



General Assembly Third Committee

Directed By: **A**veronica Yale

TSMUN MMXXII BACKGROUND GUIDE 2022

Topic I: Ensuring Affordable Healthcare Infrastructure
Topic II: Protection of Displaced Women and Girls



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Tallahassee Southern Regional Model United Nations! My name is Veronica Yale, and I am the Director of the General Assembly Third Committee for TSMUN 2021. I am currently a student at Valdosta State University with plans to attend law school next fall. This is my second year participating in Model UN and I am currently the President for the Valdosta State Model UN team.

The topics under discussion for this year's General Assembly Third Committee are:

- I. Ensuring Affordable Healthcare Infrastructure
- II. Protection of Displaced Women and Girls

The General Assembly Third Committee (GA3) is one of the six main committees at the General Assembly of the United Nations. GA3 is also known as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee and deals with human rights, humanitarian affairs and social matters. All 193 member states of the United Nations are permitted to participate in this committee.

I truly hope that this background guide serves as a useful tool towards your preparation for the conference. The guide is meant to introduce delegates to the topics that will be discussed in committee and provide guidance as delegates begin their research. Delegates are strongly encouraged to research the positions, views, and opinions of their countries as well as relevant regional and international framework, previous resolutions, organizations, and initiatives.

Each delegation will submit a position paper in preparation for the committee. Delegates must turn in their papers before the start of the first committee session. Papers may be emailed to ga3@tsmun.org and can also be submitted through a USB drive or hard copy. For a position paper guide and a sample position paper, please visit <http://www.tsmun.org/position-papers.html>. Papers that are not in the correct format will not be eligible for awards. If you have any questions leading up to the conference, feel free to contact me at ga3@tsmun.org. I look forward to seeing the culmination of your hard work and preparation in committee.

Sincerely,

Veronica L. Yale
General Assembly Third Committee Director
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Committee Overview

Introduction

In 1945, the charter of the United Nations was established and with it the General Assembly¹. The General Assembly maintains a central position and the head deliberative, policy making, and political organization of the United Nations². Additionally, it provides a unique forum for international discussion of a myriad of issues covered by the charter as well as codifying international law.³ The General Assembly meets from September to December each year and afterwards, from January to September.⁴ During the January to September meetings the Assembly discusses issues of critical importance to the international community through intense and high-level debates.⁵ In the same period the Assembly conducts informal consultations on other topics of importance.⁶

Committee Mandate

The United Nations gives the General Assembly the power to make recommendations to States on international issues.⁷ The Assembly initiates political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal actions.⁸ In turn, these actions have impacted the lives of millions of people around the world.⁹ Additionally, the Assembly may consider and approve the United Nations budget and make financial assessments of the Member States.¹⁰ There are six main committees: Disarmament and International Security (First Committee); Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee); Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee); Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee); Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee); and the Legal Committee (Sixth Committee).¹¹ The General Assembly is split up into these categories due to the large number of items on the agenda.¹² These committees discuss the items and negotiate various approaches in order to present them to the Plenary of the Assembly for consideration and action.¹³

Governance, Structure, and Membership

¹ "About the General Assembly" *The United Nations*.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.



The General Assembly consists of 193 members who all have not more than five representatives and one total vote.¹⁴ Any decisions of the General Assembly on significant issues shall be made by a two-thirds majority of Member States that are present and voting.¹⁵ Any other questions are to be made with a simple majority vote of the Member States present and voting.¹⁶ While any nation may become a member, those that fail to pay their arrears indebted to the amount that equals or exceeds the contributions for the preceding two years shall lose their right to vote.¹⁷ However, if the Member State can prove that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member then the Assembly may allow them to vote.¹⁸ The General Assembly ultimately makes recommendations for the purpose of promoting international cooperation in economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields.¹⁹

Conclusion

The General Assembly is a very large and important part of the United Nations. The organization of these committees allows the United Nations to tackle many critical issues that affect millions of people around the world. With each committee's concentration on carefully selected issues, the United Nations is assured that this assembly is capable of creating resolutions that are practical, realistic, and working for the betterment of the whole world.

Ensuring Affordable Healthcare Infrastructure

Introduction

Currently the world is facing a global virus that has created human suffering, destabilized the economy, and disturbed the lives of people around the world. Crises such as these expose the vulnerabilities that endanger the well-being of millions of people around the world. While

¹⁴ "Article IV" *United Nations*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*



COVID-19 has certainly posed a severe risk to all communities there are other health matters that are still occurring and need our attention. The complexities behind mitigating the pandemic while also continuing to improve the health and care of millions are complicated but there have been past endeavors and successes with these challenges. Looking to precedence and utilizing critical thinking, could lead the way for innovative solutions towards these difficult circumstances.

Current Situation

The Coronavirus is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.²⁰ Most people affected by this virus experience moderate respiratory symptoms and recover without hospitalization.²¹ Unfortunately, older people and those with underlying health conditions are more likely to develop serious symptoms that can endanger their life.²² As of September of 2021, there have been over 200 million confirmed cases and over 4 million deaths that have resulted from COVID-19.²³ The pandemic has managed to affect economic growth, social well-being, and the environment apart from peoples personal health and lives.²⁴ Many pre existing inequalities and disadvantages were intensified and have disproportionately affected those that were previously vulnerable.²⁵ The greatest threat the virus posed was the disruption in regular healthcare services due to an increase in space needed for victims of COVID-19.²⁶

Actions Taken By the UN

The UN has previously carried out many efforts to ensure affordable healthcare infrastructure. Recently the most notable and significant outcome of that is the *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).²⁷ This document provides a framework for facilitating progress in several directions: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.²⁸ The agenda outlines the issues that the world faces as a whole and focuses on practical and attainable goals.²⁹ There are 17 goals that are divided into 169 targets.³⁰ The most relevant to the topic presented at this conference would be goal 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages, and goal 9: build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.³¹

²⁰ “Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)” *World Health Organization*.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard” *World Health Organization*.

²⁴ Sustainable Development report shows devastating impact of COVID, ahead of critical new phase *United Nations: Africa Renewal*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development *United Nations*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*



There are several issues that SDG 3 has worked to resolve both in the past and to this day. Infant and child mortality, immunization, environmental health, health personnel, and public health emergency response are just a few of the more significant issues that have been increasingly difficult to resolve.³² While major progress has been made towards these issues, continuing to maintain and progress the infrastructure behind is a serious objective of the UN.³³ SDG 9 concert its effort to underdeveloped and underserved regions that are disproportionately excluded from economic advancement due to lack of financing, resources, and skills.³⁴ Resilient infrastructure is important in many facets of society but given the world's recent circumstances with the pandemic it is imperative that Member States work together to create solutions for ensuring affordable healthcare infrastructure.³⁵

Regional and International Frameworks

The EU4Health program is a framework that focuses on infrastructure and financing for the EU.³⁶ The four main objectives of the framework are: to improve and foster health in the union, to tackle cross-border health threats, to improve medicinal products, medical devices, and crisis relevant products, and to strengthen health systems, their resilience and resource efficiency.³⁷ This will be achieved through various grassroots tasks that will focus on stockpiling, preparedness, and improving technology.³⁸ Additionally, they seek to establish a European health union through strategic investing and planning.³⁹

The UN has worked to provide a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses many organizations and strategies to combat the complexities in health care infrastructure.⁴⁰ The humanitarian response has been directed through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the health response has been directed through the WHO, and the development response has been directed through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).⁴¹ The WHO has created the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP).⁴² This is based on what they have learned recently as the virus has been developing and changing the way our health systems work.⁴³

Conclusion

³² SDG Goal 3 *United Nations*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ SDG Goal 9 *United Nations*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ EU4Health European Commission

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Multilateral Response to COVID-19 UNOCHA

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² COVID-19 SPRP 2021 WHO

⁴³ *Ibid.*



The proximity of issues surrounding COVID-19 to Member States means that there are overall more stakeholders to these consequences. While much work has been done, what else could be done to further protect and help different communities? What are some ways that we can establish innovative and resilient solutions toward creating new healthcare infrastructure and strengthening existing infrastructure? How should we tackle challenges such as financing and meeting all of the diverse needs of different communities? You are encouraged to embrace these challenges and create new and practical ways of tackling these complex issues.

Protection of Displaced Women and Girls

Introduction

Around the world there are tragic crises that force people to uproot their lives in order to find a safe environment to live in. A refugee is someone who fears persecution because of race, religion, nationality, social affiliation, or political opinion, and as a result of that fear cannot entrust their protection from their own country thus, they are forced to leave.⁴⁴ In 2019, there

⁴⁴ Refugees *United Nations*



were less than 80 million people that were forcibly displaced.⁴⁵ Additionally, the threat of COVID-19 increased the health care risks, disrupted border operations, increased domestic violence, and many experienced economic instability.⁴⁶ These circumstances impact everyone differently and while their resilience is commendable, women and girls face challenges at a higher rate.⁴⁷

COVID-19 has exhibited severe consequences affecting people differently based on many diverse characteristics but most notably their gender.⁴⁸ Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the virus and even more so if they are displaced.⁴⁹ Women are more likely to be frontline health workers as they make up 70% of the global frontline health force, and are typically tasked with the role as family caregiver.⁵⁰ Additionally, they often have jobs in informal markets that are not registered with the government and are more vulnerable to economic disruptions.⁵¹ Girls and women are overwhelmingly faced with numerous challenges that prevent them from good health, education, safety, and prosperity.⁵²

Current Situation

Currently there are several crises occurring around the world that have forcibly displaced many people. Just 68% of refugees come from just five countries: The Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.⁵³ These refugees typically flee to countries that neighbor their own home country.⁵⁴ Currently, Turkey hosts 3.7 million refugees with Colombia behind it at 1.7 million. Pakistan, Uganda, and Germany also have significant populations of refugees.⁵⁵ These numbers are only predicted to grow thus the need to prevent violent conflicts is more important than ever.⁵⁶ Currently, Afghans are one of the largest refugee populations in the world.⁵⁷ Most of them have fled to Iran and Pakistan although some of them are internally displaced, meaning that they are seeking refuge within their own home country.⁵⁸ Due to the U.S. withdrawal of military personnel, the security of the country has decreased, and the people feel that their lives are in danger.⁵⁹ Afghanistan is just one example of insecurity and violence leading to a refugee crisis. It is important that Member States acknowledge these circumstances and their effects on women and girls around the world.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Global Report 2020 *UNHCR*

⁴⁷ Humanitarian Action *UN Women*

⁴⁸ Protecting forcibly displaced women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic *UNHCR*.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Women Working the Frontline *UN Women*

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Figures at Glance *UNHCR*

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Global Trends *UNHCR*

⁵⁷ Afghanistan Emergency *UNHCR*

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.



Actions Taken By the UN

In 1950, following the second World War the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) was founded to help Europeans that had been displaced.⁶⁰ The following decade this agency was able to help the refugee crisis in Africa that occurred as a result of decolonization.⁶¹ The UNHCR has had great success in assisting women and girls in modern times.⁶² In 2020, 2 million women and girls were helped through the use of 24/7 helplines and 1.24 million women were able to access reproductive health services.⁶³ In 2016, the General Assembly hosted the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants.⁶⁴ This meeting resulted in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) which addressed issues and laid out commitments for Member States to follow.⁶⁵ The protection of women and girls, their equality and providing solutions towards eradicating gender-based violence were among the many goals that were discussed.⁶⁶

Regional and International Frameworks

Due to a large number of displaced persons fleeing to Europe to seek refuge, the European Union (EU), in 2016, passed Resolution 2015/2325(INI) on The Situation of Women Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the EU.⁶⁷ This document not only acknowledges the conditions that these women and girls are fleeing from but also the makeshift and often inhumane conditions that they face when they reach Europe in an attempt to find safety.⁶⁸ They are extremely vulnerable to crime, exploitation, and persecution.⁶⁹ Within the operatives, the EU expresses many ways that the Member States can create safety through legal routes, proper documentation, counselling, and educate women about their rights and entitlements.⁷⁰

In 2008, the UNHCR released the UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls.⁷¹ This document outlines the central issues that stem from improper documentation, lack of education, and lack of safe routes to safety.⁷² Additionally, it discusses the issue of economic immigrants abusing the current systems in order to gain admittance into countries.⁷³ This prevents many asylum seekers from obtaining safety and creates more confusion for the host

⁶⁰ Refugees *United Nations*

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Global Report 2020 *UNHCR*.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ New York Declaration. *United Nations: Refugees and Migrants*

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The Situation of Women Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the EU *European Parliament*.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls, First Edition *UNHCR*

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.



countries.⁷⁴ This confusion leads to stricter policies which affect women and girls the most as they are often travelling alone and with no documentation.⁷⁵

Conclusion

There are three stages within the area of displacement of women and girls that must be addressed: the reason they are displaced, their safety during passage to refuge, and their conditions of settlement. Providing solutions for these complicated issues will be challenging but rewarding for Member States and the individuals that are affected by these problems every day. The refugee crises around the world are only guaranteed to increase thus the number of displaced women and girls will grow along with their suffering. How can we protect women and girls in different stages of displacement? What are the core issues that must be initially addressed to solve the root of the issues at hand? How can we ensure that the help that is provided is inclusive and safe? It is imperative that Member States maintain a holistic perspective of the situation in order to appropriately provide resolutions.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.



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