ILM NC India

The Ivy League Model United Nations India 2016

Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to The Ivy League Model United Nations Conference India 2016 hosted by the International Affairs Association of the University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy League institution.

The Ivy League Model United Nations Conference is one of the most reputed high school conferences in the United States bringing together over 3000 delegates from across the globe in an unique academic, social and cultural experience. We are incredibly excited to bring this experience to India this year in what will be one of the largest and most academically, professionally and socially enriching Model United Nations symposiums.

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A large part of what makes ILMUNC India so incredible is the commitment of its amazing staff, as well as the immense preparation that goes into making this conference the phenomenal experience that it is. Our staffers are all leaders at the prestigious University of Pennsylvania, who come from a diverse range of majors, interests, classes, and schools – from Finance at the Wharton School of Business to Computer Science and Nanotechnology at the School of Engineering. At ILMUNC India, this academic excellence and personal passions that chairs bring truly bring a professional collegiate environment and distinct enriching experience to our high school delegates, both within and outside the committee room.

The Secretariat is working hard to ensure that the quality of the conference is unparalleled. This year will bring together close to 1000 delegates in 8 distinct committees. The topics we are discussing are pertinent issues in today's world and we are excited to witness the unique and diverse solutions that our delegates will bring to the table. The ILMUNC India team is continuously searching for ways to make the conference better and more engaging for our delegates. We are proud to announce technological advancement in the Model United Nations circuit including a groundbreaking mobile application that will soon be released.

Our delegates' experiences outside of committee are just as vital as their experiences within committee. At ILMUNC India we ensure that our delegates take away memories and experiences that will better them personally and professionally. Outside of the invaluable Model United Nations experience, we host numerous college and career fairs, personal mentoring sessions with current students and alumni, keynote speeches from prominent members of society and, of course, enthralling social events.

Our delegates are the most integral part of our story and I'd like to once again thank you for choosing to be a part of our next chapter of ILMUNC India 2016. We are certain that you will walk away from this conference with memories that you will cherish for a long time to come. Welcome to ILMUNC India 2016!

Sincerely,

Ana Rancic
Secretary-General
ILMUNC India 2016

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Introduction to the Body

The Sixth Committee is the main forum for the discussion of legal issues in the General Assembly. All Member States of the United Nations are entitled to representation in the Sixth Committee, one of the core committees of the assembly. The purpose of the committee is to continue the established tradition of supporting and promoting international law and to seek active participation in the discussion of the topics covered in this instance, among them:

- Oceans and law of the sea,
- International terrorism,
- International criminal law and the principle of universal jurisdiction,
- The rule of law at national and international levels,
- Assistance program of the United Nations' teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law,
- Criminal liability of officials and experts from United Nations missions, and
- Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its sessions.[1]

The Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly called its first session to order in 1948. The mandate of the Committee is sustained in the United Nations Charter, which empowers the General Assembly to "initiate and make recommendations for the purpose of promoting international cooperation and encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification."[2]

Topic A: International Law of the Seas

Statement of the Issue

There now exists a large body of evidence that human actions, namely the burning of fossil fuels and associated release of climate pollutants, are causing significant changes to the global climate system beyond what is considered natural. Global climate change can be defined by the UNFPA as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods."[1] This includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among other effects, that occur over several decades or longer. While global warming has been the most widely publicized and discussed aspect of the larger climate change issue, the increased frequency and severity of droughts, famines, floods, hurricanes, extreme heat waves, and other "natural" disasters over the past few decades cannot be overstated. Earth's average temperature has risen by 1.5°F over the past century, and is projected to rise another 0.5 to 8.6°F over the next hundred years.[2] Even minute changes in the average temperature of the planet can

translate to large and potentially dangerous shifts in climate and weather. Natural disasters, especially floods and storms, occur twice as frequently today as 25 years ago.[3]

These environmental changes carry significant implications for the world population. Most crucially, the world's population faces far greater risks of injury, disease, and death in our drastically evolving environment. Natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and heat waves have the capacity to claim lives instantly. Changing temperatures, precipitation, and wind patterns affect the spread of food-, water-, and vector-borne diseases and the ability for lesser developed communities to adequately produce food. As a secondary effect to the immediate health risks, changes in Earth's climate has spurred global migration and altered the world's population dynamics, to which the global community will need to adapt.

While climate change threatens the livelihoods and well-being of all people and societies, vulnerability to climate change health risks is distributed unevenly. All of the above health risks above are strongly influenced by social factors, such as socioeconomic status, age, gender, ethnicity, displacement, or disability. There is strong evidence that health impacts of climate change disproportionately affect poorer populations and children and differ between women and men. That is, the poor and marginalized, who have contributed little to greenhouse gas emissions but who lack the resources to effectively adapt as droughts, floods and other consequences take effect suffer the greatest.[4] Climate change is likely to widen existing health inequities, both between and within populations.

Unfortunately, global climate change represents the ultimate tragedy of the commons. Historically nations have been reluctant to cut emissions, curtail industrialization, and introduce the environmentally conscious measures necessary to lessen the effects of global climate change. It will take a concerted global effort to mitigate the effects of global climate change and adapt to the damage that has already been done.

History

Scientific evidence shows that the Earth's climate has changed throughout history, with seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat in the last 650,000 years, the last ice age abruptly ending 7,000 years ago and beginning our modern climate era. While these climate changes have been attributed to small variations in Earth's orbit that alter the amount of solar energy received, scientists have found convincing evidence that the current change of Earth's atmosphere is not natural. The current warming trend is significant, as opposed to the previous climatic changes, because it is very likely human-induced and proceeding at an unprecedented rate in the past 1,300 years.[5]

Most scientists today agree that this change in Earth's climate is due to the so-called "greenhouse

effect" — warming that results when the atmosphere traps in heat radiating from Earth toward space. Certain gases in the atmosphere, namely water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbons, block heat from escaping. Some of these gases are released into the atmosphere naturally and comprise Earth's natural greenhouse effect. However, humans are emitting excess gases in our everyday actions that are compounding this greenhouse effect. Carbon dioxide, for instance, is released through natural processes such as respiration and volcano eruptions. It is also released largely through human activities such as deforestation, land use changes, and burning fossil fuels. Humans have increased atmospheric CO2 concentration by a third since the Industrial Revolution began. Similarly, methane is a gas produced by both natural sources and human activities, such as the decomposition of wastes in landfills, agriculture (especially rice cultivation), and manure management associated with domestic livestock. Methane is a far more active greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, but it is also less abundant in the atmosphere. Nitrous oxide is another powerful greenhouse gas which is produced by soil cultivation practices, especially the use of commercial and organic fertilizers, fossil fuel combustion, nitric acid production, and biomass burning.[6]

Ultimately, humans have been emitting these gases since the beginning of civilization. The use of coal as fuel predates recorded history. However, the footprint of these early emissions was minute. The Industrial Revolution of 1750 and the later development of large-scale agricultural systems substantially contributed to the progression of climate change. Since the 1700s, the primary cause of greenhouse gas emissions has been the burning of fossil fuels to power heavy industry.

The first scientific claim pointing to this theory was published in 1896 by Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius. He found that the average surface temperature of the earth is about 15 degrees Celsius due to the infrared absorption capacity of water vapor and carbon dioxide. Today this is referred to as the natural greenhouse effect. Arrhenius proposed that doubling the CO2 concentration in the atmosphere would lead to a 5 degree Celsius temperature rise and warned that human activities could warm our planet by increasing levels of CO2 into the atmosphere beyond what is considered natural.[7] This theory, however, did not catch on in mainstream circles for quite some time, as scientists still believed the impact of man's footprint to be insubstantial relative to natural forces, such as solar activity and ocean circulation.

In the 1940s developments in infrared spectroscopy proved that increasing the amount of atmospheric carbon dioxide resulted in more absorption of infrared radiation, and further, that water vapor absorbed completely different types of vapor than carbon dioxide. However, the theory remained that the oceans would absorb most carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. In the late 1950s and early 1960s scientist Charles Keeling produced concentration curves for atmospheric carbon dioxide in Antartica and Mauna Loa and showed a downward trend of global annual

temperature from the 1940s to the 1970s. This evidence was interpreted to suggest a potential new ice age, ignoring the growing body of data from the 50s and 60s pointing to the greenhouse effect. In the 1980's, global annual temperatures began to rise, and at such a rate that the global warming theory became quite popular. In 1988 it was finally acknowledged that climate was warmer than any period since 1880. The greenhouse effect theory was named and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was founded by the United Nations Environmental Program and the World Meteorological Organization.

However, in the 1990s scientists started to question the greenhouse effect theory due to uncertainties in data sets. This controversy has remained today. Despite convincing evidence using advanced scientific technologies, skeptics remain. While controversy caused the IPCC to review its initial data on global warming, it never questioned whether the trend exists. Evidence shows that 1998 was globally the warmest year on record, followed by 2002, 2003, 2001 and 1997. The 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1990.[8] Today, Earth-orbiting satellites and other technological advances have enable scientists to collect a large body of data about our planet and its climate. This data very clearly reveals the signals of a changing climate.

Relevant International Action

The global community currently lacks a developed system with which to respond to climate change. This is largely due to remaining uncertainties and controversy surrounding the greenhouse effect theory and the collective action nature of the climate change problem. Climate change is a global problem that cannot be solved by few countries alone.

As previously mentioned, following the 1988 acknowledgement that the climate was warmer than any period previously, the greenhouse effect theory was named and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was founded by the United Nations Environmental Program and the World Meteorological Organization. The IPCC serves to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.[9] Several years later, in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC) was developed as a framework for international cooperation to "combat climate change by limiting average global temperature increases and the resulting climate change, and coping with impacts that were, by then, inevitable."[10]

By 1995, UNFCC members launched negotiations to coordinate and strengthen the global response to climate change. The Kyoto Protocol, the result of these negotiations adopted in 1997, legally binds participating countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (CO2, CH4, N2O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF6) by at least 5% below 1990 levels. The Kyoto Protocol was signed in Bonn in 2001 by 186 countries, however several countries such as the United States and Australia, two of the world's biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, failed to ratify the agreement. The Protocol was finally ratified in February 2005 by 163 countries, and it's

first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012. The second commitment period began on 1 January 2013 and will end in 2020.

The next global effort to respond to climate change, the Earth Summit 2012, took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012. This conference focused on sustainable development of the environment and highlighted seven main issues; jobs, energy, cities, food, water, oceans, and disasters. It aimed to find ways to build a green economy, achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty with a support system for developing countries that allows them to find a green path for development. While this conference had important objectives, tackling widespread and indirect consequences of global climate change and ways to resolve them, it did not produce any binding steps forward. The primary outcome of the conference was the 49-page non-binding work paper, "The Future We Want," in which heads of state of the 192 governments in attendance reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable development and the promotion of a sustainable future.

In September 2015, the United Nations passed the Global Goals, many of which are somehow linked to solving the climate crisis. Global Goal 13, climate action, explicitly calls for the international community to combat the impacts of climate change. While this message is beneficial, it does not offer much in the way of action.

The most significant international action to combat climate change has been the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, also known as COP21. This conference aimed to enhance the implementation of the UNFCCC through "(a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change; (b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; (c) Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development." [11] The Conference ended with a landmark decisions by the United Nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions, signed on April 22, 2016 (Earth Day). For the first time, 195 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed to limit emissions and to take common climate action. The agreement will enter into force and thus become fully effective only if 55 countries that produce at least 55% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions ratify the agreement. So far, 23 Parties have ratified the agreement, not including the United States. Not technically a part of the Paris Agreement, although discussed at Paris talks, is the Green Climate Fund, a plan to provide $100 billion a year in aid to developing countries for implementing new measures to minimize climate change. If successful, this would be a helpful initiative to reduce emissions in countries that cannot afford more costly green apparatuses.

Current Situation

Climate change remains one of the most significant threats the world population faces today. According to the American Meteorological Society, there is a 90 percent probability that global temperatures will rise by 3.5 to 7.4 degrees Celsius (6.3 to 13.3 degrees Fahrenheit) in less than one hundred years.[12] This increase will be even greater over land and the poles. While these numbers seem innocuous, even minor shifts in global temperature could trigger widespread disasters in the form of rising sea levels, violent and volatile weather patterns, desertification, famine, water shortages, and other secondary effects including conflict. Today the world is seeing substantially higher patterns of climate-related natural disasters than in past decades. From 1990-1999 around 200 climate-related disasters occurred per year. From 1999-2009 that number increased to 350 climate-related disasters on average.[13] The UNFPA estimates that natural disasters now affect over 200 million people annually.[14] In November 2011, the International Energy Agency cautioned that the next five years were crucial for greenhouse gas reduction efforts, as the world fast approaches a tipping point concerning climate change.[15]

There are multiple connections between climate change and human health. These include relatively direct impacts on human health, such as those which arise from increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events (heatwaves, floods, storms, etc.), more complex impacts mediated through other environmental systems, such as rising air pollution, altered infectious disease patterns, and disruptions of agricultural ecosystems, and lastly socially mediated effects which occur via climate change's interaction with our established social systems. This final category includes widespread impacts ranging from undernutrition, occupational heat stress and mental illness to population displacement and conflict over depleted resources.[16]

Heatwaves and increased hot weather

High temperatures persisting for several days and nights (heatwaves), especially when combined with high humidity, can deadly. Several studies have shown that death rates increase as temperatures depart from the optimum temperature for that population. For example, a 2009 study estimated that a 2 °C (3.6 °F) rise in average temperature would approximately double the annual death rate from heatwaves in many cities.[17] Of all climate-related projections, scientists believe rising temperatures to be the most robust and the most influenced by human behavior. There is convincing evidence that correlates human emissions of heat-trapping pollutants into the atmosphere and rising global temperatures. Thus, fewer emissions would lead to a cooler planet. However, coordinating this effort across nations has proven to be challenging.

"Natural" disasters (windstorms, tropical cyclones, sea-level rises, heavy rains, flooding, drought)

Projected changes in temperature and precipitation due to global warming are likely to lead to other effects that threaten human health and safety. On one hand, changing precipitation patterns and prolonged heat can create droughts, leading to

increased fires and food shortages. On the other hand, a warmer atmosphere is shown to hold more moisture, increasing the chance of extreme rainfall and flooding. In heavily populated coastal regions, sea-level rise is more likely to put people in the path of storm surges and coastal flooding. Furthermore, warmer ocean waters will likely lead to more intense tropical hurricanes and typhoons while ocean cycles continue to affect the frequency of tropical cyclones.

Indirect health effects (poor air quality, spreading diseases, allergens)

Ground-level ozone, also known as smog, is produced through the combination of three ingredients — sunlight, warm air, and pollution from power plants and cars burning coal and gasoline. If sunlight, fossil fuel pollution, and air currents remain the same, warmer temperatures will increase smog and worsen air quality.

Warmer temperatures and higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere also stimulate plant growth. In warming conditions, some plants may grow faster, mature earlier, or produce more potent allergens. Allergy-related diseases rank among the most common and chronic illnesses that can lead to lower productivity.

Changes in climate patterns will affect the mechanisms that spread diseases, also known as disease vectors. Many insect-spread diseases are limited to warm, tropical areas due to colder winter temperatures in northern and southern regions of the globe. Spread of these diseases has expanded as the world become warmer. Rising temperatures may increase the transmission of malaria in some locations, which already causes 300 million acute illnesses and kills almost 1 million people every year.[18] Similarly, warmer oceans and other surface waters may mean severe cholera outbreaks and increase the risk of harmful bacteria in certain types of seafood.

Socially mediated effects (migration, displacement, undernourishment, etc.)

Climate change can affect migration in three main ways. First, the effects of warming and drying in some regions will decrease the agricultural potential in these areas. This will lead to food shortages, famine, undernourishment, and eventually displacement. Second, increases in extreme weather conditions ("natural" disasters — i.e. heavy precipitation and resulting flash floods in tropical regions) will force people to migrate out of danger zones or leave homes that have been devastated by disasters. Third, rising sea-levels are expected to destroy prosperous, and often highly-populated, coastal regions and displace millions.[19] As urbanization reshapes the landscape of the world, it also reshapes the nature of our humanitarian crises and responses. For the first time in history, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas.[20] As many migrate from rural areas to often poor quality housing in high-risk, insecure, physically exposed, and unplanned cities, rising rates of urban poverty are a particular reason for concern. Many inhabitants are at a disproportionately high risk of flooding, weather extremes, and poor sanitary conditions as well as social tension

and discrimination. The rapid growth of urban populations, due to the unprecedented influx of displaced persons, combined with the increased likelihood of severe weather events, increases the risk of large-scale humanitarian disasters in urban centers.

These large socio-economic consequences, i.e. a decline in food security, livelihood opportunities, and the stress of migration, have negative effects on mental health, leading to mental illness and psychological stresses. Further, studies have shown a correlation between depleted resources and conflict. As drought and heavy storms become more frequent, scarce resources such as water and fertile land become increasingly hard to secure and may lead to hot conflicts in already tense areas.

Vulnerability to these health effects, both direct and indirect, is unevenly distributed. Populations that are already vulnerable to health effects due to other factors, such as socioeconomic status, age, gender, ethnicity, displacement or disability will be disproportionately disadvantaged, with those who lie at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities even more so disadvantaged. Not surprisingly, low- and middle-income countries and small developing island states will be most affected by climate change. These poor and vulnerable populations are among the hardest hit and have the least capacity or access to resources to adapt and recover to these changes. Furthermore, children and the elderly are particularly at risk for climate change health effects. While the elderly have greater sensitivity to heat and contaminants, a higher prevalence of disability or preexisting medical conditions, and/or limited financial resources that make it difficult to adapt to health impacts, children have high developmental susceptibility and long-term exposure to environmental changes. A 2000 WHO assessment of the health impacts of human-induced climate change concluded that almost 90% of deaths attributable to climate change were of children.[21]

These deaths were overwhelmingly in developing countries where high pre-existing burdens of climate-sensitive health outcomes, such as the effects of undernutrition, malaria and diarrhea, were present. This study presents a serious concern about the future of the world's population.

Another particularly susceptible group is the female population. The greater vulnerability of women in comparison to men is not only a factor of biology (for instance pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to mosquitoes carrying malaria — they are twice as "appealing" as non-pregnant women), but also determined by differences in social roles and responsibilities.[22]

Women represent some 70% of the 1.3 billion people currently living in extreme poverty, and are disproportionately affected by climate change, with many of its implications working to exacerbate existing gender disparities in health.[23] The expectation that women serve as caregivers for their families places extra burden on them during extreme weather events, while the expectation that men provide for their families financially places extra burden on them after a disaster. Girls and women may experience decreased access to important life-

saving skills due to gender norms. For instance, in some Latin American and Asian countries, girls and women are not taught to swim for reasons related to modesty. This endangers female lives in the case of flash floods.[24]

For these reasons, global climate change strains current health systems and amplifies preexisting health inequities. Those that are disadvantaged due to non-climatic determinants become even more so as the health effects of climate change increase. It will alter the world's current population dynamics as vulnerable populations become increasingly susceptible to health effects.

Analysis

Global climate change is an incredibly complex issue for several reasons. First, it is a tragedy of the commons, a situation in which there is a single shared resource (our planet) and individuals (or in this case, countries), acting according to their own self-interest, behave contrary to the common good of all users by depleting that resource through their collective action. This is an issue that requires broad multilateral cooperation. Unfortunately, the effects of global climate change are less apparent in everyday life. While the environment gradually worsens and natural disasters occur more and more frequently, global citizens do not feel the tangible effects of climate change as they do nuclear proliferation, for instance. While a natural disaster can destroy a city and claim lives just as effectively as a bomb, the cause of the disaster and its place in the larger climate change narrative is far harder to pin. Thus increased awareness of this issue and widespread agreement about the scientific basis and evidence of global climate change is crucial for the international community to reach tangible results. Fifteen to twenty countries are responsible for roughly 75 percent of global emissions, but no one country accounts for more than about 26 percent.[25] As such, efforts to cut emissions must be global. Without strict international cooperation and coordination, some states may free ride on others' efforts, or even exploit uneven emissions controls to gain competitive advantage.

Another issue impeding progress on this front is the problem of fairness and equity. Industrialized countries, such as the United States, bear most of the responsibility for having contributed to temperature change and for devising ways to alleviate it. Currently, emissions from wealth industrialized countries amount to approximately one-half of all greenhouse gas emissions—mainly carbon dioxide produced by the burning of coal, oil, and other fossil fuels — and historically they have been an even greater source of these pollutants before knowledge of their harmful nature became available.[26] In short, the vast majority of the world's population has contributed little to the problem, particularly on a per capita basis. Developing nations, especially those with large populations, claim that they are unable and unwilling to cut emissions as they attempt to lift millions of poor people out of poverty. However, nations such as India and China, despite having relatively lower emissions per capita, have incredibly large emissions when considered as a whole. As a result, these countries cannot ignore their emissions even when they are not nearly as

high on a per capita basis. To further complicate the issue, emissions of developing countries tend to be tied more to necessary infrastructure development, whereas wealthy countries have far greater emissions associated with non-necessary, luxury processes. Many agree that poor countries have the right to develop and improve their living standards, a task that requires higher economic growth and consumption and will contribute to climate change (unless the process is radically transformed from the past). Fortunately, elements that accompany and drive development – such as improved health, education and empowerment – can also promote sustainability.

The question then becomes: what is fair? Answers to this question range from assigning responsibility based on historical emissions, giving an advantage to rich countries, to assigning responsibility based on equal shares for every person, giving advantage to developing countries with large populations. This issue is very contentious and splits the international community on how to tackle climate change this issue, making cooperation difficult. Most countries agree that developed countries must take earnest action first and foremost before poorer countries should be expected to contribute. Some further argue that wealthy industrialized countries, such as the United States, provide developing countries with substantial aid to subsidize green efforts and progress development in a way that is more challenging and costly without reliance on fossil fuels. For these reasons, finding sustainable development methods — ways in which poorer countries can develop in a green way — is crucial. Studies unfortunately show that regions with the lowest emissions are the most concerned about climate change, such as Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, while the world's top emitters, such as the United States and China, are least concerned.[27]

Another large issue in the overarching climate change dilemma is the issue of adaptation. While mitigation is incredibly important to prevent the exacerbation climatic deterioration, the effects of climate change are already being felt and the global community must adapt to these changes. The actions of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters have worldwide implications. Because these impacts are felt around the world, efforts to adapt to climate change will need to be global too. The international community needs to develop systems that protects those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, both geographically speaking and in terms of disadvantaged populations. That is, wealthy states will need to work to develop health systems that protect those from poorer nations, and specifically the women, elderly, children, disabled, etc. from those communities.

Possible Solutions

Solutions to global climate change need to incorporate two approaches — mitigation and adaptation. On one hand, the international community must introduce measures to mitigate the progression and worsening of climate change. Mitigation efforts include those that seek to change human behavior and reduce heat-trapping emissions globally. The goal is to avoid dangerous

human interference with the climate system, and "stabilize greenhouse gas levels in a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner" (from the 2014 report on Mitigation of Climate Change from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, page 4). On the other hand, the effects of climate change are already being felt, and the international community must adapt to the changes that have already occurred. This is called adaptation. We must build global health resilience to reduce adverse health impacts of climate change.

There are many proposed mitigation strategies that the international community should pursue at depth. Some of these methods involve finding natural, green energy resources to replace fossil fuels and reduce the source of these gases, while others involve enhancing the "sinks" that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil). Strategies that focus on changing patterns of consumption, that is, slowing the frenetic waste of natural resources, point to the need to invest in universal public infrastructures and services. By improving the efficiency of transport, housing and utilities, three of the major forms of consumption, we can help mitigate the progression of harmful emissions. As the world is urbanizing at a rapid rate, urban planning can be used to make ever-expanding cities assets in the fight to combat climate change. By making cities more inclusive and sustainable and improving energy efficiency for current and future residents, the world's most populated areas (with the highest concentration of the world's population) will become greener.[28] However, while these solutions get at the core issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, they are more applicable to wealthy nations than developing ones. Sustainability efforts are costly. It will be difficult for developing nations with poor megacities to implement these costly measures. Furthermore, finding alternative energy sources and increasing energy efficiency takes a great deal of research and time. The global community should certainly dedicate resources to developing this science, however the results will not be seen until far into the future.

One mitigation strategy area of particular interest to the UNFPA population-focused initiatives. According to the 2009 United Nations projections, the world's population reached 6.8 billion in July of 2009, and that it continues to grow by an additional 78 million people a year. Projections show that the world population could theoretically reach a high of 10.5 billion, or remain as low as 8.0 billion, by 2050. This is highly relevant to understanding environmental change, as a larger world population generally implies greater emissions.

This relationship (between population and climate change), however, is not linear. Right now, only 2.5 billion people make enough money – more than $10 per day – to consume enough to contribute to emissions. And among this group, a small minority is responsible for an overwhelming share of the damage.[29] That being said, there is a correlation between countries with low climate change resilience ratings and those that are

experiencing rapid population growth and high projected declines in agricultural production. These countries are termed "climate change hotspots"[30] The rapid growth of these hotspot areas increases the number of people who will be exposed to the impacts of climate change. For instance, water scarcity or stress is currently experienced by more than 45 countries, the majority of which are in Africa. The average population growth rate in these countries is 2.5 percent, markedly higher than the global average population growth rate of 1.1 percent. These population dynamics exacerbate water scarcity problems as the amount of renewable freshwater per person declines.

Solutions to these population issues come in a wide range of intensity. Some advocate for family planning programs to reduce rampant population growth in developing countries, while a softer approach could be greater support for sexual and reproductive health services. In recent years, there has been a large decline in international support for sexual and reproductive health services that has already resulted in an increase in unintended fertility. Studies show that in hotspot countries 1 in 4 women would like to avoid pregnancy but do not have access to modern family planning. The average number of children born to each woman in hotspot countries is 4.6, and the average population growth rate is 2.2 percent.

If unchanged, this rate of growth would result in a doubling of the population in 31 years and could greatly amplify a range of population-related challenges, including climate-change mitigation and adaptation.[31] While there is a wide rang of mitigation methods focused on population control, some more severe than effective, some form of population dynamics must be taken into consideration in attempts to mitigate climate change.

On the issue of adaptation, the international community must build resilience to climate risks. These measures must be adopted and pursued through a global effort, as those most at risk are those with the least capacity to respond. Crucial adaptation measures include alleviation of widespread issues that exacerbate vulnerability to climate change, such as the reduction of poverty and inequities in the social and environmental determinants of health.

Governments must work together to strengthen public health systems and extend services to hard-to-reach populations. Another adaptation measure focuses on infrastructure concerns. Together governments must work to build flood defenses, plan for heatwaves and higher temperatures, install water-permeable pavements to better deal with floods and stormwater and improve water storage and use. These infrastructure developments will be unaffordable for many poorer nations, which are most directly impacted by climate change. As such, this must be a global effort in which the wealthier nations provide some form of aid to make these development plans possible.

Bloc Positions [32]

This section discusses the various negotiating blocs at the most recent Paris Climate Change Conference. These blocs illustrate how general

attitudes toward climate change are split around the world.

"Umbrella Group"

This is a group of of mostly developed economies, with some of the world's largest carbon emitters (Australia, Canada, and the US) comprising an integral part of the Umbrella group. These big emitters maintain that the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emission to the level to keep temperature rise within two degrees Celsius should come from all countries, including developing countries. The group refuses to be a part of any deal for emission controls unless India and China are included. It disagrees with the distinction between Annex I (developed) and Non-Annex I (developing) countries created by the Kyoto Protocol, and believes that responsibility for emission reduction ought to be based on current emissions rather than historic levels. The Umbrella group further maintains that the stringency of reporting and accounting for emissions should be same for all countries. Leaders of this group have historically made few earnest efforts to combat climate change. The United States did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol, and Canada withdrew after the first round.

The United States bears the most responsibility for climate change. With about 1/20th of the world's population, the United States produces about one-quarter of the world's greenhouse gases, most of which come from nonessential activities (as opposed to emissions of developing nations which are arguably more necessary for improving a basic standard of living). As such, the United States must take an initiative on climate change. Without earnest effort from the United States, developing nations will be far less likely to cut emissions. Unfortunately, the United States has done little to show its commitment to mitigating climate change. Climate change remains controversial within the country, with many leaders of the Republican Party arguing that climate change is nonexistent. Public opinion polls show that only 63% of Americans acknowledge that global warming is happening, while 48% believe it is due to human actions.[33]

European Union

Historically speaking, the European Union approaches climate negotiations as a group and has demonstrative more sensitivity to global equity and their obligations regarding the issue. Following the Kyoto Protocol, European countries attempted to start negotiations on deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, however these demands did not go far at the climate conference. The EU has big the only large group to follow UN commitments on climate change. However, certain countries in the EU like Poland have held the group back from making further emission reduction commitments. Recent commitments do not reflect high ambition. The EU has made moves towards providing fast start finance to developing countries, however this initiative has been muddled due to lack of transparency and shifting of aid money. The EU group informally believes that emerging economies should contribute to emission reductions.

BASIC Group

Members of this group, which was formed as a

reaction to increasing pressure on large developing countries to reduce emissions, include Brazil, South Africa, India and China. Despite being among some of the world's largest emitters, they maintain that developing countries should take the lead in emission reduction efforts and provide support for developing countries through finance and technology. This group places an emphasis on equity and fairness, and believes responsibility should be distributed based on historical emissions. At the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention in October and November 2002, China and India, reaffirmed their outright opposition to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee noted that developing countries will continue to increase their emissions and ought to do so to lift millions of poor persons out of poverty.[34]

AOSIS

The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) has a strong presence in climate change discussions. These countries have their survival at stake as sea levels rise and have thus made a serious attempts to bring the level of acceptable temperature rise from two degrees Celsius down to 1.5.

Africa

African countries are among the most worried about climate change and have thus played an important role in keeping the two degree limit in focus when it was in danger. They have been very adamant in pushing for stringent action from developed countries and seeking financial aid in combating climate change at home. African countries have contributed very little to emissions, with access to modern energy sources still scarce in many areas. The impacts of global climate change are incredibly severe in African nations, taking shape in droughts, famine, desertification, and population displacement. With high levels of poverty and malnutrition the priority of many African nations is increasing access to energy services and improving economic welfare. Countries in Africa are pioneering many renewable energy projects and establishing forward-thinking innovation centers to meet their growing energy needs in a sustainable way.

Latin America[35]

Latin American countries are very vocal about their concerns about climate change; leaders frequently cite climate change as a major national security threat at United Nations conferences. Public opinion surveys show that the region's citizens are similarly concerned about climate change. Seventy percent of the Latin American population lives either in or close to a body of water or in low-lying area. The region does not rank among the world's largest emitters, with its total contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions coming in around 11 percent.

Brazil and Mexico are the only two Latin American countries with carbon footprints ranking in the top 30 worldwide. Most emissions in the region are related to deforestation. A group of nine Central and South American countries, the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America (ALBA), is perhaps the group most opposed to the Umbrella group in climate change discussions. The

most vocal of this group are Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba and Ecuador, perhaps in that order. ALBA believes that developing countries should carry the initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while conceding very little from its side.

Middle East

The Middle East has a complex relationship with climate change. On one hand, severe desertification is making water resources scarce and lands uninhabitable. On the other hand, many Gulf countries depend on the fossil fuel industry for economic growth. Total carbon emissions for the region are very low (2.4%), however, per capita emissions are high.[36] Gulf countries get a lot of flack among climate change activists for being the world's largest petroleum exporters.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

- What tangible mitigation methods will be undertaken to slow the progression of climate change?
- What is a fair distribution of responsibility in climate change mitigation?
- How will population dynamics factor into mitigation attempts?
- What mechanisms will enforce adherence to climate action commitments?
- Through what measures will the global community lessen social and health inequities to protect those most vulnerable to climate-related health risks?
- How will adaptation measures be funded for poorer nations?

Conclusion

Global climate change is one of the most significant threats facing the world's population today. It poses grave implications for global health and has the potential to reshape the world's population. While no one is immune to the effects of climate change, it affects some populations, those traditionally more disadvantaged, more than others. Unfortunately, those most affected tend to have the fewest resources to adapt to these changes. Ultimately, it will take the global community working together to solve this issue. Questions of fairness and capabilities will need to resolved so that we can mitigate further damages and adapt to the changes already under way. This is a collective action problem, and the world's population must work together to save our planet and protect our people.

Topic B: Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy

Statement of the Issue

Child marriage, defined as a formal marriage or informal union of children under the age of 18, is a harsh reality for both boys and girls all over the world. Girls are disproportionately the most affected, as one in every three girls in developing countries is married before reaching the age of 18.[37] Child brides and grooms are at an extremely high risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation.

Often immediately followed by pregnancy, child marriage threatens girls' lives and health.

Girls are forced to drop out of school, limiting their future prospects and restricting economic and social mobility. Child marriage also frequently results in a social or geographic separation from a girl's family, friends, and support system, as well as a lack of freedom to participate in community activities. This all has which can all have major consequences on girls' mental and physical well-being. Nearly 20,000 girls under the age of 18 give birth every day and complications in these adolescent pregnancies and childbirth are the leading cause of death for girls between the ages of 15 and 19.[38]

Boys are also negatively affected by child marriage. They are often forced to abandon their education to find menial jobs to support their new family, perpetuating the very cycle of poverty that led to their marriage. According to a 2014 UNICEF report, over 156 million men alive today were married as children.[39] Yet the research on child grooms is minimal. The significant population of child grooms is virtually invisible in research, advocacy, and prevention work.

Where prevalent, child marriage functions as a social norm, often a strategy for economic survival as families marry off their daughters at an early age to reduce their economic burden. In considering the roots of this systemic issue impacting people of all genders and ages, the UNFPA must identify and address some of the underlying factors that pose a challenge to overall health rights and gender equality. The stark disparity in marriage laws must be challenged. Girls under the age of 15 can be married without their consent in 52 countries, while the same is true for boys in 23 countries.[40] The legal age for marriage varies across countries and is almost always younger for girls than it is for boys. Despite the gap in data for child grooms, this committee must address the complex impact of child marriage on both boys and girls.

Child marriage and adolescent pregnancy are often not the result of deliberate choices made by children, but rather, a result of an absence of choices. They are the consequences of economic burdens, limited access to school, information or health care, and systemic practices of gender inequality. Addressing these issues requires recognition of the various factors that contribute to the perpetuation of the practice to develop a thorough and impactful resolution.

History

The practice of child marriage is deeply entrenched in historical traditions and culture, as both boys and girls have been subjected to the practice. Historically, child marriage was a widespread practice. While no one religion is associated with child marriage, throughout history, a diverse range of religions across the world have influenced the age for marriage. For example, Hindu scriptures, Christian ecclesiastical laws, as well as Islamic and Jewish texts all forbade marriage before puberty. However, cultural manifestations of the practice worldwide often vary in interpretations of the original texts. Prior to the 20th century, average life expectancy at the time was incredibly low, making child marriages the key to reproduction and continuation of family lineages. As medical advances

increased life expectancies, overall qualities of life increased, and more women were educated, the practice began to be questioned. Soon this practice nearly disappeared in the developed economies of the world, as the economic need for marriage was less urgent. In many other developing and underdeveloped countries of the world, however, social and economic factors, drive the perpetuation of child marriage, despite the widespread illegality of the practice as well as global resistance.[41]

In certain parts of the world, the practice of child marriage is said to have risen from contentious and complex histories of invasion and violent imperialism. A New York Times report in 1988 described the local legends that the origin of child marriages in India were a result of Muslim invasions over 1,000 years ago. The invaders allegedly raped or kidnapped unmarried Hindu girls, prompting the communities to marry off their daughters early to protect them.[42] Today, traces of these stories can be found in views (found not only in parts of India and Southeast Asia, but all around the world) that girls reaching puberty without getting married will fall prey to sexual predators, and other beliefs that having sex with a "pure" girl can have healing consequences, such as curing some sexually transmitted infections (STIs).[43] The view of marriage as a means to "protect" women is an incredibly common one, and suggests the role of marriage as a response to certain social conditions.

Marriage has historically been viewed as a transaction between two families. Dowries, demanded throughout the world today (mainly in parts of Asia and Northern Africa) are largely common in patrilineal cultures that expect property and money from the woman's family. Disputes related to dowries have frequently resulted in gender-based violence, including killings and acid attacks, making them highly stressful and burdensome expectations for families. A bride price, on the other hand is practice that involves buying young girls who are "pure," that is, girls who have not yet had sex. Men pay incredibly large sums for virgin girls, furthering the control of a woman's sexuality. Valuing the purity of a woman has wide reaching impacts, as women considered "promiscuous" bring shame to their families and are more susceptible to violence, which, in turn, incentivizes families to marry their daughters young, perpetuating the cycle of violence and poverty. Such practes have manifested in all parts of the world, not only Asia, and have ancients origins in Babylon, Western Europe, South America, North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Major social upheavals such as war, religious campaigns, military regimes, and forced migrations, as well as natural disasters have contributed to the widespread nature of child marriage. For example, during invasions, military drafts as well as the violence that natives faced through religious persecution or forced labor and migration resulted in a scarcity of available bachelors. As a result, young girls' families would seek out suitable grooms (young and old) to marry their daughters before events beyond their control would move the boys and men away. Before the nineteenth century, some historical events that increased the practice of child marriage include: the persecution and

displacement of religious minorities (including the Roma people) in Europe, colonial campaigns to capture slaves from West Africa and bring them to plantations abroad, and forced migration and labor in Southeast Asia.[44] The aim of this background guide is not to delve into the details of these major historical events, but rather to address the scope of factors related to population dynamics that have influenced the practice of child marriage today. Any comprehensive approach to tackling child marriage must address the deeply rooted cultural views; solutions cannot simply confront laws, but must also take into consideration how to engage with communities about the nuanced, historical contexts from which the practices originate.

Relevant International Interaction

Over the last decade there has been a rapidly increasing momentum internationally around the issues of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, with a number of global initiatives, including the inaugural International Day of the Girl Child adopting this theme. At the United Nations, this wider global movement contributed to the adoption of the first ever resolutions on the issue, first at the Human Rights Council and then at the General Assembly in 2013.[45] While both are procedural and in some ways only symbolic steps, they have laid the foundation for comprehensive resolutions on child marriage. The Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2013 addressed the need to end the practices of early, child and forced marriages, asking member states to:

- "Review, enact and strictly enforce laws and regulations concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage;
- raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary;
- generate social support for the enforcement of these laws in order to end the practice of child, early and forced marriage."[46]

This year, the 58th Session of CSW renewed its call to eliminate child marriage globally, expressing its concerns that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had not adequately addressed several "critical issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women," including child marriage.[47] In addition, CSW stated that this oversight had posed a significant barrier to the achievement of the global targets. In a similar vein, the High-Level Panel on the post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP) has advocated for a comprehensive response to the global issue of child marriage.[48]

The HLP, with 27 member states, was established by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to advise on the global development framework after 2015 (the target date for the MDGs). In its report, the HLP recommended a "stand-alone goal for gender equality, including a zero target and gender-desegregated target for child marriage." [49] It strongly advised that "the context of the post-2015 development framework should address gender inequality in social institutions, norms and practices which should logically extend to child marriage." [50] At both the global and regional level there is increasingly urgent call to eradicate the practice of child marriage.

Current Situation

Most countries around the world have laws that set a minimum age of marriage, usually at age 18. However, many countries provide exceptions to this, under the pretense of parental consent or authorization from the court.[51] Other exceptions include religious laws that set lower minimum ages of marriage to take precedence over national law. Such exceptions undermine the efficacy of legal protections against child marriage. According to a recent mapping of minimum age of marriage laws by the World Policy Analysis Center, 93 countries legally allow girls to marry before the age of 18 with parental consent.[52] A significant challenge the UNFPA faces is how legal frameworks can reinforce, rather than challenge, gender inequalities.

There is growing knowledge about effective ways of preventing child marriage and supporting girls and boys who have already married, as resolutions cannot forget them as a target population. Given the complex and interwoven causes and consequences of child marriage, international research has consistently found the most effective policy, programmatic and systemic interventions are those that: consistently aim to incentivize enable girls to stay in school and receive a quality education; that empower girls and boys, mobilizing entire communities to challenge the beliefs and attitudes that support child marriage; address economic insecurities and practices that reinforce them; and encourage the implementation of appropriate laws, policies and protection systems.[53]

Analysis

The factors contributing to child marriage are complex and interrelated. The causes and reinforcing factors depend entirely on individual circumstance, as well as broader geographic, cultural, and economic contexts. The practice is often driven by rigid gender roles (embedded in cultural or religious social norms and practices), poverty, crisis, and a lack of laws or weak enforcement of laws prohibiting child marriage (conversely, strong systems of laws that reinforce the practice). In countries where child marriage is common, girls are far more likely to marry young than boys. This inequality is a result of particular understandings about the respective role of men, women and children in society -- specifically, beliefs that the primary role of girls is to produce children and care for the household, as opposed to men whose primary role is to provide for the family financially.

These are problematic expectations for both men and women. However, as a result, in many countries women are often thought to be ready for marriage at an earlier age than men, who are then encouraged to immediately take up better-paid work to support their future family. As many neoliberal policies addressing women's empowerment have failed to create lasting systemic changes, delegates in this committee must address the nuanced relationships in communities that child marriage is built from, including the varying expectations of families from different socio-economic backgrounds, the role of the young brides and grooms in the community, migration patterns, and expectations for children.

Possible Solutions

A comprehensive 2012 study of various programs in Australia aiming to reduce child marriage concluded: "Integrated programs focusing on girls' empowerment and programs offering incentives have been reasonably successful in preventing child marriage and changing related attitudes and knowledge."[54] Recognizing that governments and NGOs are the key "duty bearers" in responding to child marriage, integrated programs must take a systems-based approach, addressing the issue through legal, health, education policy and action.[55] In addition, this committee must address laws that allow for religious exceptions in a nuanced way that does not aggressively impede on religious freedom.

Quality education for children has emerged as a major way to address gender inequality, poverty and child marriage. A curriculum that is relevant to the needs, rights and aspirations of girls is vital to them to make free choices and decisions about their lives. Education also enables girls to acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to protect their sexual and reproductive health and rights; protect themselves against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (including HIV); delay childbearing; and decide if, when and how many children they have. In countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage, "The education a girl receives is the strongest predictor of the age [at which] she will marry."[56] Women with more education tend to marry at an older age and are less likely to have children while still in their teenage years. The Plan International Australia Report expands on the ways in which schooling can protect children against marriage:

"First, just being at school helps support the perception that a girl is a child and is therefore not ready for marriage. Second, when girls stay in school longer, it helps challenge ideas about the normality of child marriage as well as harmful gender beliefs about girls' inferiority to boys. Third, when schools have a gender transformative curriculum, combined with broader community engagement strategies (for example, youth-led awareness raising), it may help girls improve their social networks and ability to negotiate what they want. By the time a girl reaches adolescence, gender stereotypes and expectations of her role in society are already well entrenched. Programs to end child marriage through education must start early in a child's life. Girls who participate in early childhood care and development (ECCD) programs, with a focus on combating gender stereotypes and discrimination, are more likely to begin school at the right age and to complete their primary schooling. Evidence also suggests that ECCD programs often have a transformative effect on the attitudes and perceptions of the parents of young girls participating in them. Families begin to perceive girls as capable of learning and fulfilling roles beyond mother and wife. In the longer term, ECCD programs have delayed the age of first pregnancy for young women and promoted women's empowerment by encouraging positive attitudes about gender equality."[57]

Successful child marriage prevention programs involve rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems that work to examine and understand the process

of change as it applies to specific communities. Policy makers must take action to improve the evidence base to inform effective programming and broader systemic responses. In order to be effective, regardless of location, resolutions should not just focus on the triggers and develop strictly a prevention-based approach. Rather, solutions must extend to providing support for and resources to empower girls and boys who are already married.

As a 2014 ICRW report observes, "Unfortunately, married girls remain a forgotten population in global programming and policy efforts, which have focused increasingly on preventing, rather than mitigating, child marriage and supporting girls who are already married."[58] Married girls in particular, deserve special attention because of the immediate and intergenerational danger of child marriage (i.e. increased risk for violence, health risks of pregnancy, risk of sexually transmitted infections, etc). Empowering these women will also help their children reach their full potential and "may play a critical role in reducing intergenerational patterns of poverty and poor health" as well as gender-based violence.[59]

Solutions this committee develops must:

- Identify national, state and territory responses to child and forced marriage before implementing any new systems;
- Work with development partner governments to end child marriage through sector initiatives, programs, and systems-based responses, including education initiatives, food security, child protection, birth and marriage registration, and the justice system;
- Support civil society programs to work with children, parents, and community stakeholders to mobilize community support and create an environment where adult marriage is favored over child marriage.[60]

Engaging, educating and mobilizing parents, families and communities is essential for any program that attempts to challenge the systemic attitudes, behaviors and socio-cultural practices that support child marriage. This work has the potential to foster environments where girls are able to complete their education, and improve their agency over decisions about marriage and if and when they will have children. Community mobilization programs are most successful when they seek to directly involve women in leadership roles and are integrated with other interventions that confront the myriad driving factors of child marriage. In communities with patriarchal family structures where elders traditionally make final decisions about the children's marriages, working to engage children, youth, parents and community stakeholders in conversation is "vital in changing the attitudes and social norms that perpetuate harmful practices such as child marriage."[61] In the same societies where men are the key decision makers about marriage, these very men can play a powerful role in challenging the cultural norms that support child marriage. Thus, any and all solutions this committee considered must be developed from the viewpoint of the specific communities to account for the nuances that drive the practices in the first place.

Bloc Positions

Indo-Pacific Region

Child marriage is a significant problem in the Indo-Pacific region, as 15% of girls across East Asia and the Pacific are married before the age of 18.[62] Prevalence varies across the region, with rates of child marriage as high as 21% in Vanuatu and to 11% in Vietnam.[63] Research on the practice in this area is generally quite limited (with the exceptions of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan). This guide covers the practice in understudied areas such as Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Cambodia. Data gaps exist for the Pacific Islands region specifically, where the practice of child marriage is hard to quantify as it often occurs in rural and remote areas according to local custom. Causes of child marriage in the region are complex and diverse, from rigid gender and cultural beliefs about the role and value of girls and women, to high poverty rates and a lack of economic opportunities. Humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters can also cause families to turn to child marriage as a coping mechanism in times of hardship.

In Cambodia 18% of women marry under the age of 18. UNICEF reports that in about 61% of cases, girls married as children marry a man who is at least 15 years older than they are.[64] Child marriage is often the result of social pressure on women to marry early because "girls who remain unmarried at a certain age are not viewed positively" and due to cultural views on the significance of a woman's virginity at the time of marriage.[65] In 2005, research by UNICEF found that in Cambodia, over 30% of women who had been subjected to marriage as a child had experienced domestic violence, which is higher than levels of violence experienced by women who married as adults.[66] Currently, the Cambodian government has not formally adopted a resolution to reduce the prevalence of child marriage or to provide support women who are married as children. While Cambodian laws set the minimum age of marriage for women at 18, an exception applies where a woman under the age of 18 is pregnant and her parents or guardians consent to the marriage. The Cambodian Committee of Women (CAMBOW) opposes this law on the basis that "[i]n the context of Cambodian society and its culture to disapprove of children being born outside of marriage, it is very likely that pregnant girls who are very young will be forced to get married". CAMBOW also reports that children as young as 15 are being forced to marry men who have raped them after falling pregnant through rape.

The dynamics of child marriage in Indonesia are complex and driven by interrelated legal, religious, social, cultural and economic factors. According to UNICEF, 22% of girls aged between 20 and 24 in Indonesia were married before 18. More recently Indonesian government statistics put this figure at 24%. Child marriage rates in Indonesia have declined in the last five decades, largely because of women's improved access to education. Recent research suggests that in most cases, adolescents opt for marriage, even against the wishes of their parents. However, the stigma of being unmarried as an adult, fear of pregnancy or disclosure of pre-marital sex, and poverty are all significant factors

that influence this decision. Furthermore, child marriage and subsequent adolescent pregnancy in Indonesia has been linked to negative reproductive health outcomes for young wives, and young men and women generally continue to have limited awareness of (and access to information about) the risks of having children too young. Based on the findings from a literature review conducted for Plan International, 85% of women ceased education upon marriage.[67]

However, the decision to marry and abandon education may also result from a lack of employment opportunities, particularly for rural women. Indonesia's national law sets the minimum age for marriage at 19 for men and 16 for girls. Parental consent is required for any marriage involving people younger than 21, however, the same law allows girls younger than 16 to be married in circumstances where their parents have gained permission from a district level religious court or a marriage officer. More than 90% of these requests are approved by the district religious courts, where children do not have the right to speak about their own future, and the number of applications has been increasing significantly in recent years. There is also evidence of local authorities falsifying documents to in order to overcome the legal age requirements for marriage so that the court's permission is no longer necessary. Lack of birth and marriage documentation is strongly linked to early marriages in Indonesia. Nine of every ten child marriages involve children without birth certificates.[68] The lack of an effective, integrated and coordinated child protection system in Indonesia impedes the timely identification of, and response to, cases of child marriage.

In Australia, Child and forced marriage is an emerging human rights issue that is increasingly receiving growing academic, government, and media attention, yet the practices are under-researched and often misunderstood. Reports of child and forced marriage in the region have not been limited to any specific cultural, religious or ethnic group. Cases of child and forced marriage have been identified by community workers in Australia as a form of family violence and slavery-like practices impacting women and girls, specifically Dr Eman Sharobeem, manager of the Immigrant Women's Health Service in Fairfield, NSW, reports that there are at least 60 child brides in south-west Sydney alone.[69] Over the last two years, the National Children's and Youth Law Centre has identified approximately 250 cases of child marriage. The Plan International Australia Report writes:

"In Australia, much of the early discussion about forced marriage has also addressed child marriage. This reflects international thinking that a child does not ordinarily have the capacity to consent to marriage. In Australia, complex factors create the conditions for forced marriage of adults, including structural, cultural and gender inequalities. In child marriage, these conditions are exacerbated by vulnerability due to age. The exercise of unequal power is therefore central to the nature of child marriage."[70]

Despite support for legislation in recent years, there remains a critical gap in the approach to community consultation, raising awareness, and integrating system-based prevention and protection.

There needs to be a greater urgency in ensuring that there are sufficient support services and resources for children at risk of, or already forced into marriage.

Research in the United Kingdom suggests that NGOs and grassroots, community organizations will play a critical role in both developing and implementing effective responses to child and forced marriage. Access to a range of support services, including safe accommodation, financial support, health care, interpreting and translation, legal and sometimes migration advice, comprehensive casework, counselling, and education and employment assistance, are essential to a human rights-based approach.[71]

Child marriage remains common in Bangladesh where 65% of women are married by the age of 18 and almost one in three are married before 5.[72] Child marriages in Bangladesh often take place without the consent of the girls who are to be married. In response to a survey by Plan International in Bangladesh, 60% of women reported that the wish of parents or family was the reason for their marriage. In only 4% of cases was the decision to marry the girl's own. Under Bangladeshi law, a woman must be at least 18 years old before she can legally marry. In practice, the enforcement of this law is weak, partly because of difficulties determining a bride's age at the time of marriage because of complications with birth registrations. However, a national law passed in 2004 requires universal birth registration, which led to a marked improvement registration numbers. Between 2006 and 2009, registered births increased from 9.8% to 53.6%. At the grassroots level, new village governments (Gram Sakars) have been given responsibility for enforcing laws against child marriage. While government, civil society and international NGOs in Bangladesh are making positive moves towards ending child marriage, decline in the practice is slow and there remains much work to be done. In 2009, the UNCRC Committee expressed concerns about the inadequate facilities and counselling services for reproductive health for adolescents in Bangladesh. It also noted that poor health outcomes for girls were a consequence of "violence against girls and early marriages." The CRC Committee called on the Bangladeshi Government to "introduce gender-sensitive awareness-raising programs, with the involvement of community leaders, for practitioners, families and the general public to prevent and end harmful practices, especially in rural areas."

Given limited available data, it is difficult to gain a clear picture of the prevalence of child marriage in Papua New Guinea. Most marriages in PNG are not registered with the state and instead are approved according to local custom. In both rural and urban areas men and women are often considered husband and wife as soon as they begin to live together. An estimated 21% of women in PNG marry before the age of 18, as a UNICEF study calculated that over 4,500 female children between the ages of 10 and 14 had already been married and were living in rural areas, while the figure was only around 600 for urban areas.[73] The high levels of child marriage, combined with limited access to contraception, are likely to be a significant contributing factor to

PNG's overall high infant and maternal mortality rate (64 per 1,000 live births). Child marriage and early pregnancy are a key barrier to girls' and women's access to education in PNG: when girls or women fall pregnant, they are usually expelled from school. Child marriages are usually arranged by "parents, other family members, or other village chiefs on behalf of their family." Exploitative forms of marriage are a major problem in areas where extractive industries operate, as girls are often sold as wives to logging and mining workers. Another UNICEF study found that girls under the age of 18 were being sold by their families to men with large amounts of disposable cash earned through mining or royalty payments. The minimum age for marriage in PNG is 18 for men and 16 for women, which reinforces "a view that girls 'mature' more quickly than males" and are therefore ready for marriage during adolescence and childhood. While there are various government and civil society programs in PNG focused on empowering women through health, education and economic livelihoods, at present none have a specific focus on preventing, measuring or mitigating the impacts of child marriage.[74]

Latin America and the Carribean

Nearly 1 in 5 girls across Latin America are married off before the age of 18. Due to a lack of data in many countries, however, the scope of child marriage is not fully known. The lack of popular awareness of the practice stands in sharp contrast to its prevalence in the region, where 29% of women under the age of 18 are already married or in a union.[75] The highest prevalence rates exist in Brazil (36%), the Dominican Republic (41%), Nicaragua (41%) and Honduras (34%).[76] Brazil is home to the highest absolute numbers of girls in child marriages in the region, and is estimated to be the fourth country in total numbers worldwide.[77]

A recent study by Population Council (2013) and data from Demographic and Health Surveys indicate that early unions, which are informal, are more prevalent than early marriages or formalised unions in Latin America and the Caribbean. Girls who are most at risk of child marriage are from rural areas and poor households and often belong to indigenous groups. Social stigma around early pregnancies and single motherhood often push adolescent girls into informal unions.[78] According to UNICEF (2014), Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region of the world where child marriage is not on the decline – no significant change has been observed in the prevalence over the last 30 years.

Research into marriage customs in the region has also revealed significantly different cultural attitudes towards the practice. Most significantly that child marriages in the region are sometimes understood as a form of expressions of girls' agency, which must be understood in the context of limited educational and employment opportunities. For example, some girls wish to leave their households of origin when they experience childhood violence and abuse. Even though research participants communicated a lack of familial support for child marriage, the practice is generally perceived as the 'least worst' alternative for girls in the context of out-of reach or even unappealing educational

paths.[79] Child marriage is perpetuated by widespread gender-inequitable social norms. The complexity of girls' agency through child marriage – the fact that they choose unions that appear not to be good for them– should be further explored.

Middle East and North Africa

Approximately 1 out of 5 girls across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are married off before the age of 18.[80] Prevalence and causes vary across the region, with rates of 32% in Yemen and 3% in Algeria. While the practice of child marriage is rooted in gender inequality, high levels of poverty, and lack of educational opportunities for girls also exacerbate the practice, along with regional conflict. The devastating conditions brought on by the Syrian crisis have led some families to resort to child marriage. In times of uncertainty child marriage often increases as families find themselves in dangerous situations as their livelihoods, homes and families become endangered. For many parents, marrying their children is a method of coping with economic hardship or as a way to protect their daughters from the threat of sexual violence.

A recent study found that approximately 30% of registered marriages in Syrian refugee communities in Jordan involved a girl under 18. According to a UNICEF report in 2015, the MENA region has made the fastest progress in reducing child marriage, from 34% to 18% over the last three decades.[81] However, the increasing instability and violent conflict in the region could threaten this progress. The conflict and refugee crisis in Syria have worsened the prevalence of child marriage, including in refugee communities in Jordan. In Iraq and Syria, there is evidence that the Islamic State uses gender-based violence, including forced marriage, as a weapon of war.[82] Middle Eastern and North African countries have started to address child marriage, however. Backed internationally by the UN, in 2014, the Egyptian government developed a national strategy to prevent child marriage and promote young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, while Lebanon launched a two-year campaign against underage marriages. In conflict-affected regions, there is an urgent need to address child marriage and incorporate prevention and response-based approaches into existing interventions.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Of the 700 million women alive today that were married as children, 125 million, live throughout Africa. Approximately 39% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa are married before the age of 18. All African countries face the challenge of child marriage, whether they experience high child marriage prevalence, such as Niger (76%) or comparatively lower rates like in Algeria (3%). Child marriage is widespread in West and Central Africa (42%) as well as Eastern and Southern Africa (36%). Of the 15 countries where the rate of child marriage is over 30%, nine are in West and Central Africa, with Niger having the highest rates in the world. The West and Central Africa region has the highest adolescent birth rates in the world, at approximately 200 births per 1,000 girls.[83]

Thirty-six African countries have set the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys (Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia and Uganda) while four have set it above the age of 18 for both (Algeria, Lesotho, Libya, Rwanda). However, as practiced in regions around the world, many countries that have set the minimum age at 18 allow exceptions in the cases of the parents' or courts giving consent instead of the children.

Even further, 17 African countries either have a discriminatory minimum age of marriage (girls and boys are allowed to marry at different ages), allow marriage below 18 years of age, or have discrepancies between the minimum age of marriage and the minimum age of sexual consent. These countries include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea. Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.[84]

Accompanying these patterns of marriage rates are high levels of poverty among adolescents, high school-dropout rates, and scant access to reproductive health services. Recent data shows a decline in both child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in some countries in the region, with a rise in women's age at first marriage as a principal indicator of demographic change. The changes vary across the countries of the region, and the literature relies heavily on the availability of data from national household surveys generally explaining this change through the increase in girls' education and women's participation in the labor force.[85] It further suggests that access to contraception use may also lead to delaying marriage. The factors contributing to differences in the rates of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy across countries, as well as the core drivers of such changes and the relation to other demographic and socioeconomic factors, remain an important question for this committee to address.

The prevalence of child marriage has been slowly declining in Africa, but remains higher than the global average. North Africa has yielded the fastest progress in reducing child marriage in Africa. The youth population of Africa is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years, putting millions more girls at risk of child marriage. However, if progress is accelerated, the prevalence of child marriage in Africa could be halved by 2050. But even doubling the rate of reduction will not be enough to reduce the number of child brides in Africa. By 2050, the continent will have the largest number and global share of child brides in the world.[86]

Eastern Europe/Central Asia

Across the Eastern European and Central Asian region, child marriage is driven by – and perpetuates – the lack of value placed on girls' education and

potential professional fulfilment, the links made between controlling girls' and women's sexuality and wider family and community 'honour', the perception that women's roles should be confined to marriage, domestic labour, and child rearing, and the often unquestioned assumption that a 'good wife' is an obedient, servile spouse. Among some of the communities that practise child marriage in this region (particularly Roma in Ukraine and South East Europe, and minority groups in Armenia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan), child marriage is seen as an important aspect of cultural identity, which makes it very difficult for women and girls to resist the practice.[87] In addition, patriarchal norms within the family restrict mothers from being able to protect their daughters from child marriage, even if they wish to do so.

The data that is available indicates considerable variation in the prevalence of child marriage across this region. Rates of officially registered marriages involving girls aged 15-19 were highest in Albania (27.2%), Turkey (23%), and Kyrgyzstan (19.1%), and lowest in Kazakhstan (0.9 %), Ukraine (2.2%), and Serbia (5.9%).[88] Among certain minority groups, principally Roma in South East Europe and Ukraine, rates of child marriage are known to be much higher than among the general population. For instance, MICS data from Serbia indicate that among Roma in that country, 44 per cent of girls aged 15-19 were married or in union, of whom 14 per cent had married before the age of 15.9 Some secondary research on this region indicates that in the former Soviet republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, rates of child marriage have increased since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, as has the number of girls in the 15-19 age group becoming pregnant and giving birth, a proxy variable for the number of girls in child marriages.

But experts interviewed for this felt that child marriage had become a much more significant problem since the collapse of communist regimes in their countries, while in Kosovo, experts noted that there had been a 'peak' in child marriages during the 1990s, as a result of the conflict that took place in this period. By contrast, data cited in the country fact sheets for Armenia and Ukraine appear to indicate that rates of child marriage have been falling since the 1990s, although in Ukraine, the adolescent birth rate has remained high. Across the region, the researchers found that there was considerable variation in rates of child marriage within countries, but that overall, girls living in rural areas and in lower wealth quintiles were more likely to be married before they reached the age of 18.

The forms that child marriage takes and the factors driving it vary from country to country, but across this region, certain trends and factors driving child marriage are evident. These include: the perpetuation of gender inequality; long periods of social and economic upheaval, rising poverty, and, in some places, violent conflict; the emergence of strong traditional views on women's place in society, often closely linked to assertion of religious and ethnic identities; the social and economic marginalisation of certain ethnic or social groups practising child marriage; and poor implementation of existing legislation. In terms of what child marriage looks like in the region, the picture is one of widespread

coercion into early marriage, domestic drudgery and gender-based violence within marriage, and social exclusion.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- How will this body address the question of diplomatic immunity for UN peacekeepers?
- What, if any, additional regulations should be imposed on peacekeepers' autonomy on the ground to prevent the abuse of civilians?
- How can this body enable individual nations to effectively maintain and patrol peacekeeping forces?
- What disincentives should this group provide to dissuade or prevent peacekeepers from committing illegal actions of any kind while involved in a mission?
- How can the United Nations update the way it prevents humanitarian crises, such as those in Rwanda in the 1990s, via peacekeeping forces?
- What positive aspects of peacekeeping have existed over its history, and how can their maintenance be ensured for the future?
- How can this body work towards increasing global, public awareness of the efforts of peacekeepers?

Conclusion

The issues of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy are incredibly complex, as every world region has myriad factors that contribute to the reinforcement of the practice. Deeply rooted in centuries of paternalism and imperialism, attitudes towards gender equality are embedded in contentious histories that cannot be addressed with a top-down solution. This committee cannot claim to address all aspects of the issues (especially in context of healthcare policy, as that is under the purpose of the World Health Organization). The following UNFPA sessions must address how population dynamics specifically have impacted the practices of child marriage, and use this perspective as a starting point into developing a comprehensive resolution. The solutions must be specific to communities, as working with local grassroot organizations is highly encouraged. The ultimate goal is to provide support and resources for boys and girls around the world so that they have the agency to make informed decisions about their own future.

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