**Committee:** UNESCO

**Represented Nation:** Iraq

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Topic One: Governance and its effects on Education

Education in Iraq has taken a dramatic turn for the worse in recent years. In the seventies and the early eighties, education was one our utmost priorities. Education was free at all levels of schooling and at that time, a massive twenty percent of our national budget was devoted to maintaining and improving our education system and the gross enrollment rate for primary schools was one hundred percent. Then in 1980, our government chose to dispel insurgency in Iran. This meant that our government had to siphon money away from education and into the military. As education was still a priority during this time, we chose to run a deficit in an attempt to maintain our strong education system. After the ceasefire was implemented and the invasion concluded, 1990 brought on the First Gulf War. This war was stated by a coalition of nations that had nothing to do with the internal affairs of our country attempting to invade our great nation. This again raised security concerns, meaning that money from the education budget had to be siphoned off into the military budget. This caused the percentage of the national budget devoted towards education to fall to only eight percent. Teacher salaries were cut and dropout rates skyrocketed along with gender gap in schools. After this coalition forced the people of Kuwait back on their corrupt leader, in 2003 the United States illegally invaded our great nation, armed with false claims that we possessed weapons of mass destruction with the sole purpose of which was to drain our natural resources. This invasion toppled the government of Saddam Hussein and devolved our country into chaos, with different sections of land controlled by either the government, ISIL or a large variety of militias separated by religion, tribe and geographical location. As a result, education in our country has become almost non-existent and leading intellectuals have been systematically hunted down and slaughtered along with their families.

One of the many consequences of the illegal invasion of our nation is the systemic corruption that now constricts our country. This is a widespread problem all throughout Iraq in all of the different ruling factions as well as our government. Families to not have enough money to survive and thus they are forced to turn to corruption in order to put food on the table. This issue is not one that can be solved by our government as the people appointed to regulate it would be corrupt and it would only contribute to the problem. This is a problem that is solved by addressing the things that caused it, namely the lack of stability in our country.

Another of the consequences of the illegal invasion conducted by the United States and their allies is the political instability in our nation. As previously stated, this invasion has created instability all across the country, forcing children out of school and into the workforce, creating an uneducated generation. As well, this instability has forced our government to devote what little resources we have left to ending the war and not supporting our education system.

One of the main consequences of this internal instability is the 3.2 million internally displaced citizens in Iraq along with the 4 million plus Iraqi refugees all across the world. Iraq has attempted to help with this problem by opening our borders to 215,369 Syrian refugees despite our instability and it thinks if we can do it, anybody can. The education provided the refugee camps that these people live in is almost non-existent with only small organizations such as Relief International attempting to tackle this serious problem. It is the goal of Iraq to help improve the education systems provided in these camps so long as the education provided does not conflict with the religion and culture of the student.

Many of the solutions for these problems must be implemented by individual nations and not the United Nation. It is clear that many nations are suffering from widespread corruption and that this affects education in those countries. The United Nations can help solve corruption through improving the quality of life in these countries and helping to stabilize them by utilizing peacekeepers and assisting existing governments in making positive change. As well, many United Nations agencies can help prevent corruption. The World Bank can provide loans to countries so that they can finance anti-corruption programs but it must be wary of the fact that this money fall victim to the corruption that it is attempting to fix. UNICEF could also assist in preventing corruption through helping to improve the quality of life so that officials no longer need to be corrupt in order to put food on the table.

The best way for the United Nations to monitor countries while respecting their sovereignty is for countries to give permission for inspectors to enter their country. This would allow the United Nations access to the country and inspect it, while still respecting the rights of the country.

The issue of next to no education in refugee camps can be solved through United Nations sponsored teachers setting up makeshift schools inside of the camps for children aged 3-15. As well, if there are any teachers that had to flee their countries the United Nations could use them to teach in these makeshift schools.

Some good indicators of effective governance is the amount of debt that a country is in, its GDP per capita as well as the happiness of its citizens which can be seen in reports such as the World Happiness Report.

Topic Two: Preservation of World Heritage sites

In Iraq we have five UNESCO World Heritage sites with ten other sites on the tentative list for protection. Four of the five sites in our country are currently held by ISIL, who violate all three protections offered to them through attacking them with sledgehammers and then posting it online, use them as cover for military vehicles and cutting away chunks of them with the purpose of selling them in the black market to fund their campaign of terror. It is clear that these protections mean nothing to these militants and that the Geneva Convention is not comprehensive enough to protect these sites.

Climate change is certainly a threat to these World Heritage sites but it is an indirect one. The effects of climate change have been felt all across Iraq, with the worst drought ever recorded on the instrumental record at the time occurring from 2007-2010. This caused food prices to skyrocket and thus forced many families into starvation. In order to keep food on the table, these people are looting these sights and selling the pieces on the black market.

While countries all across the world have condemned the destruction of these sites, when provided with concrete evidence of their destruction they still choose to do nothing. The international community must come together and forcibly remove ISIL from these sites while making sure that they remain intact in the process. Iraq is fully prepared to give the United Nations unprecedented access to these sites in their effort to remove ISIL from these regions.

The selection process for World Heritage sites can be massively improved. With the current selection process, it is extremely hard to get this designation. What Iraq will propose is that only seven of the current criteria have to be met in order to achieve this designation, not all ten as the goal of this designation is to protect culture and history as a whole, not specific parts of human history.

Some solutions to the problem of the destruction of World Heritage sites in unstable regions is sending in a United Nations force to protect these sights from anyone whose aim it would be to destroy them if the country in which this site lies consents with this course of action. A different course of action is to remove the instability altogether and destroy those who would wish the destruction of these sites.

Topic 3: Supporting and Accomplishing Education 2030

Education in Iraq has always been and always will be one of our foremost priorities and it fully supports all of the initiatives that the United Nations have proposed such as the message of the Incheon Declaration although it believes that the declaration does not account for the different situations that these countries are in, namely ours. If we had the money to support an education system in our country and fully uphold the terms of this declaration it would but it is financially impossible at this point. There has to be a concrete solution to this problem, whether it involves a loan from the world bank to these countries in crisis situations for the sole purpose of education or UNICEF run schools in these regions. It believes that every child has the right to an education and that what is currently occurring in our country is a tragedy not only in terms of human loss of life, but in the loss of education.

It is up to the nations that are not currently in crisis situations to be the crutch for these countries to lean on, especially if these countries are the sources of the problem. Iraq believes that a state run education system that provides its citizens with free primary school education is a feasible goal for 2030. It is critical to set goals for the future in order for change to occur and it is the policy of Iraq that this goal, not a standard be implemented.

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