Manlius Pebble Hill Model United Nations Conference October 2018

Economic and Social Council
Chairs:
Genevieve Morrow
Emily Neuner

Preface

Welcome to the Economic and Social Council at MPHMUN 2018! The chairs for this committee will be Emily Neuner and Genevieve Morrow. Emily is in 12th grade and has participated in Model United Nations for three years, and Genevieve is a sophomore in her second year of Model UN. This committee will be run resolution style which means that all debated resolutions should be written, typed, and printed *before* the conference; no printer is available for use during the conference. Delegates who wish to be considered for an award must hand in a position paper and resolutions for all three topics at 11:59 PM on Friday, October 19th to the committees email. We also ask that you staple all of your resolutions together into one packet containing three topics and then bring 50 copies of this packet. Please double-side anything you print to help save trees! We are very excited to see all of the debate and solutions that arise during committee. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at anytime. We look forward to a great conference!

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Introduction to the Committee

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the "the main forum for discussion of international economic, social, cultural and health issues, as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms." This council contains 54 members of the United Nations elected from the General Assembly. This council meets in July, convening in New York for even years and Geneva for odd years.The council collaborates with business sector representatives and more than 3,200 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The estimated budget for ECOSOC is around 108.55 million US dollars, but in this committee we will not use a budget. ECOSOC is believed to be at the center of the UN, helping to bring people and issues together to promote collective action for a sustainable world. ECOSOC is also helps bring in more specialized agencies to help with partnerships, such as high-profile and multi-stakeholder representatives, including from governments, civil society, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, local governments, parliamentarians, the UN system, and academia.

Building Sustainable Communities Through the Empowerment of Youth

Introduction

The United Nations has recently emphasized the importance of giving youth (those from 15 to 24 years of age) the proper platforms to aid in peacebuilding and sustainable development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a collection of goals for 2030 set by the Member States of the United Nations in 2015. The role of youth in promoting these goals is vital, as the United Nations believes that the SDGs can guide young people to better understand themselves and the world around them; "activating youth will happen in three stages: awareness, understanding and action." However, many obstacles stand in the way of youth empowerment, including but not limited to unemployment, lack of access to education, gender inequality, violence, and socioeconomic disenfranchisement.

A major problem is the vulnerability of youth to extremist recruitment; regardless of socioeconomic status, adolescents are attracted to extremist groups because they provide them with a sense of identity, acceptance, belonging, and pride. By means of bribes or social media campaigns, extremists lure youth in order to turn them into dangerous weapons. According to the Institute for Policy Studies, suicide bombings are most often committed by people in their late teens and early twenties. Since extremist recruitment most often directly targets youth, it is typically not as appealing to older people.

The participation of youth in violent activities weakens the overall welfare of their communities. Additionally, a plethora of obstacles prevents young people from attending school or having access to quality

education. The Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB) defines a quality education as "one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being." According to the Global Partnership for Education, youth education reduces poverty, increases income, boosts economic growth, combats HIV and AIDS, makes people healthier, and fosters peace. "Girls and boys who learn to read, write and count will provide a better future for their families and countries. With improved education, so many other areas are positively affected." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed his concern that education is not prioritized during humanitarian crises, such as the situations in Yemen and Syria. Child labor, child marriage, discrimination against girls, and conflict are the primary factors impeding the effectiveness of education worldwide.

Unemployment among youth is also on the rise: the International Labour Organization estimated that 71 million youth were unemployed in 2016. Unemployment in varying contexts can signify a variety of things, but overall, it lessens the number of people able to perform generally unskilled labor to sustain a country's economy. Additionally, unemployed youth in developed or high-income countries tend to have a worse physical well-being than those who are employed. In addition to unemployment, socio-economic disenfranchisement prevents young people from having a voice in significant decision making.

Economic disenfranchisement is the exclusion of peoples from the process of creating or distributing wealth. Social

disenfranchisement, which is the result of economic or political disenfranchisement, is typically referred to as social exclusion, where an individual is regarded as a second-class citizen. Socioeconomic disenfranchisement, therefore, is the combination of the two, ensuing the overall rejection of a group from society. This practice, applied to younger populations, prevents youth from becoming active in the political, economic, and social sectors of their countries. Youth are necessary in these areas because they are the future generation of legislators, doctors, scientists, artists, writers, speakers, and peacemakers of our world.

History

Obstacles in the way of youth empowerment have always existed. According to the World Bank, the unemployment rate among youth worldwide has fluctuated between 12 and 15 percent in recent decades. In 1991, it was 12.5%. In 2002, it rose to 14.1% and steadily decreased until 2007. These unemployment statistics are difficult to read because low rates can occur in countries with significant poverty while high unemployment rates can occur in countries with substantial economic strength. Similarly, these fluctuations in the world poverty rates for youth cannot accurately show the differences in developed and developing nations. Typically, impoverished youth have less time in school and may work to support their families, while more privileged youth spend more time in school and less time working, finding employment later in their life. Nonetheless, these rates reflect a significant portion of the world's youth that are unemployed and/or seeking employment.

Youth involved in violence and extremism has been a rising trend. One of

the most telling statistics is that the average age of the 9/11 hijackers was 24 years old. Since Al Qaeda's origins in the late 1980's, the insurgent group has been targeting mostly those from marginalized society. Another group known as Al-Shabaab was founded in 2006 by young men that made up the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia, radicalized by an Ethiopian invasion. "Al-Shabaab," translated from Arabic, means "The Youth." In 2012, this militant group declared allegiance to Al Qaeda, sharing its anti-Western sentiments. Extremist groups and their far-reaching recruitment may be seen as a form of empowerment because they provide youth a sense of identity, as previously mentioned. However, both the positive and negative effects of this view must be addressed.

To address the need for youth empowerment worldwide, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Inclusive Social Development established a Focal Point on Youth, or "UN for Youth." This program aims to "build an awareness of the global situation of young people, as well as promote their rights and aspirations." In 1965, the Declaration on the Promotion Among youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (A/RES/2037(XX)) was created, outlining the Youth Declaration of the principle rights of young people. Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had already been adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, the Youth Declaration in 1965 reflected the need for a separate, specific set of rights for youth. These rights included the right to be raised in accordance to the ideals of equality, peace, justice, and international cooperation.

In 1979, the UN General Assembly designated 1985 as International Youth

Year: Participation, Development and Peace. Another International Year of Youth was designated for 2010, focusing on Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. During the 2010 Year of Youth, the UN provided promotional materials including bookmarks, brochures, and postcards to gain awareness. These years of youth were most successful in promoting the ideals of the United Nations as they apply to young people as well as promoting dialogue and understanding across generations. The UN also launched a mobile application in an attempt to involve more young people in global decision-making. In 2015, the UN resolution S/RES/2250(2015) addressed the significant role youth can play in peacebuilding and development. Jordan's representative Dina Kawar stated that the resolution aimed "to draw the world's attention to ensure that young people are given the attention they deserve at a time when the world is a theatre for an increasing number of negative issues." Although the resolution called for the participation and views of youth in all Member States to be taken into account during decision-making processes, young people are still vastly underrepresented and undervalued.

Current Situation

Youth are becoming increasingly susceptible to extremist recruitment. Al-Shabaab primarily uses online recruitment methods to target those between 10 and 15 years of age in Somalia. A UN Assistance Mission in Somalia report explained that "Al-Shabaab targets uneducated, unemployed youth with the promise of good pay, free Islamic education and marriage." Private companies, politicians, and businesspeople provide wary support to the insurgent group mostly out of fear and a lack of alternate financial options.

Today, the unemployment trend among youth worldwide is rising; the World Bank recorded in 2017 that the unemployment rate was 13.6%. This has been the unintended consequence of an increasing youth population internationally as well as an expectation gap regarding education between low- and high-income countries. Although there are thousands of programs that focus on employment worldwide such as the International Youth Foundation, the Citi Foundation, and McKinsey & Company, few have the necessary far-reaching effects or long term impacts. This is a result of a lack of reception of these organizations and adoption of their initiatives in many nations.

To address the many factors that prevent the empowerment of youth, ECOSOC has been holding a Youth Forum annually since 2012. This forum allows young people to join the discussion on advancing the SDGs. These participants are invited to the UN Headquarters along with representatives of youth-led and youth-focused organizations to "voice their opinions, share ideas, and think together about what they can do to achieve sustainable development." On January 30th of this year, the 7th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum met at the UN Headquarters in New York City to discuss the role of youth in building sustainable communities. The participants discussed the SDGs and how to implement the 2030 agenda, focusing on "water and sanitation (SDG 6), energy (SDG7), cities (SDG11), sustainable consumption and production (SDG12), deforestation and biodiversity (SDG15) and the use of science technology for innovation in facilitating youth engagement (SDG17)."

Questions to Consider

- How can we decrease the influence of social media campaigns and the internet as means of extremist recruitment?

- How can we help provide platforms for youth within their country's governing systems for their voices to be heard?

- How can young people be provided a balance of opportunities in employment and quality education?

Further Reading

- A page regarding the 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum and useful links.
  - http://research.un.org/en/youthandsdgs

- An article focused on the role terrorism plays for youth in developing countries. http://www.searcct.gov.my/publications/our-publications?id=55

- An article on urban youth unemployment. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2018/05/02/urban-youth-unemployment-a-looming-crisis/

Economic and Social Impact of the World's Dependence on Plastic

Introduction

Today, the world contains approximately 9.2 billion tons of plastic, and of that, about 6.3 million tons is not recycled. Among this plastic, between 5.3 to 14 million tons end up in the ocean every year. This is mostly due to plastic being thrown off ships or being dumped in rivers that lead to the ocean in Asia. Experts hypothesize that this plastic will take as long as 450 years to biodegrade, yet this not guaranteed, as many scientists also believe that some will never degrade. Nearly 700 species in the ocean, including those that are endangered, have been affected by this surplus of plastic. Some, such as small fish and sea turtles, are being strangled by the six pack rings, while others are eating microparticles of plastic that can affect their internal organs. This excess of plastic found around the world is due to the outrageous amounts of plastic being produced, from 2.3 million tons in 1950, to 162 million in 1993, to 448 million in 2015. Microplastics are now found all over the ocean floor, from sediments in the deepest known part of the ocean to particles trapped in the ice in the Arctic.

The reason for microplastics found all over the deepest parts of the ocean is due to the fact that in 2012, only 9 percent of the total amount of plastic in the world was recycled, as there is not always an option to recycle some plastics, such as grocery bags. Now the world has come up with names for areas with large amounts of plastic, such as the well known Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is referring to a large collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean. This patch spans from the shores of the West Coast of North America to Japan. Besides

the amount of plastic in water, almost three quarters of all plastic ends up in landfills all around the world. As the waste sits, it can potentially leak pollutants into the soil and water which can therefore affect crops. In 2015, an estimated 146 million metric tons of polymer plastic was produced as packaging, while about 141 million metric tons of this was thrown out. Not only does the actual plastic affect the environment, the factories that manufacture the plastic create pollution that devastates the atmosphere.

History

The earliest references to marine debris go back to a 1984 Workshop on the Impacts and Fate of Marine Debris, which was put into effect in 1982 upon request from the Marine Mammal Commission to the National Marine Fisheries Service of the United States, to examine the impacts of marine debris.

The creation of plastic helped companies all around the world make cheaper and lighter equipment, from making cars and jets more bouyant to creating clear wraps that lengthen the life of fresh food. After the first industrial plastic was introduced to the world by John Wesley Hyatt in 1870, the plastic revolution boomed in the 20th century. By 1955, people were ecstatic for this new "throwaway living," which meant less cleaning and more trash in landfills.

Before Hyatt, Alexander Parkes created the first man-made plastic in the mid nineteenth century; the new substance was not used heavily until World War II, when the Americans used plastic to coat the wires found in their war machinery. After the war, factories in the United States and Europe were left vacant, with the exception of oil factories, which helped the plastic industry because plastic is a derivative of oil. Many

studies in the past denounced plastic as a long lasting pollutant that would not break down, so now many actions have been thus put forth to attempt to find ways to either create plastic that will break down easier or lessen the amount of plastic produced.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which was discovered and given its name in 1997, helped provide information on how surrounding countries, such as the United States, China, and Japan, are some of the largest producers of plastic in the world. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is referring to a large collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean. This patch spans from the shores of the West Coast of North America to Japan. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is comprised of the Western Garbage Patch, which is located near Japan, and the Eastern Garbage Patch, located between the states of California and Hawaii. The entire patch is bounded by the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, which is a system of circular ocean currents formed by wind patterns in the area. This is the reason for the immense mass of litter in the patch, as the circular motion of the winds draw in garbage located in the ocean. One of the main reasons why debris in the patch continues to accumulate is due to the fact that most plastic is not biodegradable. Instead, the plastic will break down into smaller pieces which are easier for marine species to consume. Not only does the ocean break down plastic through the process of friction, the sun also breaks it down into smaller pieces in a process known as photodegradation.

In 2004, a study led by Dr Richard Thompson at the University of Plymouth, UK, had found that plastic was scattered in the shores and waters of Europe, the Americas, Australia, Africa and Antarctica. In September of 2009, a press conference

was held in which the director of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), Maziar Movassaghi, addressed the obscene amounts of microparticles in the ocean and demanded a solution.

Current Situation

Countries all around the world have implemented laws that they hope will help to decrease the surplus of plastic on land and in the oceans. Members of the The European Union (EU) have implemented many acts, while most countries that border water have followed suit, some bordered nations fall short of improving the initial issue. Croatia, located in Eastern Europe, has a series of laws found in the document "Characteristics of GES and Environmental Targets for the Marine Environment under the Sovereignty of the Republic of Croatia" (2014), which have helped reduce the total amount of marine litter on its shores and the sea. The document also states that Croatia hopes to organize and develop a National Marine Litter management plan. However, even though they have hope to implement this plan, it has not happened as the EU has left individual national legislations alone and has not provided assistance, therefore leaving more plastic in the ocean. Other landlocked countries tend to indirectly contribute to the problem, but they can also directly contribute to the solution. For example, Hungary indirectly contributes to marine debris as it is associated with the International Network of Basin Organizations; their goal being to develop permanent relations with the organizations interested in comprehensive river basin management and facilitation of exchanges of experience and expertise, which therefore helps decrease marine debris as most if not all water in rivers make it to the ocean.

Furthermore, in 2011, Hungary revised the law of the environmental product fee. This affected the number of plastic bags being used in the country, as annually approximately 3000 tons of plastic bags were being used; the number shrunk by almost half by 2012. To promote the law, Hungary has established the Help End Plastic Pollution on Earth day to educate citizens and get people involved.

In 2017, India passed a ban on all disposable plastic in its capital, Delhi. Cutlery, bags, cups, and other forms of single-use plastics were prohibited by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). This law was implemented following complaints about the illegal mass burning of plastic and other waste at three local rubbish dumps, causing air pollution. Eighteen states in India that are ruled by New Delhi have implemented this ban on the sale and use of plastic bags, including Madhya Pradesh and Punjab.

The United Nations has also worked on creating solutions for this pressing issue. In December of 2017, the UN called for a resolution that targeted the ocean plastic waste, however this resolution was rejected by China, the United States, and India, as they did not want to commit to these specific international goals. The countries included in the resolution agreed that plastic in the ocean needed to be reduced, but the resolution was not legally binding. The resolution "urges all actors to step up actions to by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds." Although it does not have any suggestions for realistic execution, it encourages Member States to "avoid marine litter and microplastics entering the marine environment." Further plans for resolutions hope to surpass the redundancy of past proposals and create a

more organized time table. Additionally, a more specific plan would be necessary in regards to target wastes such as marine debris and landfills.

Questions to Consider

- Should countries be held accountable for the amount of plastic they produce?
- How can the UN encourage landlocked countries to also help to decrease the surplus of marine debris?
- How would the reduction of plastic produced affect countries that are largely dependent on plastic?

Further Reading

- An article focused on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/
- The history of plastic pollution on both land and in water. https://www.britannica.com/science/plastic-pollution
- An article that focuses on single use plastics in the ocean. https://ieep.eu/archive_uploads/2128/IEEP_ACES_Product_Fiche_Single_Use_Plastics_Final_October_2016.pdf

Gender Selection in Developing Countries

Introduction

Gender selection, also known as sex selection, is the attempt to control the sex of an offspring to achieve a desired sex. Gender selection can be achieved prenatally, which would require sex-selective technologies such as sperm sorting and in vitro fertilization (IVF) with a preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), or postnatally, which would entail the neglection or execution of the undesired child. The three primary motives for a family to request gender selection are medical concerns, family balancing desires, and gender preference. The latter term is also described as "free choice."

The United Nations and the World Health Organization have generally approved gender selection for medical reasons. A mother may choose to undergo a prenatal diagnosis or preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) procedure, which would determine if the child would have an inherited disease; in gender selection, a diagnosis of an X or Y chromosome-linked disease would be followed by the termination or rejection of the affected embryo. Another option would be pre-fertilization gender selection, which, by contrast, works with gametes rather than embryos; this technique is typically characterized as more humane, if the mother thinks of an embryo as a developing person. The disorders and diseases that are most commonly prevented by gender selection are typically extreme or even fatal diseases, ones that a mother does not want to see her children suffer with in their lifetimes.

However, not all gender selections are for medical reasons. A UN Population Fund report states that "around 117 million women are believed to be 'missing' in Asia and Eastern Europe" as a result of gender

selection for nonmedical reasons, such as family balancing and gender preference. These motives tend to result in gender imbalances with sex ratios favoring males as well as furthered discrimination against women. Additionally, gender selection for nonmedical reasons is viewed by the United Nations as immoral and unethical, disrupting the natural cycle of life.

Many Asian nations have high rates of gender selection procedures for nonmedical reasons, even though most countries have policies that attempt to restrict them. Canada, the UK, Australia, and the European Union have laws strictly against gender selection. Unfortunately, those who still wish to undergo these procedures tend to travel for them; this is known as "reproductive tourism." These people tend to travel to the United States, Thailand, Mexico, or Italy, where gender selection is legal.

Gender selection is not new; before sex-selective technology was invented, parents would resort to neglecting or killing their infants if they were not of the desired sex. In the 1980s, sex-selective medical practices became more widely used with the inventions of new sex-selective technologies. Meant for medical purposes, this practice was prenatal gender bias in disguise. It is important to note that even with sex-selective technologies available, many people in developing nations cannot afford them and resort to infanticide or neglect.

The One-Child Policy in China is one example of how gender selection biased the gender ratio; when the law was first implemented in 1979, there were 106 boys for every 100 girls (this is not far from the natural sex ratio, which is 105 boys to every 100 girls). Today, in some areas of the

country, the male count has risen as high as 140. Families in China believe that a son is more valuable than a daughter in their patriarchal society, therefore the practice of gender selection (pre- and postnatally) has risen significantly. In 2015, China replaced its One-Child Policy to allow most married women to have two children, but the old policy had already done its damage.

India has also struggled with the sex selection and an imbalanced gender ratio. In the past, early sex-selective abortions were performed openly at government hospitals: doctors would help identify the sex of the baby, and they would abort the fetus if it was a girl. In the 1970s, once India's feminist groups and other campaigners began criticizing gender selection, the government became aware of its harmful consequences. By this time, many children had already been aborted; All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) had already

helped abort an estimated 100,000 female fetuses. However, the general trend is that more developed countries do not suffer from this problem as much as they do not believe they need to have men to help provide money to the family, as many do believe in developing nations.

Current Situation

Several laws have now been passed internationally to prevent sex selection. In India, there are two laws that protect the fetuses that have become the victims of sex selection; the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP) was passed in 1971, and the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act (PNDT) in 1994. Both were amended in 2002. The latter legislation allowed abortions only in specific situations and was amended to prohibit sex selection with intent to abort the fetus. It is important to note that many countries have banned gender

selection for nonmedical purposes in attempts to prevent gender imbalance, but such laws have yet to be proven effective.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNDP), human trafficking and sexual violence have increased as a result of a gender imbalance in southern Asia. Son-preference also leads to a lower quality of life for the women that are born, who face societal disappointment, abuse, or neglect. In many developing nations, an obscene amount of pressure is placed on women to give birth to sons rather than daughters because of the socioeconomic value of sons. This puts both the mother and the potential female child in danger. The option of gender selection can be forced upon women consciously or subconsciously, depriving them of their reproductive freedoms and right to their own bodies.

In 2011, WHO released "Preventing gender-biased sex selection," an interagency statement in collaboration with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The statement revealed growing concerns over abnormally high male-to-female birth ratios specifically in Asian nations as a result of gender preference.

Questions to Consider

- How can we prevent families from using gender selective technologies for nonmedical reasons?
- How can laws against gender selection be better enforced?
- To prevent gender selection, how can families be better educated on its consequences?

Further Reading

- An article that provides factual

  information on gender-biased sex

  selection.

  https://www.unfpa.org/gender-biased

  -sex-selection

- A history of sex selection.

  https://www.bbc.com/news/1421313

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- An article on the ethical issues of

  gender-biased sex selection.

  http://www.who.int/genomics/gender

  /en/index4.html