



United Nations General Assembly

Directed By: Jackelyn Feliciano

TSMUN XXV BACKGROUND GUIDE 2021

Topic I: Addressing Basic Needs within the Afghan Refugee Crisis
Topic II: Achieving Clean Water and Sanitation for All



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Tallahassee Southern Regional Model United Nations. My name is Jackelyn Feliciano, and I am the Director of the General Assembly for TSMUN 2020. I am currently a student at Tallahassee Community College and plan to transfer to Florida State University to study political science and international affairs.

The topic under discussion for this year's General assembly are:

I: Addressing Basic Needs within the Afghan Refugee Crisis

II: Achieving Clean Water and Sanitation for All

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six principal organizations in the United Nation. The UNGA responsibilities consist of making recommendations to states on international issues consisting of political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal. There are 193 UN Member States, each with a vote in the general assembly. The assembly president changes with each annual session and is elected by the body itself.

I hope this background guide can help you with your preparation for the conference. The background 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, and 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 positionpapers@tsmun.org. For a position paper guide and an example 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. For conference information, resources for preparation, scholarships, and other useful information visit <http://www.tsmun.org/>. If you have any questions leading up to the conference, feel free to contact me at GA@tsmun.org. I look forward to seeing the result of your hard work and preparation in committee.

Sincerely,

Jackelyn Feliciano,
General Assembly Director
GA@tsmun.org



Committee overview

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was created in 1945 after World War II in order to establish and foster international diplomacy between Member States, ensure peace and security, promote and maintain human rights, and address global issues.¹ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six principal organizations in the United Nations.² The UN General Assembly has universal membership which allows any Member State to participate in its discussions.³ The UNGA's responsibilities consist of making recommendations to Member States and the Security Council (SC) on international issues consisting of political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal aspects.⁴ The first general assembly session was on 10 January – 14 February 1946.⁵ Every year Member States meet in the General Assembly Hall at the Headquarter in New York on the Tuesday of the third week in September.⁶

Committee Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate and ability of the General Assembly are outlined within Chapter IV and Articles 10-22 of the Charter of the United Nations⁷ Outlined in this chapter, the General Assembly is able to discuss matters relating to the peace and security of international affairs, initiate studies to address the issues, create and fund subcommittees, meetings or agencies with the purpose of addressing a specific issue, and make recommendations for the promotion of cooperation and security between Member States.⁸ Any issue or subject requiring action will be referred to and addressed by the Security Council⁹ Once issues are discussed, recommendations will be put into a draft resolution which will then be voted on¹⁰ Once adopted or voted upon, these are considered resolutions of the General Assembly.¹¹ However, these resolutions, unlike the Security Council, are considered non-legally binding and any resolutions and the recommendations contain within are considered policy norms which are reached by consensus.¹²

¹ United Nations Charter Article I. 1945. "Chapter I: Purposes and Principles". United Nations.

² United Nations Charter. "Chapter IV: General Assembly". United Nations. 1945.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ United Nations General Assembly. "Functions and powers of the General Assembly". United Nations. 2020.

⁵ United Nations Archives. "Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 1st session". United Nations. 2020.

⁶ United Nations General Assembly. "Workings of the General Assembly during the COVID-19 pandemic". United Nations. 2020.

⁷ United Nations Charter. "Chapter IV: General Assembly". United Nations. 1945.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² United Nations General Assembly. "Functions and powers of the General Assembly". United Nations. 2020.



Governance, Structure and Membership

In the United Nations General Assembly, 193 Member States are represented and have an equal number of votes (which is 1).¹³ The agenda provides a guide of the issues which are discussed in each committee session and is to be voted upon.¹⁴ The majority of decisions reached in the General Assembly are through consensus or complete agreement throughout the body¹⁵ When voting, most decisions are decided by simple majority votes (minimum 51%), while substantial votes are decided by two-thirds majority vote (minimum 67%).¹⁶ Decisions which require either a simple majority or a two-thirds majority are outlined within the Rules of Procedure¹⁷ The president of the General Assembly is a mostly ceremonial role which is elected through the simple majority vote for a one-year non-renewable term.¹⁸ The responsibility of the president is to guide discussions, enforce procedure, and to ensure progress within a set timeline.¹⁹

Conclusion

The responsibilities of ensuring global security, safety, and human rights, falls upon the United Nations and its Member States.²⁰ Despite not having the power to enforce, this body is still a platform which allows discussion and cooperation between global actors that can shape human history.²¹ As the largest body, the General Assembly is known to create the culture which drives future agreements and understandings about what human rights is and what it has the possibility to be.²² This role is not only substantial, but exciting to those participating and watching. By participating in this body, each Member State has the opportunity to meet with other important leaders and exchange ideas about how to progress in a global forum.²³

¹³United Nations Charter Article I. 1945. "Chapter I: Purposes and Principles". United Nations.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ United Nations General Assembly. "Functions and powers of the General Assembly". United Nations. 2020.

¹⁷ United Nations Charter. "Chapter IV: General Assembly". United Nations. 1945.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations Charter Article I. 1945. "Chapter I: Purposes and Principles". United Nations.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.



Addressing Basic Needs within the Afghan Refugee Crisis

Introduction

In 1921 the British are defeated in the third British-Afghan war, and Afghanistan becomes an independent nation.²⁴ After the independence of Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan makes himself king and proclaims Afghanistan a monarchy instead of an emirate.²⁵ King Khan faces adversities as he tries to limit the power of the National Council.²⁶ Due to the backlash, King Khan leaves the state in 1929.²⁷ By 1933, Zahir Shah becomes king for the next 40 years and in 1934 the United States officially recognizes Afghanistan.²⁸ In 1953 Mohammed Daoud Khan becomes the prime minister of Afghanistan and asks for economic and military help from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).¹⁰ Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Leader, agrees to lend assistance and the two states become allies in 1956.²⁹ Between the years 1973-1979, the situation in Afghanistan escalates; Mohammed Daoud Khan over throws the king, Zahir Shah, and the state becomes the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, with Mohammed Daoud Khan as president.³⁰ "Khan is killed in a communist coup. Nur Mohammad Taraki, one of the founding members of the Afghan Communist Party, takes control of the country as president, and Babrak Karmal is named deputy prime minister. They proclaim independence from Soviet influence and declare their policies to be based on Islamic principles, Afghan nationalism, and socioeconomic justice. Taraki signs a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union".³¹ Leaders under Khan, the former president, objected the social changes and begin a rebellion, called the Mujahadeen.³² In 1979 after the assassination of United States Ambassador, Adolph Dubs³³ the United States pulls back assistance to Afghanistan.³⁴ On December 24th 1979, the USSR invade Afghanistan and fight with Mujahadeen.³⁵ In 1982 approximately 2.8 million Afghans fled to Pakistan and 1.5 million to Iran in search of refuge.³⁶ This begins the displacement of Afghans and becomes one of the largest refugee crisis in the world.

²⁴ PBS. "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan". 2014. Public Broadcasting Station.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.



Action Taken by the UN

“On 3 January 1980, a number of Member States requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. The Council met from 5 to 9 January 1980, and on 9 January decided, in view of the lack of unanimity of its permanent members, to call for an emergency special session of the General Assembly to examine the matter.”³⁷ At its sixty-first session, the General Assembly showed dedication to the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact.³⁸ They recognized the threats Afghanistan faces for example terrorist threats, lack of security, the safe and orderly return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons, the promotion and protection of human rights and the advancement of economic and social development, and expressing strong support for the central and impartial role that the Secretary-General and his Special Representative continued to play in the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan.³⁹ The security council created the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on 28 March 2002.⁴⁰ It was established at the request of the Afghan government to help create a foundation for sustainable development and peace.⁴¹ On March 17th 2003 the UN Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Afghanistan, and Pakistan signed an agreement.⁴² Under this agreement the “UNHCR will continue to assist the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan for three more years. The agreement is designed to support a gradual organized return that is sustainable. At the end of this process, a screening will take place to determine who among the remaining Afghan population is still in need of protection and continued refugee status. The agreement with Pakistan is the fourth in a series of such agreements.”⁴³ In 2014, 170 wells were constructed for 47,013 refugees by the UNHCR.⁴⁴ There was also 3,890 shelter units created which helped 23, 340 refugees.⁴⁵

Regional and International framework

Afghan refugees make up the largest refugee population in Asia and second largest in the world.⁴⁶ The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) was created in 2012 and was implemented in order to provide “a framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors to facilitate voluntary return of Afghan refugees and sustainable reintegration of returnees, while also providing assistance and support to the two main host countries (Iran and Pakistan).”⁴⁷ In 2015, the level of returns has drastically increased, reaching 50,503 by end August.⁴⁸ 97% of those that return come from Pakistan and give reasons for their decision to return as “deteriorating

³⁷ United Nations General Assembly. “The Situation in Afghanistan”. United Nations. 2020.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ United Nations Security Council. “Resolution 1401”. United Nations. 2002.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees. “Afghanistan tripartite agreement with Pakistan”. United Nations. 2003.

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees. “Afghanistan Fact Sheet”. United Nations. 2015.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees. “Afghanistan”. United Nations. 2020.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid



environment with decreasing tolerance of the presence of refugees”.⁴⁹ The regional objectives for Afghan refugees are ensuring they have clean water, healthcare, finances, shelter, and education. These are basic necessities that are not only necessary but allow afghan people to excel and live a comfortable life while the situation of Afghanistan is being repaired. This is also part of the reintegration of the population in Afghanistan and ensuring they have basic necessities.⁵⁰ Some obstacles Afghans face are protection risks, finding employment, barriers to sustainable reintegration.⁵¹

Conclusion

As the second largest refugee population in the world, Afghan refugees are increasingly vulnerable to lack of resources, care, and opportunities.⁵² This group requires strategic planning to provide basic resources and housing in the Member states which are hosting them and may not have the capacity at this moment. This reference is meant to be an introduction and we encourage Member States to find solutions and carry out further research into the specifics of the circumstances. Think of ways that this population can be given resources through short-term emergency care (food, water, shelter, medicine) as well as how they can be educated, employed, and housed through long-term care (infrastructure, development, opportunities).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ UN News. “Returning home, Afghans continue to face challenges in rebuilding their lives – UN agencies”. 2018.

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid.



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II. Achieving Clean Water and Sanitation for All

Introduction

Water is a crucial necessity in many aspects of life, from drinking water and sanitation to agriculture and industry, but still, it remains inaccessible to millions. But, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), as of 2015, 844 million people around the world are without access to a basic drinking service and at least 2.3 billion are without a basic sanitation service.⁵³ These numbers do not include the 263 million people who have to spend over 30 minutes per trip collecting water from outside-the-home sources, and the 892 million who are still practicing open defecation.⁵⁴ Inconsistencies in access to water supply and sanitation, increasing populations, and pollution are all combining in many places to make water one of the greatest risks to poverty eradication, economic progress, and sustainable development.⁵⁵ It is estimated by UNICEF that by 2040, roughly 600 million children under 18 years old will be living in areas of extreme water stress.⁵⁶ One of the biggest issues with achieving clean water for all is the lack of universality. In Europe and North America, 99 percent of people have access to clean drinking water, but in Sub-Saharan Africa, only roughly half of the population has access.⁵⁷ In July 2017, WHO and UNICEF’s joint Programme, the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), released a statement concluding that too many people, specifically in rural areas, do not have access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services.⁵⁸ According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), in order to achieve safe, accessible drinking water and sanitation for all by 2030, it is absolutely necessary to invest in adequate infrastructure, supply sanitation structures, and conserve and restore water ecosystems.⁵⁹

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) are three separate fields that address the ongoing water crisis and correlating health issues. The three sectors are combined due to their interconnectedness where the success in one field is dependent on the success in another.⁶⁰ Water focuses on the safety, quality, and accessibility of water.⁶¹ Sanitation centers on efficient treatment of water so that it will ensure an adequate quality.⁶² Hygiene concentrates on the use of quality water, and efficient sanitation to prevent diseases and better the collective health of communities.⁶³ By ensuring adequate access to WASH, the international community has the opportunity to make advancements in various development goals, globally.⁶⁴

⁵³WHO & UNICEF, *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene*. 2017.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵World Bank, *Water Overview*. 2020.

⁵⁶UNICEF, *Thirsting for a Future*, 2017.

⁵⁷WHO & UNICEF, *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene*. 2017.

⁵⁸WHO, *2.1 Billion People Lack Safe Drinking Water at Home, more than Twice as Many Lack Safe Sanitation*, 2017.

⁵⁹UNDP, *Goal 6: Clean Water & Sanitation*. 2015.

⁶⁰UNICEF, *About WASH*. 2016.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴UN-Water, *Water, and sanitation interlinkages across 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2016.



Actions Taken by UN

The international community has committed itself to ensure universal access to clean water and sanitation many times in the past. In 2010, the UN GA reached a huge milestone with resolution A/RES/64/292 titled “*The Right to Water and Sanitation*”, which formally recognized clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right and a necessity for achieving an adequate standard of living.⁶⁵ The resolution also called upon Member States and international organizations to help capacity-building, provide financial resources and technology transfer to help Member States, specifically developing Member States, to provide clean, accessible and affordable water and sanitation to all its citizens.⁶⁶ In 2015, the GA adopted resolution A/RES/70/1, titled “*Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” (2030 Agenda), which formally established access to drinking water and sanitation as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.⁶⁷ The first target set by goal 6 states that by 2030, access to safe and affordable drinking water must be universal, while target 6.3 focuses on the improvement of water quality to be free from contamination or chemicals that cause diseases or death.⁶⁸ Water is a core element of sustainable development, and is essential for socio-economic development, giving SDG 6 the opportunity to advance efforts of the 2030 Agenda in multiple ways.⁶⁹

In December 2017, UN Member States adopted UN GA resolution A/RES/71/222 on an International Decade for Action on ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ 2018-2028.⁷⁰ This Decade for Action was established in response to the 2030 Agenda and aimed to accelerate international efforts towards meeting water-related challenges, including limited access to safe water and sanitation, and increasing pressure on water resources and ecosystems.⁷¹ In addition, it attempts to highlight the importance of using environmentally conscious efforts to improve access to adequate water and sanitation through the transfer of specialized technologies to developing Member States in particular.⁷²

Regional and International Frameworks

In collaboration with the government of Italy, Regione Umbria (regional government of Italy), and UN-Water, the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is able to produce an annual report titled “*The United Nations World Water Development Report*” which focuses on addressing water insecurity, conservation, and climate change.⁷³ Outlined in the most recent report of 2020, this report highlights concerns about the effects of climate change on water scarcity and the solutions available.⁷⁴ Specifically, this report found that climate change is often not noticed as it effects seasonal changes in water scarcity, essentially hotter summers and colder

⁶⁵UN General Assembly, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation (A/RES/64/292)*, 2010.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

⁶⁸UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Sustainable Development Goal 6*. 2015.

⁶⁹UNESCO, *Water and Agenda 2030*. 2020.

⁷⁰UN General Assembly, *International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028*. 2017.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ UNESCO, “*The United Nations World Water Development Report 2020*”. 2020.

⁷⁴ Ibid.



winters.⁷⁵ This leads to more severe climate events such as natural disasters, heat waves, storm surge events, thunder storms, and unprecedented rainfall.⁷⁶ This report concludes by stating that not only does more attention need to be paid to the severity and frequency of these events as well as water availability to address poverty, but also that climate change as a whole must be addressed in order to ensure that water is available and is safe to use.⁷⁷

In addition to the UN reports in collaboration with regional groups, the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) produce their respective progress and collaborations in order to reduce poverty and ensure water availability. In 2009, the Asia Society and ASEAN outlined how best to address the growing water crisis affecting Asia.⁷⁸ This report notes that while Asia has more than 50% of the entire world's population and expected to include two-thirds of the world's future population growth, it has less fresh water than any continent other than Antarctica.⁷⁹ Details like these are astonishing as fresh water in particular is the primary source of safe drinking and sanitation for many rural and impoverished areas.⁸⁰ Reports such as this compile their data from other reports such as the *Asian Water Development Outlook* of 2007 which is produced by the Asian Development Bank in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Water Forum.⁸¹

Conclusion

By 2050, it is estimated that more than 75% of the world's population could face water scarcity.⁸² This will especially impact urban areas where the population globally is expected to increase by more than 1 billion and fresh water is often unavailable and clean sources are scarce.⁸³ Effecting this issue is industrialization, urbanization, and more importantly, climate change.⁸⁴ The United Nations formally recognizes water as a human right and includes it within its *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* as Sustainable Development Goal 6, highlighting its need in the progression of human rights internationally.⁸⁵ Without water, all other aspects of a person's life can be effected including education, social development, and health outcomes.⁸⁶ Generations can collapse with water scarcity as paternal success is a substantial indicator of how their children's life will play out.⁸⁷ Through UN initiatives, this issue can be addressed and the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Asia Society and ASEAN, "Asia's Next Challenge:

Securing the Region's Water Future, A report by the Leadership Group on Water Security in Asia". 2009.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ David Satterthwaite. "An urbanizing world". International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). 2020.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ United Nations. "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all". Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2020.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.



effects alleviated through cooperation and Sustainable Development.⁸⁸

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