

# Ontario Model United Nations III



## Arab League, Background Guide

April 7<sup>th</sup> to April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
[omun.ca](http://omun.ca)

## Letter from the Chair

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Dear Delegates,

Hello, and welcome to the League of Arab States!

My name is Kohilan Paramaanantham, and I am a senior at Upper Canada College. Throughout high school, I participated in mock trial and loved the quick-thinking and public speaking skills I gained from the experience. When I came to UCC, I found that the Model UN community on campus is full of wonderful people who are just as exciting and passionate as my mock trial team, if not more so. As a freshman, I served as an Assistant Director for OMUN and very much enjoyed meeting delegates who were so dedicated to becoming our world's future leaders. MUN is a very important part of my life, and I truly believe in its ability to cultivate in young individuals the attitude and ability required to lead our world into the future.

I am especially excited to be your Director for the League of Arab States. I believe that in today's society, many people make broad, outlandish claims about Arab nations without any real knowledge about the problems being addressed in these countries. I chose to direct this committee to emphasize the need for comprehensive discussion concerning the issues in these Arab states from both an internal and external perspective.

In my guide and in committee, we will investigate the ever-changing economic, political, and social climates in the Arab nations and discuss plans of action so as to decrease tension within the region and educate the international community about the League's commitment to solving their own issues as peacefully and effectively as possible. I hope you embrace this opportunity to delve more deeply into the complex variety of factors involved in having meaningful debate in this committee, and I look forward to hearing your ideas regarding these topics.

Sincerely,

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## **Topic One: Decreasing Global Dependence on Middle Eastern Oil**

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In recent years, major countries like the United States and Canada have begun moving away from purchasing Middle Eastern oil and toward bolstering their own domestic production, creating more competition within the global oil production industry. As a result, countries within OPEC and neighboring nations have been adopting different ways to finance their operations, given that oil prices have been declining for some time now. The decreasing revenue flow into these nations has also raised the pressing question regarding how to redistribute income among Arab nations within OPEC and how to shift focus to renewable energy sources with the help of Arab nations outside the organization.

Additionally, ethnic and religious conflicts between nations in the League of Arab States could further complicate these economic problems. These inherent differences will certainly make committee discussions difficult, but the urgency of the matter demands that members in the committee work toward some form of compromise for the sake of each nation's financial situation.

### **Introduction**

Fossil fuels are one of the most important resources of today's society, the global dependency on it increasing day by day. It is used in cars, heating our homes, airplanes, power electricity plants, medicine, cosmetics, plastics, and countless more products used in everyday life. It is used in almost everything we need and our demand for the products is increasing. The oil market has tremendously increased over the past few years, accelerating the rate at which the supply is running out. Not only is the supply of fossil fuels running out, the environmental effects it has brought about global warming, with an increasing climate change and disastrous effects. This puts our global society in a risky predicament, in which we urgently need to find sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels, for our immediate sake, and for future generations to come.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Fossil fuels:** Fossil fuels are fuels created within the earth's crust, over extended periods of time, due to the extreme pressure that fossilized plants, animals and other organisms are subjected to. Fossil fuels include fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas.

**Global Warming:** Global warming refers to the gradual increase in temperature of our planet, and its effect on our ecosystems.

**Greenhouse gases:** (GHG) Greenhouse gasses are gasses found in our planets atmosphere, and produced by human industrialization and activity. These gasses trap and reflect radiation.

**Greenhouse effect:** The greenhouse effect refers to the increased reflection of thermal energy back to earth. This occurs because the greenhouse gasses absorb and subsequently reflect back thermal energy towards earth, in turn increasing the planets temperature.

**Sustainable energy:** “Sustainable energy is created through the use of non-exhaustible resources, which will not compromise the existence of future generations. Thus, many renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power are ideal, as they generate power through means of resources that will exist perpetually, but do not pollute whilst producing power.

**Ozone layer:** The ozone layer is a name referring to the cloak of ozone in our atmosphere that surrounds our planet, resting approximately 15-30km above the earth’s surface. It protects earth from ultraviolet radiation, but is however being damaged by extreme pollution.

**Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG):** Liquefied natural gas is in essence natural gas, which has been cooled to decrease its volume, making it easier and more economical to store, transport, and produce energy with.

## **General Overview**

### **Fossil Fuels**

Fossil fuel is currently the world’s primary energy source, it has fueled global economic development for the past century, however it is a finite source, and the amount left is minimal. Moreover, fossil fuels are the main source of greenhouse gas emissions, creating extreme environmental harm as a consequence of global warming. Fossil fuels are not only highly important in use, it is extremely valuable and very important in geopolitics.

### **Oil**

Oil is the primary resource for transportation; cars, airplanes, ships, all primarily run on oil. Most oil comes from underground reservoirs, and it is pumped up, the original product that it is created from is crude oil, which is then processed into gasoline, petroleum, pesticides and other products. The heavy reliance on oil for transportation creates difficulty in reducing the use in order of protecting the environment. There are two main environmental consequences that pose as a threat when looking at oil use and transport; the combustion of oils causes large amounts of greenhouse gases, however the threat of oil spills are extreme hazards as well. Not only does the use of oils when combusting create greenhouse gases, however the production of it does as well.

Heavier crude oils require high energy levels to process, and hence result in higher emissions and environmental degradation compared to regular oil. As the regular oil found underground is running out, producers are turning to crude oils, increasing the greenhouse gas emissions tremendously.

## **Coal**

Coal remains to be the primary generator of electricity in many countries across the world, like many fossil fuels, the combustion and production of it brings along environmental consequences. The combustion of coal releases toxic air pollutants that contribute to acid rain, such as sulfur dioxide, mercury and nitrogen oxide. Not only is the combustion dangerous to the environment, the mining of the coal often requires the removal of vegetation and soil. The wastes that come from the production in the mines often pollute and damage rivers and streams. Not only does the production and combustion of coal have environmental consequences, it has been known for the hazards and dangers it brings to the laborers.

## **Natural Gas**

Natural gas is one of the cleaner fossil fuel alternatives, that is commonly used for generating heating and electricity for buildings and in industrial processes. The fuel is mostly transported through pipelines, however recently the transport is increasing in the form of liquids (LNG). This is to meet the increasing demand worldwide for the natural gas. Model United Nations International School of The Hague 2015 | XXV Annual Session Research Report | Page 4 of 10  
The combustion of natural gas is a lot cleaner when compared to coal and oil, due to close to zero acid rain pollutants. It releases approximately 30% less CO<sub>2</sub> than oil, and 43% less than coal. Natural gas however mostly consists of methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), which is created through decomposing waste in landfills and manure. Methane is a very potent greenhouse gas (20 times CO<sub>2</sub>), and hence natural gas is still considered a harmful fossil fuel.<sup>1</sup>

## **Depletion of fossil fuels**

Fossil fuels are very old sources of energy, as they originate from decayed plant and animal material over millions of years. In the past 20 centuries, the consumption of fossil fuels has increased immensely, leaving behind a lot of climate impacts and little fossil fuels. Due to the extensive time it takes for the production, once the fossil fuels we have available have been used, there will be none left for a long time. Hence it is said that fossil fuels are finite. Crude oil reserves are running out at a 4 billion tonnes a year rate, it is therefore expected that by 2052, our oil reservoirs (that are known) will be gone. Gas is one of the fossil fuels that will last a little longer, however with decreasing oil, the dependency on gas will likely increase, and so the gas is

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<sup>1</sup> "Fossil Fuels." Fossil Fuels. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 June 2015.

expected to run out by 2060. Coal are thought to be sources that will last for another.<sup>2</sup> This data is based on a stable consumption of fossil fuels every year, which does not include the increasing rate. Due to an increasing population size and an improving standard of living, the demand for fossil fuels keeps increasing. As fossil fuels are running out, the world increases its dependency on the fossil fuels that are still left, and hence these deplete at an accelerated rate. The depletion of fossil fuels is a cumulative accelerated rate, and it is only a matter of time until the world will have no more reservoirs to satisfy the required amount of fuel. How long will it take exactly, is a question that is often asked. The graph above displays the amount of energy reserves per fossil fuel, and its depletion rate over the years. It can be seen from the graph that the expected year we run out of fossil fuels will be in 2088, however there are going to be new reserves found, which will extend the mark. The finding of new reserves is much harder, and the results are minimal. Looking at oil, 16/20 of the world's largest oil fields have reached their maximum production level.<sup>3</sup>

## **Sustainable Energy**

Sustainable energy is one of the options that could act as a solution to the environmental damage the fossil fuels have on our economy. Wind, solar and water energy are examples of widely available energy. Governments are highly recommending the use of sustainable energy, and subsidizing it largely to support this. Apart from the construction of the plant, there is no pollutant emissions that effect air or water, therefore it is considered the best option for replacing fossil fuels. However, there are many disadvantages of sustainable energy, especially concerning costs and finances. The installment of a plant, whether domestic or government purposed, is high of cost, and only pays out after a couple of years. The subsidies and grants that governments are making costs a lot of money, and has resulted in many countries cutting back on the availability of this. Moreover, sustainable energy, such as wind, has shown to be an unreliable energy source, on which the demand from developed countries cannot depend. Another issue that often rises when considering sustainable energy is the difficult of storing and transporting the energy. There is a lack of knowledge, development and hence use of sustainable energy, this issue is what stands in the way of replacing fossil fuels.<sup>4</sup>

## **Economic market**

The oil market is one of the largest trading and valuable markets today, with rising demands, and increasing value of oil. It has caused for some of the richest persona and countries in today's world. Some of the largest multinational companies work engage in the fossil fuel production business. Having to decrease the dependency and consumption on fossil fuels will lead to major

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<sup>2</sup> Central Intelligence Agency. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 15 June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> "The End Of Fossil Fuels." - Our Green Energy. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 June 2015.

<sup>4</sup> "World Nuclear Association." Sustainable Energy : Renewable Energy : N.p., n.d. Web. 21 June 2015.

economic changes, with a large market completely demolished. Many of the countries playing major roles in the oil market are developing countries, generating income from oil primarily.

### **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

#### **United States of America**

The USA is leading in the world's petroleum consumption, at an average of 19.05 million barrels per day (2014).<sup>5</sup> Their import and use therefore is the largest contributor to the global warming, and hence could be most influential in decreasing the dependency on fossil fuels in a demand change.

#### **Russia**

Russia is the primary exporter of natural gas to Europe. Their national gas company, Gazprom is the main supplier to almost all European countries, and generates large incomes for the country. The dependency of Europe on Russia for gas supply was visible when the gas was cut off via Ukraine, the European Union reacted to the crisis as it being completely 'unacceptable'.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria**

The top five exporters of oil, leading the market with the highest of 8,8 million barrels per day (Saudi Arabia). These are the five main countries who are in charge of and responsible for regulating the oil market.<sup>7</sup> Their supply of oil controls majority of the market, and therefore is of high influence in the dependency on fossil fuels.

#### **European Union (EU)**

The European Union is one of the main importers of oil, and a highly influential organization for the European countries. These are mostly developed countries, and hence large users of fossil fuels, their influence, politically and economically could lead to a large decrease in dependency on fossil fuels.

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<sup>5</sup> "U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." How Much Oil Is Consumed in the United States? EIA, n.d. Web. 10 June 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Lea, Robert. "Europe Plunged into Energy Crisis as Russia Cuts off Gas Supply via Ukraine." Mail Online. Associated Newspapers, n.d. Web. 15 June 2015. .

## **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

SIDS are very dependent on fossil fuels for electricity and transport, they are considered “energy deficient in conventional energy and have limitless potential for renewable energy,” (Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister Barbados). Economically, this would free up to 30% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and environmentally would benefit as well. Tonga is one of the SIDS which is looking into becoming carbon-free producer of electricity.

## **UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events**

The United Nations has looked mainly into setting goals for countries to work on and achieve. Such as the Millennium Development Goal 7<sup>7</sup>, to “Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.” Another example of this is the upcoming conference on climate change in Paris (COP21), with the aim of combating climate change effectively and boosting the transition towards resilient, low carbon societies and economies. The conference in 2015 based on renewable energy in SIDS was successful in creating agreements and suggestions to countries on how to set this up. Moreover, the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27th July 2012 from the Rio Conference (A/RES/66/288) was also successful in laying out a base for the adoption of sustainable energy forms in all countries.<sup>8</sup>

## **Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

The numerous resolutions that have been brought out and the conferences that have been held have shown to carry a lot of support amongst nations. However the demand for fossil fuels has not decreased drastically enough for it to have a positive effect on the climate change and global warming effects it has shown to have. The UN has set numerous goals, on many occasions, however no defining action has been taken to limit the emissions of greenhouse gases, nor to implement wide ranged sustainable energy. Several countries have shown to have implemented widespread renewable energy infrastructure, such as Denmark, UK, Scotland, Germany and Ireland.<sup>13</sup> However this will not be enough to decrease the global dependency on fossil fuels, and majorly eradicate the use of fossil fuels.

## **Possible Solutions**

A possible solution would be to focus mainly on the adoption of sustainable energy forms, on a national and household basis. This would require governments to look at the best form of

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<sup>7</sup> "United Nations Millennium Development Goals." UN News Center. UN, n.d. Web. 22 June 2015. .

<sup>8</sup> "Energy ∴ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform." Energy ∴ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 June 2015.



incentives or subsidies for this to be encouraged, without causing economical stress. Moreover, a complete report and research to the dependency of the world on fossil fuels and the future of fossil fuels would assist in making decisions and looking at how to handle the situation.

## **Topic Two: Conflict in Yemen**

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The modern-day Republic of Yemen was founded in 1990, the merger of North Yemen (officially the Yemen Arab Republic) and South Yemen (officially the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen). The north became a republic in 1962; the south was controlled until 1967 by the British, who valued it for the port of Aden, and then adopted a Communist government that lasted for two decades.

In 2014 Yemen became a federation of six regions, undertook operations against al-Qaeda, saw President Hadi fire his cabinet and Houthi rebels start to take control of the area starting in the capital of Sanaa, then the Red Sea city of Hodeida.

Since the formation of a new Yemeni government in late 2014, the beginning of violent clashes between government forces and Houthi rebels saw the United Nations Security Council on February 16th denounce the Houthi actions and demand that they negotiate a power sharing agreement under Gulf Council patronage. This didn't occur.

Last month ISIS carried out its first major attacks in the country adding a new element to the conflict and a Saudi-led coalition entered the fray brining this conflict into a new level of heightened violent conflict.

### **Introduction**

The fledgling state of Yemen faces economic disparity, food insecurity, and multidimensional civil conflict – each of which has corresponding social cleavages. Longstanding rivalries amongst Houthi and other tribal groups is reinforced by their Shia-Sunni religious sectarianism, which offers Saudi Arabia and Iran the perfect platform for another proxy war. The Carnegie Institute notes, “this war in the North has exposed greater vulnerabilities for the regime, weakened the central government, and emboldened other threats to Yemeni and global stability such as al-Qaeda.”<sup>1</sup> Between food insecurity, poverty and political jockeying, Yemen must overcome internal and external issues if peace and prosperity are to take root.

### **Historical Context**

A child of the “Sick Man of Europe,” North Yemen gained independence in 1918 after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. South Yemen, officially dubbed the People's Republic of Yemen, became independent from Britain after having stood as a protectorate under the post-World War II mandate system. It was not until May of 1990, after decades of hostility between the two

individual states that the north and south unified into the solitary Republic of Yemen recognized by the international community today. Unification did not solve the rivalry between regional groups – as evidenced by the attempt at succession by southern leadership in 1994.

### **Current Crisis**

The current crisis in Yemen was ignited by the Houthi uprising and later joined by southern separatists and Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), creating a multi-front military conflict over political power, economic control, and religious zealotry. Please read through the following material with the following questions in mind: Who are the important actors (international organizations, sovereign states, internal organizations, individuals)? What are the motives for each actor? What is the outcome they hope for, and how do their actions reflect this? What has already been done by the international community?

### **The Yemeni Economic Engine**

Industry (26.8%) and services (64%) account for the majority of Yemen's economy, even though agriculture (9.2%) employs the majority of the labor force. This is despite the fact that only 2.2% of Yemeni arable land and 41% of that is maintained as permanent pastures. Though these figures may seem incongruent, they fall into place after adjusting for the rampant rates of unemployment (27%) and poverty (54%). The lack of income compounded by the cost of fuel and imported goods has caused widespread poverty and desperation.

Yemen suffers from the “resource curse” phenomenon, whereby the success of a country's economy relies on the export of a one or several raw resources. Yemen's chief export and economic fuel is oil. The mining, refining, and exporting of liquefied natural gas has also become an integral fixture of the economic engine. According to the CIA World Factbook, oil and natural gas account for 25% of the country's GDP and 65% of the government's income. The US Energy Information Administration states that “Although Yemen is not a major hydrocarbon producer relative to several other countries in the Middle East, the country has sufficient oil and natural gas resources for both domestic demand and exports. However, Yemen's difficult security environment hinders the production and transport of those resources.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Al-Houthi**

Named after their fallen leader, the al-Houthi movement walks a fine line between the economic, political, and sectarian divides that sever the Yemeni social landscape. Based out of Sa'dah, the Houthi movement is made up of Shia Muslims of the Zaydism sect – a minority in Yemen and a rival to Sunni-based, Salafi denomination. A political awakening began among key

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<sup>9</sup> United States EIA: Yemen <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/country.cfm?iso=YEM>

families in the Zaydism tradition when, starting in 1980, Salafi religious institutes implanted themselves inside Zaydic-Shia Muslim communities with government support. Due to the clear religious and political motivation, northern Shia Muslims began to mobilize against what they perceived to be religious marginalization and cultural war. Starting in 2004, analysis have broken the contemporary history of Yemenis conflict into six parts leading up to the Arab Spring in 2011.

### **Round 1: 2004 June to September**

The initial military struggle between the Zaydis and the central government was ignited by youth who disrupted a mosque shouting anti-government, anti-American, and anti-Israeli slogans. The disruption spread from the city of Saada to Sana'a and the government detained several hundred protestors to contain the incident. Hussein al-Houthi led a military uprising, calling the detainment unjust. The conflict escalated, taking over 1,000 civilian lives, and ended in September 2004 after Hussein was killed.

### **Round 2: 2005 March to May**

Badr al-Din al-Houthi, Hussein's father, took on the leadership mantle for the movement. After several skirmishes the conflict rose back to an extreme level. President Saleh pardoned leaders of the Houthi movement in May, unilaterally ending the civil conflict. However small skirmishes continued.

### **Round 3: Autumn 2005 into Spring 2006**

Tribal forces loyal to al-Houthi in mid-November. Fighting continued until President Sahel made concessions in order to solidify peace for the upcoming 2006 election in September. These concessions were pardons for 600 Houthi members, a new governor for Saada and a government salary for the Houthi family. During this period Badr al-Din al-Houthi died of natural causes and was replaced by his two sons Abdul Malik al-Houthi and Yahya al-Houthi.

### **Round 4: 2007 January to June**

The trigger of conflict in this particular instance is still unknown, though Yemeni government officials claim that it was Houthi agitated, threatening longstanding indigenous Jewish communities. Fighting was again centered in and around Saanda, and spread outward into other territories. The conflict took on an international detention, as Yemen attacked Iran and Libya as client states sponsoring war within its sovereign borders. Yahya al-Houthi, a leading member of the movement and parliamentarian, had left to Libya for refuge and later traveled to Germany. Back in Yemen, the government had stripped Yahya of his parliamentary immunity,

which further isolated the rebel movement from the political stage, thereby encouraging armed action over political dialogue. According to the Carnegie Endowment, it was President Saleh's aggressive recruitment of tribesmen to fight the Houthi incursion that "injecting tribal politics into what had thus far been a largely sectarian conflict. This shift would prove to be a lasting factor of subsequent fighting, as the war in Saada metastasized." This action will cause cracks in Yemeni society to deepen as tribes began to choose sides between the Houthi insurgency and Yemeni government under President Sahel. Tribes aligned to either side based on cultural/religious/economic/political divides that already existed, but were not causing immediate harm to the nation.

This episode of conflict was mediated down to a cease-fire in June by the Qatari government. The set of principles and mutual understanding has since been dubbed the Doha Agreement. The majority of government and Houthi affiliated forces remained quiet, but small scale skirmishes continued to occur up until the next large scale military quarrel in the Spring of 2015.

#### **Round 5: March 2008 to July 2008**

The territory directly involved in warfare grew rapidly, stretching from Sanaa in the south all the way to the outskirts to Houthi controlled Saada in the northern. By July, President Saleh felt pressure from within his support base to end the violence. According the Congressional Research Service, there were rumors of planned coups through the government as well as instability within the military leadership structure. With this in mind Saleh declared a unilateral cease-fire on July 17, 2008. According to the Carnegie Institute, "Saleh was rumored to have sought a cease-fire for several reasons: international pressure, the scale of the humanitarian toll, local mediation, and concern about the proximity of the rebel advance."

#### **Round 6: August 2009 to February 2010**

Just as in 2005, the unilateral cease-fire built on sand, and the tide of tension quickly washed it all away. With nothing more than an autocratic president's declaration staving of violence, small scale battles continued to be fought along enemy lines. These grew in frequency until a wave of kidnappings hit the capitol city. The government blamed the Houthis, but some analysts have voiced concern that it was actually the newly merged Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP). If this was in fact the case, AQAP was successful in playing the two main factions against each other, thereby giving itself movement to grow without large-scale opposition. Qatari mediation did not make peace, and therefore could not keep it.

### **Questions to Consider**

*Please consider the following questions when preparing for the conference:*

- *What are the agendas of each faction involved in Yemeni politics (i.e., the Houthis, the transitional government led by President Hadi, President Sahel's political base, AQAP)?*
- *Are the interventions by states like Saudi Arabia helping or hurting? Remember, there is rarely a blanket "yes or no" answer; it is up to you to find the good and the bad in hope of picking out that which will lead to peace.*
- *What is the UN Security Council capable of doing to address the problems in Yemen? What is it incapable of doing? Part of figuring out what should be done is determining what can, and cannot, be done.*
- *What is your country's perspective on the best possible outcome in Yemen? What can your country do to promote this best possible outcome within the confines of the Security Council proceedings?*
- *What if anything can be done to address the refugee issue – both to protect the human lives at stake and to prevent the refugee crisis from becoming a greater threat to regional or global security?*

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Model United Nations International School of The Hague 2015 | XXV Annual Session  
Research Report | Page 10 of 10

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