

MINI MUN IV



ECOSOC

March 14-15, 2008

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Introduction From Your ECOSOC Chairs

Dear Delegates,

As one of your chairs of the Economic and Social Council, I'd like to welcome you to MINI-MUN IV! My name is Chelsea Lee, and I was born and raised right here in Port Charlotte. I am a senior this year and in the midst of applying to college, where I plan to study International Relations and the environment, and I am extremely excited about being a part of MINI-MUN IV!

I have been a member of the Model United Nations team here at PCHS for four years, and this year I am the Vice President of the team. My travels with the team include participating in fifteen conferences, including those at Harvard, Yale, McGill, and the University of Pennsylvania. I have also been involved in MINI-MUN for four years, and last year I served as the Secretary-General of the conference. Needless to say, I love Model UN and am very excited to be your chair for this year.

In the real United Nations, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is actually a grouping of many specialized committees that focus on various international issues, including HIV/AIDS, the environment, development, and children's rights. For MINI-MUN, however, ECOSOC will be one committee with two very different topics, which will allow you to explore different global issues. We hope that you will take this opportunity to research unfamiliar topics and perhaps find an area that you are passionate about.

My co-chair, Kevin, and I are here to help you in any way possible, so do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about preparing for MINI-MUN or Model UN. I look forward to meeting you all in March!

Best wishes,

Chelsea Lee

Chair, Economic and Social Council

MINI-MUN IV

c-lee@comcast.net

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Dear Delegates,

I would like to welcome all of you to MiniMUN, and particularly to the ECOSOC Committee. My name is Kevin Lopez and I am one of your chairs for the duration of the conference. Originally from West Palm Beach, I am now a senior in high school about to embark onto the college journey. My interests reside in the field of Business and International Affairs.

I have been involved with MiniMUN for the last three years of high school. I have been involved in Model United Nations at Port Charlotte High School for the past three years and have become a specialist in topic areas relating to medicine and humanitarian related issues. My MUN career was launched at Vanderbilt University where I represented Israel in the ECOFIN Committee. I was a chair last year for MiniMUN dealing with topics of HIV/AIDS and Poverty. My experience through Model UN has allowed me to travel and compete at schools including: Harvard, Yale, McGill and Georgia Tech.

Throughout the conference we will be discussing two topics of relevant concern within the international community. Both topics equally reflect issues which are or have been on the ECOSOC agenda. Both Chelsea-your other chair-and I have in depth knowledge relating to both topics. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either Chelsea or myself during the research process. We look forward to seeing strong and concrete debate and understanding of the topics at hand. We would like to encourage you to research both topics in depth noting that either topic can go first during caucus. Good luck and see you in March!

Sincerely,

Kevin Lopez

Chair, ECOSOC

MiniMUN IV

Kalopez1019@aol.com

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Other Staff Members

Assistant Chair: John Reyes

Hi! My name is John Reyes, and I am your ECOSOC assistant chair at the 2008 MiniMUN Conference. As a current three-year Model UN member here at Port Charlotte High School, I have had the greatest opportunities with discussing and “solving” refugee and human-trafficking related topics. I have also dealt with poverty eradication issues, and have a little background with nuclear disarmament, though just a little. I hope you all have fun, and see you at the conference!

Guest Speaker: John Rioux

John, a sophomore at Port Charlotte High School, has been on the MUN team since his freshman year. Having had the ECOSOC topics at some of the most prestigious conferences in the nation, such as Yale, Harvard, and Georgia Tech, John will act as a guest speaker to the committee. During his speeches, delegates will have the opportunity to ask John questions regarding the topics.

Crisis Staffers :Cody Holland and Michael Kosmowski

Both seniors at PCHS, Michael and Cody have participated in MUN for 3 and 4 years, respectively, covering a broad array of topic areas. They will be in charge of creating your crisis, which will take place sometime during your participation at MINI-MUN IV.

Position Papers

You will be expected to write a position paper for your country to help you prepare for MiniMUN. Position papers are essentially a summary of the topic you are discussing and your country’s views on the issue. Each topic should take roughly half of a page or longer, and you should write about both of the topics for our committee. The paper can be structured in any way you choose, but should include the history and background of the topic, the actions your country has taken on the topic, and any solutions your country proposes on the topic. One of the easiest ways to write the position paper is in the following format (though your paper should be written in paragraphs, not as an outline):

- I. History/Background of the Topic
 - a. What the problem is and who it affects
 - b. Why the topic is important to the United Nations
 - c. What actions have been taken by the United Nations to solve the problem
- II. Country Actions
 - a. What basic policy your country holds toward the topic
 - b. How your country has addressed the problem in your country
- III. Proposed Solutions
 - a. Any solutions or programs that your country would like to see implemented
 - b. How you would work with other countries to put these policies into a resolution.

Feel free to contact Kevin or Chelsea if you have any questions. **Position papers will be turned in to the dais staff at the start of the first committee session.**

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TOPIC ONE: MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS IN URBAN AREAS

Introduction

In recent years, the world has seen the devastating effects of natural disasters in both developed and developing nations on a massive scale. The 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami devastated that region, causing over 200,000 deaths, particularly in crowded coastal cities. Pakistan also suffered from a massive disaster, when, in 2005, an earthquake of 7.6 magnitude struck the region of Kashmir, causing over 73,000 deaths and destroying thousands of buildings and homes. Natural disasters, however, do not discriminate; the devastation of New Orleans caused by Hurricane Katrina made front-page headlines worldwide, as even the United States failed to protect its urban citizens from floodwaters and broken levees. In order to prevent further catastrophes, it is imperative that this committee must address both their countries' preparation for natural disasters as well as the need to address the underlying causes of devastation that include pre-existing situations in cities.

Background

Though natural disasters have been a part of life on earth for nearly all of its existence, increased global temperatures and dramatic urbanization, or movement to cities, have created a mix of conditions that makes disasters especially deadly. In 2006, over 300 natural disasters occurred worldwide, negatively affecting over 117 million people. Urban areas have been particularly affected, and the devastation caused by natural disasters both stems from and changes the patterns of settlement and human movement within large cities. In order to protect the urban poor from natural disasters, it is essential that this committee address the slums and lack of basic social services that exist in many areas.

Perhaps the most important measure to mitigate the worst effects of disasters in any region is preparation – the more prepared a city or nation is, the more likely it is to have a lower loss of life, more rapid response time, and more successful reconstruction. Elements of preparation include emergency plans for all areas of the government in the event of a disaster, proper and adequate maintenance of the physical and communications infrastructure of urban areas, carefully planned evacuation strategies, and existing good relations with neighboring regions. Additionally, the most prepared cities have multilateral (more than one country or city) plans with other cities, countries, or organizations that include plans for support for both parties in the event of a disaster. Preparation is an integral part of disaster management, and delegates should examine the strength of their country's emergency plans as well as the historical success or failure of other emergency plans (i.e. the Southeast Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, etc.).

There are two major phases of reaction to a natural disaster: immediate relief and long-term reconstruction. Relief encompasses the efforts most commonly seen in the media, which include the provision of temporary shelter, necessary levels of food and water from outside the affected region, and emergency medical treatment. These efforts are usually undertaken in cities by a combination of national and municipal governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), disaster relief agencies, and aid from foreign governments in both monetary and financial forms.

Reconstruction, which is the more drawn-out of the phases, rarely makes international news, and thus suffers from a lack of international support and funding. This effort involves primarily the reconstruction of infrastructure, or the roads, buildings, power

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and telephone structures, and other physical elements that allow transportation and communication. National and municipal governments ultimately hold responsibility for this endeavor, though they often fail, because of poor governance or inadequate resources, to rebuild a city's infrastructure following a natural disaster. This necessitates the involvement of UN agencies, NGOs, and private corporations willing to invest in infrastructure, but the international involvement is not nearly so strong as in the immediate aftermath. A potential avenue for delegates to explore lies here, in devising solutions that prolong the engagement of the international community in post-disaster reconstruction, particularly in developing countries that lack the resources of their developed counterparts.

The Urban Poor

Though natural disasters can have consequences for any region, large cities have a very high potential for increased devastation. Urban areas typically have a high population density, which means that residential neighborhoods are crowded and housing structures are very close together. Additionally, the emergence of "mega-cities," or cities with over 10 million people, has led to an increase in the amount of slums that are vulnerable to natural disasters. Slums are areas on the edge or just outside of a city that are characterized by high levels of poverty, low quality of life, and a lack of basic social services like clean water supply and sanitation. Additionally, housing in slums often fails to meet national building codes and is much more likely to collapse or malfunction than those in other

Predictions of increased incidence of natural disasters due to the changing global climate make it imperative that the world's leaders concentrate on protecting urban citizens from the devastating effects of these disasters. However, economic disparities, both between developed and developing countries in a region and within a city itself, complicate the issue, as the prevalence of squatter settlements,

structurally unstable low-income housing, and lack of communication technology in poor neighborhoods indicates. The dilemma regarding the urban poor is two-fold: delegates must devise solutions that alleviate the aggravating factors mentioned above before natural disasters, as well as prevent their reemergence in the chaos of post-disaster reconstruction.

What UN Bodies are Involved?

Disaster management truly incorporates nearly all agencies that the UN has at its disposal. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Management is the primary arm of organization in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, urban or otherwise. This group, a part of the UN Secretariat, coordinates the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, and UN-HABITAT following a natural disaster, as these bodies have the programs in place to react quickly and provide shelter, food, medical services, and other necessities of life to those affected. In the latter stages of development reconstruction, the ISDM enlists the assistance of the World Bank and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to aid in financing reconstruction and relocating those displaced by the disaster. A possible avenue for improving responses to disaster lies in examining the roles each of these bodies play in the response to natural disasters, and in reevaluating the ways in which they might be tailored to meet the needs of large cities.

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Lessons from Hurricane Katrina

Contrary to many popular conceptions, it is not only the urban poor of developing countries that suffer during disasters – the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina demonstrates that even the one of the world’s leading developed nations can fail to protect its citizens. Natural disasters do not discriminate – without proper planning and preparation, all cities are vulnerable to the devastation of nature’s wrath.

According to a UN-HABITAT report,

“As in many parts of the developing world, the poorest residents of New Orleans lived in the most hazardous areas of the city and suffered more casualties and economic damage than wealthier households. For instance, in one of the hardest-hit neighborhoods – the Lower Ninth Ward – 98 per cent of the population was African-American and more than a third lived in poverty.”

The weakness of the infrastructure of New Orleans, the government’s failure to rectify the social inequalities of the city, and a fatally slow response time by emergency relief agencies have all been cited as causes of the tragedy of Katrina. The stunning similarity of these characteristics to those that describe problems in developing cities indicate that this is an issue that affects both the global North and South (developed and developing countries), and one that these two groups should find consensus on.

The Challenge

One of the primary challenges that any branch of the United Nations faces in implementing programs and policies is that of making these programs and policies sustainable. Without engaging the local people, whomever they may be, in the economic and developmental growth of a city or country, the stability in that region will be shaky at best. Thus, it is essential that in designing solutions to this topic all delegates

take into consideration how to integrate the urban poor in reconstruction efforts. Additionally, disaster relief agencies must work within government bureaucracy, which is even more complicated in dealing with cities because agencies must work within both national and municipal (city) governmental structures. Often, the well-being and relief of the poorest citizens and those displaced by natural disasters are at the bottom of these government agendas, and the UN must take steps to raise the priority level of the disadvantaged.

Another, more global concern is the lack of representation of the urban poor at the local and international levels. Because nations, especially those with poor governance, often sacrifice the social good for corporate, economic, or political interests, these interests far overrule those of the marginalized citizens in the international arena. More specifically, the lack of social organization of these people prevents them from having the strong lobbying power of the more fortunate, and the cycle of poverty that is only intensified by disasters prevents them from moving above their current status. Further, it is especially rare for nations and even international bodies to have institutional mechanisms through which the urban poor can address their concerns and situations. Without a voice in the effort to prevent and minimize the loss of life and well-being in the event of a disaster, this increasingly marginalized class will continue to suffer, at the expense of global development.

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Questions to Consider

(These questions are meant to prompt debate and/or research. Delegates are neither obligated nor expected to answer these questions outright.)

1. What does your country believe are the most important factors in disaster preparedness and response?
2. How can the UN, and particularly ECOSOC, improve its response to the challenges natural disasters pose to cities?
3. What steps can the committee take to include the marginalized urban poor into the national and international discussions of natural disaster preparedness? To increase a sense of community among these peoples?
4. How can ECOSOC bridge the gap in technical and financial support between immediate relief and long-term reconstruction to ensure the success of both?
5. Can ECOSOC use its work in post-conflict reconstruction to actually mitigate the existence of slums and poor living conditions in cities?
6. Should developing and developed countries and cities take different approaches to solving this issue, or should they use similar methods? What does your country suggest, and what experience has it had in dealing with natural disasters?

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TOPIC TWO: ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES

Introduction

The United Nations Charter ratified the formation of the economic and social committee or ECOSOC. Under the charter it designated responsibility to ECOSOC to ensure the coordination and networking of the fourteen UN agencies. These agencies consisted of functional commissions and five regional commissions. ECOSOC has served the UN as the central body, next to the general assembly to properly coordinate what is being done within the UN. ECOSOC differs from the General Assembly simply because it relates specifically to organizations, including the eleven UN funds and programs. Under ECOSOC it is essential to disseminate information based on the achievements of these organizations and bodies. Many Non-Governmental Organizations are granted observer status to enable their participation based on experiences and plans which have been initiated by outside organizations.

The duties of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are as stated to involve:

“promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress; identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems; facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

ECOSOC is granted the power to direct the bodies under its jurisdiction to relate efforts to factors that directly relate to the aforementioned topic areas. ECOSOC also maintains authority over organizations that are recognized by the United Nations. This body is in charge of the process organizations must go through before they are recognized by the UN, once recognized the body also decides which organizations are allowed access to sessions of the body as observers.

ECOSOC works in partnership not only with other UN funds and programs, but also heads of international organizations and business sector representatives. As mentioned before non-governmental organizations are in constant involvement within ECOSOC. More than 2,100 registered NGOs participate with the ECOSOC committee.

ECOSOC has many organizations at its reach which can be used as valuable resources to deal with pertinent issues. It is important that ECOSOC evaluate which organizations are most vital to solving the issues currently on the agenda. Dialogue is essential to ensure the functioning of this committee as well as proper methods to solve the stressed problems within the international arena.

History of the issue

Research and development have led to many innovative measures in health, but mostly the developed nations have benefited from these breakthroughs. One of the most significant acts in the history of modern public health that sought to bring all people to a minimum level of health was the creation of the first World Health Organization (WHO) essential medicines list in 1977. It constituted itself as one of the eight most important factors within the WHO “Primary Health Care” strategy.

According to the World Health Organization, essential drugs are “those that satisfy the primary health care needs of the population.” The selection process considers the importance that a particular drug has to public health, the efficiency and safety of the drug, and the comparative cost-effectiveness. The status of these medicines mean that these drugs are important and almost mandatory to have access to by populations and health systems at all times in a proper or adequate amount. Dosage is also important in

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consideration to the proper distribution of these drugs. The status of medicines being essential to particular populations is entirely dependant on the individual nations.

Though the establishment of the essential medicines list (EML) was recognized and commended by many organizations and nations. The private sector, remained hesitant on the effects of such standards in health. The list caused different speculations, mainly from the pharmaceutical sector. In 1987, the International Federation of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations (IFPMA) called the medical and economic arguments for the EML “fallacious” and stated that the establishment of the EML “could result in sub-optimal medical care and might reduce health standards.” Clearly the speculation was revolved around the liberty placed on individual countries being able to classify which medicines were essential. Such liberty could not be allowed mainly because many nations fail to even report proper data to the WHO about health issues taking place within their nations. Pharmaceuticals are also hesitant of the possible establishment of the attempts of developed nations and the possible creation of a limited medicines list, because most of the pharmaceutical revenue come from developing nations.

The lack of coordination between pharmaceuticals and the WHO set the agenda for dialogue within the Uruguay Round Talks. The Uruguay Round became center stage for creation and initiation of different issues all pertaining to some aspect of trade and development within the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The opposition of different health policies and policies, particularly relating to drugs and the accessibility of drugs, came directly from mayor pharmaceuticals before the Uruguay Round. Pharmaceuticals fought their position basing their argument on the lack of protection on drug patents which rightfully pertain to one patent holder. Dialogue brought about the initiation of a separate organizational body pertaining to trade which currently is most noted as the World Trade Organization(WTO).

Based on the stance of pharmaceuticals, the Uruguay discussions led to the ratification of a document ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights (IPRs). Such ratification was to be placed under the jurisdiction of the WTO, and to be set out by different countries at specified time frames. The Trade Related Aspects to Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), became the framework many nations had to abide by to ensure the proper establishment of intellectual property legislation within nations. Developed countries and lower developed countries were designated different time frames to instill legislation within their designated bodies of their government.

There are many issues that pertain to the establishment of different legislation and such strict enforcement within the international agenda of IPRs. Most notably, TRIPS established the foundation for IPR legislation, which essentially sets the minimum standard for countries to abide to in the context of structure. For example, under TRIPS, a patent is rightfully the property of a patent holder for a minimum of 20 years. Under this protection, the patent holder has ultimate control over their particular patent, and according to TRIPS the protection can exceed the 20 year protection period. This presents an issue for the international community. The effect of over 39 million people infected with HIV/AIDS, and the impact of other diseases on vulnerable populations, has lead issues pertaining to IPRs to continuously be debated within a global forum as the United Nations. It is the responsibility of the delegates in this committee to recognize the impact of strict IPR enforcement and how such enforcement presents a negative impact to countries that are at a disadvantage in infrastructure development.

The problem is twofold, and must be analyzed in such manner that satisfies both pharmaceuticals (specifically relating to access to medicines) and countries with a disadvantage. Pharmaceuticals must be ensured that innovations will be protected, mainly because without an incentive for pharmaceuticals,

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nothing will be done and research and development will fall significantly leaving the global community in a recession in innovation. It is also important to recognize that without innovation there is lack in growth, which is essential for global economics, especially for third world nations that are still in the process of forming a solid base towards expansion.

Noting countries specifically, it is apparent that most of the world's most deadly diseases plague lower developed countries. Issues such as poverty, inaccessibility of fundamental education, and external debt limit any possibility for such countries to afford a well constructed health sector. Africa is faced with most of the world's debt along with many countries in Latin America. Such hindering affects are limiting these regions and the countries within these regions that are most in need for essential medicines. Africa for example constitutes for approximately ten percent of the world's entire population, however it is the home to over sixty percent of the world's HIV/AIDS population. The effects of intellectual property rights is contradicting any ratifications within the United Nations, most noticeably the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration grants essential rights to individuals based on the 1948 consensus on international human rights legislation. The article relates to the right of individuals within the global community to have access to essentials such as: access to medicines and rights to education and other basic fundamentals. The fact that these rights are being denied is crucial to address when pertaining to medicine and the right for individuals to access them, which inadvertently is the responsibility of individual nation's governments. But how can countries assume such a responsibility when they have little or no access to a pharmaceutical sector within their countries? This is important to realize when evaluating the incentives and opportunities this body will propose to benefit lower developed countries and those countries that are in urgent need for external aid to grant their populations essential medicines.

Such restrictions on IPRs become an issue with particular need to address. The WTO bases its principles on ensuring access to liberalized trade, when in the context of IPRs lower developed countries lack the possibility to participate in the pharmaceutical market due to lack of revenue. Realizing the outside factors, it is obvious that even after the designated time frame for patent protection expires, countries will still lack the financial capacity to reproduce the expired patent as a generic counterpart, leading countries to resort to external options in which prices may be out of reach.

Initiatives such as the Clinton Global Initiative, have decreased the significant impact of that prices play on countries that lack significant revenue due to a weak economic market. It is important that the pharmaceuticals still gain revenue for the medicines that are being produced, however the prices must be at a feasible reach for countries that suffer greatly from deadly diseases.