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Chair Report.

Chair Seoyeon Son
Chair Seunggeon Lee

General Assembly 3: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (GA3)

Chair Report

[Agenda A: Alleviating the gender gap in education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region]

Yonsei Model United Nations 2024

Chairs: Seoyeon Son, Seunggeon Lee

Committee Director: Wonseok Lee

About the United Nations

The United Nations is the largest intergovernmental organisation that was founded in 1945 after World War II. Consisting of 193 member states, the United Nations endeavours to sustain international peace, security and cooperation, guided by the United Nations Charter.

A replacement for the League of Nations, the United Nations has been the centre of discussion and euphony for multilateral issues such as general disarmament, international security, multilateral cooperation, international economy, human rights affairs and sustainable development. The United Nations is operated under six major organs - The Secretariat, General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice. The United Nations has also assigned other specialised agencies and rapporteurs in reach for international peace and security.

Sessions of committees pertaining to the United Nations carry arduous responsibilities of perpetuating peace and humanitarian rights. Delegates of member states thrive to represent their designated nation and to form an international consensus on a myriad of agendas.

Committee Introduction

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, or the Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues committee (SOCHUM) deals with various pressing and fundamental human rights issues in the global community. A vast conglomeration of topics are discussed, ranging anywhere from women's rights, discrimination of any kind, treatment of refugees, to even criminal justice, international drug trade, among other important issues. First established in 1945 in response to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the

primary goal of SOCHUM is to ensure the most basic and necessary rights that all people require and deserve, regardless of any circumstances such as race or religion. Due to the wide range and gravity of agendas this committee holds, SOCHUM works towards such goals through the promotion of international cooperation, not only between nations but also various non-governmental organisations or other UN entities as well.

Agenda Introduction

Agenda A: Alleviating the gender gap in education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region

Equal access to education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region continues to be a challenge, as the region faces multiple conflicts such as ongoing civil wars, proxy wars involving multiple governments, and ethno-religious conflicts. For instance, the Syrian civil war has displaced millions of people, and there are around an estimated 2 million out-of-school girls in Syria. The lack of political stability in some countries in the MENA region brought about some serious obstacles in providing universal education to children, regardless of gender. Furthermore, COVID-19 resulted in mass school closures and further loss of opportunities for education, as there was generally a lack of funding for teachers, learning materials, and technology.

It is within this context that the disparity between education attainment male and female students has been exacerbated. In 2023, the Global Gender Gap Index for education attainment is 95.2%, marking an improvement overall from the previous year. Variation in attainment levels has the second least amount of variance amongst all of the sub-indexes. Although significant investment was made from the 1970s in the MENA region, which saw a rise of education attainment from 2.3 years to 7.5 years, there are still noticeable differences within each country. One nation which has been facing criticism is Afghanistan, after the de facto government launched an initiative to ban females from receiving secondary education and attending universities. The regression from the previous elevation made in the public and political lives of females is a stark reminder that action must be taken to resolve disparities in education attainment in the MENA region. However, it is also important to note that the MENA region comprises multiple nations, each with varying degrees of progress on providing equal access to education to all children. For instance, in Egypt, the enrollment rate for primary education is over 90% for both males and females as of 2022, and around 30 to

35% of students go on to finish tertiary education. Therefore, delegates must try to set a common initiative with the aim of reducing the gender gap between education attainment which is feasible by all countries in the region, and to allocate resources and funding appropriately to help achieve such goals.

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Key Terms

Conflict zone

Regions where ongoing wars or political instability and strife impact aspects of daily life such as access to sanitation, education, housing, transportation, and health care services. Examples of current conflict zones are Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Yemen, Syria, the Gaza region, and the Sahel region, to name but just a few. Understanding conflict zones and how they impact educational opportunities will be a crucial component of this agenda.

MENA region

An abbreviation of the Middle East and North Africa region, comprising 19-27 different nations that vary by each NGO that characterises it. It includes members of the Arab League, in which Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen are included, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Israel. This term is especially important to narrow down research parameters and get a firm grasp on the geographical context of the agenda.

COVID-19

A global pandemic that began in Wuhan, China in 2019 and spread to all major regions of the world, resulting in 771 million cumulative cases and causing just under 7 million deaths as of 2023 and negatively impacting the world economy (WHO). As with

other terminology, in the context of this agenda the focus should be on how COVID-19 has affected educational opportunities in the MENA region.

Educational Disparity/Inequality

A term referring specifically to differences in opportunities for education and education attainment levels in general. These differences can be classified by nation, by region, or by gender. In the case of this agenda, the term educational disparity can be used to compare educational opportunities and attainment across different MENA nations, between the MENA region and the rest of the world, and more specifically educational disparity according to gender for each nation, region, and cross-comparisons between said nations and regions.

Gender gap/disparity

A general term that encompasses how differences in men and women impact opportunities in various aspects of life such as social, political, educational, and economic sectors. Bearing in mind the extensive implications of this term, it is important to narrow this definition down in the case of understanding the agenda. Within the context of this agenda, this term will be used to describe the differences in educational opportunity and attainment in male and female students starting from primary to tertiary education.

Historical Background

Starting from the second half of the 20th century when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began tracking progress on education enrollments, adult illiteracy levels have been steadily decreasing; enrollments from primary to tertiary levels of education also increased from less than half to more than two thirds. By the early 21st century, the majority of the world achieved 95-100% enrollment levels in primary education. Enrollment opportunities in secondary education have also steadily increased, but access to tertiary education continues to be a challenge for developing nations, as there is a lack of infrastructure and quality of education being provided.

The MENA region has experienced some of the most growth in terms of average years of schooling from the 1970s to the 2010s. The average years of schooling were 2.1 years, 3.3 years, 4.8 years, 6.1 years, and 7.2 years for each decade respectively, totaling to a percentage increase of 239% over this timespan.
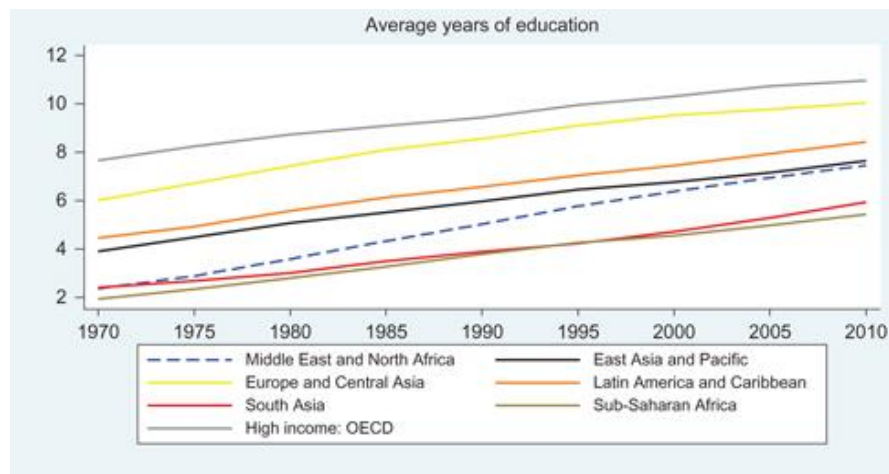

Figure #1 - Average years of education by region, Review of Middle East Economics and Finance, 2015.

Research from the *Review of Middle East Economics and Finance* suggests that the main reason for such a drastic increase had to do with the initially low levels of educational attainment combined with a large increase in public spending on education (Iqbal and Kiendrebeogo). However, there is a difference in the quality of education being provided, which is responsible for the lack of labour participation in women even with educational parity in terms of simple attainment being reached. For instance, data gathered in 2000 shows that the average percentage of the female population that are illiterate over the age of 15 is 42% whereas it is 22% for males. Even within a smaller age bracket of 15-24 years the figures are still 23% for females and 11% for males. This suggests differences in the quality of education being provided for male and female students. The percentage of rural Egyptians who have never attended school comes out to 45% for women and 23% for men, whereas for urban Egyptians the figures are 22% and 12% respectively. This demonstrates a difference in educational opportunities in rural areas compared to urban ones (Roudi Fahimi and Moghadam).

The MENA region has also long been the centre of several conflicts, due to long standing historical and political instabilities. According to data provided by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), one in five children are not in school in the MENA region, and an estimated 3 million people should have had access to schooling if it weren't for conflicts that happened in the region. More than 8,850 educational institutions have been destroyed in the aftermath of the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, making access to education all the more difficult under these circumstances. Adolescent girls are 1.5 times more likely to be out of lower secondary education in the region, and one in five girls are married before the age of 18, which impacts their education opportunities and labour participation.

The Syrian civil war began when pro-democracy protests that began during the Arab spring in 2011 spread across the nation, prompting the government to use unjust violent force upon its citizens. With over 500,000 casualties, the Syrian civil war has impacted access to quality education for the majority of its youth. Data from 2014 obtained from Save the Children concluded that Syria went from having over a 90% literacy rate to having the second worst enrollment rate in the world. Causing a refugee crisis and forcing millions to become internally displaced, this war is a prime example of how ongoing conflicts are exacerbating the gender gap in education in the MENA region. Another example, the civil war in Yemen began in 2014 when Iran-backed Houthi rebels took over the western end of the country, sparking a conflict between the UN backed Hadi government and the former Saleh government. Saudi Arabia led a coalition of Sunni states consisting mostly of airstrikes in an effort to take back control of Sanaa in the west. Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP), a terrorist organisation, has expanded its influence as a result of this political struggle. As a result, over 377,000 deaths have occurred, with more than 4 million civilians being displaced and ¾ of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. More than 2 million children are out of school, and an estimated 8.1 million children are in need of emergency education.

Status Quo

The Persistence of Geopolitical Conflicts Hindering Progress on Education

Afghanistan's takeover by the Taliban has had the most visible impact on the issue of gender inequality in education, as the terrorist group has outlawed female education starting

from secondary school altogether. Although Afghanistan had been making noticeable progress, having over 3.8 million students enrolled in 1st through 12th grades from 2002 to 2021, and over 100,000 women receiving tertiary education, this was quickly halted by the implementation of highly restrictive measures by the new regime.

The latest development in the region is the Israel Palestine conflict in the Gaza strip. An instigation through an airstrike and border breaches by Hamas and other Palestinian on Israel prompted the Israeli forces to retake the territory. Hamas has taken hostages, some of whom are children, and Israel launched a series of retaliatory attacks that severely damaged infrastructure in Gaza. So far, more than 6,000 children have been killed as a result of this conflict, and up to 1.8 million people are estimated to be displaced. Emergency education centres have been situated in nearby regions, as Gaza is currently unreachable.

However, nations such as the UAE, Kuwait, and Jordan have made significant progress in minimising educational inequality due to their political and economic stability. As such, these nations should set the blueprint for the region as a whole, setting guidelines and joint initiatives to help politically and economically stabilise the region as a whole and facilitate infrastructures and systems to improve the accessibility and quality of education in the MENA region.

Poor Quality of Education

The general quality of education is also an issue, as most participating MENA nations rank bottom in various international measures for assessing education quality such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Only half of the children in school meet the minimum required threshold for reading, mathematics and science based skills. Combined with a poor student to teacher ratio which ranges from 8.8 in Kuwait to 29.37 in Djibouti, and the usage of outdated curricula, the quality of education is a factor of great significance that contributes to education inequality in the region. The neglecting of compulsory education in lieu of higher education is also evident, as Gulf states spend four times more on higher education than compulsory education. However, the reason for the low quality of education may lie in ineffective management rather than a lack of public spending, as the overreliance on central authorities to meticulously manage all facets of education is having adverse effects on the effectiveness in the allocation of the necessary resources. Treating compulsory

education with the same significance as basic education should be the priority when it comes to improving the quality of education in the region.

Impact of COVID-19 on Education

Besides this, access to education during COVID19 severely deteriorated as well, due to the general lack of technological infrastructure to hold online classes, and a longer average school closure period compared to the rest of the world. Although the gap on education has been steadily decreasing, and women now exceed men in terms of tertiary education by a miniscule percentage, COVID-19 had adverse impacts that disproportionately impacted female students. Female students were expected to take over household responsibilities if their mothers were infected, thus impacting dropout rates. Furthermore, the lack of access to technology in the region that makes remote learning possible also contributed to a widening gap in the access to education, as the percentage of females in the MENA region that used the internet was 44.2%, compared to 58.5% for their male counterparts. This, along with a lack of clear guidelines for teachers on how to navigate online education clearly had a negative impact on education opportunities in the region as a whole. Only 18% of countries provided training on online classes as of data collected in 2020 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). During the pandemic, female students were expected to take over household responsibilities if their parents became affected by the pandemic, and as a result more female students dropped out of the tertiary education sector.

Past Actions by Nations and Organisations

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every child has the right to education, and that at least up to elementary education should be made compulsory, and opportunities for higher education should also be provided. It further emphasises that education should also promote respect, understanding and cooperation between all nations, ethnicities.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is a comprehensive agreement with 54 articles and sets the political, social, economic, and cultural rights of all children. Articles 28 and 29 focus on the right to

education of each child and the goals of education respectively, and it reiterates many of the points raised in article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights.

Convention against Discrimination in Education

The Convention against Discrimination in Education is the first internationally recognized agreement with a legal force dedicated solely to the right of education. Unlike other treaties, this treaty does not contain any reservations, which means that States that corroborate cannot exclude certain aspects or articles of the treaty and should accept them in full. 109 states have agreed to this convention thus far. This treaty reaffirms that education is a right, echoing what article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 28 and 29 of the UNCRC have emphasised. Other than ensuring that primary education is free and that secondary and higher education is available, this treaty also focuses on equal educational standards across all public educational institutions at the same level in relation to its quality. In other words, not only does it focus on equal opportunity, it also focuses on equal quality of education. However, monitoring progress remains a challenge, as the main source of data collected is directly from governments, and international bodies have limited jurisdiction on gathering independent data as member States are voluntarily submitting the relevant data.

Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States

This convention was an agreement by the Arab States at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) summit in 1978 to recognize achievements in higher education through the free movement of educational resources and information on studies, diplomas and degrees, encouraging developments in education infrastructure in the region, among other aims. A revised convention was agreed upon again in 2022, which specified measures on how to report progress on the evaluation of developments in higher education, emphasising transparency and reliability of such procedures. Furthermore, it recognised the importance of facilitating partial studies along with higher education certificates, and the establishment of a national higher education information centre.

Safe Schools Declaration

The Safe Schools Declaration is a pledge to protect students, teachers and professors and to keep providing education during armed conflicts,with 118 States endorsing the declaration which was first opened in 2015. It also aims to stop educational institutions being taken over for military use. However, key nations in the MENA region such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have not signed this pledge, but nations such as Afghanistan and Yemen have signed this treaty yet failed to uphold its goals.

Education 2030 Framework for Action

The Incheon Declaration adopted in 2015 offers guidelines on how to achieve sustainable development goal 4 (SDG-4) to provide quality education. Since a number of agreements have reaffirmed the right to education itself, this declaration states that educational policies should now aim to efficiently and effectively carry out equitable education policies. It also points out inclusion of minorities and disabled persons, and striving for gender equality in education by providing equal opportunities and removing stereotypes and discrimination based on gender. It also stresses the importance of ensuring a certain standard of education by ensuring the safety and reliability of schools, and government systems that empower teachers. A testament to how comprehensive this framework is is that it also includes how to address education in emergency situations such as natural disasters, pandemics, and conflicts. It endorses governments to refer to guidelines such as the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards in their planning and responses to providing education in emergency situations.

Stances of Major Countries and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

China

In recent years, China has increased cooperation in the Middle East to extend beyond energy sources and economic gains through the formation of various conventions such as the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) in 2004 and the China-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Strategic Dialogue in 2010. Its 2016 Arab paper policy further outlines China's intent to foster a closer relationship in the region.

In terms of education, China has established several university exchange programs with various nations in the Middle East through the formation of a China-Arab Higher

Education and Scientific Research Cooperation Seminar which is under CASCF, a China-Arab University Presidents Forum, and a 20+20 Cooperation Plan for Chinese and African Institutes of Higher Education, with an estimated 17,000 exchange students as of 2014. China has also begun an initiative to set up 15 Confucius Institutes (CIs) as of 2021. CIs are funded by the Chinese government and are aimed at promoting Chinese language and culture. The reception by the local communities in the Middle East have generally been positive, as many Arab states recognise China's importance in the global economy and see China as an alternative ally to the United States of America (USA).

Afghanistan

After the takeover of the government by the Taliban, Afghanistan has banned female education beyond primary school. This comes at a major cost to the progress that the country has been making in offering equal educational opportunities to all children, as rising literacy rates and school enrollment rates have halted. Afghanistan is desperately in need of changes that will ensure girls will be able to receive education beyond the primary years again. The quality of education, though its importance must be taken into account, is less of an immediate concern at the moment, as political tensions are high in the nation. Rather, focus should be placed on trying to convince the Afghan regime to reopen education to female students, so that progress can be made in the future to ensure minimised differences in education based on gender.

Palestine

Palestine has a compulsory schooling age from 6 to 15. A grade point system decides whether a child moves onto high school after secondary education ends, after which there are opportunities to venture into higher education. However, the high levels of unemployment are concerning, as a large percentage of young Palestinians remain without work. In May 2022, Palestine made a pledge to decrease the gap between education and employment, and later that year the Palestine Educational TV channel was created and over 70 schools have been connected to the internet in an effort to digitise their education system. There is still a long way to go in terms of providing the necessary technical infrastructure to support this nationwide, and it is clear that additional funding is needed.

Children in the West Bank are currently most affected, as the standoff between Hamas and the Israeli government continues to destroy infrastructures and livelihoods of the civilians living there. An estimated 9,650 students, teachers, and staff have been impacted by Israeli attacks using teargas, stun grenades, and other weaponry from 2019 to 2021. As the conflict continues to escalate in the West Bank, more hours of schooling will be lost and more destruction of education centres will follow as well. Palestine needs urgent assistance so that it can provide its citizens with emergency education as the conflict continues.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has made significant improvements in enrollments from the 1970s onwards. More than 50 universities and 30,000 schools exist with more planned in the future. In universities, over 50% of the students are female, and special needs schools and adult learning centres. Currently, over 90% of males and 70% of females are literate, and for children under 15, these figures are 89.2% and 93.2% respectively.

However, problems still persist with regards to achievements in education, with boys consistently ranking lower compared to girls in various measures such as the National Assessment of Learning Outcomes (NALO), TIMSS and college admissions tests. This gap in learning has to do with the separation of schools according to gender, with male students only being taught by male teachers and vice versa. Although the kingdom announced that boys will be taught by female teachers starting from 2019, a more normalised school environment is necessary to not hinder early development which can cause differences in educational outcomes. Furthermore, steps should be taken to minimise student absenteeism and missing school time, so that each student receives approximately the same amount of education.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Like Saudi Arabia and many other nations in the MENA region, the UAE has made significant progress in education attainment, with literacy rates rising from 58% and 38% for males and females in 1975 to nearly 95% for both males and females at present. A number of universities in both the private and public centres offer humanities and STEM programmes. The government curriculum consists of a K-12 structure and follows most modern guidelines

in education. Special education is also offered to students with disabilities or learning problems.

The main issue with the UAE is the inequalities in the quality of education received due to stark differences in socioeconomic status. Students of a wealthy background attend private schools, where smaller school sizes, better facilities and teaching staff are available. However, considering that a large number of students that graduate from private schools move on to higher education outside of the country, and that some form of employment is guaranteed to all its citizens, the UAE's education system is one of the most modernised ones in the MENA region.

Possible Solutions

1. Deployment of Emergency Education Centres in Warzones

One of the main challenges to providing equal opportunities for education is the political instability of the region. Although the ultimate aim should be to end the conflict altogether, in the short term the most realistic solution is to provide emergency education centres in conflict zones so that children can keep learning. While there have been efforts at relocating students to nearby schools safe from the conflict zone, the issue of overcrowded classrooms and general inaccessibility under intense war situations remains a challenge. More recently, there have been efforts to introduce remote learning options such as radio stations and online learning websites. This should alleviate the physical burden of having to travel vast distances to safe areas when children are already displaced, and with technical support can be a more effective method to providing emergency education to children in conflict zones. It is important to note that humanitarian assistance should cover all essential aspects of human life including education for children, and not be limited to offering food and shelter.

2. Improving the Quality of Education

The large wealth gaps in the MENA region contribute to significant differences in the quality of education received for students. Students of a higher economic background take a disproportionate advantage since the majority of them attend private schools that have better facilities and curriculum compared to public schools. However, the vast majority of students are taught outdated curriculum and are at a disadvantage in terms of the learning environment

and resources at their disposal. Differences in rural and urban areas also persist, as children in rural areas have a lower enrollment rate compared to children in urban areas. To solve this issue, an education system that ensures achievement of a minimum standard of learning should be implemented across the region. The willingness to sustain such policies by regularly collecting necessary data and ensuring that standards are being met, reaching a consensus on what inequity in education looks like, and effective planning and allocation of resources are some key factors that will contribute to a higher quality of education in the region.

3. Decreasing Barriers to Tertiary Education

Due to stark differences in socioeconomic status contributing to vast differences in the amount of education received, higher education remains a burden to the majority of students in the MENA region. Furthermore, because of COVID-19, universities lost both public funding, tuition, and other sources of income, resulting in closures and dropouts. COVID-19 also impacted the general mobility of students, professors and researchers, making it difficult for international students to study at these universities. Although online classes had been offered during the pandemic, differences in internet coverage impacted the quality of education. Since the pandemic is over, it is imperative to increase both public and private funding to universities so that additional scholarship opportunities and better facilities can be offered to all students wishing to pursue higher education.

Questions to Consider

- What impacts do conflicts have on access to education as a whole, and how does it affect gender disparities in the MENA region?
- What are some ways to de-escalate conflicts in the MENA region and provide humanitarian aid in the form of education?
- How can the curriculum and learning material be improved upon generally in the region and which nation will serve as a realistic benchmark?
- In what ways can cooperation be bolstered between more and less developed countries within the region and the world as a whole to promote quality education?

- What impacts in terms of education did COVID-19 have on the region as a whole, and how does it differ from the rest of the world?

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General Assembly 3: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (GA3)

Chair Report

[Agenda B: Ensuring the Rights of Indigenous Minorities in the Face of Environmental Crises]

Yonsei Model United Nations 2024

Chairs: Seoyeon Son, Seunggeon Lee

Committee Director: Wonseok Lee

About the United Nations

The United Nations is the largest intergovernmental organisation that was founded in 1945 after World War II. Consisting of 193 member states, the United Nations endeavours to sustain international peace, security and cooperation, guided by the United Nations Charter.

A replacement for the League of Nations, the United Nations has been the centre of discussion and euphony for multilateral issues such as general disarmament, international security, multilateral cooperation, international economy, human rights affairs and sustainable development. The United Nations is operated under six major organs - The Secretariat, General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice. The United Nations has also assigned other specialised agencies and rapporteurs in reach for international peace and security.

Sessions of committees pertaining to the United Nations carry arduous responsibilities of perpetuating peace and humanitarian rights. Delegates of member states thrive to represent their designated nation and to form an international consensus on a myriad of agendas.

Committee Introduction

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, or the Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues committee (SOCHUM) deals with various pressing and fundamental human rights issues in the global community. A vast conglomeration of topics are discussed, ranging anywhere from women's rights, discrimination of any kind, treatment of refugees, to even criminal justice, international drug trade, among other important issues. First established in 1945 in response to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the

primary goal of SOCHUM is to ensure the most basic and necessary rights that all people require and deserve, regardless of any circumstances such as race or religion. Due to the wide range and gravity of agendas this committee holds, SOCHUM works towards such goals through the promotion of international cooperation, not only between nations but also various non-governmental organisations or other UN entities as well.

Agenda Introduction

Agenda B: Ensuring the Rights of Indigenous Minorities in the Face of the Environmental Crises

It would be an understatement to say that climate crises are one of the most urgent issues the global society is facing. Alongside rising sea levels, destruction of ecosystems, or hotter temperatures, the climate crisis poses a more direct risk on society as well through problems such as food insecurity, water scarcity, loss of habitat, or even exacerbating poverty. Environmental conservation thus has a direct link to our most basic and necessary survival.

However, not all people are exposed to the dangers of climate change equally. Some communities are more directly influenced by these changes. One example is indigenous minorities. As they continue to lead a harmonious lifestyle with the environment, they experience the damaging effects of climate crises more quickly and intensely. This problem is accelerated by the fact that indigenous communities remain powerless in the economic and political sector. As such, they are unable to voice their specific needs that must be tailored to their unique lifestyle in the face of environmental crises. Delegates must find a way for external entities such as governments or organisations to help these communities, yet avoid appropriating indigenous minorities and intervening excessively.

Another thing delegates must consider is the significance nature has on indigenous communities. It is not only a means of survival, but also a way of culture. It is a way to continue their tradition and heritage. Therefore, certain solutions such as simply migrating to another region may be deemed inappropriate according to each communities' lifestyles. Such cultural significance may be hard for non-members of the community to understand, which is why ample communication with the community members themselves is important. Delegates must keep this in mind and devise ways that allow the cooperation between various entities involved in resolving this issue.

Key Terms

Indigenous

The United Nations has not adopted a single definition of the word "indigenous" considering the diversity among different groups. Instead, they have developed a consensus on the understanding of indigenous groups on the following standards:

- Self- identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (United Nations)

In short, indigenous culture can be identified as having a distinct sense of culture within a separate community that works to maintain their traditional ways of life. Because there is no certain "checklist" through which a community can be identified as "indigenous," indigenous communities are mostly self-identified. While this could be a way to respect such cultures, it also poses administrative impediments in that we cannot draw a clear line to which extent such policies can be applied to.

Due to their distinct lifestyles, indigenous communities enjoy particular rights that allow them to continue their traditional culture, such as the right to practise customary law, territorial autonomy, the right to protect traditional knowledge, intellectual property and cultural heritage.

Minority

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the official definition of the word 'minority' when referring to a group of people is 'any small group in society that is different from the

rest because of their race, religion, or political beliefs, or a person who belongs to such a group.'

However, we must not only consider "small" in terms of physical size, but also through intangible measures as well. The best example would be political power. Indigenous groups rarely enjoy political representation in national legislature despite them taking up a considerable proportion of the population. This leads to a vicious cycle of social problems such as poverty, social exclusion, discrimination, etc. In other words, the word 'minority' should be interpreted in respect to the actual power they have influence over society.

Indigenous Land Rights

With colonisation and imperialism, indigenous people have been stripped of their traditional land. Despite several decades passing by, and imperialism no longer in world order, we might assume that proper compensation, or at least the return of land would have been carried out. However, that is a grossly mistaken perception.

Most of the time, indigenous people are still confined to a restricted area, or "indigenous conservation areas" to continue their lifestyle. But this still does not guarantee legal rights over their land to do what they want. In fact, a lot of the time, while indigenous groups may inhabit the land, the usage of it lies in the hands of governments.

The term "land rights" in this agenda doesn't only mean the physical inhabitation of land, but also all legal and moral privileges that come with it–how to manage it, how to utilise or preserve it, etc. In other words, it means the right to form their own community without any external influences under the presumption that it does the public no harm.

Environmental Crises

Environmental crises refers to all abnormal weather events, ranging from increased precipitation amounts, shorter seasons, to more long-term effects such as rising sea levels or the melting of glaciers. The term is phrased as "crises" in that it poses a danger to the survival of human civilization, whether directly or indirectly. Such danger is exacerbated for indigenous communities due to their high relevance with nature in terms of their lifestyle or cultural traditions. When we put the terms environmental crises and survival in the context of

indigenous groups, we must consider not only their physical but also cultural prosperity as well.

Representation

By definition according to the Cambridge dictionary, the first definition of 'representation' is "a person or organisation that speaks, acts, or is present officially for someone else." But another definition that is often overlooked, yet of grave importance, is the one below: "the fact of including different types of people, for example in films, politics, or sport, so that all different groups are represented."

As mentioned before, it is hard, or even impossible to fully understand and represent indigenous culture from the perspective of an outsider. As such, it is important that indigenous groups represent themselves, whether it be in policymaking or in social campaigns. In other words, it is not only the mere *consideration* of their opinions or stances that should be considered, but just and proper representation.

Historical Background

The relationship between indigenous peoples and the environment dates as far back as the establishment of these communities. Yet with decades of colonisation, their connection was forcefully weakened, leading to these groups having to fight for their generations of traditions and culture in regard to the environment.

Climate disasters are further magnified and accelerated for indigenous communities due to their lifestyle of high relevance with nature. Their lack of infrastructure attributes to such maximised impacts of climate change. Because many indigenous communities lack drinking water treatment facilities, especially for those on remote islands, climate change is threatening their access to clean water. For example, higher hospitalisation rates for diarrheal disease have been observed for babies living on the Fort Apache reservation in Arizona than the general U.S. population. Food sources are especially threatened due to indigenous communities' high reliance on nature for them. For example, the Melanesian people are known to get 70% of their dietary needs from nature through ways such as agroforestry, wild food gathering, and fishing. The Inari Sámi people also get 75% of their protein through

fishing and hunting. Juan Lucas Restrepo, Director-General of the Alliance of Bioversity-International and CIAT, pointed out that despite centuries of survival, Indigenous Peoples' food systems are likely to disappear within a few years with the acceleration of climate change threatening their future.

Dangers don't pertain to physical harm, but mental illnesses as well. With 99% of indigenous people in the United States historically losing their land, it led to the land dispossession, displacement, and forced migration of indigenous populations. This was a significant toll on their mental health as it led to the separation of families and communities. The detriment was accelerated due to the high level of cultural and spiritual connections many indigenous people have with their historic land. This would lead to the extinction of both the community itself and the mental health of the people.

Recognizing such significance, efforts have been made to alleviate these dangers. The Kyoto Protocol is often praised for its significance in environmental actions, for example by being the first international treaty that was legally binding. It also recognized the "common but differentiated" responsibilities of countries, placing the burden only on developed countries as an effort to relieve historic inequalities in environmental actions. However, the Kyoto Protocol failed to consider another constantly side-lined stakeholder in this matter: indigenous groups. They were merely seen as only victims of environmental crises, rather than actual agents with the potential and capabilities to take action.

Despite such negligence, indigenous elders stuck together as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to participate in the first Conference of the Parties (COP) session in 1995. In 2008, they established the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) to be a legal constituent of the UNFCCC. This organisation would be the negotiating body for indigenous peoples in future conferences. Eventually in the Paris agreement, the role of indigenous tribes in terms of traditional knowledge and innovation to the environment was formally recognized. They slowly started to gain a voice, which was manifested through the establishment of various organisations. In the COP21 conference, held in 2015, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIPP) was founded as a means of communicating and exchanging knowledge, tradition, and efforts between indigenous communities. Not only did this mark a rather improved status of indigenous peoples in the global community, but it also served as a beacon of hope for indigenous tribes. In COP22, the conference officially welcomed a

"multi-stakeholder dialogue" which included indigenous communities. Furthermore, in 2018, the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) for LCIPP was established for the purpose of implementing the objectives of LCIPP. In COP25, 2019, the establishment of these two organisations were further enforced by adopting a two-year work-plan between FWG and LCIPP.

Despite the tremendous amount of progress that has been made, these efforts remain to be either insufficient or unexpressed. For example, in COP26, there was a protest led by indigenous activists for further representation. While they may have earned a spot in the organisation, the UN in this case, their voices are not taken seriously. Eriel Deranger, the executive director of Indigenous Climate Action and member of the facilitated working group for North America, states that indigenous communities are "more visible but [are] not taken any more seriously," and that they are "romanticised and tokenized." In other words, the incorporation of indigenous delegates was a mere facade, and they remain to be patronised by having their concerns taken as illegitimate.

Alongside participation in policy-making, there has been a long history of direct activism of indigenous groups against environmental destruction itself. One prominent example is the Land Back movement. This movement is an indigenous-led movement that aims to restore and revitalise the land's lost biodiversity. Their efforts have shown to be successful, with The Rappahannock Tribe being given back their land that was previously taken by the government. With their newly restored land, the tribe plans to restore nature trails considering the region's importance as a nesting location for migratory birds.

Status Quo

Deprivation of Indigenous Land Rights

While a small number of indigenous people survive, the impact they have on the world suggest otherwise. With 2.5 billion people relying on communal and indigenous land, and Indigenous Peoples occupying 65% of the land on Earth, the extent of their influence goes well beyond their community. However, despite such numbers, only 18% of such land are granted legal ownership to these indigenous communities. This huge disparity is not only significant in terms of the physical displacement of the groups, but also in that it signifies the disenfranchisement of the rights to resources and preservation of the land as well.

Reclaiming rights to what was rightfully mine requires no explanation, but there is a more tangible and economic reason to it as well. Studies have repeatedly shown that land preservation and resilience is better retained when indigenous people take ownership of the land. For example, deforestation rates around the world in indigenous-secured lands are significantly lower than lands that lack tenure-security. In Bolivia, the average deforestation rate of tenure-secured lands by indigenous people was 0.15% between 2000 and 2012, compared to the rate of 0.43% of non-tenured lands.

Indigenous communities also bring economic benefits as well. This is especially true for the case of Latin America, in which the costs of securing indigenous lands in the Amazon is a mere 1% compared to the economic benefits they derive. In Bolivia, Brazil, and Columbia, the benefits indigenous communities derive are estimated to be between $1845 to $4158 per acre, or a total of $679 billion to $1,530 billion for the next 20 years. This is a stark comparison to the amount of money it takes to ensure tenure-security for indigenous lands, which are $18.21 per acre in Bolivia, $27.52 per acre in Brazil, and $2.43 per acre in Colombia.

Indigenous lands have also shown to have higher resilience to climate change than other lands. A study led by the University of Sheffield revealed that the forest areas where protected and indigenous land areas overlapped had the highest integrity. However, this study also observed that for the case of Asia and Americas, the effect on integrity was worse in indigenous lands than on-protected areas. A possible explanation for such puzzling results could be the deprivation of indigenous rights. While an area could be recognized as traditionally indigenous, indigenous people may have little control over the land. This is especially true as indigenous lands are usually rich with resources such as oil or gas deposits, which leads to exploitation. This leads us to the next topic of the lack of political representation.

Lack of Political Representation
With the deep cultural and traditional connections indigenous people hold in their communities, non-members of the community can rarely grasp the true essence and magnitude of the culture indigenous people hold. As such, any representation that is done by anyone other than themselves could be deemed as incompetent. Proper representation especially in terms of politics and policymaking is crucial as inappropriate policies could

only exacerbate the problem rather than solving it. One example could be the failure of indigenous policies implemented by the Australian government in 2017. With the threat from the United Nations that Australia might lose a seat from the Security Council if they didn't enact upon the UN's recommendations on indigenous issues, the main cause of failure for such policies is pointed out to be the "savage cuts to services, a loss of local control, a failure to listen to Indigenous voices, and policy-making which is paternalistic and overly bureaucratic." In other words, it was trying to solve an inside matter from an outside perspective.

Not only the neglect of opinion, but also the number of indigenous representatives themselves are severely lacking. For example, even in Latin America, where indigenous people take up 8% of the population, there is little to no representation of such proportions in the national congress or legislature. For example, in Mexico, despite indigenous people taking up 15% of the population, only 2.8% of total seats in the national legislature were given to such groups. This translates into a representation gap of 81%. As they lack representation, the problem of lacking proper infrastructure or recognition of rights is perpetuated, leading to an endless cycle.

Growing Resilience of Indigenous Communities

While they are among the ones most impacted by climate change, it would be a grave inaccuracy to merely view them as passive victims. In fact, the resilience of indigenous communities has not only astounded researchers, but they also provide us with new and creative insights for future climate change resilience policies.

What makes them most vulnerable to climate change is also what makes them most resilient against it: their intimacy with nature. Because they interact with their local surroundings as a part of their daily lifestyle, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) states that indigenous communities are often better suited to provide information on local biodiversity than researchers themselves. The Charzzani people, an indigenous community in the Andes, used their knowledge to predict the changing weather patterns and subsequently altered their environmental management practices. A study about the Inuit and the local river also revealed the necessity for further communication and collaboration among indigenous groups and scientific researchers, as they often provide insights that were previously unknown.

Resilience doesn't only mean adoption, but also efforts for active changes as well, such as through political participation. One example is the Sami in The Sami are participating in national politics by having their own political parties and traditional organisations such as the Swedish Sami Herders Association (SSR).

Past Actions by Nations and Organisations

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Adopted in the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is one of the most fundamental documents in the matter of indigenous rights. It would be an understatement to say that this is the foundation for all resolutions, projects, and even recognition itself for indigenous matters. By providing an universal framework that ensures the minimum right of well-being for indigenous peoples, it highlights the unique and specific situations indigenous groups face that may be overlooked in other more general resolutions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In terms of this document from the perspective of our agenda, it is also significant in that it recognizes the "indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment." As such, it has been the building blocks for numerous consequent resolutions and projects on the matter of indigenous participation for environmental preservation.

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, or UNPFII, is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council on matters relating to the economic, social, cultural, environmental, educational welfare of indigenous groups, and much more. They provide their insight and express their opinions through ECOSOC to the United Nations, which fosters cooperation and coordination between these two previously distant groups. Through this forum, it ensures the efficacy and sustainability of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC)

The Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change, or IIPFCC, is a representative body of indigenous peoples in the UNFCCC. By providing a means for various different groups to come together, it marks a collective effort for indigenous people on the matter of environmental concerns. They have made active participation in various United Nations environment-related events, such as within the UNFCCC or COP meetings.

Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIPP)

The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIPP) is a means for indigenous groups to communicate with each other and exchange information regarding climate change. Information can range from local practices to knowledge, technology, and efforts of local and indigenous communities in response to climate change. Through a collective platform, LCIPP facilitates not only communication but also mitigation and adaptation of indigenous groups to climate change. As such, they enhance participation of these groups in the UNFCCC process as well. Their three main functions are defined to be 1) knowledge, 2) capacity for engagement, and 3) climate change policies and actions. LCIPP has a Facilitative Working Group (FWG) inside their organisation, which fosters the implementation of such goals into the real world.

Green Climate Fund's Indigenous People's Policy

In recognition of the distinct identities and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples from mainstream society, the Green Climate Fund adopted an Indigenous People's Policy as of 2015. This allows GCF to predict and avoid any adverse impacts their activities might have on the indigenous community. Consequently, Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) has been established to maximise coordination between relevant stakeholders. However, there has been criticism that despite their adoption of such policies, GCF has failed to implement these into their actual business practices. For example, their projects that required intervention failed to obtain Indigenous Peoples' Free, Prior, and Informed Consent and never seriously considered how indigenous worldviews could have potential to GCF projects.

Stances of Major Countries and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Brazil

Despite Brazil having a history of recognizing indigenous rights through its constitution, since President Jair Bolsonaro rose to the office in 2019, indigenous rights have been drastically deteriorating. As a result, recent governmental policies have been showing a trend of seeking to minimise indigenous rights to traditional land.

For example, President Bolsonaro promoted a bill that would require indigenous people to prove their physical presence on their land on October 5, 1988, which is the day the Brazilian constitution was enacted. This would leave numerous people displaced. Furthermore, using the Russo-Ukrainian war as a bait, he has been pushing for a law that allows mining on indigenous reservations. While it is true the war has highly impacted the supply of fertilisers, this can be only seen as an excuse to justify the encroachment of indigenous lands considering the fact that only 11% of the necessary resources lie under indigenous land.

Consequently, indigenous land was 138% larger compared to the year before President Bolsonaro came to the office, along with an 137% increase in illegal logging, mining, poaching, and land grabbing in 2020 compared to 2018. Not only does this threaten the survival of indigenous groups, but it also leads to further environmental consequences such as exploitation and degradation of land.

Columbia

Historically, Colombia didn't recognize indigenous rights to land. However, since the mid-1980s, 90% of the Colombian Amazon is largely under the collective ownership of 55,000 indigenous people, and relatively little colonisation has been undertaken. More than half of the Colombian Amazon has been given to indigenous groups as the name of "resguardos." Resguardos are a legal framework that recognizes the legal rights of indigenous people over their land, providing autonomy and self-governance, along with governmental recognition of indigenous environmental management mechanisms. As a result, indigenous resguardos areas in the Colombian Amazon show the highest level of biodiversity in the region.

Despite its significance, however, there have been significant challenges posed as well. The biggest is the conflict with armed groups. Illegal armed groups are engaged in illegal logging or crop cultivation, all of which require land. As such, utilising the lack of legal protection of indigenous lands, they dispossess indigenous lands. Having nowhere to go and their resilience weakened, indigenous people have no choice but to turn to illegal activities as well, creating a never-ending cycle which not only diminishes the survival of indigenous groups but also perpetuates environmentally degrading practices.

It is imperative that governmental efforts are made to fill this gap in policies and legal framework. Conservation policies must be more inclusive and participatory towards indigenous groups and address the fundamental structural contradictions in deforestation policies. For example, while small-scale deforestation done by illegal armed groups are considered criminal, they also don't provide a viable, alternate economic option. Yet at the same time, large-scale deforestation done by corporations is excused. Solving such irony is crucial for building a sustainable framework that ensures indigenous land rights.

Indonesia

Indonesia is a country that has one of the richest indigenous populations, with over 300 indigenous groups and 700 languages spoken. Despite such diversity, Indonesia has been lacking in recognizing indigenous rights–the most prominent being that they have yet to sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Such neglect can be seen in internal politics as well. One of the biggest problems is palm oil plantations. Indonesia is the biggest exporter of palm oil in the global economy to the extent that it was the number one export in 2021 with $27.3 billion exports. This, however, comes at the expense of indigenous rights. Due to palm oil plantations, indigenous people have lost their traditional forests and lands which left them displaced. With the Indonesian government turning a blind eye, indigenous communities lost 24 million hectares of indigenous land; 14 million being for palm oil plantations. This can be seen as a result of the overwhelming combination of weak governmental laws, poor oversight by the government, and failure of the companies to ensure proper human rights (which are their legal obligation). As a result, there has been increasing conflict over the lands between indigenous/local citizens and corporations. For example, Orang Rimbia in Jambi, Central Sumatra, are living in poverty due to palm oil plantations stripping away their inhabited land.

As a result, the forest that once was more than enough to sustain not only them but also external communities is now insufficient to provide the bare minimum. Indigenous women are especially affected by this as they are the main actors in passing down traditional culture and knowledge.

While indigenous communities face significant challenges, it would be an understatement of their resilience to say that they made no progress. In fact, ironically, indigenous people were able to prosper during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic brought younger people in the cities back into rural areas, allowing communities to respond better to environmental threats such as deforestation or floods. This allowed them to embrace technology for their resilience as well, a progress which can be seen as a development that could aid their sustainability.

Furthermore, governmental action is being undertaken to improve such situations. Not only has there been ongoing bills to legally recognize indigenous people, As of September 2023, the government recognized the rights of 15 Dayak indigenous communities to the 70,000 hectares of the forest in Borneo. Dayak communities are a loose group of ethnic communities native to Borneo. While there is much more to go, this is significant in that the actual recognition and efforts for indigenous rights are now visible in governmental policies.

The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)

The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs is a non-profit organisation that defends the rights of indigenous people around the world. They focus on documentation and capacity development and advocacy as a means of support on all regional, domestic, and international levels.

By obtaining the status of Observer NGO at the United Nations, they have been involved in numerous international conferences to allow the intervention of other indigenous groups that would not have been able to participate otherwise.

In the field of climate change, they mainly focus on activities on national levels, UNFCCC, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). For national levels, IWGIA ensures the effective participation of indigenous groups in national climate policy formulation and implementation. IWGIA ensures the participation of indigenous groups by facilitating the implementation and operationalization of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples'

Platform, and its Facilitating Working Group within the UNFCCC. Similarly for GCF, IWGIA works to increase the role of Indigenous Peoples' Advocacy Group existing within GCF, and to enforce their Indigenous Peoples' Policy and monitor the effectiveness of the Redress mechanism.

United States of America

With a long history of colonialism, indigenous people having their land stripped off was a prevalent practice. It is estimated that 99% of their historical land has been taken away, and the land that they are left with is inappropriate. The land indigenous communities were forced to inhabit were more prone to extreme climate events such as heat waves or droughts, along with having less environmental resources. Furthermore, they were uncoincidentally positioned in proximity to federal land, which limited their land usage.

One of the most prominent examples regarding the agenda in the United States of America is the legacy of uranium contamination of Navajo Nation. Between 1944 to 1984, there was a boom in uranium production, and Navajo Nation was located right in the middle of the uranium mining belt. As such, the government made a lease with the community for mining. However, along with the fact that prior to 1961, the impacts of lung cancer from mining was unknown, but also the lack of communication led to a contract that could be seen as unfair. In the Navajo language, there was a lack of word for 'radiation'--as such, when they were signing the lease, they were doing so under uninformed circumstances. Today, there are over 500 abandoned uranium mines which led to the radioactive contamination of the environment, but especially water sources. This is crucial in that not only does water provide a necessary source of living, but also due to the cultural significance it holds in the Navajo culture.

Nevertheless, there has been increasing efforts to mend these past mistakes. In regard to the Navajo Nation, there have been uranium cleanup projects, along with governmental efforts for an extensive legal framework that ensures the land rights of indigenous communities. There have been efforts for internal politics as well, one being the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Policy on Environmental Justice for Working with Federally Recognized Tribes and Indigenous Peoples. This policy would allow for the increased and direct participation of legally recognized indigenous communities on policies that would affect them as well.

Possible Solutions

1. *Proper Representation of Indigenous People in Policy Making*

Proper representation of indigenous representatives in all levels of policy-making, from local to international, is imperative for a sustainable resolution to this issue. This is because only community members themselves can grasp the potential implications of a certain policy, especially for environmental policy-making when the significance altercations on the environment could have different implications. As such, it would be dangerous to only assume what could lead to the elimination of the cultural survival of indigenous communities.

Participation of indigenous groups can be done in various ways. The best starting point would be to enhance existing groups, rather than creating new ones that serve only the same purpose. For example, the most prominent organisations regarding this issue at the moment include the UNFCCC's Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform and its Facilitative Working Group. By advancing this platform to extend its reach to other platforms or fields of work as well, delegates could work to formulate a central, extensive network that would improve the efficiency of the currently broken-down indigenous effort.

2. *Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge*

The fact that indigenous knowledge can contribute to environmental resilience is no longer doubted. As such, we must think of this agenda not to only make one-sided resolutions, but to foster the active *interaction* between both entities.

Indigenous knowledge could provide fresh insight on the current climate disasters we face. However, for them to be implemented on a larger scale and in different environments, altercations are necessary. As such, ways for communication between these two fields of knowledge are necessary. Some methods to do so would be a collaborative research facility, or a think tank.

By doing so, not only can we foster the perpetuation and implementation of indigenous knowledge, but we can also enhance the resilience of our world in the face of climate crises.

3. Long-Term Resilience

While this resolution may be the most obvious, it is the most crucial and the most complex. One of the key points we must consider is that the survival of indigenous communities doesn't merely mean their physical survival, but also their cultural survival as well. This means that methods such as simply displacing them in another area would bring about adverse effects.

For the resilience of indigenous communities, one of the most important things is autonomy. Certain governmental interventions could be made along the way in the process, but in the end, it is important to be reminded that the self-standing resilience of indigenous communities is the ultimate goal. As such, policies should not only be focused towards putting out the short-term fires of climate crises, but also long-term goals that would help these communities respond to similar, if not even harsher, situations in the future.

In order to do so, we are linked back to the first solution of proper representation as only community members themselves know the structure of their groups. It is important to not see all of these solutions as a separate clause, but an organic whole that eventually feeds back into each other's positive cycle.

Questions to Consider

- Where is the line between governmental intervention and indigenous political autonomy?
- What role does the environment play for the physical and cultural survival of indigenous communities?
- How should "land rights" be defined? What are their boundaries–does the physical occupation of land lead to rights of resources as well?
- How can we ensure proper political representation of indigenous communities?
- How could indigenous knowledge contribute to governmental efforts to preserve the environment?

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