



ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2010
BERGEN COUNTY ACADEMIES

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PROGRAMME

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Hello Delegate,

My name is Cecilia An and I will be your co-chair for AMUN 2010 UNDP. I am currently a senior in the Academy for Business and Finance. Our committee will focus on sustainable development to improve living conditions and use aid and resources more effectively. We will be debating the topics of Universal Education, world hunger, and maternal health and focusing on delivering adequate resolutions in our committee. Just like some of you, my first experience in Model United Nations was in the Academy Model United Nations Conference my freshman year. Since then, model UN has always been a club I have stayed with because I appreciated the eye-opening experience it gave its participants about the rest of the world and I have gone on to participate in NAIMUN and WAMUNC. I met countless new friends at these conferences and learned so much about international issues.

My name is Sunjoo Paik and I will be your co-chair for AMUN 2010 UNDP. I am currently a senior in the Academy for Medical Science Technology. I first started Model UN as a freshman. Clueless to what MUN was, I attended my first conference in Washington, DC, NAIMUN, with almost no knowledge of how these debates worked. By the end of the conference, I was knowledgeable on parliamentary procedure, working papers, and resolutions. By the time WAMUNC came around, I was more prepared and was able to effectively debate and sponsor several resolutions. I went on to participate in AMUN 2008 and also staff for AMUN 2009. The main reason why I continued to participate in Model UN was the sense of accomplishment I felt passing a working paper into a resolution after hours of debating and compromising. Also, the skills I acquired from participating in the debates were crucial in other aspects of my academic career. I am excited to be a part of this committee and see the debate from the other side as a chair and hopefully pass some great resolutions as a committee. I hope that those participating in this committee will have a great experience and learn a lot about issues facing the United Nations today.

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at peian@bergen.org or sunpai@bergen.org

Sincerely,
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TOPIC 1: EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Introduction

Two of the most pressing issues facing the United Nations today are extreme poverty and hunger. Because the two are interrelated, it is crucial to pinpoint the relation between both and work to eliminate it. The United Nations has developed a list of “Millennium Development Goals” which is a list of goals the organization wants to reach by the year 2015. The first goal is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Specific targets include reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The World Bank has estimated that 1.4 billion people in developing countries are living in extreme poverty (2005). This number has grown exponentially since then. Recent increases in the price of food have had a direct and adverse effect on the poor. These increases are predicted to push an estimated 100 million others into *absolute poverty*. This universal definition of poverty is measured using strict guidelines defined by David Gordon’s paper, “Indicators of Poverty & Hunger” for the United Nations. Although the proportion of children under five who are undernourished declined from 33 per cent in 1990 to 26 per cent in 2006, the number of children in developing countries who were underweight still exceeded 140 million.

It is often difficult to define poverty in the more affluent countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Those living in poverty in these countries are a minority and are defined to be in “relative poverty”. This term is defined by the lack of social necessities and the presence of social exclusion by the majority. For example, cars and computers are considered necessities in the US. Those unable to afford these things are excluded from the general society since they are unable to participate in the activities that most Americans participate in.

It is quite apparent that there is no clear answer as to how poverty should be eliminated. Those living in poverty also become vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. Many governments do not see poverty-reduction as a priority since they do not fully understand the wider benefits of eliminating poverty. Those that do realize the importance of reducing poverty go about doing so in a wasteful manner and do not implement working



The Millennium Development Goals

policies.

In many Central Asian countries, the government has made many failed attempts to develop forests or grazing land for annual crops. These attempts cause desertification, landslides, dust storms, and drought which directly lead to even greater poverty. Desertification is also caused by those who harvest vegetation at a rate faster than the

rate at which it grows since they are unable to afford fossil fuels.

Current Situation

The MDG goal of cutting in half the proportion of people in the developing world living on less than \$1 a day by 2015 remains plausible for the world as a whole. Although there has been extreme success in Asia (mostly East Asia), little progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty in the sub-Saharan Africa region. The latest estimates released by the World Bank (August 2008) show that the number of people living in the developing world living in extreme poverty may be even higher than what was previously thought. By using a new threshold for extreme poverty now set at \$1.25 a day (purchasing power parity) in 2005 prices, the World Bank concluded that there were 1.4 billion people living in poverty in 2005. Significant decreases in poverty rates have occurred since the 1980's. In 1981, the poverty rate was 52 per cent, 42 per cent in 1990, and 26 per cent in 2005. Over a short span of 25 years, the poverty rate in East Asia fell from almost 80 percent to under 20 per cent. In contrast, the poverty rate in sub-Saharan Africa remained constant at 50 per cent.

The proportion of people worldwide suffering from malnutrition and hunger has declined since the early 1990's. However, the number of people lacking access to food has gone up. With the recent increases in food prices, an estimated 1 billion people will go hungry and an estimated 2 billion will be undernourished. As mentioned before, Eastern Asia has made huge improvements regarding both extreme poverty and hunger. This region, notably China, has been successful in more than halving the proportion of underweight children between 1990 and 2006. Comparatively, almost 50 per cent of

children are underweight in Southern Asia. This region by itself accounts for than half the world's undernourished children.

The majority of countries making the least progress in reducing child malnutrition are located in sub-Saharan Africa. Jobs provide almost no relief from poverty due to extremely low pay rates. The "working-poor" is defined as employed persons living in a household where earnings are less than \$1 per person a day. Half of the workers in sub-Saharan African are considered to be a part of the "working-poor." Between 55 and 75 per cent of the working age population is employed in the majority of regions. However, in Northern Africa and Western Asia, the employment-to-population ratio for women is less than 25 per cent which is more than 40 percentage points below the ratio for men. The reason for this percentage is not that women in these regions are unwilling to work. Rather, women joining the work force are seen as socially unacceptable. Rapid urbanization in many areas worldwide has altered the distribution of poverty. Slum dwellers, who account for 1 billion of the worldwide urban population, die earlier, experience more hunger and disease, receive less education, and have fewer job opportunities.

Past Measures

In Badakhshan, a mountainous region of Afghanistan and Tajikistan extremely vulnerable to desertification, Kuhiston (an NGO) implemented a program that encouraged the villagers to develop mini-nurseries. Seedlings were planted around the district in order to stabilize the land and slow down the soil erosion. The trees will later provide the district with raw materials, fuel, fodder, and fruit. Each participating household planted about 120 trees. The program also gave warm clothing for many of the families, plastic to cover broken

windows, and coal. A total of 42,000 trees were planted in the Bartang Valley. This specific program was successful due to the commitment of the villagers as well as their enthusiasm for the project.

Through self-employment and empowerment, microfinance has aided many of the world's poor in increasing their incomes. Microfinance clients, most of which are women, have built micro-enterprises that produce income. Through microfinance, the poor are able to establish networks to improve health and education in their communities. Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is one of the most successful microfinance institutions. Other examples of pioneers in microfinance include ACCION International in Latin America and Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bank in India. In 2006, microfinance institutions have provided loans to about 113 million clients worldwide. In the past two years, Malawi's voucher program for fertilizer and seeds has helped double its agricultural productivity and turned the country into a net food exporter after decades of famine and starvation. NERICA (New Rice for Africa), a crossbreed of Asian and African rice varieties can make up to 200 per cent more than traditional crops. It is expected to produce savings of several million each year in the cost of rice imports. NERICA has provided food security and improved nutrition in Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Togo, and Uganda. Since 2002, the courier delivery company TNT and the World Food Program (WFP) have developed a partnership called "Moving the World" to help fight global hunger. This program has relieved many countries of starvation through various methods of transporting food. The aforementioned programs are just a few of the ways in which poverty reduction can be

approached. It is important to keep in mind that any kind of intervention that provides temporary relief cannot be considered successful if it causes any type of damage to the environment or adversely affects the biodiversity of the area.

What needs to be done

There needs to be an implementation of concrete steps to mitigate hunger identified by the High-Level Conference on World Food Security. It is crucial to ensure that there are social safety nets to minimize the consequences on the poor of the global economic slowdown and higher food and energy costs. There needs to be an urgent increase in the support for the aforementioned food programs such as the WFP. Assistance must be given to developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Support needs to be given to research and development in yield enhancing agricultural and climate change technologies. Partnerships need to be formed with civil society, NGO's, the private sector and foundations to develop participatory, pro-poor, urban and rural development strategies.

Key Positions

Africa

A great number of the poorest countries in the world is located in Africa. The rainfall in this region is extremely unreliable and thus, there is barely any irrigation of land. The natural resources of Africa have been exploited by many European and American companies which further add to the continent's overall poverty. These richer nations have offered ridiculously low prices for the continent's exports. Areas near East Africa and the Sahara have recently been experiencing land degradation because of poor land management. Most of the financial aid given to many of the African

countries has been used for short-term solutions to poverty (such as emergency food aid). Any type of long-term aid has not been used in efficient ways as many corrupt officials have exploited this aid for military spending. Loans have also been given. However, they have high interest rates which many countries find too expensive to pay off. Civil wars and corrupt governments are a huge reason why poverty reduction in Africa is becoming increasingly more difficult. Angola, Burundi, Mozambique, Somalia and Uganda have ineffective governments due to civil wars and this makes it almost impossible for those countries to find supplies or build essential infrastructures.

Asia

Although there are many affluent countries in Asia (Japan, South Korea, etc...), a great majority of the poorest countries in the world are located in Asia. Poverty in Asia is most concentrated in the South and Central Asian countries. The biggest catalyst of poverty in these regions is the rate at which the population is growing compared to its scarce resources.

Latin America

Countries of Latin America experience widespread poverty. The indigenous peasants are the poorest due to an unequal distribution of wealth. Although Latin America has more foreign investment, these investments are often short-term and unreliable. In addition, expensive high interest rate aid loans have made it increasingly difficult for Latin American countries to reduce poverty. Similar to many Asian countries, the rate at which the countries' populations are growing is not proportion to their scarce resources.

Resources

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>

<http://www.crid.or.cr/digitalizacion/pdf/eng/doc16966/doc16966-3.pdf>

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/ydiDavidGordon_poverty.pdf

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econpco/research/pdfs/PovertyReductionInAfrica.pdf>

<http://world-poverty.org/>