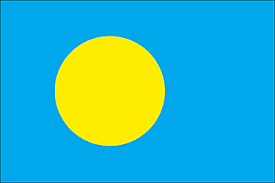
Republic of Palau

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Topic 1: Governance and its Effects on Education

Defined simply as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” by the NGO Transparency International, corruption is considered by the World Bank Group to be a “major challenge to its institutional goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030.[[1]](#footnote-1) Governmental corruption in any form inhibits a nation’s ability to properly allocate funds to various programs including education. Since education plays an essential role in the future of peace, poverty eradication, and sustainable development, equal education must be provided to all children despite political instability or times of conflict.[[2]](#footnote-2) Corruption is a major obstacle to accomplishing this goal; therefore, it needs to be more effectively monitored, exposed, and punished.

The Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2015 ranked 168 countries based on a grade determined by their corruption. The top 10 countries with the lowest scores were Somalia, North Korea, Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan, Angola, Libya, Iraq, Venezuela, and Guinea-Bissau.[[3]](#footnote-3) The nation of Palau was not included in this index; however, it was determined to have a control of corruption score of approximately -0.502 on a scale of -2.5 to 2.5; higher scores corresponding to better governance.[[4]](#footnote-4) Palau’s improvement in eradicating corruption is shown in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat’s final assessment of its 14 nations progress is achieving seven of the MDGs since it completed six out of seven of the goals and was one of the only four nations that met five or more goals.[[5]](#footnote-5) The completion of sustainable development goals indicates that there is less presence of corruption in the government. In addition the success of education in the nation of Palau proves the absence of major corruption in the government. According to the CIA World Factbook, 99.5% of the Palauan population is literate.[[6]](#footnote-6) Even though Palau does not suffer from drastic governmental corruption, the delegation of Palau supports the eradication of corruption in order to achieve the goal of equal educational opportunities worldwide.

The delegation of Palau believes that corruption can be combatted through prevention, monitoring, exposure, and punishment of all types of corruption with the help of NGOs, such as Transparency International, the World Bank, and UNICEF. On January 27, 2016, Palau hosted a consultation on anti-corruption where many government leaders shared their strategies towards fighting corruption.[[7]](#footnote-7) At this conference, the president of the Palauan senate, Camsek E. Chin, stated, "The more we are open and transparent as a nation, government and parliament, the more we can contribute to creating a society where everyone gains maximum benefit from our economy, tourism and resources”. Transparency and openness in government finances is a key aspect of monitoring corruption. The World Bank lists other strategies for fighting corruption: paying civil servants well to avoid bribery, eliminating laws and programs that are often susceptible to corruption, establishing international conventions, and using technology and the internet to increase transparency.[[8]](#footnote-8) The most important component of this plan is to increase transparency with government spending so that corruption can be recognized quickly and be punished. Nations should be ranked on their corruption on not only the government’s spending, but also their action on known corruption. Since it can be difficult for the United Nations to oversee the internal affairs of a sovereign nation, it needs to continue to work with NGOs such as Transparency International. The delegation of Palau recognizes the role that corruption plays in preventing equal education for all and plans to work with other nations to devise a plan for eradicating corruption that all nations can implement.

In addition to corruption, the lack of education for children in areas of conflict or refugee camps is contributing to a less peaceful future and the prevention of the progress of sustainable development and poverty elimination. The delegation of Palau sees the lack of education in Syrian refugee camps as a priority of all nations, not just nations in that region. Schools in refugee camps face many problems which has resulted in 80% of syrian refugee children in Lebanon to go be enrolled in school.[[9]](#footnote-9) In addition to the lack of education, the education that exists in areas of conflict often needs to be improved. The quality of an education is determined solely by the teacher and the resources available to the teacher; therefore, better teacher training programs need to be implemented. Currently, UNESCO and the International Teacher Task Force are working with IGOs, NGOs, private sector organizations, and UN agencies in attempt to increase the amount of qualified teachers worldwide.[[10]](#footnote-10) Since the transportation to school and the schools being overcrowded are two major problems, more schools need to be established so that transportation is less costly and all children have an opportunity to attend.

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Topic 2: Preservation of World Heritage Sites

During times of conflict and natural disaster, it is not only the duty of nations to protect their people but also to protect natural landmarks and historical sites around the world because they are symbols of different cultures and the wonders of nature on our planet. In 2002, the nation of Palau recognized the importance of the preservation of World Heritage sites and signed the World Heritage Convention. In 2012, Palau’s first and only World Heritage site, Rock Islands Southern Lagoon, was inducted into the World Heritage list due to “the esthetic beauty of the site is heightened by a complex reef system featuring over 385 coral species and different types of habitat.” The Rock Islands Southern Lagoon includes 445 uninhabited limestone islands of volcanic origin and is home to a diverse aquatic ecosystem. In addition, it has a historical significance since it was once inhabited by villages in the 17th and 18th centuries but has since been abandoned due to climate change. The Rock Islands Southern Lagoon was included on UNESCO’s World Heritage list due to its fulfillment of criteria iii, v, vii, x, and xi. The Rock Islands Southern Lagoons and many other naturally and historically significant sites around the world face destruction from warfare and climate change, which is why their preservation is essential.

Since UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites has proven to be successful in protecting sites from danger, the delegation of Palau believes that the selection process needs to be easier. Currently, the selection process includes nomination of the site by only a nation that has signed the World Heritage Convention, followed by a nomination and an evaluation where the site must meet one out of ten of the selection criteria. The current selection criteria does not need to be changed due to its simplicity with ten criteria that include historical, cultural, and natural standards. However, the delegation of Palau believes that the list should be open to any country, regardless of whether they have signed the World Heritage Convention or not, in order to prevent politics from playing a role in the preservation of these sites. Currently, only nations that have signed the World Heritage Convention can nominate sites for the list. World Heritage sites should be protected because of their significance to people or an ecosystem, not because of the beliefs of a country’s government.

Another obstacle that endangers the induction of sites to the World Heritage List is the involvement of private industries, especially tourism. The tourism industry often argues that if a site is included on the World Heritage List, tourism to those sites will go down. UNESCO needs to change this assumption by promoting sites on the World Heritage List as not only sites to protect but also as sites to visit. By promoting tourism to these places, private interests will be more accepting to their admittance to the list and more countries will sign the World Heritage convention. In addition, stressing the dangers that these landmarks face will encourage the private tourism industry to allow for the protection of them and the tourism that it brings.

The final danger that threatens the preservation of many World Heritage sites around the world are areas of conflict and instability. During times of war, militaries often destroy places of cultural significance, or they simply ignore the importance of these sites. In order to protect these landmarks, UNESCO has been has been and must continue working with NGOs such as ICBS (International Committee of the Blue Shield) and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). These NGOs not only provide protection for these sites, but they also provide experts, such as architects and archeologists, to devise methods of strengthening these sites and protecting them from harm.

The delegation of Palau recognizes the importance of the preservation of all World Heritage sites and looks forward to working with other nations to improve standards so that more landmarks can be better protected.

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