorded crime in countries consistently reporting

basis: 1995=100



SOURCE: World Drug Report 2009, UNODC

