**Country:** Bahamas

**Committee:** United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

**Topic 1:** Governance and its Effect on Education

1. **Background of topic**

Throughout history education has always been at the cornerstone of human civilization. Education provides us with the knowledge and skills necessary to our survival. Since education is so crucial we must work with the international community to make sure that it is a top priority.

It is sad to say but there are many people in our world that are not able to receive a proper education. The number of children not enrolled in school is on the rise, in UNESCO’s 2013 study it showed that 124 million children we out of school. However this number has grew in UNESCO’s out of school children data release of 2015 which now shows that every 1 in 11 children are out of school. Children are not only out of school but they are often illiterate, about 110 million children cannot read or write at all. This s extremely crippling for every child’s life as well as society as a whole. When a child is not educated and cannot read or write it makes it nearly impossible to obtain a well-paying job. When these children do not receive jobs they become stuck in the ever growing cycle of poverty. Poverty, which is often caused by unemployment, is the state of being extreme poor where one does not have many basic necessities. When one is living in poverty they have a =significantly decreased standard of living and often have much higher mortality rates.

One of the leading contributors to this issue is governance. Governance is the government’s exercise of authority. As defined by the business dictionary, it is the establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implantation, by the members of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanisms required to balance the powers of the members (with the associated accountability), and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization. When governance is preformed and implemented correctly it can be very beneficial. Proper use of governance can help to drastically improve education. However when used incorrectly it can be detrimental. When poor governance is practiced regularly it cripples the nation’s education system. When poor governance is in play the governing bodies are typically misusing government funds and resources. When this happens government funding for public programs such as education often experience serious cuts.

Many factors contribute to a nation’s poor governance. These factors often include but are not limited to political instability, financial crises, and corruption. Political instability is a root cause for many issues and is detrimental to a nation in almost every way imaginable. When a nation is in conflict its ability to govern is greatly diminished. When a nation becomes politically unstable it lacks the guidance or ability to conduct and manage the nation’s affairs. In nations with political unrest, such as Syria, educational programs are impacted severely. According the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) nearly all of the educational programs in Syria were wiped out in just 2 years of civil war. Before the war nearly every child was enrolled in primary school but by 2013 almost 2 million children were out of school. If continued this will leave Syria with an entire education left uneducated therefore continuing and expanding the issue. One of the leading causes of poor governance is corruption. Corruption in government is the unethical and fraudulent conduct of government officials for private gain. Many countries suffer from corruption as political official’s abuse their power for personal gain and to obtain status/control. One of the most common forms of corruption is when officials accept bribes for which they will alter policy or law. When a nation is corrupted one of the first programs effected is education. In corrupt nation fewer resources and funds and given to infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and roads. When a nations educational systems are effected the nation’s progress is slowed, poverty continues, and instability is created.

1. **Past UN Actions**

Given the correlation between proper governance and good education, UN has taken action in different forms such as resolutions, treaties, and program creation in order to attempt to improve governance. These actions have been taken to try and fight corruption, to provide aid, and create dialogue. The UNODC or United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is one of the most active agencies in stopping corruption. The most famous and arguably the most effective document in fighting corruption is the United Nations Convention Against corruption of the UNCAC. This is a legally binding document has 140 signatories and 178 parties who have yet to ratify it, it was created in 2003 and enacted in 2005. The convention addresses the six main areas surrounding corruption; prevention, criminalization, law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, and technical assistance and information exchange. The biggest struggle for member states in the implementation of convention. To assist with implementation and monitoring the UN secretariat and the Conference of State Parties developed teams and committees to help these member states. Transparency International is an NGO that is very close to this issue as they have been working for the last two decades to end corruption. Every year they publish their annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Global Corruption Report, and Bride Payers Index to international community as a part of their efforts to rid our world of corruption.

1. **Policy and Possible Solutions**

The Bahamas does not stand for corruption of any kind. We are in the top 15% of countries on Transparency International CPI with a score of 71. We are a nation is full support of education and is working to provide proper educational programs for all children. Since 2008 we have been a member state of the United Nations Convention against Corruption or the UNCAC. We are in full support of its policies and are working to implement them in our nation. We would like to present 3 main solutions in order to improve governance’s effect on education by combating the underlying issue of corruption. We must first encourage the countries who have not adopted the UNCAC to do so. When these countries ratify and accept we will have taken the first step to destroying corruption. However there are still many holes in the convention especially with its effectiveness to slow the rise of corruption levels worldwide. Because of this our next solution is to develop a new global framework to combat this rise. The framework will be targeting developing nations where corruption levels are increasing exponentially. Third we would like to encourage to pay increases for public servants. When paid well government officials are much less likely to turn to bribes. By increasing the wages of civil servants we are decreasing the likelihood of corruption. Lastly we believe that there needs to be an increase of transparency in government. As government transparency increases corruption in government will too decrease. We plan to work with the NGO transparency international to increase government transparency and openness. We may also incentive countries to become more transparent by rewarding countries who either lower their score annually and/or countries who have scores of 70 and above.

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**Committee:** United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

**Topic 2:** Preservation of World Heritage Sites

1. **Background of Topic**

As defined by UNESCO a world heritage site is a natural or man-made site, area, or structure recognized as being of outstanding international importance and therefore as deserving special protection. Sites are nominated to and designated by the World Heritage Convention (an organization of UNESCO). As stated in its mission UNESCO promotes the identification, preservation, and protection of cultural and natural heritage of what is considered to be significant to human value around the world. Since 1972 when UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO’s member nations have been actively defending these sites.

Every year member states are allowed to submit applications for sites to receive the title of a World Heritage Site. These sites are all voted on and added to the list once a year. The promotion from a cultural site to a World Heritage Site is carefully considered, in order to be promoted they must meet one of the 5 natural or 5 cultural criteria. The status of World Heritage Site is so carefully consider because once a site has the legal status of World Heritage Site they are subjected to prima facie evidence that they are legally protected under the threat of war, under the Geneva Convention, its articles, protocols and customs, combined with other treaties including the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and international law.

Climate Change and War are the two main threats to World Heritage Sites. In May of 2016 UNESCO in partnership with UNEP (the United Nations Environment Program) and the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) released a report detailing the severe damage caused by climate change to over 31 World Heritage Sites in 29 different countries. Climate change has left many sites in danger due to increased temperatures, rising sea levels, and serious droughts. As previously stated political unrest and war have negative effects on all aspects of life, this includes World Heritage Sites. Many World Heritage Sites in the Middle East in countries such as Syria, Iran, and Iraq have been caught in the crossfire and either destroyed or are at risk of destruction. It will be up to these nations to decide what is more important, their culture and heritage or this conflict and war.

1. **Past UN Actions**

UNESCO has created numerous agencies and instruments in order to protect World Heritage Sites. In 1954 the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict was created. The Hague Convention and its protocols set international standards on how to deal with risks faced by cultural heritage during times of conflict. The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property was created in 1970 to set preventive measures, restitution provisions, and create an international correlation framework. In 1972 the World Heritage Convention was created to provide a solid basis from which to protect cultural heritage. Lastly the ICC or International Criminal Court defines any destruction of historical buildings and heritage sites as a war crime.

1. **Policy and Possible Solutions**

The Bahamas does not have any World Heritage Sites of our own, however we understand and respect the value and significance of them. For this reason we have two sites up for vote this coming year and support the protection of all World Heritage Sites. The Bahamas feels that in order to combat the threat of climate change we must first educate the global community on what the issue is and its severity. Another solution to combat climate change in the use of subsides and incentives for companies and countries who are “going green”. Likewise those countries who are only contributing to the issue through emissions and waste without any effort to improve should be penalized. In regards to threat from conflict and war it is important to create dialogue with the governments and militaries of the nations in conflict to stress the importance of these sites to their nation’s culture and explain the consequences that can come from their destruction. Lastly we must continue the work of the organizations previously mentioned to help to protect these World Heritage Sites and preserve the world’s culture.

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**Topic 3:** Supporting and Accomplishing Education 2030

1. **Background of topic**

Since its creation in 1945 UNESCO has worked for over 70 years on a multitude of issues. They have worked on missions to create peace, to educate the world, to eradicate poverty, and create sustainable development, just to name a few. To help meet their goals and develop solutions UNESCO created the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In both sets of goals there was an emphasis placed on education.

Education can have many meaning, but the most common sense of the word is the acquiring of general knowledge, developing the powers or reasoning and judgment, and generally preparing oneself intellectually for mature life. Education may also be the acquiring of specific skills. UNESCOs educational objectives are, to provide global and regional leadership in education, strengthen education systems worldwide, and respond to contemporary global challenges through education. These objectives are clearly in line with the 4th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The fourth SDG aims to: “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

In 2015 at the World Education Forum the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 was created in order to improve education for all individuals without exclusion. Within Education 2030 there is a framework to guide the execution of SDG 4. The framework encourages international/intercountry as well as national collaboration in effort to obtain the goals. Education 2030 focuses on expanding 5 areas of the educational approach: access, inclusion, equity, quality, and learning at all levels. The declaration also plans to provide twelve years of free primary and secondary education for all UN member states by 2030. Due to sovereignty and cultural respect these educational programs will not be subject to international regulation or evaluation, some nations may interpret appropriate educational programs differently. This may cause issues seeing as not all programs will be equal or all inclusive. The declaration is in need of sufficient funding in order to be successful. This may cause issue seeing as many UN member states will be unable to provide the funds necessary.

1. **Past UN Actions**

International organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, and UNHCR have all been created to tackle world issues with an emphasis on education. Many NGO’s such as the International Task Force on Teachers, United World Schools, and Pencils of Promise are all NGOs dedicated to providing and improving the worlds education. UNESCO has also worked to combat education in the past by setting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These were a set of 8 goals set in 2000 aiming to be accomplished by 2015. MDG 2 was very similar to SDG 4 as it aimed to: “achieve universal primary education.” Although the MDG did not receive 100% success it greatly improved education worldwide.

1. **Policy and Possible Solutions**

The Bahamas is in full support of the Sustainable Development Goals and Education 2030. In order to achieve SDG 4 we believe that we must work together and have international collaboration. Without every nation doing their fair share it will be nearly impossible to succeed. If we follow the Education Framework for Action or FFA we should be able to accomplish this goal by the year 2030. However as supported by the FFA we need to constantly develop new ideas to modify and improve the framework. To make the framework beneficial for the most countries possible we need to make focus on a couple of essential points and from there allow modifications so that each country can create the system best for them. In order to adjust and modify the framework correctly we must monitor the progress of the goals. Each country should submit a yearly report to UNESCO so that we may track the progress and develop the best methods for accomplishing the goals.

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