United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

FEBRUARY 2ND, 2023 - FEBRUARY 4TH, 2023
GENERAL ASSEMBLY | BLACKSBURG, VA

VT MUNC

CONTENTS

THE PREMIER VIRGINIA TECH MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
VTMUNC.ORG

Dear Delegates of VTMUNC I,

We appreciate your participation and dedication to the premier Virginia Tech Model United Nations Conference's efforts to promote productive and civil discourse and conversation. Nevertheless, please be warned that some presentations, discussions, and or information found in the background guides may contain delicate or triggering material. At Virginia Tech, we prioritize fostering a safe and inclusive environment, so we want to ensure that you are prepared for the nature of the discussions to occur.

That being said, the following content areas may contain sensitive material:

1. **Conflict Zones & Human Rights Violations:** Some conversations may involve sensitive global problems including human rights violations, armed conflicts, and or other difficult themes.
2. **Sensitive Cultural or Religious Topics:** Some topics may raise sensitive cultural or religious issues for individuals.
3. **Violence and Trauma:** In their speeches or resolutions, delegates may reference incidents of violence, trauma, or abuse in real-world scenarios that may potentially be a sensitive topic to delegates in committee.
4. **Discussions about Discrimination and Marginalization:** Emotionally intense discussions concerning discrimination, marginalization, or inequity may arise during committee.

As you prepare for the conference, we encourage all of our delegates to approach these discussions with both respect and empathy for differing perspectives. If the content of these committees is something that you are uncomfortable with, we recommend that you take the appropriate steps to prioritize your well-being, such as seeking support from conference staff or Secretariat of VTMUNC I.

Bound by the motto Ut Prosim (That I May Serve), we serve to ensure that we will promote constructive and respectful dialogue during committee sessions. As you prepare and participate in the conference, we promise that VTMUNC I will stay committed to creating a space where all your voices are heard and are welcome.

Thank you for your compassion and cooperation to our goal of respectful and intellectual discourse for all. We hope that as you progress with our conference, you continue to bloom.

Sincerely,
Aaryan Menon, Secretary General of VTMUNC I
Shriya Chemudupati, Under-Secretary General of General Assemblies of VTMUNC I
Madeline Pedersen, Under-Secretary General of Specialized Agencies of VTMUNC I
Juan Camilo Bonilla, Under-Secretary General of Crisis Committees of VTMUNC I

Conference Guidelines

The first iteration of the Virginia Tech Model United Nations Conference, otherwise known as VTMUNC I, is committed to providing a safe and pleasurable experience for all delegates, advisors, and individuals involved with VTMUNC I. Although participating in Model UN is being involved in competitive activity, its fundamental purpose is to uphold and put into practice both the principles of diplomacy, collaboration, and cooperation. Any individual that violates the policies and procedures of VTMUNC I and the ideals of an open and inclusive environment will be subject to disciplinary action from the staff of VTMUNC I; disciplinary action may include a warning or being disqualified from receiving awards. Promoting an environment that is open to all by being safe, equitable, and exhilarating is our utmost priority. In order to ensure this, the following are **prohibited**:

1. Any pre-writing or working on committee content outside of VTMUNC I committee sessions (as described by the Schedule of Program).
2. Any speeches, directives, crisis arcs, or actions in committee that intend to create violence or promote a violent environment to a specific group of people, including mentions of sexual violence, graphic violence, and other behavior that is beyond committee guidelines.
3. Any hate speech, written documents, or behavior that uses language that is discriminatory and disrespectful, including but not limited to any language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, antisemitic, Islamophobic, or language harmful to any specific group.
4. Any actions that are deliberate, both knowingly and intentionally, to bully, harass, or otherwise harmful behavior that may or has hurt other delegates' physical and or mental health.

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Virginia Tech's first Model United Nations conference. We would like to personally thank each of you for your commitment and participation in our first-ever conference! We know how much time and effort each of you has put into being a part of this historical experience and we are extremely excited to witness your problem-solving, creativity, and diplomacy firsthand.

The United Nations Development Programme, also known as UNDP was created in 1966, following the combination of two existing committees, the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, created in 1949, and the United Nations Special Fund, established in 1958. The UNDP is a committee that works in roughly 170 countries to eradicate poverty as well as reduce inequality in the existing infrastructure of these countries. The UNDP helps countries create and implement developmental policies, leadership skills, institutional capabilities, and more. The UNDP focuses on three specific areas: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and finally climate and disaster resilience.

This committee is for member states to discuss issues related to a specific region to create and enforce solutions to tackle the ongoing economic and social challenges throughout this entire region. We hope that through discussion and creativity, members will be able to work towards solutions to strengthen and reconstruct the established economic crises in the Middle Eastern/North African region (MENA). As delegates, we hope that in this committee, you become well-versed not only in the region's current economic state but also in its rich history and culture to create and enforce solutions to ensure that the work being done has long-lasting effects and can be maintained. We're looking for delegates who are diplomatic, creative, and collaborative; those individuals who share excellent communicative skills while maintaining and upholding the decorum of the entity that is The United Nations.

We hope that this committee exceeds your expectations and we hope that your experience at Virginia Tech is both long-lasting and unique. Our USGs, chairs, and volunteers are working diligently to ensure that this committee is at its very best yet. Please feel free to contact the Under-Secretary General of General Assemblies and Regional Bodies or us if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you all work together and are very excited to meet every one of you!

Kind Regards,
The UNDP Dias
Shriya Chemudupati | Under-Secretary General of General Assemblies and Regional Bodies |
Sumaiyah Ali | Head-Chair |
Shashwat Roy | Co-Chair |
Jacky Bendall | Technology Chair |

Background Information

The Middle Eastern, Northern African Region (MENA) has long been a region of rich, complex, and invigorating history and culture. Roughly a decade ago, in this specific region, citizens across the Middle East and Northern Africa rose in protest against what is presently known as the "Arab Spring," which caused several political and economic shifts; the consequences of such are still being felt today. Since the Arab Spring, the MENA region has faced issues such as corruption, economic disparity, regional conflict, and increased repression.[1] Since the mid-1990s we have seen a decline in stability in the Middle East/Northern Africa (MENA) region. However, following 9/11 and the Arab Spring incident, there have been substantial, drastic changes which are concentrated in this region specifically.[2] This committee aims to analyze, debate, and create solutions pertaining to several key issues such as economic stability and growth, economic disparity across genders, and discussing methods to prevent the regression of solutions. Several issues are

affecting the progression of active efforts in this region such as corruption, conflict, lower oil production, etc. A major driver of the spread of state failure in this region is the stunning success of the transnational movement of violent jihadis. This is a movement explicitly aimed at producing state failure of U.N. member states whose rulers are seen as beholden to the U.S., Europe, and an infidel-run international system.[3]

Topic A: Improving Economic Stability in the Middle East/Northern Africa Region (MENA)

In the Northern African Region, there are several cases we can study. Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia are all examples in which the national poverty rate was exacerbated by corruption, high inflation, and large inequalities, both cultural and sexual. Unemployment rates (Tunisia with 14% nationally, Egypt with an average of 11%, and Libya with an average of 17%) are also a significantly large factor as to why the economic development of the MENA region is so fractured.[4] Job creation and stability are

[1] Jeffrey Feltman, Kevin Huggard, and Kemal Kirişci. "The Middle East and North Africa over the next Decade: Key Challenges and Policy Options." Brookings, March 9, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-middle-east-and-north-africa-over-the-next-decade-key-challenges-and-policy-options/.

[2] "Instability in the Middle East." Hoover Institution. Accessed November 17, 2023. https://www.hoover.org/research/instability-middle-east.

[3] "Instability in the Middle East." Hoover Institution. Accessed November 17, 2023. https://www.hoover.org/research/instability-middle-east.

[4] Sidamor, Zeyneb, Latifa Lemtaouch, and Hamza Bensouici. "The Economic Consequences of the Political Instability in Arab Region." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 219 (2016): 694–99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.053.

at an all-time low, especially because several types of labor typically go unpaid or severely underpaid, especially for women who complete these jobs as well. This poor business environment is one of the reasons for countries in northern Africa. In the Middle East, one of the capital problems is institutional. The efficiency of investment in the Middle East has been falling behind. One of the reasons for this is the fear and distrust people have for their governments, given their history of corruption and Middle Eastern governments doing a poor job of overcoming past economic blunders.[5] According to the Middle Eastern Policy Council, one of the main solutions to the issue is to help with job creation. The council also factors in food/water scarcity as one of the sources of instability. Locally, people in the Middle East tend to blame the West's involvement for their economic shortcomings. Creating jobs with a stable income and security will ensure a boost in the economy as well as improved living conditions for those living in the MENA region. One of the main problems in creating jobs is ensuring that these jobs are still available even through potential conflict or corruption, and ensuring that there are equal opportunities for everyone, both male and female alike. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

their programmes are specifically targeting five key areas: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, climate change, disaster resilience, women's empowerment, knowledge societies, HIV and development, energy and environment, and youth and innovation.[6] The UN aims to target these areas specifically to improve the quality of life for those living here as well as create a secure future for continuing generations. Ultimately, the goal is not just to "solve" the problem, but to "fix" the problem.

Current Situation

Some of the main opposing forces of the current efforts in improving economic stability are: lower oil production, tight policy settings in emerging markets, and conflicts amongst the region including but not limited to the Sudan conflict and the Israel and Palestine conflict. These tight policies include those to fight inflation, reduce vulnerabilities, and fight to rebuild economic buffers. These policies across the region amid tight global financial conditions call for accelerating structural reforms to support potential growth and enhance resilience.[7] The World Bank also aims to create institutional reforms and policies that aim to create transparency and accountability. However, there have been

[5] Alan Richards Dr. Richards is professor of economics at the University of California. "Economic Roots of Instability in the Middle East." Economic Roots of Instability in the Middle East | Middle East Policy Council. Accessed November 19, 2023. https://mepc.org/journal/economic-roots-instability-middle-east.

[6] "All Hands on Deck." Arab States | United Nations Development Programme. Accessed November 19, 2023. https://www.undp.org/arab-states.

[7] "Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia." IMF, October 23, 2019. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/MECA.

several current factors that have prevented these institutions from completing their goals such as the COVID-19 pandemic, unprecedented migration of refugees, food and water insecurity, and violent extremism. Post-pandemic, the MENA region has had a large share of inactive youth in employment and education, large gaps in economic opportunities for women, fragmented social protection systems, underdeveloped private sectors, absence of a level playing field, and limited access to credit that stifled the creation of new firms and growth, employment, and incomes.[8] Skyrocketing oil and food prices brought by war on Ukraine, high global interest rates, and slowing economic activity in the US, China, and Euro area have brought added pressure to the region.[9] Currently, one of the main programs in place is agreements including but not limited to the Middle East Regional Cooperation Program (MERC), US commitment to aid in food security, and strategic investment through partnership with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).[10]

Questions to Consider:

[8] "Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia." IMF, October 23, 2019. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/MECA.

[9] "A New State of Mind - World Bank." A New State of Mind. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/887ca619-e90d-53f5-b85c-77c0ad5f66ed/content.

[10] "Middle East." U.S. Agency for International Development, March 28, 2023. https://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/middle-east.

1. ***What are possible solutions to combat the effects of low employment for affected youth from the COVID-19 Pandemic?***
2. ***What are some ways to regulate the payment of all labor types across the region?***
3. ***How can we decrease the distrust and fear of the local community in their governments?***
4. ***What are some ways to increase investment profiles among the local population?***
5. ***How can we ensure that created jobs will remain available for several years in the future?***

Topic 2: Economic Equality Across Genders

Gender inequality has been an issue for a long time. Religion and culture have played a large factor as to why there is such a large gap across genders. However mainstream media, especially in the West, tends to focus on these gaps and exacerbate them into something more severe. Outside of the Gulf, female unemployment rates are greater than male rates. In the Gulf, the reverse is true, but this may simply be a statistical artifact, in which women who can't find a job are defined as out of the labor force. Strong social conventions restrict the definition of "respectable work." Since nearly all women in the region are married, they can more

easily remain unemployed if necessary to "maintain family honor." (Men, of course, engage in similar behavior; Jordanian unemployment coexists with the immigration of unskilled Egyptians because young Jordanian men do not want to accept work that they, their families, and perhaps especially important prospective spouses' families find "demeaning.") In this regard, men, but especially women, are adversely affected by the decline in (eminently respectable) public-sector jobs. [11] It is important to note that gender plays an important factor in job creation, as many types of jobs are often ignored, and left unpaid if they are viewed as feminine or a predominantly female-led field. It is generally concluded that Islam is a reason for persistent gender inequality. For example, Fish analyzed the impact of Islam on literacy rate, sex ratio, women's political participation, and GEM by using cross-section data and concluded that overall, the status of women in Muslim countries is inferior rather than in non-Muslim countries. However, Fish explained that the only reason for this result is due to the democratic deficit in these countries.[12] Lower female education lowers

the average level of human capital, and thus, has a negative direct impact on income growth. Gender inequality also affects population growth and investment, and thus, produces an indirect impact on income growth. There are also effects of increasing female education that impact other development outcomes, not just income levels.[13] The UNDP is currently focusing on several initiatives aimed specifically at improving the quality of life across all genders and ensuring that there are equal opportunities across all genders. Their primary goals fall into three categories: Gender and Sustainable Development: working with national partners to engender national development policies to reduce and eliminate barriers to women's economic empowerment and foster gender equality as a prerequisite to achieving sustainable development, the second being Gender, Democratic Governance and Peacebuilding: supporting advocacy, policy and legislative reforms to accelerate the equal participation of women in all governance processes and decision-making spaces in pursuit of social harmony and sustainable peace, and finally the third being Gender, Climate and Disaster Resilience: considering the disproportionate impact of climate change and disasters on women, we support national partners to strengthen the participation of women in

---

[11] Alan Richards Dr. Richards is professor of economics at the University of California. "Economic Roots of Instability in the Middle East." Economic Roots of Instability in the Middle East | Middle East Policy Council. Accessed November 19, 2023. https://mepc.org/journal/economic-roots-instability-middle-east.

[12] Kucuk, Nezahat. "Gender Inequality in the MENA: Myths versus Facts." Loyola eCommons. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://ecommons.luc.edu/meea/182/.

[13] Baliamoune–Lutz, Mina, and Mark McGillivray. "The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education on Income in Africa and the Middle East." *Economic Modelling* 47 (2015): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2014.11.031.

disaster mitigation and recovery efforts.[14] The UNDP, while focusing on these specific areas, also aims to create and implement policies as well as infrastructures to ensure that these policies are maintained even after their direct support is withdrawn.

Current Situation

According to UNICEF, the main culprits for the gaps in progress are further compounded by global and regional events, including political and economic upheaval, conflict, occupation, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The increasing backlash from governments towards civil society since the Arab uprisings over a decade ago, especially towards women's rights and youth feminist groups, has also impeded progress. Conflict is another factor that perpetuates gender inequalities and human rights violations in some countries of the region. Furthermore, the staunch patriarchal character of governments continues to impact the movement towards gender equality which, in turn, reinforces the structural inequities present in negative socio-cultural norms and practices through laws, justice mechanisms, and socio-political institutions. Many States in the region still allow such norms and practices to restrict the rights of females relative to males, and limit access for women and girls to targeted education regarding their rights and other substantive empowerment initiatives. Women's civil society in the region has actively engaged

with the Women's Peace and Security agenda at the international level, for example, activists have testified in front of the Security Council to highlight the gender impact of conflict and occupation on the lives of women and girls in the region. [15]

Questions to Consider:
1. *How can we ensure that female-dominated work is paid equally and fairly in comparison to predominantly male fields?*
2. *What can be done to prevent the spread and exaggeration of gender inequality across the Western world?*
3. *What are possible solutions to ensure the maintenance of possible initiatives against gender inequality?*
4. *How can we incentivize education and increase the literacy rate for the and female youth in the MENA region?*

Topic 3: Methods to Prevent Regression of Progress

One of the main issues with the UNDP's progress in the MENA region is the inability

---

[14] "Gender Equality." UNDP. Accessed November 20, 2023.
https://www.undp.org/arab-states/gender-equality.

[15] UNICEF, and Unicef. "Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in the Middle East and North Africa." UNICEF Middle East and North Africa, November 1, 2021.
https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/situational-analysis-women-and-girls-middle-east-and-north-africa.

to create and specifically maintain changes. There have been several instances in which policies have been implemented but have not been upheld per the UNDP's guidelines. Currently, the UNDP has several efforts to create a healthier environment for change. These include the UN Development Group (UNDG) at the regional level. The Regional UNDG for the Arab States/MENA is chaired by Khalida Bouzar Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDG Arab States/MENA Team works closely together to provide UN Country Teams with strategic guidance and policy advice, and coherent, coordinated, and timely technical support through the established inter-agency Quality Support and Assurance mechanisms. The Arab States/MENA Team supports and works with teams in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as 17 countries, namely Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.The Regional Programme for the Arab States (2018-2021) is framed around two outcomes: firstly, to assist partners in advancing regional cooperation and policy dialogue on inclusive and sustainable growth, while tackling climate change and environmental protection, and secondly, to focus on the root causes of conflict and governance deficits, facilitating stakeholders' cooperation to counteract fragilities, promote democratic reforms and

fostering resilience.[16] These programmes are all creating solutions to ensure that their work is upheld for future generations to come.

Current Situation:

As mentioned before, there have been several efforts to create and implement changes which unfortunately have met several forms of resistance and have prevented these changes from reaching their full potential. Currently, some of these efforts include UNODC, including through the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR), a joint initiative with the World Bank Group, which is also actively engaged in assisting several Arab countries in developing strategies, improving interagency coordination, engaging in international cooperation, and facilitating their efforts to recover stolen assets.[17] The vast majority of Arab countries are parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and they are committed to fully implementing its provisions and the resolutions adopted by the Conference of States Parties, including the Sharm-El-Sheik Declaration adopted at the ninth session, which aims at strengthening cooperation to prevent, identify, investigate, and prosecute corruption during times of crisis. OIC Member States are prioritizing

---

[16] "Governance." UNDP. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.undp.org/arab-states/governance.

[17] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/2023/RF/Framework_ENG_ONLINE.pdf.

anti-corruption in a quest to address the devastating and wide-ranging impacts felt because of corruption.[18] One of these objectives is to strengthen legal, policy, and institutional frameworks to prevent and counter corruption and financial crimes taking into account inter alia, the outcomes of the UNCAC implementations, and review mechanisms and other relevant assessment priorities. Through this, these organizations aim to support Member States with the review and development of laws, regulations, and policies to prevent and counter corruption, money laundering, financing of terrorism, and other financial crimes, assist Member States in establishing/supporting strong institutions preventing and countering corruption, money laundering, financing of terrorism, and other financial crimes, and assist Member States with the development of the institutional and operational priorities and requirements to enable women and youth to take an active role in preventing corruption and financial crime in their societies. [19] There are also solutions which are known as "knowledge-based approaches," which are used to prevent and counter corruption and financial crime priorities. These approaches aim to increase Member States' capacities to

gather, produce, analyze, and manage disaggregated data on corruption and other related crimes to establish and run effective monitoring mechanisms, increase Member States' understanding of the emerging forms of corruption and financial crimes, and the impact of corruption during times of emergencies, and finally increase competent authorities and relevant private sector institutions capacities to conduct corruption and money laundering risk assessments, apply risk-based approaches, and adapt/develop risk management systems in relevant sectors.[20]

Questions to Consider:
1. *How can we strengthen international cooperation to ensure a coordinated response to conflict and corruption?*
2. *What are possible initiatives to create dialogue and policy regarding issues such as climate change and gender inequality?*
3. *What issues should be prioritized when creating solutions/policies?*

---

[18] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/2023/RF/Framework_ENG_ONLINE.pdf.

[19] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/2023/RF/Framework_ENG_ONLINE.pdf.

[20] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/2023/RF/Framework_ENG_ONLINE.pdf.