UNAR 2017
Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

Committee Overview

Child Prosecution and Sex Tourism in Thailand
Effects of Climate Change on Marginalized Persons
Humanitarian Aid to Drought Victims in Botswana
Reducing the Gender Gap in International Agriculture

Committee Description

SHC is run Harvard Style, meaning that resolutions are not to be written until the date of the conference itself. Additionally, it is highly recommended that every delegate write at least one position paper on a topic, as doing so is a requirement to be considered for an award.

All delegates are expected to come to the first day of the conference with a working knowledge of all or most of the topics as well as the policies of the countries that they represent. Keep in mind that SHC is tasked with addressing a myriad of social, humanitarian, and human rights issues, and delegates are expected to work for the maintenance and fulfillment of the United Nations’ stated goals in these areas. Remember, Model UN is not a competition, so use this as an opportunity to broaden your horizons and have some fun.

Chairs

Seamus Hogan
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I am a junior at Geneva High School, and I am excited to be chairing again. This is my second year in Model UN, and I am vice-president of the GHS club. I am also a member of Hip-Hop Club, Ski & Snowboard Club, and I serve on the Geneva Reads Board of Directors.

Zainab Shah
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My name is Zainab Shah, and this is my second time chairing and third year in Model UN. I am a junior at Pittsford Mendon High School, and along with Model UN I play on the Varsity Tennis Team and participate in our Habitat for Humanity Club.
Child prostitution and sex tourism are major economic businesses in Thailand. They involve over 800,000 children under the age of sixteen, and the profits of the trade exceed those of drugs and weapons trade, as well as gambling. The people of Thailand do not see these actions as immoral because they have been a part of the culture for so long, and bring in most of the country’s revenue.

Child Prostitution and Sex Tourism have increased tourism in Thailand over the last decade. Many single men travel to Thailand to take part in sex tourism, and the revenue coming from sex work has positively impacted Thailand’s economy.

Children are either forced to work as sex slaves by brothels or by their own families, who sell their children into sex slavery for money. Many of the people living in Thailand live under the poverty line, and feel as if they have no other choice. They do not receive many work opportunities, so many resort to working as sex slaves as a means for income.

Prostitutes working in these businesses are not offered most basic needs and are degraded in society. Many social stigmas are associated with the profession, despite its widespread nature. Thailand provides no health protection for prostitutes; HIV/AIDS has become the main cause of death in the country.

There have been many efforts to combat child prostitution and sex tourism worldwide, including the Child Sex Tourism Prevention Project, launched in 2004 by the non-governmental organization World Vision. Although these efforts have helped to raise awareness of sexual exploitation, they have not been able to address the roots of the problem and help put an end to these crimes.

What measures can the United Nations take to help raise awareness and combat sex tourism and child prostitution? How can the UN address these issues without leaving Thailand economically disabled and without infringing upon Thailand’s national sovereignty? What strategies can be implemented to aid children who were forced to take part in this trade?

Sources:
Marginalized people are vulnerable to human rights abuses, already. Climate change only exacerbates their difficulties with health, housing, livelihood, and security. These people are disproportionately affected by climate change because they already have a fragile infrastructure and ecosystem, making effects much more catastrophic.

Droughts and heat waves caused by global warming have lead to starvation and malnutrition in many marginalized groups. These natural disasters have increased in frequency in the last decade, specifically in Kenya, Cambodia, and Ethiopia. Climate change has also led to violence in many areas, due to fighting over limited resources. People resort to violent raids of storage sites and fights with others to obtain food and other necessities for themselves and their families. This conflict wipes out infrastructure and takes lives, further detriment their situations.

To combat the issue of Global Warming, the UN has passed the Paris Agreement on December 12, 2015 which had all countries in agreement to stop the rise of global temperatures. Despite these efforts, the global temperature continues to rise and these problems become more prevalent for marginalized persons and the rest of the world.

What other measures can the UN take to combat Global Warming? What can the UN do to help marginalized persons directly? How can the UN ensure that resources for marginalized people are fairly and evenly distributed?

Sources:

Minority Rights Group International: The Impact of Climate Change on Minorities and Indigenous People
Minority_Rights_Group_International.pdf

Humans Rights Watch: The Impact of Climate Change on the World’s Marginalized Populations

CBM International: The Impact of Climate Change on People with Disabilities
On July 14th, 2016, President Lieutenant-General Seretse Khama Ian Khama declared a state of emergency in Botswana, in response to what the Department of Meteorological Services predicts will be “the worst drought in 34 years.” Sustained desertification and minimal water security have long plagued the people of Botswana, and the El Nino weather phenomenon threatens to be particularly devastating to Southern Africa in coming years. The United Nations has warned of “large scale crop-failure” in the region, and has predicted an imminent humanitarian crisis.

The depletion of surface water and the degradation of rangelands pose as significant threats to agricultural sustainability in Botswana. Pastoral farming has been most severely impacted by the deterioration of rangeland resources, and thus the cattle industry has plummeted, which is socioeconomically detrimental to the people of Botswana. With approximately 70% of rural households partially dependent upon rain-fed crops, the drought threatens to plunge many families into destitution and hunger.

Although the issue of food and water security in Botswana is nuanced and broadly impactful, there is a more urgent obligation to address the impending ecological crisis and its immediate humanitarian consequences. The drought threatens not only to claim human lives, but to degrade a culture and a way of life for millions of people.

What strategy ought to be implemented in order to provide relief to victims of drought in Botswana? How can the UN work to preserve Batswana cultural stability, as resources grow scarce? What can be done to diminish the human consequences of this and other ecological crises worldwide?

Sources:
ENCA Africa: Botswana Declares Drought a Disaster http://www.enca.com/africa/botswana-declares-drought-a-disaster
Women “comprise, on average, 43% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries,” yet they scarcely receive equal access to agricultural resources. This is not only a glaring injustice, but also a significant hindrance to maximizing agrarian productivity and achieving international food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that, if women were granted equal access to major agricultural resources, then gross agricultural output in developing countries would increase by between 2.5-4%, and the estimated number of undernourished people worldwide, approximately 925 million, could diminish by 100 to 150 million.

Despite their significant involvement in the production and usage of crops, women are often denied proportional economic compensation and technical support for their labor. Women are more likely to be low-wage earners or unpaid laborers, especially in developing nations. Unfortunately, many institutions still operate under the assumption that women are not, and cannot be, “real farmers.” The majority of technical assistance, investment, and resources are controlled by or devoted to male farmers. Even within an agrarian family, the patriarch is typically considered the principal agricultural instrument, while women are treated as a supplementary class.

In the continued international effort for gender equality, agriculture is a major obstacle. As the international community works towards a more agriculturally sustainable world, women are systematically being left behind. The agricultural gender gap continues to widen, as rural women in developing countries are most severely impacted.

What can be done to decrease gender inequity in global agriculture? How can women be empowered to become full-fledged participants in the agricultural industry? How does discrimination reduce global productivity, in agriculture and beyond?

Sources:

Bridging the Gap: FAO’s Programme for Gender Equality in Agriculture and Rural Development
http://www.fao.org/3/a-i1243e.pdf

Gender Differentials in Farm Productivity: Implications for Household Efficiency and Agricultural Policy

UN Women Watch: Gender Equality & Trade Policy - Trade, Agriculture, Food Security, and Gender Equality

African Development Bank: Gender Equality in Agriculture - What are the benefits for Sub-Saharan Africa?