Model United Nations at UCSD presents
On Saturday April 25th, and Sunday April 26th, 2015

General Assembly – Third Committee
Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural

TritonMUN XI

Introduction

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the eleventh session of TritonMUN 2015! My name is Zoe Cheung and I am your Chair for the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural committee of the General Assembly. I am a third year studying History and International Studies with a focus in Sociology. As Director of Travel in Model United Nations at UCSD, I have participated in various conferences across the country and enjoy debating the international challenges faced by society. This will be my third time chairing and I look forward to hearing your ideas and thoughts as you discuss the prominent issues relevant to this generation. Aside from MUN I work as an office intern in two different departments and industries. In my spare time, I like to travel and see the world for myself. Experiencing diverse cultures is an irreplaceable opportunity to me.

Both topics of this committee will require in-depth research and the active collaboration of delegates to reach a consensus. I hope to see delegates presenting creative solutions to the issue that are not only in line with their country position but feasible in practice. During committee, I will be looking for delegates to demonstrate diplomacy and knowledge of the issue as well as why awareness needs to be raised. Most importantly, I hope for delegates to have fun and meet new friends in the process.

Sincerely,

Zoe Cheung

zoecheung59@gmail.com

Hello Delegates!

My name is Tyler Takemoto and I will be your Vice-Chair for the 3rd General Assembly Committee. I am a second year Cognitive Science: Human-Computer Interaction major with a minor in International Studies. Model UN has become a central part of my college experience. So far, I enjoy the fast-paced rhetoric, the rich collaboration, and the emphasis on background research and knowledge afforded by my experiences with the team.

Aside from Model UN, I serve as the Co-Chair and Editor-in-Chief of *Revellations*, one of our college publications, and contribute to the UC San Diego Design Team. Overall, I try to take advantage of the many creative and communicative outlets provided by student organizations on campus.

Every bloc is a stakeholder in the issue of preserving endangered languages. Because it is a challenge that is so widespread and so specific to each region, I am eager to see how this committee will address this problem within the overarching framework of the United Nations General Assembly. I expect delegates to be prepared with a well-researched understanding of the issue, including their own country's stance, challenges, and involvement in the topic. During debate, I look forward to seeing delegates demonstrate diplomacy, knowledge, and adherence to their country policy.

It is my honor to serve as your Vice-Chair for this Committee. I hope that I can provide a challenging, informative, and enjoyable experience.

Sincerely,

Tyler Takemoto

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Topic A: Women's Political Participation in Peace, Conflict, and Political Transitions

I. Background

The issue of women's political participation in peace and conflict concerns not only the welfare of women but goes hand in hand with overall gender equality issues. By giving women a voice in politics will not only ensure a more well-rounded governing system, it is also essential in building and sustaining democracy.[1] It is crucial that the generation today is educated on this issue to understand that significant barriers remain to reach the full integration of a gender perspective in peace and post-conflict processes at both country and international levels.[2] In order to boost women's political participation, it is important that there be higher levels of awareness as well as social integration along with inclusion. There lies an enormous untapped potential in women[3] to voice their opinions and participate in political discussion, which if channeled in the right direction will lead to positive political transformations.

In 2011, United Nations Organization UN Women's Executive Director Michelle Bachelet further emphasized the previous point that women in politics is fundamental to democracy and essential to the achievement of sustainable development and peace. Bachelet also stresses that there is now data to show that countries with greater gender equality have higher gross national product per capita. In addition to that, countries with more women in parliament tend to have more equitable laws and social programs and budgets that benefit women, children and

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[1] "Gender, Women and Democracy" *National Democratic Institute.* Web. 20 Dec 2014.
[2] Falch, Ashild. "Women's Political Participation and Influence in Post-Conflict Burundi and Nepal" *Peacewomen.* Web. 16 Dec 2014.
[3] "Third Committee Approves Text Stressing Critical Importance of Women's Political Participation in All Contexts - Peace, Conflict, Political Transition" *United Nations.* 18 November 2011. Web. 28 Dec 2014.

families.[4] As a whole, women need reforms that will promote their rights in the political system which in the end will also benefit the country as well. The issue has continued to persist due to traditional value that constrains a woman's ability to freely move around in the political domain.

Historically, gender disparity in the political field has been great and existed mainly due to gender inequality as well as multiple structural and functional factors that vary in different social contexts across countries. Women's exclusion from political structures and processes rested on the wide belief of their suitability in roles as caring mothers and wives therefore enforcing their exclusion in the public domain of politics. Even as society rapidly develops, changes have only taken place at a slow rate. In 1995, 11.3 percent of national parliamentarians were women, as of July 1 2014 this number had increased to 21.8 percent.[5] Statistics serve to emphasize the disparity as well as underline the institutional obstacles in the way of women. Data from UN Women, presents an image where women in all regions are underrepresented whether it is the police, prosecution services or judiciary.

The gender gap in politics is not something that can be solved overnight and will require both institutional and social reforms. Bringing awareness to the community will require educational reforms and the participation of the public. Local governments can also play a role in motivating women to not only pursue an education but also recognize their importance in the political domain. A starting point would be to address the need to ensure that women have a voice within their own households before pushing for involvement in the public sphere. In order to achieve female empowerment in politics, it should be based on existing norms and standards for gender equality such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

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[4]"Women's Political Participation" *UN Women.* 11 October 11. Web. 2 Jan 2015.
[5]"Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation" *UN Women.* Web. 2 Jan 2015.

against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as on outcomes of major conferences and resolutions of bodies such as the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women.[6]

On a case-to-case basis, there has been progress in countries such as Burundi and Ecuador, where women who previously had no rights to participate in political discussions are now increasingly included in governance governmental and justice systems. An astounding 40 percent of members in the customary Bashingantahe justice system are women, a great example of gender advancement in politics. Not all countries experience such development and it should be the role of governments, educators and society to further promote the importance of women's participation in politics. With continued constitutional and legal reform, education, social integration and inclusion as well as economic empowerment, it is possible for more women to participate in politics.

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[6]"UN Women Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda" *UN Women.* Web. 3 Jan 2015.

II. United Nations Involvement

There continues to be structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions that limit women's political participation in peace, conflict and political transitions. As a consequence, international bodies such as the UN Women exist to provide solutions; their programs on leadership and participation are guided by a history of international commitments to women's representation.[7] Other international bodies include CEDAW which upholds women's right to participate in public life, while the Beijing Platform for Action calls for removing barriers to equal participation. The Millennium Development Goals measure progress towards gender equality in part by the proportion of women in parliamentary seats. In addition, the Commission on the Status of Women also exists to promote awareness and equality of gender rights.

The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* was adopted at the Fourth World Conference for Women, held in 1995 in Beijing China. The platform emphasized women's equal participation in decision-making as not only a demand for justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. The Declaration in addition highlights that without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. It also stresses the need for equal human rights, respect for cultural diversity, and promotes a principle of shared power between genders.[8] The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at its forty-first session in 1997, adopted Agreed Conclusions (1997/2), which emphasized that the goal of equal participation of men and women in decision-making was important for strengthening democracy and achieving the goals of sustainable development. The Commission reaffirmed the need to identify and im-

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[7]"Women's leadership and political participation" *UN Women.* Web. 2 Jan 2015.
[8]"Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women" *United Nations.* Web. 10 Jan 2015.

plement measures that would redress the under-representation of women in decision-making, suggesting the elimination of discriminatory practices and the introduction of positive action programs.[9]

The Security Council in its resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security reaffirmed the important role of women in the political participation of in peace, conflict, and political transitions. Taking into account the importance of increasing women's participation in positions of power and decision-making, the General Assembly at its 58th session in 2003, adopted resolution 58/142 on women and political participation which urged Governments, the UN system, NGOs and other actors to develop a comprehensive set of policies and programs to increase women's participation in decision-making.[10] The resolution also addressed the importance of supporting and generating political will, as well as demonstrated serious commitment to the promotion of the advancement of women and the goals of gender equality through the organization of awareness raising campaigns.[11] Along with that, the resolution requested the Secretary-General to include information on the political participation of women in his report to the 50th session of the Commission in 2006, when the Commission considered the theme on equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.

In addition to solutions presented by international bodies, the work of local governments and organizations are equally important in promoting and ensuring women's political participation. An example of collaboration between an international body and the local government is at Timor-Leste. In Timor-Leste, UN Women are supporting women's political participation

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[9] "The Changing Nature of Conflict: New Dimensions, New Players, New Perspectives" *The Women's Foreign Policy Group*. 2001. Web. 9 Jan 2015.
[10] "Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership" *United Nations*. 27 October 2005. Web. 21 Dec 2014.
[11] "Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation" *United Nations*. 2010. Web. 21 Dec 2014.

through a collection of programs aimed at building the capacity of women to play effective roles as political actors. Most notably is the Programme for Enhancing Rural Women's Leadership and Participation in Nation Building (PERWL) that targets Timorese rural women with the aim of building the capacity of women leaders and groups at the national and local levels to participate in the process of nation building.[12]

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[12]"Timor-Leste: Transitional Strategy and Appeal 2008" *La'o Hamutuk.* Web. 15 Jan 2015.

III. Bloc Positions

Americas

The Americas are leaders in women's political participation but by only a small margin. As of January 1st 2014, there were 25.2% of women parliamentarians in this region.[13] While North America remains a developed region, women are still underrepresented in political positions. Women make up a very small percentage of elected officials both at the local and national level. For instance, in the 109th congress (2005-2007), there were only 14 female senators out of 100 and 70 congressional representatives out of 435.[14] Central and South America in comparison is still subjected to a great deal of gender inequality that makes it difficult for women to represent in political positions. For example, Argentina has a 30% quota for women on electoral lists.[15] This means that the number of women in the House has remained the same for many years and has made no significant impact on Senate commissions where they are still traditionally represented in the social and family commissions while their male counterparts are in the commissions for industry, foreign relations, energy, defense and so on.

Europe

The percentage of women parliamentarians in Europe excluding Nordic countries is 23.3%[16], a close second to the Americas. Countries such as France and Finland are key examples of active participation on the part of local governments to promote gender equality in political representation. In France, gender equality is written in the law and political parties have to

[13]"Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation" *UN Women.* Web. 2 Jan 2015.
[14]"Gender, Women and Democracy" *National Democratic Institute.* Web. 20 Dec 2014.
[15]"Latin America: a pioneer in promoting women's political participation" *International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance).* 4 March 2014. Web. 15 Jan 2015.
[16]"Fact Sheet: Women's Political Participation" *International Women's Democracy Center.* Web. 16 Jan 2015.

present equal numbers of men and women. While in Finland, the law requires at least 40% of each sex should be represented in the membership of various decision-making bodies, which led to an increase in women's membership from 25% in 1980 to 48% in 1996. All in all, countries belonging to this region are key examples of countries promoting gender equality and making it part of their legal system to have equal numbers of men and women represented in political parties.[17]

Asia

Traditionally, women have always taken an inferior position to men in countries like China, Japan and Korea. Even as society has modernized, traditional values of gender are very much entrenched in all aspects of life including politics. The percentage of women parliamentarians in Asia is 18.4%[18], a relatively low figure to some of the other regions in the world. However, in certain cases like India, local programs have greatly increased the number of women leaders and there are close to one million elected women leaders at the village level today due to the Panchayat Raj Act. In other areas like Bangladesh, the reform of 1997 along with the support of the local government, international bodies and imposition of quotas has helped change the popular political culture to gradually become more conducive to women's political participation. There continues to be a struggle for women's active participation in politics as a whole in Asia.

Middle East

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[17]"Fact Sheet: the Equal Futures Partnership to Expand Women's Political and Economic Participation" *The White House.* 24 Sept 2012. Web. 13 Jan 2015.
[18]"Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation" *UN Women.* Web. 2 Jan 2015.

The percentage of women parliamentarians is the lowest in the Middle East at 16%[19]. Like Asia, there are many traditional values that put women at an inferior position to men. However in additional to traditional values, the Arab region specifically has long been characterized by political activity whether in its anti-colonial movements, its own regional and internal conflicts, or the various wars it has witnessed, still lags far behind other regions in the world when it comes to the political status of its women.[20] The region is defined by a complex set of issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict and its repercussions, unstable economic conditions and trends, undemocratic internal governance systems and so on.[21] As civil societies across the region are in different stages of development, progress in women's political participation will require a greater deal of effort and support from International bodies, NGOs and local governments.

Oceania

Even though the percentage of women parliamentarians is surprisingly low at 16.2%[22], the Oceania region has traditionally placed a high value on the contribution of women. Pacific governments led by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders are committed to equality for women in decision-making through a range of international and regional commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, the MDGs and so on. Despite commitments, this region fares amongst the worst in the world due to the fact that constitutional reforms were often focused on other issues and it wasn't until the 1990s that the issue of political advancement of women was

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[19]"Fact Sheet: Women's Political Participation" *International Women's Democracy Center.* Web. 16 Jan 2015.
[20]"Women's political participation and economic empowerment in post-conflict countries" *International Alert.* July 2012. Web. 6 Jan 2015.
[21]Sabbagh, Amal. "The Arab States: Enhancing Women's Political Participation" *International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance).* Web. 13 Jan 2015.
[22]"Fact Sheet: Women's Political Participation" *International Women's Democracy Center.* Web. 16 Jan 2015.

raised in earnest.[23] Therefore, there is a real necessity for a more coordinated and strategic approach to address the under-representation of women in parliaments.

[23] "A Woman's Place is in the House - the House of Parliament" 2006. Web. 14 Jan 2015.

IV. Questions to Consider

1. How can the international system help to empower the role of women in politics?

2. How can local governments help to empower the role of women in politics?

3. What are specific barriers that restrict the Committee's work on this topic?

4. What are other methods of increasing women's political participation?

5. How does increasing women's political participation benefit your country?

V.   Suggested Sites

http://www.unwomen.org/en - UN Women, United Nations Organization

https://www.ndi.org/ - The National Democratic Institution

http://www.peacewomen.org/ - The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

VI. Bibliography

"A Woman's Place is in the House - the House of Parliament" 2006. Web. 14 Jan 2015.

<http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Content_1-171.pdf>

"Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation" *United Nations.* 2010. Web. 21 Dec 2014.

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/10-50143_%28e%29_%28desa%29dialogues_ecosoc_achieving_gender_equality_women_empowerment.pdf>

"Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership" *United Nations.* 27 October 2005. Web. 21 Dec 2014. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/eql-men/FinalReport.pdf>

"Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation" *UN Women.* Web. 2 Jan 2015.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>

"Fact Sheet: the Equal Futures Partnership to Expand Women's Political and Economic Participation" *The White House.* 24 Sept 2012. Web. 13 Jan 2015.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/24/fact-sheet-equal-futures-partnership-expand-women-s-political-and-econom>

"Fact Sheet: Women's Political Participation" *International Women's Democracy Center.* Web.

16 Jan 2015. <http://www.iwdc.org/resources/fact_sheet.htm>

Falch, Ashild. "Women's Political Participation and Influence in Post-Conflict Burundi and

Nepal" *Peacewomen.* Web. 16 Dec 2014.

<http://www.peacewomen.org/portal_resources_resource.php?id=545%203>

"Gender, Women and Democracy" *National Democratic Institute.* Web. 20 Dec 2014.

<https://www.ndi.org/gender-women-democracy>

"Latin America: a pioneer in promoting women's political participation" *International IDEA*

(Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). 4 March 2014. Web. 15 Jan 2015.

<http://www.idea.int/americas/latin-america-a-pioneer-in-promoting-womens-political-

participation.cfm>

"Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women" *United Nations.* Web. 10 Jan

2015.<http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/off/a--20.en>

Sabbagh, Amal. "The Arab States: Enhancing Women's Political Participation" *International*

IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). Web. 13 Jan 2015.

<http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/upload/Arab_World.pdf>

"The Changing Nature of Conflict: New Dimensions, New Players, New Perspectives" *The*

Women's Foreign Policy Group. 2001. Web. 9 Jan 2015.

<http://www.wfpg.org/assets/documents/changingconflict.pdf>

"Third Committee Approves Text Stressing Critical Importance of Women's Political

Participation in All Contexts - Peace, Conflict, Political Transition" *United Nations.* 18

November 2011. Web. 28 Dec

2014.<http://www.un.org/press/en/2011/gashc4031.doc.htm>

"Timor-Leste: Transitional Strategy and Appeal 2008" *La'o Hamutuk.* Web. 15 Jan 2015.

<http://www.laohamutuk.org/econ/08TLDPM/08TransitionalStrategyAppeal.pdf>

"UN Women Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda" *UN Women.* Web. 3 Jan 2015.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/post-2015/un-women-position>

"Women's leadership and political participation" *UN Women.* Web. 2 Jan 2015.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>

"Women's Political Participation" *UN Women.* 11 October 11. Web. 2 Jan 2015.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2011/10/women-s-political-participation>

"Women's political participation and economic empowerment in post-conflict countries"

International Alert. July 2012. Web. 6 Jan 2015. <http://www.international-

alert.org/sites/default/files/publications/201209WomenEmpowermentEN_0.pdf>

Topic B: Promoting Policies for Preservation of Endangered Languages

I.   Background

There are over 6,000 languages spoken worldwide. Language is an integral part of cultural practice, preserving important ancestral knowledge for future generations. Linguistic Neuroscientists have come to believe that language may even encode patterns of thought that are unique to specific cultures.[24] The world is currently home to a broad spectrum of linguistic diversity. However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that without any significant countermeasures, half of the world's languages will be extinct by the end of this century.

New languages form and existing languages decline in use as a natural byproduct of social progression. However a combination of factors, including colonial expansion throughout the 20th century, ethnic and cultural conflicts, and the increasing degree of global interconnectedness have led to an unprecedented degree of cultural and linguistic decline in all regions of the world. [25]

A language is considered extinct if there are no remaining individuals who learn it as a native language and if there are no longer any living individuals who have learned it in such a manner. Recent examples of extinct languages include the Aasax language in Tanzania, which went extinct in 1976; the Ubyh language in Turkey, which went extinct in 1992; the Akkala Saami language in the Russian Federation, which went extinct in 2003; and the Eyak language in

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[24]Gleitman, Lila & Papafragou, Anna (2005). Language and thought. In K. Holyoak & B. Morrison (eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Thinking and Reasoning*. Cambridge University Press. 633--661.
[25]Dixon, R.W.M. The Rise and Fall of Languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

the United States, which went extinct in 2008. While it is impossible to accurately determine the exact number of languages which have become extinct in past years, one thing is certain: the number will continue to increase at a rapid pace if preventative measures are not taken. [26]

Although there are endangered languages in every region of the world, regions with the greatest degree of linguistic diversity—such as Melanesia, Africa, and South America—are most heavily affected by the issue. Numerous indigenous languages in such regions are in immediate danger of extinction due to a variety of factors including a national social pressure to adopt broader cultural and linguistic practices. The emergence of a global marketplace encourages governments and nations to move toward a more centralized culture—a move that requires the assimilation of minority languages and cultures.

It is difficult to address the issue of endangered languages because the nature of the problem is diverse, unique, and highly regional. Overarching efforts such as large-scale conferences and initiatives have been met with mixed success due to the inherent difficulty in applying global frameworks to regional issues. A prime example is the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages, which was established in 1981 to promote the preservation of endangered languages throughout Europe. It was closed in 2010 due to lack of a sufficient funding apparatus. Many regional organizations rose up to take its place.

In response to these difficulties, international bodies have largely taken a back seat: providing funding, recommendation, and strategies for smaller-scale initiatives to implement solutions at the local level. Governments, educational institutions, and linguists working within the affected areas have been valuable tools in preserving endangered languages. Governments can pass policies legitimizing official minority languages. Educational institutions can foster

[26] Sampat, Payal. Last Words: The Dying of Languages. *World Watch*. 2001.

environments in which students learn in their native tongues. Linguistic initiatives can work to catalogue and investigate the social climate surrounding endangered languages. [27]

Language is a vital part of humanity's heritage. Moreover, language shapes how its users view the world. To preserve the breadth of diversity the world currently enjoys, it is imperative to prevent the decline of languages that form a cornerstone of cultural identity. Fortunately, the world has learned about the problem of language extinction early enough to change its course and foster a global culture that continues to be characterized by richness and diversity.

[27]Fishman, J. A.. Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1991.

II. United Nations Involvement

Although multiple committees of the UN have recognized the importance of preserving linguistic diversity, there have been few measures implemented to formally address the issue. In its Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO has emphasized that the preservation of indigenous cultural practices, including language, should be a primary concern of the international community. [28]

To chart a course for the protection and preservation of indigenous cultures, the UN has met through several conventions including the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. While these conventions discussed the necessity of endangered language preservation, the issue was not a main focus and the measures implemented at each conference did little to directly confront the problem. [29]

The adoption of UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2000/222 led to the founding of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The forum allows multiple United Nations bodies, such as the UNDP, UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNESCO, and International Labor Organization (ILO) to collaborate on initiatives to promote cultural diversity, including linguistic preservation. [30] However, similar to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Di-

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[28] "UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity" Available from:
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf
[29] "Resolution from the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions"
Available from:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
[30] http://www.un.org/en/events/iyl/multilingualism.shtml

versity of Cultural Expressions, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues considers the preservation of endangered languages to be an important priority, but not necessarily a main focus.

There have been multiple UN General Assembly resolutions that specifically address the topic of multilingualism. For example, Resolution 67/292 emphasizes the need for all UN Committees to implement translations of written materials including resolutions, press releases, and online resources in more languages to promote linguistic diversity. [31] Although helpful, the resolutions that focus on multilingualism do not necessarily address the problem of endangered languages. Translating UN documents into additional languages may aid linguistic diversity, but it does little to protect the extinction of languages in imminent danger.

The most significant obstacle to UN Involvement in both the protection of indigenous cultures and the preservation of linguistic diversity is that the issues in question are widespread and diverse across many different regions. Therefore, to implement policies and practices that will substantially address the problem, the UN requires a detailed and informed picture of each case. However, there are simply too many endangered languages across many regions for the UN to work with on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, because the cultural situations surrounding endangered languages may vary across and even within regions, overarching approaches might not be effective for all situations. Additionally, it is difficult to find a comprehensive pipeline for funds and support for international initiatives to preserve endangered languages because the issue is highly regional and lacks the multilateral support needed for such a large undertaking.

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[31] A/RES/67/292

III. Bloc Positions

American Bloc

The Americas are home to numerous indigenous populations with their own unique cultures and languages. As a result of past colonization, many of these cultures and languages were assimilated, displaced, or destroyed. Those that remain face an uncertain future. Canada and the United States have implemented numerous policies within their own borders to preserve indigenous cultural traditions including indigenous languages. The Linguistic Society of America and CELP are two organizations tasked with the research and implementation of policies to better understand and preserve endangered languages.[32]

Central and South America are home to substantial indigenous populations. Many nations in these regions have implemented policies that allow public broadcasting and education in indigenous languages within the region where the languages are prevalent. These measures have been met with widespread success, but there still remain indigenous populations and languages that require protection.

European Bloc

Europe is a region with many different languages within and across its national borders. Broad programs aiming to preserve endangered languages in European regions have experienced setbacks in the recent past. One example is the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages, which closed in 2010 due to difficulties securing funding. It has been replaced by many smaller regional organizations, some which are more effective than others.

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[32] Linguistic Society of America. "Endangered Languages" *Linguistic Society of America*. 2012. Available from: http://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/endangered-languages

Currently, over 200 languages are spoken in Europe. Many are in immediate danger of going extinct. Recent effort in Britain to educate schoolchildren in the extinct Manx language demonstrates a successful initiative underway to counteract the trend.[33]

Middle Eastern Bloc

The Near East is home to a vibrant and diverse group of cultures and languages. However, various factors have led to widespread trends that endanger minority cultures and languages. For example, political turmoil in countries like Syria and Iraq has led to brutality against minority groups. Drought across the Horn of Africa has resulted in hundreds of thousands immigrating to neighboring nations, including many indigenous groups whose cultural identity is threatened by displacement.

Additionally, many nations in the Middle East, including Egypt and Iran, have continued to pass legislation promoting the use and adoption of the Arabic with the purpose of creating monolingual states which can share a common language. This trend has increased the danger to cultural identity of minority groups.[34]

Asian Bloc

The pressures of globalization have led to increased centralization and decreased diversity in Eastern Asian nations such as China, Japan, and South Korea. In China, for example, numerous indigenous populations exist along the country's southern borders and mountain regions. These populations are encouraged by both socioeconomic and governmental pressures to adopt

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[33] EBLUL. "Promoting European Linguistic Diversity." *European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages*. March 2010. Available from: http://eblul.eurolang.net/
[34] Miller, Catherine "Linguistic Policies and the issue of ethno-linguistic minorities in the Middle East" *Islam in the Middle Eastern Studies: Muslims and Minorities*. 2003. Available from: http://www.academia.edu/5502394/Linguistic_policies_and_Language_Issues_in_the_Middle_East

Mandarin Chinese as their primary mode of communication, leading to the decline of many indigenous languages in the region.

Southern Asian nations such as India, Thailand, and Vietnam have the highest concentration of diverse indigenous cultures and languages in the world. These are also the regions that will experience the greatest magnitude of language extinction in the coming years.

African Bloc

Similar to the Americas, cultural and linguistic diversity in Africa was negatively impacted by colonial expansion. The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) was founded in 2006 as a commission of the African Union. ACALAN is tasked with the preservation of Africa's cultural and linguistic diversity as the continent becomes increasingly integrated.[35]

Oceanian Bloc

Australia, New Zealand, and numerous Pacific Island Nations are home to diverse indigenous groups with unique languages. The Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC) was established in cooperation with several Australian universities with the purpose of applying technology to the preservation of indigenous languages. PARADISEC and similar initiatives implemented through coordination of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions across Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Nations have led to electronic databases that document and preserve indigenous languages across the region.[36]

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[35] African Union Commission. "Africa's Languages for Africa's Development" *African Academy of Languages*. 2012Available from: http://www.acalan.org/index.php
[36] PARADISEC. "Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures" *Australian Register*. 2013. Available from: http://paradisec.org.au/

IV. Questions to Consider

1. Many regional initiatives are already underway to combat the threat of language extinction. What unique tools and perspectives does the UN have to contribute?

2. Some nations have made the establishment of a monolingual (single-language) culture a national priority. How will this body accomplish its goals in the context of the policies and viewpoints of such nations?

3. Efforts to provide multilateral support for the preservation of endangered languages have faced difficulty. What are some of the challenges this body will face in securing the funding and administrative power necessary to support its goals?

4. There are many different endangered languages throughout the world. Each case may require a unique approach. How will this body address the varying conditions across regions?

V.   Suggested Sites

http://en.unesco.org/ -UNESCO Website

http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/- UNESCO Map of Endangered Languages

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