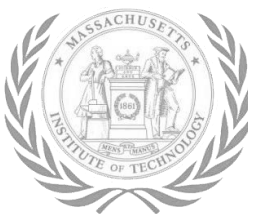


2013

ECOSOC 2013

BACKGROUND GUIDE

MIT MODEL UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE V



ecosoc2013@mitmunc.org



LETTER FROM THE DAIS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the MIT Model United Nations Conference 2013! My name is Nancy Lu, and I will be chairing the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) along with my co-chair, Taylor Rose. I am currently a freshmen here at MIT, considering a major in 18C (Mathematics with Computer Science) with a minor in 5 (Chemistry) and Applied International Studies in Latin America. In high school, I spent three years in Model United Nations competing across the state of Florida and now at MIT, this is my first time actually chairing a competition. Apart from MUN, I am also a coxswain for the Varsity Lightweight Women's Crew Team and I am also a Medlink, a student that is a "link" between the student body and MIT medical.

Hi, I'm Taylor. I'm a born and bred New Yorker who competed in the National Forensics League for four years of high school in the categories of Student Congress and Extemporaneous Speaking. Here at MIT, I'm a coxswain for the Varsity Openweight Women's Crew team and majoring in Course 6 (Computer Science), potentially with a minor in 14 (Economics) or 17 (Political Science), concentrating on developing nations.

The world's economic, social and environmental challenges are ECOSOC's concern and for you, delegates, it will also be your concern for your time here at the conference. The issues that my co-chair and I chose are of great interest to the both of us. These issues are meant to be global, meaning that every member of

ECOSOC will have say on these topics. The first issue deals with post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. There are so many conflicts in the world today that one cannot turn on the news without hearing of one. The second topic deals with women's rights in developing nations that are also dealing with the problems that accompany religious rule.

We're both so glad that you'll be joining us here at MIT in February and hope that you enjoy and learn from the research on the two following topics. If you need any help or direction, don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lu

Taylor Rose

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Topic 1:**PEACEBUILDING AND
POST-CONFLICT
RECOVERY****Introduction**

In 2011, there were 37 armed conflicts that took place in 30 different locations around the world, and of these conflict, six were considered “wars.” *“An armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year”*, and a conflict reaches the level of “war,” when the number of deaths increases to one thousand or more in a given calendar year. Because of the vast number of conflicts around the war, there is a need for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. The United Nations serve as intermediary between the conflicting groups. (Reference 1)

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main bodies of the United Nations, deals *“the economic, social and related work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and institutions.”* (Reference 2)

Because of the amount of current conflicts, the United Nations have taken a great interest in developing ways to facilitate peacebuilding between conflicting groups. Peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery are international tasks that require the assistance from the UN’s multiple bodies and other

organizations, such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

“The United Nations has been at the center of expanding international peacebuilding efforts, from the verification of peace agreements in southern Africa, Central America and Cambodia in the 1990s, to subsequent efforts to consolidate peace and strengthen states in the Balkans, Timor-Leste, and West Africa, to contemporary operations in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan.” (Reference 3)

Recent Policy

In 2005, various leaders from around the world attended the World Summit at the UN headquarters in New York City in order to follow-up on the World Summit in 2000, which discussed the role of the United Nations at the turn of the 21st century. At the 2000 World Summit, the UN adopted the Millenium Summit Declaration, which dealt with peace, security and disarmament as one of its topics. (Reference 4)

During the 2005 World Summit Meeting, world leaders, once again, discussed issues of peace, security, and disarmament. As a result of the meeting, advances were made. (Reference 5) The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was created to support *“peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict.”* (Reference 6)

“The Peacebuilding Commission plays a unique role in (1) bringing together all of the relevant actors, including international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments, troop contributing countries; (2) marshalling resources and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and where appropriate,

highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace.” (Reference 6)

Other advances included various methods to strengthen peacekeeping, fight against terrorism, control proliferation of weapons, and combat transnational crimes. (Reference 5) As members of ECOSOC, you should consider the past actions done by ECOSOC and see whether or not they should be revised in order to obtain the goal of peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery. For example, delegates should think of ways to effectively implement peacekeeping agreements between nations and make sure that these agreements are met.

Current Issues/Solutions

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has grown much stronger since its creation. The PBC has a Peacekeeping Fund that it uses to fund activities that help implement peace agreements, promote peaceful resolution and coexistence, help rebuild economic sectors, and other activities deemed appropriate by the UN. The PBC funds through two different funds, one for immediate needs and one for long-term needs for peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery. (Reference 7) The PBC's Peacekeeping Fund is used in various countries in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia.. (Reference 7)

It is your job as delegates to research if the PBC has helped your own respective country and see the effect it has on your own nation. Using what you researched, you should develop an opinion on the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Commission. Also, you should consider the current method for post-conflict

recovery and see if it has worked in your own respective nation.

Blocs/Countries Point of View

Many countries who just got out of their respective conflicts still have not reached their stage of economic development before the conflict.

African States

There has been a history of African states being at conflict, whether internally or with other states. Because of this, there are several UN missions helping these states recover from their post-conflict state. For example, the civil war in Liberia, which had almost 150,000 casualties, prompted UN involvement. *The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established by Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003 to support the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the peace process; protect United Nations staff, facilities and civilians; support humanitarian and human rights activities; as well as assist in national security reform, including national police training and formation of a new, restructured military.* (Reference 12)

The UN has a history of missions in Africa; United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) in 1998 (Reference 13), the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in 2002 and the The United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) just to name a few.

Also, the Peacebuilding Commission funded a Peacebuilding Priority Plan of \$9 million US dollars in March 2009 for Comoros. The Plan *focused on security and*

stability, governance and social cohesion and revitalization of the economy, with an emphasis on youth at risk and vulnerable women” (Reference 8)

Asian States

The UN's Peacebuilding Fund financed post-war Sri Lanka in 2010 with a focus on Internally Displaced Persons. (Reference 14)

The War in Iraq (2003-2011) left the country in economic turmoil. Iraq's economic development had receded and it has to restart its development once more. (Reference 11)

Latin America & Caribbean States

In April 2011, funding of 10 million US Dollars from the Peacebuilding Commission was given towards Guatemala's Peacebuilding Priority Plan. The Priority Plan covers issues regarding justice, security sector reform, and the empowerment of women. (Reference 15)

Western European & Other States: The United States of America is the UN's largest contributor. It has a large impact on the UN's peacekeeping operations. (Reference 9)

The US gave the UN about \$6,347,415,000 US dollars in 2010. (Reference 10)

Questions to Consider

- What is the effect of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)?
- How does funding affect the UN's peacekeeping mission?

- Are there methods to maximize funding?
- Are there are other more efficient methods to peacekeeping?
- Should there be reparations for damages done to conflicting nation states?
- What should the method be for post-conflict recovery?
- What should the funding for post-conflict recovery be focused on?

Helpful Links

Economic and Social Council,
<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/>

United Nations Peacebuilding Commission,
<http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>

Uppsala University, Department of Peace and Conflict Research,
<http://www.pcr.uu.se/>

United Nations Peacekeeping,
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/>

Note: Italicized words are direct quotes.

References

- 1 http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/faq/#What_is_a_conflict__
- 2 <http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/>
- 3 <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/peacebuilding.shtml>
- 4 <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

- 5 <http://www.un.org/summit2005/presskit/Peace.pdf>
- 6 <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>
- 7 <http://www.unpbf.org/>
- 8 <http://www.unpbf.org/countries/comoros/>
- 9 <http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/issues/funding/us-dues-and-contributions.html>
- 10 https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:3C5rqDi8XZkJ:www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/legislative_reports/us_contributions_to_the_un_06112010.pdf+%&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgIpb37S2sTVtHmiEZv8JrbKWmhzChkE60FUhJ_f5I_4rWqnXA6npHJCpQJgP1EvnzOxtTrU_t1ZyfrsimGu0Fjg3CKbwEt3A8BMgc2ZFMHk-B43E9E7Dcd9q3QRCVHAV7PXXR3&sig=AHIEtbR8WTUSFpLbtEGXY_DGZa4R7szNhA
- 11 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/870845/Iraq-War>
- 12 <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmil/>
- 13 <http://unipsil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9611&language=en-US>
- 14 <http://www.unpbf.org/countries/sri-lanka/>
- 15 <http://www.unpbf.org/countries/guatemala/>

Topic 2:**WOMEN'S EDUCATION:
HOW TO IMPROVE THE
RIGHTS OF WOMEN
THROUGH EDUCATION
IN DEVELOPING
NATIONS?****Introduction**

Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goal is to promote gender equality and empower women through schooling in primary and secondary goals. Since the Millennium Goals were enacted gender gaps in access to education have narrowed, but disparities remain high in university-level education and in many developing regions. Despite progress made, men continue to outnumber women in paid employment, and women are often relegated to vulnerable forms of employment.

With the Arab Spring in 2011 came a flood of Islamic politics and goals in the Middle East. Violence against women throughout the region has increased over the past year and Islamic governments have been discussing potentially misogynistic laws and policies, including limitations on education for women and girls (Coleman). In October 2012, Malala Yousufzai, a 14-year-old girl fighting for her right to education was shot and nearly killed for her beliefs (Kristoff). Events like this are occurring more often. It is time that the violence be prevented and for women to be able to receive their rights to an education.

Delegates should arrive at solutions to augment education for women and girls in the developing world, while also focusing on limiting violence against female education activists in developing countries.

Chinese philosopher Confucius once wrote that "women hold up half the sky." Yet women in developing nations still lack many of the rights held by those in the fully developed world. The education of girls and women in the developing world in particular is lacking. Women face a variety of obstacles on their path to education including, but not limited to: governments banning the education of women, religious dogma forbidding female education, and responsibilities to the home.

With the Arab Spring in 2011 and the new governments that appeared across the Middle East, many expected women's rights to expand throughout the region. Unfortunately though, the world has not seen these results. In fact, violence against women's rights activists has increased (Coleman).

This topic is not meant to be so comprehensive that it covers all international women's rights questions. Rather, as this background guide will show, you are to limit yourself to the education of women and to areas where violence against women's education activists is expanding.

In order for developing nations to reach their full potential, women must gain their rights. With this guide, allow for education and a decrease in violence to be your main focus.

Background/Historical Actions

From the foundation of the United Nations in 1945, the empowerment of women has been a focal point of the organization. After some debate, it was decided that women needed their own commission within the UN. In May 1946, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations founded the Commission on the Status of Women. It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Since 1945, the commission has advocated for equal rights, women's education, an end to gender discrimination, and the demise of gender-based violence (Commission on the Status of Women). And while many strides have been taken towards achieving gender equality and the success of the MDG-3, miles still have to be travelled.

In December 2010, the Arab Spring began. The political movement removed dictators in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen, sparked major uprisings in Syria and Bahrain, and resulted in smaller protests throughout the Middle East.

With these uprisings came a fear from women that their rights would quickly be forgotten. Gamila Ismail, a female Egyptian politician and activist, removed herself from Egypt's parliamentary race after learning of the discrimination being placed upon her by the election committees. Similar events have occurred in Libya and Yemen as well. Women are not faring well under the new Arab governments (Coleman).

And this discrimination is expected to

greatly deter the advancement of women's education and the fight against gender-based violence. In Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, hard-line Islamic leaders seek wording in the draft constitutions that they say would reflect *sharia* (Islamic) law on divorce, marriage, and many other social areas—areas that would limit women's access to education and their right to fight for themselves in courts (Monitor's Editorial Board). Other Muslim ruled nations have also taken backwards steps in achieving women's equality. In Iran, 36 universities have announced that 77 B.A. and B.Sc courses in the coming academic year will be "single gender" and effectively exclusive to men (Tait). And violence has also been used to silence women, particularly those attempting to receive an education.

The Taliban's act of shooting Malala Yousafzai demonstrated just how radical groups are willing to act in order to suppress women, especially those trying to receive an education in order to better their situation. And just hours before Malala was shot, another radical group located in Indonesia raped a 14-year-old education activist to silence her (Kristoff).

The UN Education envoy has been acting upon this violence against women interested in education and politics. Petitions have been formed requesting action.

And yet, very little has been done thus far. "Despite a global commitment that every child would be in primary school by 2015, 61 million children of primary-school age are still not in education, 32 million of them girls. The arithmetic of educational neglect makes grim reading: 15 million children who should be at primary school

are working full time; 10 million girls leave education to become child brides every year, and millions more are trafficked” (Brown).

This conference is the opportunity to act on these requests and begin to quell the violence against women and augment their education. Only this way can the path to the MDG-3 be opened and ultimately, universal access to education be achieved.

Current Solutions

Western nations are attempting to work with Arab nations on women’s rights, in particular education. The UN envoy for education has begun a petition regarding the shooting of Malala Yousafzai. The UN Commission on the Status of Women has been continually working towards universal education, by working with governments and the people of various nations. Non-governmental organizations are also on the ground throughout the developing world in efforts to expand access to education and to decrease violence against women.

Blocs/Countries Point of View

Middle East

Islamic and non-Islamic nations throughout the Middle East will clearly be a focal point of the debate. Nations with Islamic theocracies and sharia law in other geographical regions will also be important. With violence throughout the region escalating against female political and education activists, these nations will be the ones to form their own internal paths to solutions of peace.

Eastern Europe and Latina America

Eastern European and Latin American nations, while not focused on in this background guide, also have dissident regarding women’s rights and education and thus will also play an important role.

Western Nations

Western nations, such as the United States and Great Britain, will also both serve important roles in the debate. Historically, western nations have played key roles in the development of women’s rights. It is expected that once again, western nations will operate as mediators and guides to developing countries attempting to create paths to women’s rights.

Particularly important countries to consider will include Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, United Kingdom, and the United States.

Questions to Consider

Is there a direct correlation between Islam and a decline in women’s rights?

How can education be expanded?

How can women work with Arab Spring leaders in order to achieve women’s rights and universal access to education?

What is the effect of the UN Commission on the Status of Women?

How can Western, Middle Eastern, and Eastern nation states work together to

form a path to universal education?

How can violence against women be prevented?

Is there an option for negotiation with radical groups on women's education?

References/Further Reading

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