



**City Montessori School Model United Nations
Aliganj, 2019**

UNGA

Protecting the cultural identities with regards to
the alarming rise of Islamophobia.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings Delegates!

It's is great honour to be a part of Executive Board for CMSMUN 2019.

The background guide shall only be an instrument of assistance to the delegates instead of being the sole basis for your research.

The given list of topics is not exhaustive and it is not intended to be. The list is simply indicative of pressing issues and topics of concerns, which must be addressed and will give you a bird's eye view of the gist of the issue. The delegates are at full liberty to bring up any other relevant point for discussion. We understand that MUN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first timers but it must be noted that our aspirations from the delegates is not how experienced or articulate they are, rather, we want to see how he/she can respect disparities and differences of opinion, work around these, while extending their own foreign policy so that it includes more of comprehensive solutions without compromising their own stand and initiate consensus building. We sincerely hope that the UNGA of CMSMUN will help you gain experience to become better professionals and persons in future.

Regards,
Executive Board

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SUGGESTIONS BEFORE YOU START RESEARCHING:

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially

differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.

A challenging, yet highly rewarding committee, involvement in the MUN conference simulation offers an insight into the dynamics of international relations and politics. Lots of work will be required but as previous participants in similar simulations ourselves, we promise you an exciting experience.

NATURE OF SOURCES/EVIDENCE:

This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference.

Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources-

1. **United Nations:** Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as a credible proof to support a claim or argument.
2. **Multilateral Organizations:** Documents from international organizations like NATO, NAFTA, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, OPEC, the International Criminal Court, etc may also be presented as credible source of information.
3. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as a credible piece of information.
4. **News Sources:**
 - (i) **Reuters:** Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.
 - (ii) **State operated News Agencies:** These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some

examples are – RIA Novosti⁸ (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency¹¹ (People's Republic of China), etc.

Note- Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the aforementioned criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. Each country has one vote. Some Member States in arrear of payment may be granted the right to vote. See the list of countries in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Imagine a world painted with one colour, all monochromatic, how would it appear? I am sure your answer would be a definite no, endowment of various colours and cultures make this world beautiful, we have to work together to safeguard the different colours and cultures of this world, in the two day extravaganza of debate and deliberation we shall dive into depths of different topics ranging from xenophobia to islamophobia, Christchurch (New Zealand) attacks and so on and so forth.

WHAT IS 'CULTURE'?

You may ask: what does it mean to be cultural? In order to answer this question, we will need to understand the meaning of culture. In the simplest terms, culture refers to “the man-made part of the environment”. It comprises diverse products of the behaviour of many people, including ourselves. These products can be material objects (e.g., tools, sculptures), ideas (e.g., categories, norms) or social

institutions (e.g., family, school). We find them almost everywhere. They influence behaviour, although we may not always be aware of it. Let us look at some examples. The room you might be in now is a cultural product. It is the result of someone's architectural ideas and building skills. Your room may be rectangular, but there are many places where rooms are not rectangular (e.g., those of Eskimos). We adopt and enact to the cultural demands but as much as culture shapes us, we also shape culture. Several anthropological analysis show that culture and our identity go hand in hand. They suggest that the relationship

between individuals and their social surroundings is interactive, and in the course of these interactions, they constitute each other. This perspective emphasizes that human beings are not passive recipients of cultural forces. Instead, they themselves create the context in which their behavior is shaped. In spite of the fact that culture is always with us, much confusion exists in defining culture. It is more like the notion of "energy" in physics or "group" in sociology. Some believe that culture really exists out there, and it matters to individuals, while others believe that culture does not really exist, instead it is an idea created and shared by a group of people. The innumerable definitions of culture commonly point to some of its essential features. One is that culture includes behavioral products of others who preceded us. It indicates both substantial and abstract particulars that have prior existence in one form or another. Thus, culture is already there as we begin life. It contains values that will be expressed and a language in which to express them. It contains a way of life that will be followed by most of us who grow up in that context. Such a conceptualization of culture tends to place it outside the individual, but there are also treatments of culture that places it in the minds of individuals. In the latter case, culture is identified with a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols. Culture provides meaning by creating significant categories like social practices (e.g., marriage) and roles (e.g., bridegroom) as well as values, beliefs and premises. As Richard Shweder put it, to learn that "a mother's sister's husband is an uncle", one must somehow receive the 'frame' of understanding from others. Whether culture is taken as an existing reality, or as an abstraction, or both, it exerts many real influences on human behavior. It allows us to categories and explain many important differences in human behavior that were previously attributed to biological differences. Social and cultural contexts within which human development takes place vary widely over time and place. For example, some twenty years ago children in India would not have known several products that are now part of a child's world. Similarly an Adivasi living in a remote forest or

hilly area would not have a “pizza” or “sandwich” as breakfast. In the previous paragraphs, we have made frequent use of the terms culture and society. Often they are considered to carry similar meaning. Let us note at this point that they are not the same thing. A society is a group of people who occupy a particular territory and speak a common language not generally understood by neighboring people. A society may or may not be a single nation, but every society has its own culture, and it is culture that shapes human behavior from society to society. Culture is the label for all the different features that vary from society to society. A group of people, who manage their livelihood through hunting and gathering in forests, would present a life characterized by certain features that will not be found in a society that lives mainly on agricultural produce or wage earnings. Culture is a very subjective term, what means culture to you may not mean culture to someone else, there have been attempts to define culture by different psychologists, social scientist, archaeologists, some of the definitions are mentioned below so as to give you a general view of this term.

Culture in terms of history: When archaeologists talk about culture what they mean is a group of artifact of a distinctive style found in a specific geographical and stratigraphical location over a period of time, here those artifacts are indicative of the cultural groups or people who lived in that period of time having a distinctive lifestyle.

Culture in the words of Vyogotsky (psychologist and social scientist): He argued that culture provides a social context in which people live grow and understand the world around them.

Culture in general terms: Culture is a collective system of customs, believes, attitudes and achievements in art and literature.

WHY AND HOW TO PROTECT CULTURE?

Preserving culture and heritage through generations

Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books,

works of art, and artefacts). It also includes intangible culture traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts *intangible culture* (such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge), and natural heritage (including culturally significant landscapes, and biodiversity). Whatever shape they take, these things form part of a heritage, and this heritage requires active effort on our part in order to safeguard it. They may be significant due to their present or possible economic value, but also because they create a certain emotion within us, or because they make us feel as though we belong to something - a country, a tradition, a way of life. The best way to preserve your cultural heritage, whatever it may be, is to share it with others.

The importance of preserving heritage, tradition and race

Cultural heritage and natural history of a nation has a very high value and is unique. It is an identity that can be introduced to the world. Cultural heritage affirms our identity as a people because it creates a comprehensive framework for the preservation of cultural heritage including cultural sites, old buildings, monuments, shrines, and landmarks that have cultural significance and historical value. Culture and its heritage reflect and shape values, beliefs, and aspirations, thereby defining a people's national identity. It is important to preserve our cultural heritage, because it keeps our integrity as a people. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

Cultural heritage and integration for immigrant receiving countries

Recognising international qualifications of culturally diverse professionals in immigrant receiving countries helps diasporic communities in preserving, respecting and accommodating their cultures. Recognising these qualifications

also enriches host societies by diversifying their approaches to services, cultural offerings and businesses. This becomes particularly important when smaller communities are trying to attract migrants but the host communities lack diverse cultural resources to attract and retain them. Recognising international qualifications is designed to integrate newcomers but also to leverage what they have to offer in terms of culture and professional expertise.

HOW DO YOU PRESERVE HERITAGE, TRADITION AND CULTURE IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETIES?

While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life. There is a risk that certain elements of intangible cultural heritage could die out or disappear without help, but how can we safeguard and manage a heritage that is constantly changing and part of 'living culture' without freezing or trivializing it? Safeguarding them is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning. In other words, safeguarding focuses on the processes involved in transmitting, or communicating intangible cultural heritage from generation to generation, rather than on the production of its concrete manifestations, such as a dance performance, a song, a music instrument or a craft. There is a risk that certain elements of intangible cultural heritage could die out or disappear without help, but how can we safeguard and manage a heritage that is constantly changing and part of 'living culture' without freezing or trivializing it? Safeguarding them is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning. In other words, safeguarding focuses on the processes involved in transmitting, or *communicating intangible cultural* heritage from generation to generation, rather than on the production of its concrete manifestations, such as a dance performance, a song, a music instrument or a craft.

PRESERVATION OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE THROUGH EDUCATION

The appreciation of cultural heritage should be communicated through an integrated education approach in this global society. Sustainability in the preservation of cultural heritage through education should be encouraged. It is a way of how tangible and intangible cultural heritage can be safeguarded. The role of media in preserving culture and heritage Digital storage has played a large role in the preservation of cultural heritage. It has enabled the sharing of cultural and historical heritage around the world. Digital storage is not only the most popular method of preservation, but it is the trend for the future.

HOW DO THE ARTS STRENGTHEN CULTURAL VALUES?

People pursue artistic and creative expression through a variety of outlets: formal theatrical performances, sculptures, paintings, and buildings; as well as the less formal arts, music and food festivals, celebrations and informal cultural gatherings, pickup bands, and crafts groups. Together, these formal and informal, tangible and intangible, professional and amateur artistic and cultural activities constitute a community's cultural assets. These activities – which encompass a diverse set of locations, spaces, levels of professionalism and participation, products, events, consumers, creators, and critics – are essential to a community's well-being, economic and cultural vitality, sense of identity, and heritage.

PROTECTING CULTURE AND HERITAGE

To be kept alive, tangible cultural heritage must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practised and learned within communities and between generations. Safeguarding measures to ensure that intangible cultural heritage can be transmitted from one generation to another are considerably different from those required for protecting tangible heritage (natural and cultural).

There is a risk that certain elements of intangible cultural heritage could die out or disappear without help, but safeguarding does not mean fixing or freezing intangible cultural heritage in some pure or primordial form. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning.

This panel session will explore how the active involvement of civil society is the best way to safeguard heritage and create opportunities for human and economic development. The session will explore best practice on experiences. It will involve state-of-the-art theories, methodologies and good practice in mobilizing civil society around cultural heritage, and their impact on its healthy development.

CULTURAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOM

Cultural rights are human rights that aim at assuring the enjoyment of culture and its components in conditions of equality, human dignity and non-discrimination. They are rights related to themes such as language; cultural and artistic production; participation in cultural life; cultural heritage; intellectual property rights; author's rights; minorities and access to culture, among others. All persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Cultural rights are often called the “Cinderella of human rights,” since they have not been explored in depth either by international human rights bodies or in the academic literature. Although specific issues such as minority practices have recently attracted the attention of international lawyers, and theoretical approaches relating to cultural rights have featured prominently in discussions within political theory, international law is still lacking a comprehensive discussion of cultural rights. International law has recognized the importance of culture—in UNESCO documents, for example. However, culture was long seen as capital or creativity, and cultural rights were seen as rights of individuals or rights of states. This view has changed recently, especially after the explosion of minority discussions in international law in the 90s and indigenous cultural rights in the 00s; hence culture is now defined broadly as a way of life. Recent UNESCO work on “cultural heritage” has also affected the scope of cultural rights. Although the law of cultural heritage is much wider than the human rights considerations, it raises important issues related to cultural rights. At the centre of cultural rights is the generic “right to culture,” recognized in Article 15 of the

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The article recognizes the right to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, and the rights of scientists and artists. It also recognizes “the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.” The right to participation in culture has recently been seen in its broad sense to include “the right to benefit from cultural values created by the individual or the community” (Report of the International Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Seventh Session, UN Doc E/1993/22, Para. 202 and 223). States must also ensure that there is no unjustified discrimination in the enjoyment and participation in cultural activities (Article 5(e) (VI) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination). Cultural rights of minorities and indigenous peoples are further protected by specific instruments, including Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as elaborated in the UN Declaration on Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Declaration on Minorities) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Such rights also raise issues that are either not fully explored, such as customary legal systems and group rights to intangible culture, or that are seen under the prism of other rights, such as minority dress codes, discussed mainly under the right to religion.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

The preservation of cultural heritage in times of conflict. Theft, war, civil disorder, terrorism, neglect and vandalism are human factors in the accidental or willful destruction of our heritage (Teijgeler, 2001). Of these threats, armed conflict remains particularly intractable and disturbing. Regrettably, of late we have experienced more than once how shocking the effects of a violent struggle can be on the heritage of countries. Undoubtedly, the final decade of the 20th century was marked by destruction of heritage on a symbolic scale that has been unrivalled for the past several centuries. Disasters need to be managed in order to control them, or at least to mitigate the effects. Disaster Management Cycle should address issues relevant to all phases of the disaster cycle: preparedness, response, recovery, rebuilding, prevention and mitigation. Yet, it should be realized that each collection, each building and each situation is unique and that every institution has to prepare for disasters with its own unique plan. Preserving our heritage and improving our environment it is recognized that the retention of heritage buildings has environmental sustainability benefits.

Conserving heritage buildings reduces energy usage associated with demolition, waste disposal and new construction, and promotes sustainable development by conserving the embodied energy in the existing buildings. Cultural heritage is under attack – from environmental degradation and climate change, from socio-economic pressures and the accelerating pace of urbanization, from the strains of global tourism. The role of civil society in preserving heritage and culture. But war is not only the enemy of man; it is also the enemy of the best that man has produced: the whole cultural and historic heritage (Taman, 1996). The tendency of recent warfare to move from interstate to intrastate has amplified the impact. The direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on cultural heritage have been devastating (Gergana, 2001). It appears that the scores for armed conflict, as a cause of destruction and damage for archives, are extremely high in most of the continents (van der Hoeven and Albada, 1996). From time immemorial, war has gone hand in hand with widespread destruction and the 'right to booty'. The aim of war was to collect booty and thus the destruction of cultural property was considered an inevitable consequence of war. The first stirrings of a wish to protect works of art appeared during the Renaissance. The concept was further developed in the 16th and 17th centuries by writers on international law, such as Jacob Przyluski. In his *Leges seu statuta ac privilegia Regni Poloniae* (Cracow, 1553) Jacob Przyluski [Jacobus Prilusius] put forward the idea that every belligerent should show regard for a work of art, but not solely because of its religious nature' (Toman, 1996, 4-5). The protection of cultural property was also considered in non-western civilizations. Under Islamic law, the obligation to distinguish between civilian and military objects is clearly imperative and permits no exception. In accordance with the orders of the first Caliph Abu Bakr (AD 632-634) attacks should be strictly confined to military targets (i.e. objects that by their nature or use are intended for the pursuit of hostilities). Thus the Islamic concept presumes all objects to be civilian unless proven otherwise (Toman, 1966)

CHRISTCHURCH CASE

The Christchurch mosque shootings were two consecutive terrorist attacks at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, during Friday Prayer on 15 March 2019. The attacks began at the Al Noor Mosque in the suburb of Riccarton at 1:40 pm, and continued at the Linwood Islamic Centre at about 1:55 pm. The gunman live streamed the first attack on Facebook Live.

The attacks killed 50 people and injured 50 others. A 28-year-old Australian man, described in media reports as a white supremacist and part of the alt-right, and a self-described eco-fascist and an ethno nationalist, was arrested and charged with murder. The attacks have been linked to an increase in white supremacism and alt-right extremism globally observed since the mid-2010s. Politicians and world leaders condemned the attacks, and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described the date as "one of New Zealand's darkest days." The government has established a royal commission of inquiry into its security agencies in the wake of the attacks, which are the deadliest mass shootings in modern New Zealand history.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Despite controversy surrounding the meaning, history and causes of Islamophobia, there is near unanimity on the prevalence of practices associated with this concept, which include acts of abuse and attacks directed against Islam and Muslims in a number of western societies, which represent a violation of human rights. With the exception of a minority opinion, which completely rejects the use of the term Islamophobia, those who still harbor some doubts about the term, associate it exclusively with an emotional state characterized by fear and hatred, directed against Muslim communities living in the West. They deny the existence of any hatred directed against Islam as a religion per se, alleging that those who prefer to use the term Islamophobia only do so in order to shield the Islamic religion itself against criticism. Still, the majority opinion concurs with the view of the Runnymede Trust, a British think-tank, which holds that the “animosity harbored against Islam and Muslims in Western societies is unique and can only be grasped using an equally unique concept, hence the justification of the term Islamophobia.” There is no agreement as to the origins or causes of such a phenomenon. Some consider it as a new phenomenon caused by Muslims’ inability to integrate into the Western societies where they live, or by members of violent organizations, whose conduct causes fear and scepticism. The majority of those who have analyzed the phenomenon confirm that it dates back to centuries, and has a wide range of causes, most of which point in the direction of those involved in acts of abuse and assault.

Islamophobia is commonly known as a condition of phobia vis-a-vis Islam and Muslims, which develops into hostile behavior, including verbal and physical abuse against Muslims, their scripture, holy personalities and symbols including assault against mosques, cemeteries and religious centers. This condition also manifests in the form of attempts to distort the image of Islam and its symbols,

especially as directed against Prophet Mohammed. Some consider that the above definition does not accurately capture the full scope and depth of this phenomenon, which goes far beyond the phobia some individuals experience with regard to Islam and Muslims. They rather maintain that the term used to describe it fails to reflect the human rights violations it entails. Granting that Islamophobia is an expression of public ignorance about true Islam in Western societies, the argument no longer holds when you find it widespread among the elite of society as well, which leads to the belief that Islamophobia is the result of a deliberate and intentional effort to distort the image of Islam and create a state of permanent fear of Muslims for purpose of achieving both personal and collective goals. Over the last couple of decades, namely after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, Islamophobia transformed beyond recognition. No longer a spontaneous expression of emotions, it turned into an ideology that found its way into the political agendas of right-wing extremist groups, seeking to make political gains by promoting hatred against Islam and Muslims. This systematic effort to distort the image of Islam and Muslims, is not limited to the extreme right, but also includes secular-minded thinkers and intellectuals, who consciously harbor hostile sentiments against religion, seeing in the increasing number of Muslims in Western societies, an existential threat to these societies and their secular way of life. A report published in the United States by the Council of American Islamic Relations in 2013, revealed the existence of a network of more than 37 groups, which engage in the systematic promotion of hatred against Islam and which played a role in introducing 78 legal amendments to Congress and other legislative bodies between 2011 and 2012, all of which aimed at distorting the image of Islam. Unfortunately, these systematic efforts to distort the image of Islam and Muslims, coupled with the rise in terrorist acts involving some Muslim individuals, turned Islamophobia into a permanent cultural phenomenon, constantly evolving and ultimately feeding into so-called anti-terrorism laws, running counter to the efforts made by Muslims to enact legislation criminalizing hate speech against them.

CONCLUSION

By now you have a peripheral idea of the different facets of the agenda and its history, context and problems, however, this background guide was just to harbingers the process of research which is a non exhaustive activity, the more wide and deep you research the better and promising results your results will be.

If in case you need any guidance, clarification or support you must feel free to drop a text or call at the aforementioned contact via email or telephonically.

Happy Researching!

