

SSUNS 2016 Position Paper**Committee: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Country: France****Delegate: Brent Leung****School: Upper Canada College****Topic 1: The Role of Infrastructure in the Development of South East Asia**

The development of proper infrastructure in developing nations is one of the key factors that pushes countries from being developing to developed. Without infrastructure, there is no means for trade, for communication and for future relations with other countries. The delegation of France strongly supports the implementation of not just infrastructure, but proper infrastructure that will lead to benefits such as economic growth, better environments for workers inside those developing nations and better opportunities for these nations in general. As France, we have one of, if not the most, developed infrastructure for transportation in the world. We have one of the densest road networks, an extensive network of railways and navigable waterways and one of the busiest airports in the world. And yet, despite our development, we are still looking to improve our infrastructure because we recognize how important it is to our economy and the development of our nations. In recent years, we've focused on improving major road projects that bypass Paris, as Paris currently is the center of the French transportation system, and instead provide connections between other large provincial cities. The delegation of France strongly believes that for any developing nation in South East Asia to progress forward economically, they will have to install proper infrastructure.

There are clear reasons as to why developing nations need infrastructure. The problem now is not why we need infrastructure in these developing nations, but what is the best

mechanism to install proper infrastructure that will not only be actually useful to economic and social pursuits of the nation, but also infrastructure that won't deteriorate within the first few weeks of its installation. However, there are a few problems that are currently limiting the progression of the development of infrastructure in South East Asia. The largest issue is that the different regions of South East Asia all have varying levels of infrastructure. While some of have very well developed infrastructure like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, others such as Cambodia do not and it limits connection between these countries. With many different regions of South East Asia all having different levels of infrastructure, the entire South East Asia region as a whole will not be able to move forward and there will be no unity nor trade between these regions. Secondly, there is a lack of government knowledge and representation about infrastructure in general, and without that representation no real policy will be enacted to change the current state of infrastructure that is so gravely needed.

The delegation of France would like to propose a three-step process to create real infrastructure in these countries. The first step is to create more governmental representation and policies within governments of these South East Asian nations. The main issue is that there is a lack of knowledge and lack of funding for projects like infrastructure because there is no incentive to them to spend money on infrastructure. If we can provide them or show them that incentive, we can improve their knowledge and their willingness to fund infrastructure and overall we can get better infrastructure. France wants to propose that the UN and other Western bodies fund regional bodies within South East Asia that show a willingness to improve their infrastructure. Ideally, they would spend the extra money we give them on infrastructure but it will be hard to monitor such a thing and regardless, what they choose to do with the

money we give them is irrelevant because they will have an incentive to actually improve their infrastructure for an actual tangible benefit. That creates more governmental awareness and knowledge about the issue of infrastructure because other foreign aid groups like the UN and other countries are sending the message that infrastructure is important with that incentive.

Where will the money come from? The money is going to be provided as an investment by other Western countries because they will reap benefits by investing in infrastructure that will be talked about later in this position paper.

The second step is to unify the existing regional and sub-regional bodies that deal with infrastructure in South East Asia. France cannot stress how important it is for foreign aid to maintain a unified South East Asia. Firstly, it means that within South East Asia, the regional bodies will all have proper transport routes between each other to stimulate economic growth for South East Asia as a whole. Secondly, it also means that foreign aid can be more effective because there are more generalized needs for aid for regions apart of South East Asia. So how are we going to unify all the existing regional bodies? After we've established that all of the regional bodies will have some kind of baseline infrastructure because of the incentive we provided to the government, the regional bodies now all have similar goals in terms of improving infrastructure. In that way, we feel there is a natural mechanism for the regional bodies to start building infrastructure between them to further not only their own economic pursuits, but also other regional bodies, both of which are beneficial. Additionally, we would recommend that the United Nations push to cooperate and spur the actions of ASEAN to help facilitate the creation of those connections between different regional bodies so that the UN has some kind of control or monitor on these new developments.

The final step is to improve international relations for these South East Asian bodies. France feels that this is one of the few benefits that occur naturally with the accomplishment of the first two. As infrastructure in the South East Asian regions improves, it also means more trade options are open to other countries. For example, better infrastructure means better shipping lanes, more ports, more airplanes, etc. to other countries. This will improve the overall economy of both the international community and the South East Asian region. Note that this is the reason why the international community will fund the governments of the regional bodies within the South East Asian region, as they will gain valuable trading partners. Furthermore, the South East Asian community will owe certain Western countries and thus will attempt to pay back their donations with discounted prices, support for research and technology, etc. all of which are good for the Western countries. Something else to note is that many of these developing nations in the South East Asian region have lots of untapped resources that are not on the market simply because they cannot be transported to other countries. Cambodia has recently found untapped oil resources in the South China Sea, which could appeal greatly to the international market.¹

In conclusion, the way to improve infrastructure in South East Asia is by firstly raising awareness within the government and giving them a tangible incentive to engage in improving infrastructure, secondly to unify the regional bodies, and thirdly to improve international relations of South East Asia.

¹ Mydans, Seth. "Big Oil in Tiny Cambodia: The Burden of New Wealth." The New York Times. N.p., 5 May 2007. Web. 6 Nov. 2016. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/05/world/asia/05cambo.html>>.

Topic 2: Future of Food

One of the most prevalent issues of our time for developing countries is a lack of food security. In South East Asia alone, 27.8 million people are considered undernourished.² That's almost 10% of the population that don't have access to basic necessity goods needed to live a fulfilling life.³ This is hugely problematic for a number of reasons, namely a lot of wasted economic potential due to poor living standards. It's very hard for any of these citizens to perform at the top of their potential without proper nutrition, which is why there is lots of wasted economic potential. As France, we believe this is not only morally deplorable that people don't have access to basic necessities, but also that the economies of regional bodies within Asia and the Pacific are suffering because of their lack of food. The delegation of France would like to recognize the importance of this issue, as we ourselves have had to deal with this issue in the past and also have to deal with this issue currently. We also feel we are one of the most qualified to talk about solutions to this issue as within the past 30 years, poverty in France has fallen by 60%.⁴ However, although France is in a significantly better position than Asia and the Pacific, we still have problems with food insecurity, poverty and health restrictions. In fact, around 11% of adults in France face food insecurity in their households.⁵ Because we have to

² United Nations Children's Fund, World Health Organization, The World Bank. UNICEFWHO-World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates. (UNICEF, New York; WHO, Geneva; The World Bank, Washington, DC; 2012).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Chevalier, Pascal. "Measures of Poverty in France." (n.d.): n. pag. Nov. 2013. Web. 6 Nov. 2016. <http://www.insee.fr/en/insee-statistique-publique/connaitre/colloques/pauvrete/pdf/pauvrete_chevalier_en.pdf>.

⁵ Caillavet, France, Djilali Touazi, and Nicole Darmon. "Food Insecurity, Health Restriction and Poverty among French Adults: Implications for Public Policies." Food Insecurity, Health Restriction and Poverty among French Adults: Implications for Public Policies (n.d.): n. pag. 2 Sept. 2011. Web. 6 Nov. 2016. <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/114326/2/Caillavet_France_570.pdf>.

deal with this issue on a daily basis and because we feel we are one of the most qualified to discuss solutions, France believes we can truly help Asia and the Pacific's problem with food and poverty.

One of the main ways we can alleviate poverty within Asia and the Pacific is by increasing and funding the agricultural industry. Agriculture is particularly good at improving poverty because firstly, many people in Asia and the Pacific have a lot of experience farming and working the fields because they have knowledge from past generations. Secondly, the food that they can create from farming can actually be used to provide themselves with a source of nutrition, which can help increase food security. One example is seaweed, which is farmed by many people in Asia and the Pacific, sold off because there is high demand, and eaten by the people in Asia and the Pacific. However, there are downsides. One of the main problems with agriculture is that it is largely dependent on the weather and the yield of crops, which lead to highly volatile prices. Such volatile prices are not good as a source of income in the long term because your income would fluctuate significantly and some months these families may not have sold enough crop to feed their families if they depend solely on agriculture. Additionally, weather is not going to be on the side of farmers. With increasing climate change causing more and more large scale environmental disasters, the land being used by farmers in Asia and the Pacific is constantly at risk of being destroyed and destroying the income of all the farmers along with it, which will put all of those people back into poverty. Furthermore, people of lower socioeconomic status are also greater impacted by climate changes. It is clear that we need a solution that will not only increase the agricultural industry, but will also deal with issues pertaining to climate change.

For this reason, France would like to propose a 3-point plan to deal with the issues of poverty in Asia and the Pacific. Firstly, we want to increase the agricultural industry. We want to propose increased subsidies in the short term, funded by the regional bodies of those nations, to the agricultural industry to incentivize workers to switch to the farming industry and to produce more goods and services surrounding agriculture in general. Secondly, we want to increase the level of education about agriculture in general to provide some kind of long term solution. We want to introduce new agricultural programs in high school and at the post-secondary level where students inside Asia and the Pacific have an opportunity to learn more about agriculture so that we can continue the growth of the agricultural sector into the future. Through both of these mechanisms, we hope to achieve increased growth in the agricultural sector which will ultimately lead to economic growth and less poverty.

The second part of the three-point plan deals with climate change. Firstly, we want to propose a program where high-polluting countries like the United States, Russia and China would be forced to accept a certain number of environmental refugees every year based on their population to disincentive them from polluting and incentivize them to move towards greener technology. Secondly, we also want to introduce stricter carbon polluting regulations in all countries around the world because climate change is a global problem. Increased carbon taxes, cap and trade systems and carbon permits are all examples of regulation that would be introduced in countries that aren't already using them or increased in countries that are. In that way, we plan to reduce the level of carbon emissions which not only will help the people of Asia and the Pacific, but will generally help the globe as a whole.

Thirdly, we want to open up the markets in Asia and the Pacific. One of the main cause of poverty and reasons why citizens in Asia and the Pacific don't have adequate access to food is because of the strict regulations imposed by some of the regional bodies in Asia and the Pacific limiting foreign firms from providing goods and services. For example, in Malaysia, the government has tariffs that can reach up to 50% of the price of the good/service and a number of goods and services require import licensing.⁶ This severely limits foreign competition and takes away food from the mouths of Asian and the Pacific citizens. To help combat this issue, we want bodies like ASEAN to push for decreased regulations of trade to open up the market to foreign firms. In France, we have a large number of firms who would be happy to provide food produced at cheaper prices by biotechnology to sell to people in these country and to provide them with a way to feed themselves. With increased nutrition comes increased productivity, and by increasing productivity we get a better economy overall.

In conclusion, we propose a three-point plan of increasing the agricultural sector, reduce carbon emissions and opening up the market to help deal with the issues currently faced by Asia and the Pacific like poverty and food insecurity.

Topic 3: Labour Migration & Illegal Trafficking in the Asia-Pacific

Labour migration is clearly one of the biggest problems in the Asia-Pacific. The number of illegal workers commuting to their jobs every day is unprecedented (25.8 million people!)

⁶ Export.gov. "Malaysia Trade Barriers, Regulations, and Standards." Export.gov. Export.gov, 4 Aug. 2014. Web. 06 Nov. 2016. <http://2016.export.gov/malaysia/doingbusinessinmalaysia/eg_my_072633.asp>.

and causes significant problems for the governing bodies of those regions.⁷ Even worse are the conditions that these labour migrants have to face every day in their work environments. As such, France believes that this is by far the most important issue of the three that we will be discussing. This is an issue that hits very close to home, as in France, one of the biggest problems is the culture surrounding migrant workers in France. Our labour market is very hostile towards new entrants, whether they have arrived recently or for younger people looking for their first job. Therefore, you have a very high unemployment rate as well as a high rate of underemployment because a lot of migrant workers can't get jobs in the field they are most qualified for or can't get a job period. This leads to these migrant workers being forced into worse opportunities for employment like forced prostitution and forced labour. Notably are examples of employers from Saudi Arabia and Northern Africa who enjoy immunity to French laws forcing women and children into domestic servitude in France. However, we have taken steps to try to reduce the high unemployment rate. Recently, we introduced a new bill that despite the concerns of the population, will lead to lower unemployment as the bill reduces the restrictions on firms regarding their workers, allowing for easier hiring and firing of workers. We expect to see a rise in employment because of the new policy.

There are two main problems with labour migration in Asia and the Pacific. Firstly, there's a significant amount of human trafficking. The main cause of human trafficking is poverty, as people in poverty tend to seek better living conditions, which makes them more

⁷ Wickramasekera, Piyasiri. "Asian Labour Migration: Issues and Challenges in an Era of Globalization." (n.d.): n. pag. International Labour Office. United Nations. Web. 7 Nov. 2016. <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_160632.pdf>.

vulnerable to people looking to traffic these people with promises of false economic opportunities. Human trafficking has huge consequences for the people being trafficked, as it is effectively modern day slavery. People are forced into working for people without pay and negating their basic human rights. They no longer have any liberties and some of the essential rights that we grant to all humans. The second major problem with labour migration, which is somewhat of an impact of the first, is that the conditions in which labour migrants are exposed to are terrible. There is a certain stereotype or stigma surrounding labour migrants, which causes them to be ostracized from their workplace and to experience things like discrimination. These people have a lack of protection in the workplace, which can lead to human rights abuses and abuse. Both of these issues have a significant bearing on why we need to solve the problem of labour migration.

The first step in solving an issue like labour migration is acknowledging that the issue exists. We have already made progress in this department, as we've seen past efforts that have already attempted to improve the situation surrounding labour migration. The next step is to deal with the consequences of the labour migration, so dealing with the fact that migrant workers have terrible workplace conditions. The international community has also already made progress in this regard, but we need to take it a step further as many countries that have labour migration problems are ignoring the conventions and regulations that we've currently set out for them. For this reason, France proposes that we start to enforce the policies we already have to deal with labour migration problems like the Convention concerning Migration for employment and impose strict consequences for countries that do not follow the guidelines. Examples of consequences would be things like sanctions, condemnation and withdrawal of aid

to countries that do not follow the guidelines that we've currently set out for them. By creating a consequence that is going to be enforced by the international community, we can start to work towards improving the lack of protection in countries that receive lots of migrant workers.

The final step is to solve the root of the problem, the underlying issue that's causing a large number of migrant workers in the first place. The main reason why there are so many migrant workers in Asia and the Pacific is because a large majority of their population is in poverty and see no other opportunities to get out. France firstly would like to propose an increase in education about human trafficking and migrant workers to raise awareness about such topics so that we can reduce the number of citizens who will be tricked into signing up for labour immigration programs and to reduce the number of illegal trafficking. Secondly, we'd also propose the opening of the market in labour receiving and labour sending countries in the Asia and the Pacific to allow foreign firms to employ workers in these countries to ensure that worker safety is maintained whilst improving the conditions that these people in the Asia and the Pacific are living in. In that way, we can reduce the number of people in poverty, decrease the illegal trafficking of humans and ensure that firms are following the basic protection required for workers.

In conclusion, the way we solve problems surrounding labour migration is by acknowledging issue, which we have already done, dealing with the consequences, which can be accomplished with the enforcement of already existent policies, and finally dealing with the root of the problem, which can be accomplished by opening up the market.

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