



UNHRC
TOPIC BULLETIN

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CHAIRS

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- THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE -

Dear delegates,

It is my absolute pleasure to invite you all to participate in this year's AMUN. I am beyond excited to be chairing this year's UNHRC committee. Let's get to know each other! I have been participating in Model United Nations since the very first trimester of my high school career. I love this club because there is something for everyone in it. Whether you are a good writer, good speaker, good thinker, or even a social butterfly, this club can be your home. I have gone to multiple college and high school conferences. This is the fourth conference I will be chairing!

Besides Model UN, my interests include embroidering, swimming, listening to music, and hanging out with my friends. I also love making new friends, so introduce yourself!

This topic guide should not be your only resource for research in these huge matters. Human Rights are something that are taken for granted in privileged societies, but this committee's job is to go through the layers of problems with the treatment of indigenous people and at workplaces. We expect you to touch a majority of these, and we cannot wait to see how everyone presents their country's position and plans on these issues. This topic can evoke strong feelings from some people, but do not let it make your arguments biased.

Overall, Reese and I cannot wait to chair this year's committee. See you all there!

Good luck,
Enrica Kumar, Co-Chair, UNHRC
enrkum21@bergen.org

Dear Delegates,

I am so excited to welcome you all to this year's AMUN, and to chair the UNHRC committee! I have been actively participating in the Model UN club at my school since freshman year, and have attended a number of high school and college conferences as a delegate. This will be my second time chairing for AMUN, but my first time in the UNHRC committee. Model UN has given me experience in a variety of essential skills, including speaking, debating, and working with others. I hope that you will all get the same out of this experience!

Outside of Model UN, I like to paint, cook, crochet, and spend time with friends. I love meeting new people, and I can't wait to meet all of you!

The topics we will be discussing are very complicated issues with a variety of social, political, and economic factors. You should spend your time exploring a variety of resources, including the issue on a global scale and the specific problems faced in your country. You should use this topic guide to start your research, but definitely look into other resources to find your information.

Thank you for participating in this year's AMUN! Enrica and I are so excited to meet you all and hear your ideas on these topics.

Sincerely,
Riesling Conway, Co-Chair, UNHRC
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Introduction

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was first established in 2006 with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. It replaced the then UN Commission on Human Rights (UNHCR). It strives to uphold human rights in every part of the world and uses documents such as the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other pertinent documents as guides. The council usually holds three meetings a year. With 47 member countries including 13 nations each from the African group and Asia-Pacific Group, 6 from Eastern Europe, 8 from Latin American and Caribbean, and 7 from Western Europe and others, UNHRC encapsulates a wide variety of nations. A flagship of UNHRC is its Institution-Building package. As part of this package, a Universal Review is held in each 193 member states of the UN to identify human rights issues across the world. Other special proceedings of this council include the help of the Advisory Committee

and Complaint Procedure, which is also part of the Institution-Building package. Some ongoing topic issues include the Israeli-Palestine conflict, addressing violations of Human Rights in poor political environments, and more.



Topic A: Prevention for and Enforcement against Workplace Harassment

Overview

With movements like #MeToo and advocates against sexual harassment increasing, the cases for Workplace Harassment would be expected to go down. However, there are more people coming forth. Workplace Harassment is something that occurs in a majority of organizations world-wide. The numbers are an unfair representation of the increase or decrease of Workplace Harassment cases. Many are not reported, in fear of judgement or work termination. The ones that do report solemnly achieve full justice. Therefore, since not all cases are recorded or reported, the cases count going up and down does not show clear improvement or degradation. There are two types of Workplace Harassment. The first, quid pro quo, can be described as “an exchange of sexual services for gain or avoidance of loss.” This usually occurs with a superior holding an advantage over the inferior. The second, hostile work environment, is “any sexual harassment that fosters an intimidating environment for the



victim.” This can include unconsented sexual touching, the use of crude language, unneeded physical conduct, and sexual or disrespectful remarks. Many countries and organizations have laws and rules in place in order to prevent such type of behavior. For example, specifically the Department of Labor has the Harassing Conduct Policy in place throughout the country, preventing workplace harassment to reach a level severe enough to break law. However, these laws and rules do not fully, or even majorly, prevent workplace harassment. This committee will explore ways to confront this problem in more effective ways than already in place.

Topic History

In 2016, in a survey done by The Guardian, 60% of women working in Silicon Valley deal with unwanted sexual advances. Many of these women even claimed that their talent was overlooked due to their gender. These incidents happen in each corner of the world. In Bangalore, India, more than

60% of women who work in the garment industry experienced or were pressured with violence at work. In Zambia, 81% of female workers have undergone workplace harassment.

As seen, many of these workplace harassment cases are directed towards women. Unfortunately, some cases of violence in the workplace even end with death. According to a report done by the ILO (International Labor Office) in 1998, the United States had over 1,000 cases of homicide caused by workplace violence and harassment. And, the U.S. was not even in the lead for workplace harassment rates that year. Instead, it was France, Argentina, Romania, Canada, and England. Jobs that require workers working alone outside normal hours (janitors, cleaners, etc.) or alone at small shops (gas station, kiosk workers, etc.) are subject to higher probability rates of workplace harassment. Over 45% of women working in the EU experience forms of workplace harassment. Every country has some sort of law to prevent sexual harassment in



workplaces. The United States has the Harassing Conduct Policy, the United Kingdom has the Equality Act of 2010, and India has the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013. However, even though these measures are present, cases only show an upward trend.

Current Situation

With multiple cases coming to light by the end of 2019, many companies swore to reform this workplace harassment culture. According to a EEOC report, 87%-94% of those who are harassed do not file a complaint. More than half of the women surveyed by the Washington Post claimed they experienced unwanted sexual advances, a percentage that shows up in multiple researches. Movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp advocated for an environment with workplace equity and no sexual harassment. The movement allows for lawyers and funds to support victims of sexual harassment in the workplace. The #MeToo movement has allowed for

many famous politicians and actors to be prosecuted and their victims brought to justice. It even influenced the ILO to adopt the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment. In 2018, only 59 out of 189 countries had “no specific legal provisions covering sexual harassment in employment”. However, once the ILO convention set a standard for these countries to follow.

Possible Solutions

Though many companies have annual seminars to prevent workplace harassment, they “often emphasize legal liability and are therefore ineffective for prevention”. Sexual harassment not only proves to be a financial loss for companies or loss of life for victims in some cases, but creates an unsafe environment for females. Possible solutions should include necessary sexual harassment policies at every organization, including the zero-tolerance approach and consequences. Implementing safe precautions, including moral superiors demonstrating leadership



and support of the policy and taking caution with office parties. Offering a complaint or hotline system or a monitor for the workplace.

Country Policy

Due to the ILO, or International Labor Organization, many countries were able to come to an agreement during the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in Mid-2019. This convention calls to account for violence and harassment done by superiors and third parties and for governments to take measures to prevent and protect people from workplace harassment. Investigations, compensation, and protection are also promised to victims. Amongst many other parts of this convention, high-risk sectors will be prioritized for the safety of the workers. 439 votes were for, 7 against, and the rest abstained out of 476 votes. The signatories of this convention include the African Group of States, the European Union, Canada, New Zealand,

Philippines, Latin American and Caribbean states, the United States, and many more.

Questions to Consider

Should different industries have the same set of prevention measures and consequences for offenders?

What would a successful monitoring system look like at a workplace?

How would a victim stay safe if the offender resorts to violence in response to the victim filing a complaint?

How would a victim ensure that they are brought to justice and not just given forceful compensation without a trial?

How should companies be prevented from only prioritizing legal liability and not prevention?



Topic B: Rights and Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples

Overview

Indigenous peoples all around the world have faced countless issues, ranging from violence and dispossession of land to everyday discrimination. Indigenous peoples have a lower life expectancy, higher rates of prison inmates, lower rates of literacy, and higher rates of unemployment, according to Amnesty International. Indigenous women face additional issues, as they are more likely to be raped. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, over one in three indigenous women are likely to be raped during their lifetime. The problems faced in each individual country vary, so policies must be made to address a variety of different situations. This might also involve making amends for past wrongdoings, such as addressing the systemic racism and discrimination that indigenous peoples face from their own government. Human rights violations that should be addressed include violence and brutality, forced assimilation, discriminatory land rights, and forced relocation.



In this committee, delegates will find ways to address a variety of human rights issues faced by indigenous communities.

Topic History

Due to imperialism and colonization, indigenous groups have faced violence, discrimination, and marginalization for hundreds of years.

In 1982, the United Nations Economic and Social Council created the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which served to establish a set of minimum standards protecting the human rights of indigenous peoples. The Draft moved through the United Nations slowly, with the major concern being the control over indigenous lands and natural resources. In 2006, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council. It was then adopted by a majority of states in 2007, with four states voting against: Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Since

then, all four states have chosen to support the declaration.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples establishes a minimum set of standards for the survival and well-being of indigenous peoples, as well as considerations of fundamental human rights and how they apply to indigenous peoples.

Recently, demographics have shown alarming facts regarding the indigenous population, such as lower life expectancy and high levels of poverty. These affect indigenous communities around the world, including Australia, the United States, and Latin America. In April of 2016, a group of youths from Standing Rock and other indigenous communities gathered to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, a pipeline that could potentially harm the drinking and irrigation water supply of the indigenous communities and was a threat to ancient burial grounds and cultural sites. This led to worldwide protests in support of justice for Native Americans and the rights of indigenous peoples.



Current Situation

The current situation faced by indigenous peoples varies greatly around the world, but in many countries some of the main concerns include violence, land rights, and systemic racism and discrimination. The issues facing indigenous groups in Australia have recently been brought to the public's attention due to alarming statistics which show that the groups are negatively affected. However, those same problems are faced by indigenous communities all over the world. Land rights issues have also been a problem, such as in the United States with the Dakota Access Pipeline. Environmental issues are also relevant and should be considered, as Indigenous territories hold approximately 80% of the world's biodiversity. With the current issue of climate change, this should be considered when determining ways to protect indigenous lands.

Possible Solutions

There are a number of ways the United Nations can help protect the rights of indigenous peoples. While the United Nations already has the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, this can be expanded upon in order to address the current situation. For one, additional standards can be put in place to further protect indigenous peoples' land. Delegates should also think of solutions to the systemic racism faced by these groups, such as finding ways to encourage further education and increase employment for these communities.

Country Policy

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was first drafted in 1982, then slowly moved through the United Nations. In 2006, it was adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council, and in 2007, a majority of states adopted it in the General Assembly, with Australia, the



United States, New Zealand, and Canada voting against it, and Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine abstaining from the vote. Since then, the four states voting against have turned in favor of the declaration, and Colombia and Samoa have also supported it.

Questions to Consider

Should the land rights of indigineous peoples be protected, considering both the environmental impact and the impact on businesses?

How should the systemic racism faced by indigineous peoples be addressed, and how can the poverty and illiteracy be lowered?

How can the culture and identity of indigineous peoples be encouraged, despite years of forced assimilation?

How can the state give these marginalized groups a greater say in the governance of the people?

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Topic A

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Topic B

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/indigenous-peoples/>



