



President's Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Children's Fund of the Model United Nations Conference!

My name is Munkhbat Munkhjargal, and I will be one of your chairs this year. I am a sophomore majoring in International Studies at Earlham College. I was born and raised in Mongolia, and I had an amazing opportunity to attend UWC school in the UK for two years. During my two years there, I have been involved with Model United Nations my entire time. My passion is to help people experiencing or have experienced hardships through their lives and putting smiles on their faces. I have attended many conferences as both a delegate and part of the secretariat, but with every new conference there is more to learn. I am excited to embark on this journey with you, and I hope you are too.

My name is Agathe Chapelle and together with Munkhbat, we will be serving as your co-chairs during ECMUN 2017. I am a first-year student at Earlham College. I was born and raised in France, and I moved to Swaziland in Southern Africa in UWC Swaziland for two years. During my time there I had the opportunity to get introduced to MUN. Since then my interest towards MUN has been growing largely due to my interest in Politics around the world. This year will be my first time chairing for a MUN conference. I am so excited to be working with you all. We all are very excited to meet you all in January and lead you through this amazing experience!

A little bit about our committee. UNICEF provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. It is one of the members of the United Nations Development Group and its executive committees. The topics we will be discussing in the committee are all highly significant and relevant in our globalized world, and we hope you will all come prepared, with carefully done research, an open-minded spirit, and the willingness to learn. Please familiarize yourself with ECMUN 2017 parliamentary procedures and do not hesitate to get in touch with any of us if you have questions. We are all looking forward to working with you. Please do not hesitate to email us with any questions you may have!

Best of luck!

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Committee Background

In December 1946 the United Nations Children's Fund was created in order to provide children with basic needs. This was done as the world was still suffering from the lasting and damaging effects of World War II, which included a large-scale children's famine in Europe. Following this crisis, UNICEF became a permanent mandate in 1953, as across the world, there were still millions of children who needed humanitarian assistance. The United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, which emphasizes the different goals of UNICEF: Education, health care, good nutrition and safety. UNICEF has set their priority on five focuses: child survival and development, basic education and gender equality, HIV/AIDS and children, child protection, and policy advocacy and partnership. From training teachers to protecting children from armed conflict, UNICEF's achievements have had a great impact on the well-being of children around the world and have secured rights for children in many territories around the globe. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty which promotes the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. The UN General Assembly adopted the convention and opened it up for signature of countries on 20th November 1989. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most rapidly and widely ratified international human rights treaty in history. The Convention changed the way children are viewed and treated. They are to be treated as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of passive objects. There is much to celebrate as we mark the 25th anniversary of the Convention; from the declining infant mortality to rising school enrolment. However, this historic milestone must also serve as an urgent reminder that much remains to be done. Too many children still do not enjoy their full rights on par with their peers.

Topic I: Impact of Forced Displacement on Children

Overview:

There have been over 28 million children from the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa fleeing their homes due to poverty, conflict, oppression, and human rights violation to Europe seeking safety. Migrants have been crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean seas to get to Europe. This year more than 300,000 people attempted to cross the sea, unfortunately about 3,000 people have been drowned while on this dangerous trip to safety. Syria's civil war is the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. Half of the pre-war population of Syria have been killed, forced, or pressured to leave their homes to find a safer life somewhere else. According to the UN, more than half of the refugees, 2.5 million, from Syria are under the age of 18. Most of them were out of school for months and few of them for years. The younger youths have been confused and scared by their experience lacking a sense of home and safety. The old ones would have to grow too fast in need to provide food through finding jobs and taking care of the family during these desperate circumstances.

All refugee children around the world have been systematically denied fundamental rights such as access to education and protection from forced marriage. The enormous and growing number of children who are forced from their homes is making it more urgent than ever to set out a global plan to address the issue. A Recent study from the UNICEF suggests that 63 million children will be forcefully be displaced from their homes by 2025, which doubles the current figure. Issues that we need to discuss are not just food, shelter, education and training, but also should be trauma that needed to be dealt with and counseling that needs to happen, and other follow-up services.

Historical Background:

The recent Syrian civil war started when the anti-government demonstration took place in March 2011. However, the peaceful protesting quickly escalated to armed opposition groups, after the violent government cracked down. Division between different ethnic and religious groups over complicated the politics of the conflict even more. After five years of war, it is believed that 250,000 people died and half of them were civilians. Bombings have destroyed cities and towns, and gruesome human rights violations were boundless. Since then, the fundamental human rights and need such as food, medical care, and education became scarce. The UN defines refugees as people who have been forced from their homes out of fears of persecution related to race, religion, and ethnicity. According to this definition, more than 65 million people globally are refugees today. This is the highest number since World War II.

Current situation:

Refugees have been dehumanized. Just because they were forced to flee home, does not mean that their rights have been changed. At least, 3.5 million children globally are out of school. Nearly one million children do not have access to proper education. Parents think that marriage under the legal age is the best way to protect their daughters. Child marriage amongst Syrians in Jordan tripled from 2011 - 2014. There are more than 100,000 refugee children who have been separated from their families, seeking asylum across 78 countries. It is not enough to hope that Government will take care of the issue as most of the programs are underfunded and ineffective. On the other hand, hoping on the NGO's and charities are not sufficient as well. Most of those are running on a deficit or have the funding for 60% of what they need. The issues for children who are forcefully dislocated are not just about safety in a physical sense; it is also about the ability that they can integrate themselves into the new environment. Most of the host countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, cannot afford to meet any requirement apart from the very basics regarding the food and shelter. Some of them are victims of child trafficking and exploitation.

Questions to consider:

1. Do nations have an obligation to let in refugee children?
2. What should be the programs that countries should be implementing?
3. How can nation-states fund the programs fully?
4. How should countries help other countries that have the most number of refugee children such as Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon?

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Topic II: Environmental Degradation in the Context of Future Generations

Overview:

"In all that we do, we inherently represent not only ourselves but past and future generations. We represent past generations, even while trying to obliterate the past, because we embody what they passed on to us. We represent future generations because the decisions we make today affect the well-being of all persons who come after us and the integrity and robustness of the planet they will inherit" -Edith Brown Weiss.

We do not have to look too far to see the environmental degradation affects our Earth. Environmental problems change the landscape we already know drastically. Problems like climate change, natural resource depletion, pollution, global warming, deforestation, ozone layer depletion, acid rains, and ocean acidification are a reality we face and we, as political, social and economic entities, need to take action.

While issues on environmental degradation in the context of future generations have been discussed before, the current high-tech society is the one whose actions will affect the well-being of future generations the most. This sparked waves of various discussions across the world on what kind of policies countries should implement in order to update the political, economic and social institutions towards long-term thinking.

Historical Background:

While the importance of intergenerational equity climaxing now, it has always been a theme for discussion on different political areas. In 1983, the UN General Assembly established the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) to find a middle ground on issues like current progress and preservation of global environment.

The final 1987 report, Our Common Future says: "Those responsible for managing natural resources and protecting the environment are institutionally separated from those responsible for managing the economy. The real world of interlocked economic and ecological systems will not change; the policies and institutions concerned must."

The UN Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992, put forward the concept of intergenerational equity: the current development should not be ceased, but should be restricted to an extent that will provide an existent and healthy environment for future generations. 190 states came to consensus on the aforementioned statement. Action plan, Article 21 called for actions that will provide sustainable development without breaching the rights of the future generations. Looking at the current environmental decline one can conclude that policies were not successfully implemented, and if humanity keeps following the same path, the future generation will not have the opportunity to live in a safe and healthy environment whatsoever.

Current situation:

In the mid - 1990s 106 countries signed the Cousteau Society's petition calling for a Bill of Rights for future generations, which led to UNESCO's 1997 "Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations."

Since then countries tried to put forward the idea of future generations being involved in present day decision making. Countries start questioning how will the generation of 2060 react to this policy, how will they be affected?

For that reason, a legal relationship between future and present generations should be established. The methods in which this idea is mostly carried out are the following: guardians, trustees, ombudsmen for the following generations. Guardianships and Trusteeship initiate the protection of the future generations' interests by the folks who make decisions nowadays. However, Trusteeship is governed by the highest standard of care: fiduciary duty.

Ombudsmen, or commissioners, are similarly designed to protect the rights of future generations. While forming a part of the government ombudsmen mostly function independently. Their duties involve evaluation of legislations, policies proposed by the government: shortly, making sure that the policies implemented today will not have negative effects on certain groups in near and far future.

Amongst the countries that are trying to follow the models mentioned above one can identify:

- Hungary: in 2008, the government set the system of Commissioners for the Future Generations.
- New Zealand: the PCE (parliamentary commissioner for the environment) was empowered by the Environmental Act 1986 with PCE (parliamentary commissioner for the environment), aimed to analyze the environmental policies enacted by country's minor and major policymakers. With the 5-year serving period, the commissioner or ombudsman acts independently from the government.
- Israel: In March 2001 Israel's parliament—established a Commission for Future Generations. The commission is assigned to serve as 'checks and balances' on the areas such as demography, natural resources technology ,etc.

The environmental degradation is still an ongoing problem, and though the methods mentioned above are good starters, the UN, EU and other vital institutions are debating new ways of addressing this complex issue.

Questions to consider:

1. Should the countries with low GDP, declining economies and other internal/external obstacles consider the concept of 'future justice' at all?
2. Should the countries with more or less privileged domestic and foreign conditions take most of the burden for the preservation of the environment for the future generations?
3. How efficient were the models of environment preservation for future (commissioners, trustees)? Are they worth following?
4. What are the new methods that could solve the everlasting problem of environmental degradation in the context of future generations?

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Topic III: Children and AIDS

Overview:

Over the last two centuries, HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus), the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired immune efficiency syndrome) became one of the most important global health and development issues. Over 36.7 million people across social classes, continents and generations are affected by it. While no part of the world has an AIDS-free population, the majority of the people affected by the epidemic are living in developing countries specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa. Examples include Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, as well as other countries such as South Africa and India. 1.8 million children (people under the age of 18 years old) are living with HIV, according to U.S department of Health and human services, which makes this virus as one of the largest cause of infant death across the world. Moreover, some children remain untested but are carriers of the virus and are still not educated on the effects of the virus towards human immune system. How the disease AIDS affects children globally is one of the global challenges of this decade. In the future, UNICEF aspires to work towards an AIDS-free world.

Historical Background:

Many believe the HIV virus was spread from chimpanzees to humans in the Democratic Republic of Congo around 1920. Reliable data suggests that by the 1980's the virus had already infected between 100,000 and 300,000 people spread over 5 continents. In 1981, HIV was reported in the USA and was a disease mainly seen in gay men and drug users. By 1982, following progressive research and understanding, the term 'AIDS' was given to the disease. Haiti suffered severe discrimination due to a large percentage of their population being diagnosed with AIDS as a result of their involvement with the disease. The virus is also known as 'slim', due to one of the symptoms being extreme weight loss. 1983 saw the World Health Organization assess and survey AIDS for the first time, as in the USA alone cases had risen to 3,064 and there was a death count of 1,292. Over the years understanding, diagnosis and treatment of the disease has developed with the support, fundraising and education provided by celebrities such as Charlie Sheen, Freddie Mercury and NBA basketballer Magic Johnson.

Both the Department of States and the Department of Health and Human Services coordinate programs to help tackle the disease. Other organizations that are involved include the National Institutes of Health, Department of Labour and the Peace Corps, to name a few. Similarly the United Nations program 'UNAIDS' advocates to provide accelerated, comprehensive and coordinated global action on the epidemic. With an annual budget of \$70 million and operating in 155 countries, strategic plans are put in place accordingly. Figures suggest 2004 saw 36.9 million people living worldwide with HIV; 2.6 million being children under 15.

Current situation:

According to UNICEF, since the beginning of the twenty first century awareness of HIV/AIDS has increased, greatly affecting the number of people receiving a treatment. Currently, roughly 17 million people receive treatment. One truly sees progress in the treatment and prevention of infection in children, as the global HIV rate for children has decreased by 35 percent for the children under the age of 15 years old, which is the greatest decrease ever for the infection. However, we still see 3,200 children are dying daily from AIDS, so this virus is still a major cause of infant death in many low and middle income countries (especially in sub Saharan Africa). In 2013 the World Health Organization, pushed governments to have a more active role in providing support for mothers and children carrying HIV. New HIV infections in children have fell by 60% due to mother-to- child transmission prevention through a greater access to drugs and HIV testing. Along with this, transmission through sexual relationships has decreased due to a larger amount of people being educated about presentational techniques. Yet, in countries where marriage at a very young age is still part of the culture the rate of infection remains very high.

While in developed countries HIV infection in healthcare settings has almost completely been eradicated, in low income countries there is still a lack prevention of HIV infection caused by used needles that have not sterilized or are being reused, or blood transfusions. Whilst some countries have seen a recent overall decline of over 50% in new infections over the past 10 years, other countries' infection rates are escalating rapidly. Besides the physical issues of HIV virus, the virus has massive social and economic costs. Only half of the HIV exposed children are being tested and only held of the children living with HIV do not have access to a decent treatment. 13.4 million children have lost one or both parents due to AIDS. UNICEF must take action to tackle this widespread epidemic that is causing so much death and social and economic problems.

Questions to be considered:

1. What main problems make it challenging to achieve an AIDS-free generation?
2. How could governments of state with high HIV infection rates do in order to support children living with AIDS?
3. How can education and cultural beliefs affect HIV infection rate in children?
4. What is the role of developed countries and organizations developing countries and should they provide help to these developing countries?

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