Delegation from Represented by

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

Yemen strongly believes that corruption and political instability in the government has a detrimental effect on the quality of education in a country. This issue directly affects Yemen in many ways and is making it harder for the children in Yemen to receive a good education. Yemen has been in a state of political crisis since 2011. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, its government is “in transition” (2016, p. 4). There is currently a civil war occurring in Yemen between the Houthi rebel movement and the elected government (BBC, 2016, para. 1). This has led to immense political instability and is strongly deterring from the focus on the quality of education in Yemen.

In 2012, the authoritarian president Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to hand over leadership to Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi after an uprising (BBC, 2016, para. 4). This was supposed to help Yemen out of the political crisis it had been facing since 2011, but President Hadi had immense trouble dealing with the problems facing Yemen, including corruption in the government (BBC, 2016, para. 5). The Houthi rebels took advantage of this and infiltrated Sanaa, the capital city of Yemen (BBC, 2016, para. 6 and 7). The government officials, including President Hadi, were placed under house arrest but did escape almost a month later to Aden, a city in southern Yemen (BBC, 2016, para. 8 and 9). However, in March of 2015, President Hadi had to flee abroad and only returned to Aden after months of fighting and many deaths (BBC, 2016, para. 10). This war is still going on but has reached a stalemate and neither side is making any progress. Since the government in Yemen is very unstable, it is hard for children to receive a quality education.

When countries are facing political instability and corruption, the government does not direct its attention and funding to education. The education standard in these countries greatly decreases in these times of distress. The United Nations has realized this and started to combat the problem through various committees and resolutions such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Yemen is also trying to combat this problem through various UNESCO projects such as “Strengthening the education system to support the transition in Yemen”(UNESCO, 2016, p. 1). They started this initiative in February of 2013 and its goal was to work together to achieve two key interventions, which are reforming the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and supporting the education system in Yemen to the particular Yemeni educational challenges and priorities (UNESCO, 2016, p. 1). UNESCO also helped and funded Yemen with their project, “Teachers Training on Program of Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future”(UNESCO, 2016, p. 1). Yemen also joined the Global Partnership for Education in 2003 and is working on many initiatives that focus on girl’s enrollment in school, school completion rates, and education in emergency or conflict-affected areas (Global Partnership for Education, 2016, p. 1 and 2).

The United Nations also implemented a program called “No Lost Generation” in Syria. This program aims to provide education to the Syrian children that have been displaced and are living in refugee camps. This program is very beneficial because it ensures that this generation of children doesn’t grow up to be illiterate because of the political instability and conflict going on in their country. More programs like this one would help to solve the educational problems facing children who are living in countries where the government is corrupt and unstable.

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

Yemen strongly supports preserving World Heritage Sites and finding a way to protect them under the threat of war and climate change. When a cultural site has been given World Heritage Site status, it is protected under the Geneva Convention. This states that it is prohibited to destroy these sites or use them in war. However, the United Nations faces a serious problem in protecting these areas during times of conflict and against climate change.

Yemen is facing a serious challenge in protecting its cultural sites because of the war currently occurring across the country. Cultural and historic buildings that date back to the first century AD are being destroyed in this conflict (UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). It is important to protect these sites but it is becoming increasingly difficult.

Yemen has three sites on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. The Historic Town of Zabid, the Old City of Sanaa, and the Old Walled City of Shibam are all in danger of being damaged and destroyed (UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). On June 12, 2015 the Old City of Sanaa was bombed and many historic buildings were reduced to rubble and many lives were lost (UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). The Director General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokiva has urged both sides to refrain from targeting cultural monuments but it has not had a significant effect on the actions of the parties involved in this conflict (UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). She said, “I am particularly distressed by the news concerning air strikes on heavily populated areas such as the cities of Sana’a and Saa’dah. In addition to causing terrible human suffering, these attacks are destroying Yemen’s unique cultural heritage, which is the repository of people’s identity, history and memory and an exceptional testimony to the achievements of the Islamic Civilization”(UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). In February of this year, the National Museum of Tiaz was shelled and almost completely burned (UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). This destroyed many precious artifacts and rare manuscripts. The preservation of World Heritage Sites is a serious problem and one that directly affects Yemen because it is an unstable region.

UNESCO has worked with Yemen to create an Emergency Response Action Plan on the Safeguarding of Yemini Cultural Heritage. The General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY) and the General Organization of Antiquities and Museum (GOAM) have also been working closely with UNESCO to combat this problem in Yemen. They are focusing on raising awareness, assessing cultural sites, obtaining information about the damages, technical assistance on the ground, and monitoring (UNESCO, 2015, pg. 1). To succeed with this operation, Yemen has reached out the international community to support this plan. The local government in Yemen doesn’t have the funds or resources to implement this action plan on their own and believe that if the international community works together to support the Yemini authorities in this time of crisis, they can protect their cultural sites from being destroyed. Ms. Irina Bokova has said, “To succeed, this plan must be funded, and it is clear that local government does not have the resources to undertake these efforts alone, I ask you to mobilize your institutions and your contacts to support UNESCO and the Yemeni authorities to implement this action plan”(UNESCO, 2016, pg. 1). Yemen is ready to work together to help solve these problems and protect important World Heritage Sites.

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

Yemen strongly supports the United Nations goal of accomplishing inclusive, equal, and quality education for all children by 2030. One of the primary challenges that this goal faces is providing education to children who are in countries facing natural disasters, unstable governments, and countries at war. This relates back to our first topic of governance and it’s effect on education. These countries need to have educational systems in place that can be maintained even at times of unrest and war so that these children still receive a quality education. Another challenge that arises is gender inequality and ensuring that girls receive the same level of education as their male counterparts. It is also hard to determine international educational standards because each country has their own culture and interpretation of what a good educational system is. These are all important issues that need to be resolved in order to accomplish this goal.

In Yemen, females don’t receive the same level of education as males. In 2015, according to the Central Intelligence Agency, the estimated literacy rate (defined as a person age 15 and over that can read and write) for females was 55% while the estimated literacy rate for males was 85.1% (2016, p. 3). The United Nations statistics show that 39.5 females out of 100 and 57.4 males out of 100 receive secondary education (United Nations Statistics Division, 2016, p. 3). Only 6.1 out of 100 females and 13.7 out of 100 males receive tertiary education. (United Nations Statistics Division, 2016, p. 3). The inequality between females and males education and the amount of children that don’t complete their education are two issues that are very important and need to be addressed in order to accomplish the goal of inclusive education in 2030. Yemen also currently has an unstable government and is fighting a civil war. This has a huge effect on children’s education because the government is preoccupied with this conflict and spends less time and money focusing on improving the quality of education these children are receiving.

The United Nations currently has many organizations that are working towards this goal such as UNICEF and UNESCO. The Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 stated that one way to establish an inclusive educational system for all children by 2030 was by monitoring progress at the international and national levels. Yemen supports the goal of having an inclusive education system by 2030 and is ready to work together to come up with solutions to overcome the obstacles in the way of accomplishing this goal.

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