INTERMEDIATE UNESCO

Background Guide

University of Colorado Boulder Model United Nations

Committee Chair: Victor Bader

•To maintain international peace and security

•To develop friendly relations among nations

•To cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights

•To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations

Dear Delegates,

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2016 University of Colorado Boulder Model United Nations Conference.

The three topics that will be covered under Intermediate UNESCO are:

I.   Media Accountability in the Information Age

II.   Protecting World Heritage Sites in Zones of Conflict

III.   Genetic Research in Humans

In this guide, background information will be provided on the topics presented as well as other resources to reference while researching for your delegation. We fully hope that you will explore member states positions and policies further. Many items will be brought up in the guide that may be a valuable starting point for your research. Prior to the conference each delegation should submit a position paper representing the views of their delegation on the issues in the agenda. Please review the guidelines for Model United Nations before attending and be familiar with policies on conduct and guidelines.

We hope to see you soon,

Victor Bader

Committee Chair

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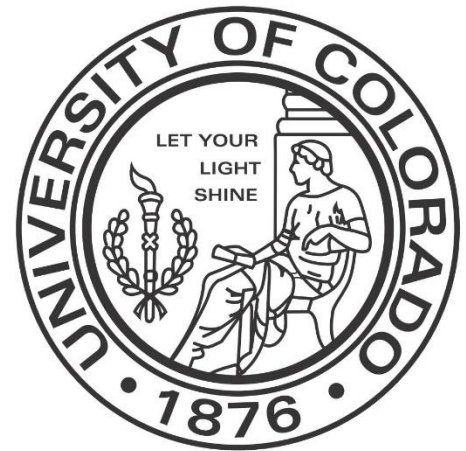
Introduction

UNESCO is a specialized agency in the United Nations that acts with a relative degree of autonomy and coordinates its work through ECOSOC. The work between the UN and UNESCO is solidified by an agreement that allows UN representation at UNESCO and UNESCO to send representatives to meetings of relevant to UNESCO to the UN. The agreement also forces UNESCO to report to ECOSOC before engaging in any new inter-agency agreements. The responsibilities of UNESCO are laid out in its constitution and state that its mandate is to encourage the spread of education and culture, to aid in the sharing of knowledge, and to work with its members and organizations to promote agreement and the diffusion of ideas. UNESCO aligns its priorities with the UN agreed upon global goals. That meant the Millennium Development Goals till 2015 and now the Sustainable Development Goals till 2030. UNESCO also tends to focus on Africa and has several far reaching programs based on its mandate. UNESCO's mission is "UNESCO's mission is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture. Its main concern is to foster and maintain intellectual solidarity."

Structure:

All UN members have automatic membership in UNESCO. Any other states that wish to join need to be approved by two of UNESCO's member organs. UNESCO's organs are the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat. The General Conference includes all 195 members, and 10 associated states, and is the primary body for decision making. The General Conference meets every two years to decide the budget and plans and works by a simple majority, however a two thirds majority is needed to ratify a convention. From the member states 58 are voted on for four year terms in a geographically distributed manner to serve on the Executive Board. The Executive Board sets the agenda and provides oversight. The Secretariat is the administrative arm of UNESCO and is headed by the Director General. The Director General is nominated by the Executive Board and voted on by the General Conference. UNESCO also creates several national commission based on article VII of its constitution. These country level bodies are an important part of UNESCO's structure and help carry out its programs and coordinate with governments.

Function

UNESCO has a very wide reach into a multitude of issues. Its national commissions give it a total employee count of over 2000 and it has 65 field offices. It conducts activities in nearly every member state. Almost every nation has recognized the benefit of UNESCO however there is some criticism that it lacks focus. UNESCO's documents that decide most of its actions are its Medium-Term Strategy and its Approved Budget. The Main Line of actions are determined by the near and medium term goals. Any actions that do no match with these need special budgetary consideration.

The international community built the UN after the Second World War to help provide diplomatic bridges and in the hopes that such an even never occurred again. UNESCO was built under the ideal that sharing knowledge and culture could not only benefit the world but also act as a means to strengthen bridges and especially understanding.

Links:

UNESCO Website: https://en.unesco.org/

UNESCO Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO

UNESCO-Constitution:

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Topic I: Media Accountability in the Information Age

The advent of digital technology has had profound impacts on media, journalism in particular. A large part of those changes revolve around the changing structure of news media companies to adapt to new business models. Traditional media has faced declining revenues leading to the advent of high volume and sensationalist media which generates more revenue. Because of this structural change it has become more difficult to guarantee political and economic independence of news sources. The new forms of media are primarily websites, BuzzFeed being a prime example, which are not always easy to hold accountable for what they

publish. These websites may publish in such high volume that traditional forms of media accountability are unable to keep up. This is exacerbated by what individuals can also add by posting on an outlets website including disseminating misleading articles and videos from unreliable sources. There is also no accountability in publishing information taken off a social media page. It has become increasingly common for journalists to publish articles containing this information and for a lawsuit to be filed for violation of privacy. For many the position that the world finds itself in know can be boiled down to understanding how much value should be placed on free speech and how much should be placed on a fair and accurate media.

Media Literacy

As with many of its projects UNESCO aim to use education to help close the gap where policy fails. Media Literacy aims to empower ordinary citizens with the knowledge of how to engage with both traditional and new media as well as how media fits into a democratic society. The Grünwald Declaration is a declaration by UNESCO stating the need for media education and explaining its desired implementation in traditional education and for adults. UNESCO however no longer uses the term media education and instead uses Media and Information Literacy(MIL) to avoid confusion with higher level media studies. MIL has become an important part of UNESCO's efforts to deal with the shifts in media and is implemented in a variety of forms around the world.

Promoting Media Accountability in South East Europe and Turkey

UNESCO is currently running a project to promote media accountability in south east Europe which is a reflection of many of its ideals relating to media accountability. The project is aimed at accomplishing a few major goals including media self-regulation, media accountability, addressing hate speech, & increasing awareness of Freedom of Information(FOI) laws. Media self-regulation has been attempted through the education of the public about journalistic professional standards and ethics. UNESCO has supported the creation of agencies and organizations to check media in order to ensure accuracy and integrity in journalistic pursuits. To address hate speech UNESCO has helped conduct research to identify solutions and their impact on

freedom of expression. To further empower journalists with tools UNESCO has worked to increase the knowledge and use of FOIs.

Freedom of Speech

An important topic of discussion is the role that free speech plays in media. The right to hold and express an opinion is stated as article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With that comes the right to both seek and impart that through any form of media. However, this freedom includes hate speech and intolerance. The debate that arises is very typically centered on whether media sites have a responsibility to moderate content placed on their forum by users and the need for ethical guidelines in that region.

Sites:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

Grunwald Declaration: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/MEDIA_E.PDF

UNESCO Media Literacy:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/media-development/media-literacy/

UNESCO Promoting Media Accountability in South East Europe and Turkey:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/extrabudgetary-projects-on-freedom-of-expression/projects/media-accountability-south-east-europe-and-turkey/

UNESCO Communication and Information: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/events/calendar-of-events/events-websites/journalism-ethics-and-self-regulation-in-europe-new-media-old-dilemmas/conference-topics/

Topic II - Protecting World Heritage Sites in Conflict Zones

Among the functions of UNESCO established by its constitution UNESCO are maintaining and spreading knowledge as well as encouraging the spread of culture. To achieve this goal one of UNESCO's flagship programs has been the establishment of World Heritage Sites. World Heritage Sites are comprised of a mix of natural and manmade structures that are considered culturally relevant to the entire world, or part of global heritage. These sites as chosen by the World Heritage Committee which is made up of 21 elected UNESCO members. Beyond just world heritage sites many artifacts and locations that are not on the list may also be considered world heritage and subject to a number of treaties to be discussed. A concerning amount of destruction of world heritage has occurred as a result of conflict in regions like the Syria and in the areas where ISIL has been working to destroy many important sites. Protecting world heritage sites is a difficult prospect for UNESCO considering some of the conflicts that they are in and plans need to be made for the dangers that important sites face.

Endangerment of World Heritage

The sites that are endangered by conflict are variable and difficult to place under one category. Some are national parks with massive land area that may contain endangered species and some are temples that are smaller and may contain important relics of human history. UNESCO and the UN have many different plans to address these issue including UNESCO's Biodiversity Conservation in Armed Conflicts which mainly focuses on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Unite4Heritage campaign, started by UNESCO's Director General Irina Bokova, to address destruction in the middle east. The Biodiversity Conservation in Armed Conflicts is a plan that occurs in several phases. The first phase is to establish diplomacy of conservation which involves political and diplomatic support of the sites conservation as well as opening dialogs with all parties in the conflict to attain their cooperation. The second phase involves establishing feasible emergency action plans in the sites and starting a plan of community conservation. The third and final phase involved finalizing actions on the plans and meetings with high level officials in order to implement measures to correct the problems in the countries. The Unite4Heritage campaign has been more recently active and was developed in response to

the acts of ISIL. The campaign has worked to spread awareness and has deemed many of ISIL's acts war crimes and is working to stop the damage done.

UNESCO & UN Resolutions

The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was a treaty signed in 1954 in The Hague following the Second World War where many cultural artifacts were destroyed or lost. The convention entails its member states to provide adequate protection for their cultural artifacts, movable or immovable, and to register them so that they may be better protected. More importantly it asks states to provide protection for their cultural artifacts and to respects the culture of other states they may be in conflict with. While this has the benefit of encouraging good preservation it is irrelevant to non-state actors and in many countries particularly those in the ISIL crisis has not been followed even if signed.

The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property signed in 1970 was a treaty that encouraged tracking of artifacts especially from war zones with the implementation of inventories, export certificates, programs to have cultural artifacts returned to their rightful sender, and import export controls to limit trafficking. The problems in many warzones where cultural artifacts are at stake is rife with looting and black market trading. Even large sites such as temples are not immune as pieces may be removed for sale. By placing states above the fray and encouraging and international framework of protection it was hoped that many artifacts would be sent back to their original owners.

The World Heritage Convention ratified by UNESCO in 1972 is one of its most prominent pieces of legislation. It encourages nations to identify and conserve heritage they may possess in their country and to specifically identify sites that may be considered culturally relevant. The world heritage convention acts as the broadest statement of a UNESCO's dedication to protecting cultural heritage and countries who are signers are encouraged to record and educate on the culture they possess as well as protect it. In terms of in active conflicts this has been interpreted to mean many things including recording and identifying as much as possible about the

sites and the threats to them. In places like the rainforests in danger in the Democratic Republic of the Congo this also means scientific sampling and conservation effort for the species in danger in those areas.

Sites:

List of World Heritage Sites: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/

Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict:

http://whc.unesco.org/en/congobiodiversity/

Unite4Heritage: http://www.unite4heritage.org/

World Heritage Convention: http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/

Trafficking Convention:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/1970- convention/

Convention on Cultural Property in Armed Conflict:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/armed-conflictand-heritage/the-hague-convention/

Topic III - Genetic Research in Humans

Genetic research has been a hot button topic for quite some time. Much of the controversy revolves around Bioethics which has become increasingly pertinent as humans gain the ability to influence their fundamental makeup. Humans have in the last half century made incredible strides in the field of biology and have gained the ability to identify the potential for disease as well as new treatments to help deal with disease. This has however also given rise to the possibility of genetic discrimination and the private profiting from the human genome. A prime example of the latter case is Henrietta Lacks who was an unknowing donor of a widely used cancer cell line which was later commercialized and her family's medical records made public for the sake of research which many have found a disturbing example of what could happen to any individual. UNESCO takes the same stance with genetic research as it does with almost every other type of research and encourages

international cooperation and the sharing of discoveries for the benefit of all mankind. This is especially pertinent here because UNESCO has called the human genome a part of human heritage. While UNESCO has stated it seeks intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind many countries hold very different opinions and policies on where the line lies for ethical human genetic work based on religion, level of development, and cultural beliefs.

UNESCO & UN Resolutions

Both UNESCO and the UN as a whole have taken steps to formally address the issue of human cloning and genetic research. The UN has passed the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning which called upon member states to adopt all measures necessary to prohibit all forms of human cloning which are incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life, please not this is not binding to member states and possesses some ambiguous language. UNESCO has adopted the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. The declaration calls for ethical research for the benefit of all humanity and for the ethical treatment of individuals from whom genetic material is taken. The latter section is in regards to both research done and the possibility of discrimination based on the person's genes.

International Bioethics Committee(IBC)

The IBC is a body of 36 experts that follow biological research and works to ensure its ethical conduct and implementation. The experts are chosen by the Director-General who selects them for their knowledge of the field but takes into account cultural and geographic diversity. The IBC is convened at least once a year in order to provide recommendations on specific bioethical concerns. In regards to human cloning the IBC has recommended that the international community come together in order to create a binding resolution due to the advent of new technology and the potential for the abuse of human dignity created by the weakness of current UN legislation. The IBC has also released the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data which covered informed consent, confidentiality, genetic discrimination, international solidarity on genetic research and benefit sharing, among a wide variety of other things.

Links:

International Declaration on Human Genetic Data:

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17720&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

IBC Cloning Report:

http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/files/12828/12446291141IBC_Report_Human_Cloning_en.pdf/IBC%2BReport%2BHuman%2BCloning_en.pdf

UNESCO Bioethics:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/bioethics/

UN Declaration on Human Cloning: http://www.un.org/press/en/2005/ga10333.doc.htm

UNESCO IBC:

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/bioethics/international-bioethics-committee/