

---

The Thirtieth Annual

Virginia Model United Nations Conference

Presents...

# Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

Colin Custer

Priya Vithani and Kelly Lugbill

*Undersecretary- General  
for Committees*

*Chairs*

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
History of the Committee .....	4
<b>Topic 1: Developing Strategies to Combat the Increasing Cost of Food in Developing Nations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Statement of the Problem: .....	5
History of the Problem:.....	6
Proposed Solutions: .....	8
Questions a Resolution Must Answer: .....	9
Bloc or Regional Positions:.....	10
<b>Topic 2: The Durban Declaration and Implementation against Genocide, Xenophobia, and Racism .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Statement of the problem: .....	12
History of the Problem:.....	14
Proposed Solutions: .....	15
Questions a resolution must answer:.....	16
Bloc or Regional Positions:.....	17
Closing Remarks: .....	20
Bibliography:.....	20

---

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) at VAMUN XXX! Our names are Priya Vithani and Kelly Lugbill, and we are so excited to get to know all of you throughout this year's conference. We are both second years at UVA from Richmond, Virginia, and we are very much looking forward to experiencing our second VAMUN.

One year ago, as we anxiously prepared for our first year at college, neither one of us could imagine how much we would fall in love with Charlottesville and the University of Virginia. It is awesome to order Chinese food as a dorm, to walk past the Rotunda on the way to class in the mornings, and to play a massive game of capture the flag on the O-Hill trails. There are so many people and activities going on all the time—it's so easy to have a blast.

Before our matriculation at UVA, we were both lucky enough to travel to the Netherlands for The Hague International Model United Nations—an experience that heightened our passions for human rights, our belief in the importance of international collaboration, and our desires to learn about the world's peoples and cultures. Through our classes at UVA, we are continuing to frame a more comprehensive global awareness. Priya is looking forward to majoring in Foreign Affairs with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies, and Kelly is hoping to double major in French and History.

We are particularly excited to be co-chairing SOCHUM because of its jurisdiction over many human rights related issues, and we would love for some if not all of you to leave the conference with the same obsessive passions that we have for human rights. First and foremost, however, our goal is for every delegate to have a fantastic time during committee sessions. We've cooked up a few ideas on our end to maintain a fun environment, but for your part we believe that substantial research will be the key to your success at and enjoyment of our committee.

We hope that this background guide will merely serve as a foundation for your own research; however, we would be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have about UVA and of course the upcoming conference. Please direct any specific questions on Topic 1: Developing Strategies to Combat the Increasing Cost of Food in Developing Nations to Kelly and all questions specifically related to Topic 2: The Durban Declaration and Implementation against Genocide, Xenophobia, and Racism to Priya.

We wish you much fruitful debate, and we are eager to facilitate votes on your draft resolutions!

Sincerely,

Kelly Lugbill and Priya Vithani

---

## Introduction

This committee primarily focuses on human rights issues, including those addressed within the reports of the Human Rights Council, as well as the promotion of foundational freedoms and the importance of sustainable development in least developed and developing countries. The two topics on which we will be focusing are:

- 1) developing strategies to combat the increasing cost of food in developing nations
- 2) the implementation of the Durban Declaration to effectively reduce and eliminate genocide, xenophobia, and racism.

The first Millennium Development goal reads, “to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.” For the poor living in the least economically developed countries, a general lack of domestic food security has forced them to spend increasingly higher proportions of their limited incomes on food. While there have been isolated success stories such as a decrease in Nepalese poverty rates, it will take a global effort to meet this goal by 2015. This topic lends

itself relatively naturally to a debate between developed and developing nations, albeit with exceptions. As you begin your research, consider whether your nation is one that will be seeking aid or one that may be in a position to donate. It will also be helpful to consider the impacts of controversial policy prescriptions. For example, one could argue that the implementation of protectionist trade barriers simultaneously removes any incentive for foreign investment in the agricultural sector; however, foreign land investment may do more harm than good by increasing independence on foreign aid. It will be your responsibility to embody your country’s stance on these types of issues. The burden is on you to behave as your country would!

Universal cooperation will also be necessary to reduce genocide, xenophobia, and racism. As the proclaimed International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World comes to an end in 2010 without having witnessed a significant reduction in these forms of discrimination, it is essential to reassess the Durban Declaration and create a resolution that will unite all the member nations in their

---

---

eradication of such intolerances. Determine if your country is one that could more significantly aid in reducing these problems, or if they more so need help fixing problems in their country. Police accountability, anti-racism programs, and changing government policies all will be important steps towards solving this pressing problem.

Since its establishment in 1945, SOCHUM's wide jurisdiction has allowed it to play a central role in the overall extension of human rights and the general maintenance of peace. However, it is important to remember that draft resolutions introduced through SOCHUM may not include clauses that fall under the jurisdiction of other committees. For example, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee cannot enact macroeconomic policy prescriptions with the intent to alter international markets because this is left up to the Economic and Financial Committee. This does not mean, however, that delegates to SOCHUM should not have a full understanding of the problems and potential solutions that may not fit neatly into SOCHUM's jurisdiction. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of SOCHUM's delegates to fully understand the topics at hand and, therefore, to make

policy recommendations to other UN organs as needed.

## History of the Committee

The United Nations was established in San Francisco, California in 1945 just as World War II ended. By October of that year, all five permanent members of the Security Council ratified the UN Charter, officially bringing the UN into existence. The formation of a General Assembly was a foundational aspect of the UN Charter, and SOCHUM was established as one of the General Assembly's original committees.

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) is the third committee under the United Nations General Assembly body and is responsible for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights is its main reference guide. SOCHUM oversees topics in the social and cultural framework such as the rights of women, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, and other issues of self-determination and human rights. This committee also focuses on social

---

developmental issues involving family, elderly persons, disabled persons, criminal justice, crime prevention, and drug trafficking. SOCHUM collaborates with various organizations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Development Programme to implement the General Assembly's resolutions and solve pending issues.

Each annual session of SOCHUM lasts nearly two months, spanning from approximately the beginning of October until the end of November. In each of the past few sessions, SOCHUM has considered just short of seventy draft resolutions—roughly half of which were submitted under the human rights agenda—by delegates representing all 192 member states of the United Nations. Permanent observers, including non-member states and intergovernmental organizations, also have a seat in the chamber and play a role in the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee's proceedings.

## **Topic 1: Developing Strategies to Combat the Increasing Cost of Food in Developing Nations**

### ***Statement of the Problem:***

Food security refers to continuous physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food. For the poor living in the least economically developed countries, a general lack of domestic food security has forced them to spend increasingly higher proportions of their limited incomes on food. In addition, increasing food prices are preventing many of the world's inhabitants from receiving an adequate amount of food, and, as a result, they are causing hunger strikes and starvation in the least developed and developing countries across the globe.

The right to food, as defined by Article 25 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is a foundational freedom of critical importance to the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. Since its adoption of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, the General Assembly has been committed to addressing global hunger and food security throughout the world, particularly in the least developed and developing nations.

---

---

In 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit adopted what have become known as the Millennium Development Goals, the first of which reads, “to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.” Specifically, the target of this goal is to reduce by one-half the number of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. While there have been isolated success stories such as a decrease in Nepalese poverty rates and an improvement in sub-Saharan African rice production, it will take a global effort to meet this goal by 2015.

The world food crisis seemed to decline after reaching a peak in 2008, and as a result it lost a lot of the media attention that was inciting global action to eradicate world hunger. However, a recent surge in food prices has brought the food crisis back to center stage. The world food crisis undercuts the attainment of the global right to food and threatens to undercut the achievement of Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals.

### ***History of the Problem:***

The issue of rising food prices in developing nations is not a new one. In 1974, the United Nations hosted the World Food Conference

in Rome to examine the problems with food distribution on both the producing and consuming ends. Representative governments expressed their intent to establish global food security “within a decade.”

In 1995, recognizing that the world food crisis was most definitely not diminishing, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations called for a World Food Summit to be held in Rome—the location of FAO’s headquarters—in November of 1996. In preparation for the Summit, FAO called upon the World Bank, Regional Development Banks, and many UN organizations including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to construct technical background papers relating food production to any potential paths that could lead to global food security.

After an in-depth analysis of the fourteen technical papers that were presented at the Summit, both the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action were adopted by each of the 186 delegations. While the Rome Declaration affirms the representatives’

---

commitment to eradicating hunger on a national and international level, the Plan of Action lists specific pledged commitments to establish food security and provides an outline for following through on those commitments. In their comprehensive approach to eradicating hunger by reducing poverty, implementing a fair trade system, encouraging agricultural investment, and increasing preparedness for natural disasters, the representatives who drafted and adopted the Plan of Action hoped to end the world food crisis. As thorough as the Summit was at identifying the multi-faceted roots of this issue and their implications for the future, the implementation of its recommendations was largely left to the discretion of member nations, who did not have a legitimate incentive to offer aid. Thus, the Summit ended up raising awareness about the food crisis without offering much relief.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, the issue of food security was highlighted as one of the most important issues of the new millennium. The obvious link between poverty and hunger was repeated yet again, this time in a simple and concise format that was accessible to many of the world's citizens as opposed to just those who held a high political office.

Discussion of the Millennium Development Goals stimulated humanitarian concern for those affected by the growing food crisis on an individual level, but this heightened awareness did not tend towards any long-lasting policy implications because allocation of foreign aid is not typically an important issue during campaigns.

In 2009, world leaders met once more at FAO headquarters in Rome for the World Summit on Food Security. Once again, nations were called upon to invest in the agricultural sectors of developing nations. Also in 2009, the High-Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World in 2050 and the Committee on World Food Security separately considered potential policy options for individual governments to adopt. As in the past, this call to action has been met by initial support from member nations. For example, President Barack Obama's announcement of the Feed the Future Initiative at the 2009 G-8 Summit through which the United States has pledged at least \$3.5 billion over the next three years is a crucial first step. However, Feed the Future's lack of longevity is worrisome and draws attention to the United Nations' responsibility to establish a comprehensive

---

procedure for productively utilizing foreign aid.

The right to food and the establishment of food security has remained a pressing issue in the United Nations General Assembly. In 2009, two separate resolutions concerning the increasing cost of food in developing nations—one that was introduced by SOCHUM—were adopted by the General Assembly. Recognizing that a suitable solution has not been reached, both of these resolutions call for the inclusion of the world food crisis in this year’s provisional agenda.

Thirty-six years after the first World Food Conference, efforts by the global community have not solved the hunger and malnutrition problems that the world food crisis has caused. Today, hunger and malnutrition are beyond the levels that previous legislation had been designed to help. While many of the technical aspects of the 1996 Plan of Action and of the more recent resolutions introduced by SOCHUM to the General Assembly are still relevant, a procedure to guarantee the implementation of these measures has yet to be developed.

### ***Proposed Solutions:***

The influx of natural disasters caused by climate change, the rising oil prices, the inequity of international trade, the lack of investment in the agricultural sector, and the disparity between the developing world’s agricultural technologies and the developed world’s agricultural technologies all contribute to the rising prices that have created the world food crisis.

With respect to climate change, an early warning system for natural disasters could help stabilize the regional food supply. By 2025, the United Nations Development Programme projects that 85% of people in sub-Saharan Africa will be considered water poor. A warmer surface water temperature on the Indian Ocean has led to a decline in the rainfall levels during the growing season, which because of its proximity is directly affecting rainfall and agricultural production in Africa. Farmers facing declining rainfall should be given the benefit of technology that can help them determine whether or not to plant short-cycle crops in periods of less rainfall. In contrast, other communities are being flooded because of climate change.

At the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition on April 8, 2008, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General John Holmes called natural disasters “the new normal.” The negative effects of floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc. as well as ways to predict and prepare for these natural disasters need to be addressed.

As reiterated in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, agricultural sector growth needs to be stimulated by investment. To secure these investments, the least developed and developing nations need to work with the developed nations so that they can be introduced to the advanced technological processes that the developed countries are already using.

Ideally, the international community needs to be held to its monetary commitments to help the regions that are seeking food security; however, the current global economy is limiting the funds that can be obtained from member nations.

Furthermore, poverty is one of the biggest (if not the biggest) causes of the food crisis, so investment is often the most sought after form of aid. Since funding from donor

nations or NGOs may not reach the levels it would need to, there may be a need to establish informal microfinance institutions.

It will be necessary to come up with development programs that will allow underdeveloped and developing nations increased access to foreign markets to reduce the cost of food, especially the staples such as wheat that are largely produced in developed countries. However, the creation of a trade agreement is often a slow process that is heavily dependent on the economic and political climates of individual nations. The essential task, therefore, is to construct a long-term, incentive-based plan for cooperation among the international community to combat the world food crisis.

***Questions a Resolution Must Answer:***

Cooperation and discourse are the keys to Model UN, so it is absolutely not necessary to pre-write a resolution before arriving at VAMUN; however, it will be beneficial to consider the possible compromises that may have to be made in order to adopt a draft resolution.

This committee hopes to develop a lasting solution for the world food crisis by implementing long-term strategies to decrease the cost of food. Therefore, while referencing the aims of past declarations and resolutions as well as their technical aspects is encouraged, we look forward to not merely repeating ideas that are already in place but to the creation and presentation of new methods that have not yet been proposed.

Although this is not an exhaustive list, possible questions to consider include:

- How to incorporate and apply the right to food as a principle;
- How to encourage increased agricultural production;
- How to close the funding gap of the United Nations' World Food Programme;
- How to discourage harmful speculation on food and fuel prices;
- How to increase developing countries' access to international markets; and
- The role of globalization in elongating the food crisis.

### ***Bloc or Regional Positions:***

There are many diverse viewpoints that must be considered throughout the conference; however, bloc or regional positions provide a starting point for beginning research or addressing the needs of certain delegations. It is also important to consider the deviations that some nations might make from their regional positions on specific issues.

**Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andes:** As of May 7, 2008, the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean have united in an attempt to diminish the negative effects of the world food crisis. The joint declaration issued at the end of the Presidential "Food for Life" Summit in 2008 cited the region's own economic policies and the agricultural subsidies of the United States, Europe, and Japan as the main causes of the Latin American agricultural sector collapse. As a result, Latin American countries are forced to import expensive foods in order to feed their people. Climate change and bio-fuel production were also listed as causes of the food crisis.

---

- Exception: Bio-fuel production in Colombia—Colombian delegates have argued in front of the UN that it is possible to produce bio-fuels without interfering with environmental policies or domestic food production. In Colombia, bio-fuel production is said to have added rural jobs in agricultural production was not previously taking place, which helped increase agricultural investments.

**European Union:** The EU food security policy is implemented both within the EU and in non-member developing nations. Until 2013 when its budget expires, just short of 50% of its budget will continue being put towards agricultural subsidies and aid. The 1 billion euro Food Facility program is meant to provide emergency funds over a three-year period to countries that are thrown into a crisis situation by the continuing food crisis. In order to respond quickly to external crises, the EU is committed to using geographical instruments such as the European Development Fund at the regional level.

**United States:** As recently as May 2010, Dr. Rajiv Shaw of the United States Agency

for International Development (USAID) released details on *Feed the Future*, a monetary commitment by the U.S. that seeks to distribute resources to investment plans with established approaches. The United States acknowledges the need to improve access to markets and reduce its own subsidies, but will have to balance this with the protectionist trade barriers and subsidies fundamental to its own agricultural sector.

**Southeast Asia:** Although stricken by hunger strikes, the food crisis has a more limited impact on Asia than it does in sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America because of the high regional production and consumption of rice. However, countries including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Singapore have had to ask the World Bank for regional aid to ensure open markets and to control inflation rates and speculation.

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** The most pressing need from a sub-Saharan African perspective is foreign investment in both infrastructure and agriculture. Without an adequate social or political infrastructure, efforts to directly stimulate agricultural production have proved futile. Climate change is also drastically affecting the region, so mechanisms to predict and

respond to natural disasters need to be put in place. However, many sub-Saharan governments including the Sudanese government have spoken out against increased land speculation under the guise of foreign aid.

**Middle East and North Africa:** With a comparative decline in oil prices, the Middle East and North Africa have had to deal with a food crisis from which they had previously been able to steer clear. This region is generally in favor of international aid, particularly in the form of loans, and is interested in developing tools for resource mobilization to take international pressure away from oil prices, which tend to be a prime indicator of gross domestic product, and, therefore, their domestic resistance to the increasing cost of food.

## **Topic 2: The Durban Declaration and Implementation against Genocide, Xenophobia, and Racism**

### ***Statement of the problem:***

In 1997, the General Assembly decided to hold the World Conference against Racism,

Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The World Conference which was held in Durban, South Africa from August 32 to September 7, 2001, was a landmark in the struggle to eradicate all forms of racism. The key issues discussed at the conference were the trafficking of women and children, migration and discrimination, gender and racial discrimination, indigenous peoples, and the protection of minority rights.

The Outcome Document is the most complete structure for addressing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance and emerged from the 2009 Durban Review Conference as a review of the implementation of the Durban Declaration. It combats racism by calling for tougher anti-discrimination legislation measures, better education, and greater efforts to fight poverty and secure development. In addition it demands greater availability of resources to be available to victims of racism and for greater multiculturalism and respect for human rights.

Critics of the Document claim that it falls short, however, of explaining how such goals are to be instituted. The Declaration calls for “the need to counter anti-Semitism,

---

anti-Arabism and Islamophobia world-wide, and urges all States to take effective measures to prevent the emergence of movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas concerning these communities.” The problem arises of exactly how this is to be done and whether or not the Declaration infringes upon the traditions and cultures of other countries.

The Declaration further draws upon the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for many of its operatives. It asks for states to “adopt public policies and give impetus to programs on behalf of and in concert with indigenous women and girls.” While this clause has good intentions, many underdeveloped nations have not yet even established gender equality and asking nations to integrate indigenous women is a stretch. For example, nations in sub-Saharan Africa that traditionally discriminate against women would have difficulty implementing these policies.

In addition, the Declaration also “requests states to promote and protect fully and effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, in conformity with the Universal Declaration

Human Rights and their obligations under international human rights instruments, regardless of the migrants’ immigration status.” It urges states to “develop and implement policies and action plans, and to reinforce and implement preventative measures, in order to foster greater harmony and tolerance between migrants and host societies.” With the large sentiment against migrants that the United States harbors against certain nations and China’s known oppression of migrants towards its borders (especially the Sino-North Korean border), implementing these clauses proves extremely difficult.

These are but a few of the problems existing in the implementation of the Durban Declaration. At the conference itself, United States and Europe were against effective discussions of slavery reparations and sent in only low-level delegates. Furthermore, Israel and United States were against discussing the possibility that Zionism is racist against Palestinians, causing both to walk out of the conference altogether. India was firmly against including discussions about caste-based discrimination, and several Arab nations were against discussions on oppression of Kurds or Arab slave trade. While some nations viewed

---

---

certain acts discussed at the Conference as racism and discrimination, others view them as tradition. Regardless of which viewpoints are correct, racial prejudice, xenophobia, and intolerance persist in many societies along with new and contemporary manifestations today, and the difficulty in implementing the Durban Declaration has quickly turned to a question of practicality versus idealism.

### ***History of the Problem:***

In 2001 the United Nations held the first World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa. The Durban Declaration is widely regarded as a landmark in the struggle to eradicate all forms of racism. The Conference was addressed by dignitaries, including Mahmoud Ahmadinejad— President of Iran famous for his denial of the Holocaust and stating that Israel should be wiped off the map— who said in his statement that it was regrettable that the United States had committed themselves to defend the racist perpetrators of genocide, while the “awakened conscience and free-minded people of the world condemned the Zionist crimes of aggression, carnage and other

brutalities of bombardments of civilians in Gaza.” Israel and the United States walked out of the 2001 anti-racism conference in South Africa before its conclusion because of Arab countries’ strong condemnation of Israel, and they were concerned that the review conference in Geneva could again become a “forum for anti-Semitism”. Following suit, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Poland and New Zealand also announced their boycotts of the meeting, citing the same concerns that it could be used as a forum to criticize Israel.

The Intergovernmental Working Group was one of the mechanisms established to follow up the implementation of the Declaration. The Intergovernmental Working Group was established by the Commission on Human Rights and held the first part of its fifth session in March of 2007 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The Working Group was devoted to a thematic analysis on the role of national plans of action in combating racism and racial discrimination.

Another mechanism to follow-up with member states and to examine their progress on promises made to end discrimination in their countries was the Durban Review Conference. Held from June 17-19, 2008,

---

the Durban Regional Review Conference of Latin America and Caribbean took place in Brazil in preparation for the Durban Review Conference in Geneva in April 2009.

Representatives from twenty-four countries were present at the Geneva conference.

However, the governments of the United States and Canada were noticeably absent, having not yet committed to the review process.

The Durban Review Conference of 2009 provided an opportunity to review and evaluate progress on measures adopted in 2001. As well as assessing progress on the Durban commitments, the review process identified gaps in implementation and provided an opportunity to outline concrete ways to make a difference. The Outcome Document calls on governments to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination—a convention which entered into force in 1969 and calls for a rejection of racism by all nations by means of dismissing hate speeches and racist organizations—and other resolutions that emerged after the 2001 anti-racism conference, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social

and Cultural Rights. The Durban Review Conference was also a vital step in reaffirming not only that racism exists in all countries but also that it is the responsibility of all governments and societies to address it.

### ***Proposed Solutions:***

The Declaration “urges States to work to ensure their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within their societies, and, where necessary, to improve democratic institutions so that they are more fully participatory and avoid marginalization, exclusion, discrimination against specific sectors of society.” It suggests that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are aggravated by inequitable distribution of wealth. Furthermore, the Declaration recognizes that the process of globalization constitutes a powerful and dynamic force, which should be harnessed for the development and prosperity of all countries.

While globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, and its costs are unevenly distributed. Thus, it is critical to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of

globalization. These effects aggravate poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, and economic disparities which occur along racial lines, within and between States. Accordingly, it is equally important to maximize the benefits of globalization through the strengthening and enhancement of international cooperation to increase equality of opportunities for trade, economic growth and sustainable development, which can contribute to the eradication of xenophobia. Only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future based upon common humanity and all its diversity, can globalization contribute to an increase in tolerance.

The Intergovernmental Working Group on the Directive was first conceived in 2003 in order to consider different plans of action concerning the implementation of the Declaration. The Working Group has tried to implement some of the courses of action specified in the Outcome Document through a variety of methods. There has been a proposal for the creation of a step-by-step plan in accordance with what each specific country and its people are ready to handle culturally and educationally. Others have suggested administrative blocs that would

work to shift the attitudes of peoples within a country by means of education and a change in culture. However, an argument is made that this would take time, and many believe that these changes must be swift or the Declaration will never accomplish anything. It is apparent, however, that something needs to be done about the persistence of racism and xenophobia, and the best method of eradicating such problems lies in the democratic process and globalization.

***Questions a resolution must answer:***

The Durban Declaration and Plan of Action (DDPA) are important developments in the fight against racism. The DDPA embodies the firm commitment of the international community to tackle discrimination at the national and international level. Recognition of the importance of tackling these issues should be a universal effort and is an important goal. While the DDPA is not legally binding, it has a strong moral value and serves as a basis for advocacy efforts worldwide. The overall agreement at the review conference in 2009 concluded that progress had been achieved, but challenges still remain.

Here are some questions to consider:

1. What actions should SOCHUM recommend in order to ensure the implementation of the DDPA?
2. The Durban Declaration urges many countries to drift away from cultural norms. Should this be encouraged, or is this infringing upon tradition?
3. How does national sovereignty fit into the picture of the Durban Declaration?
4. Is the Durban Declaration too idealistic or are its goals attainable?
5. How will democratization and globalization affect the Durban Declaration?

### ***Bloc or Regional Positions:***

There are many diverse viewpoints that must be considered throughout the conference; however, bloc or regional positions provide a starting point for beginning research or addressing the needs of certain delegations. It is also important to consider the deviations that some nations might make from their regional positions on specific issues.

**Africa:** Most countries in Central Africa have ratified key human rights treaties and made public pledges to implement them domestically, although much remains to be done in terms of transforming international obligations into domestic law. One of the controversial points at the Conference was related to the issue of apartheid. During the preparatory processes of the conference, South Africa stressed that it did not want to link compensation to apartheid. At the Tehran Regional Conference, a paragraph making such a link was inserted by Asian governments but was deleted at the request of the South African delegation. Domestic political pressures and the aim of the South African government to foster reconciliation within the country made South Africa's position difficult. In many communities and countries across Africa such as Cameroon, Gambia, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania, certain classes of people have been designated as “untouchable.” Africa is also a victim to human trafficking. While trafficking routes are constantly changing, one constant factor is the economic distinction between countries of origin and countries of destination. As with all other forms of irregular migration, trafficking invariably involves movement from a poorer country to a wealthier one. For example, African

---

women are often trafficked to Western Europe, supplementing the dramatic increase of women trafficked from Central and Eastern Europe due to the breakup of the USSR.

**Asia Pacific:** The Pacific region is primarily composed of small island communities that are extremely isolated, both geographically and politically, and face widespread social and economic problems and ethnic tensions that have, at times, resulted in social instability. In most instances, the national capacity to address these problems is low. Some of the most pressing human rights issues in the region include widespread poverty, violence against women and children, racial discrimination, lack of judicial independence and ill treatment in detention. These issues are made worse by weak justice systems. Processes of social reconciliation and peace building in the Solomon Islands, civil unrest and emergency rule in Tonga, and a political crisis in Fiji all affect those nations' key institutions.

Although Southeast Asia is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the world, protection mechanisms are not in place to promote and protect the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. The issues of statelessness and the lack of protection for

internally displaced persons and refugees have not been adequately addressed. In Cambodia, there has been a strong anti-Vietnamese sentiment, and in Indonesia there has been much violence against the affluent Chinese population which has been blamed for economic problems that have plagued the country in recent years. Southeast Asia is also a victim to trafficking. Asian women are trafficked to the United States and Europe.

**Middle East and Northern Africa:** In recent years, many states in the Middle East region have taken steps towards legal, economic and social reforms, including holding multi-party legislative and municipal elections, establishing national human rights institutions, and improving the status of women. There is, however, much progress to be made. For a long time there has been resentment by many in the Middle East at the policies of America in their region. For many of the more extremist factions, this has turned into a form of racism as well, where many things that are Western are hated or despised. The situation between Palestine and Israel is also very debatable. While Arabs and Jews are technically considered to not belong to different races, their religious and cultural

---

differences and the political history of the region has contributed to extremities and tension between the two groups.

**European Union:** Despite its small land mass, Europe is vastly multicultural, and has experienced many conflicts throughout history. In 2002, Amnesty International published a report highlighting a rise in racist attacks and sentiments against both Arabs and Jews, attributed to the increasing hostilities in the Middle East. Into 2010, problems of racism in Italy were exacerbated as a wave of violence against African farm workers in the south left some 70 people injured and resulted in the evacuation of over 300 African workers from the region. Spain has also seen increased racial violence, as the growing economy invites immigrants from North African countries such as Morocco. However, the poor conditions that immigrants have had to endure and the already racially charged region has led to friction and confrontations. Ethnic or race-based violence against women is considered the most recognizable example of intersectional discrimination. Incidents of rape in Bosnia and Kosovo represent race-based targeting of women for an explicitly gender-based violation. In 1997, *Human*

*Rights Watch* noted that, “The U.K. has one of the highest levels of racially-motivated violence and harassment in Western Europe, and the problem is getting worse.”

**North America:** From racial profiling to affirmative action, police brutality against minorities, and the rising resentment towards immigrants, racism is quite prevalent in the United States. Since the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, Security concerns have understandably increased, but so too has racial profiling and discrimination. In the early aftermath of the attacks, some Americans that were outraged and horrified attacked members of the Sikh community simply because they resembled Muslims. Various people of Middle Eastern or South Asian origin have also faced controversial detentions or questionings by officials at American airports and there has been consistent disapproval of their migration into the United States. As a result, there has been a significant rise in racial profiling and discrimination against migrants in general, which has led directly to controversial laws like Arizona’s recent immigration law, which gives police the right to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally. Opponents have called it an open invitation

---

for harassment and discrimination against migrants, regardless of their citizenship status.

**Latin America:** Latin America is home to an estimated 150 million people of African descent.

Despite their numbers, Afro-descendants are routinely subject to racial discrimination, social exclusion, and under-representation in government. They suffer from unequal access to education, health care, employment, and wealth. In addition, Latin America's indigenous peoples lagging way behind the non-indigenous population in both income levels and human development indicators such as education, health, access to water and sanitation.

### Closing Remarks:

In a few short months, you will take on the role of a high-level diplomat as you investigate, debate, and develop solutions to the world's problems. Regardless of the level of monetary or military power that you believe your delegation represents, we encourage you to remember that every single delegation has the opportunity to be

powerful in a setting such as the United Nations where debate and collaboration are the basis for action.

It is our utmost concern that you enjoy this year's committee sessions and debates in SOCHUM, and we hope that this background guide will serve as a starting point for your own extensive research. We look forward to all of your contributions to this year's VAMUN conference, and please do not hesitate to approach us with any questions.

### Bibliography:

"Fighting Hunger." *EUROPA*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.

<[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/food-security/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/food-security/index_en.htm)>.

"Anti-racism Meet Vows to Fight Racial Discrimination." *OneWorld South Asia*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.

<<http://southasia.oneworld.net/global/headlines/anti-racism-meet-vows-to-fight-racial-discrimination>>.

"Durban Review Conference." *United Nations*. 24 Apr. 2009. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.

<<http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/ddpa.shtml>>.

- 
- "Durban Review Conference." *United Nations*. 24 Apr. 2009. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/ddpa.shtml>>.
- "Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger." *MDG Monitor*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.mdgmonitor.org/story.cfm?goal=1>>.
- "Global Food Crisis." *Washington Post*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/26/AR2008042601723.html>>.
- Official Documents System*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010. <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/47/5/27/PDF/N0947527.pdf?OpenElement>>.
- "Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference." *Durban Conference*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<[http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/pdf/Durban\\_Review\\_outcome\\_document\\_En.pdf](http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/pdf/Durban_Review_outcome_document_En.pdf)>.
- "Outcome of the World Food Summit, including Action to Be Taken to Follow up the Outcome at All Appropriate Levels." *UN Economic and Social Council*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.
2010.  
<<http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/fa74a48227f3e3a0802566a400530b45?Opendocument>>.
- "Q&A on the Global Financial Crisis and MENA." *World Bank Group*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,contentMDK:22153569~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:256299,00.html>>.
- "Regional Position on Food Crisis Consolidated during Presidential Summit - Diplomacy, Trade and Security." *The Gringo*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://thegringo.com/index.php?articleID=15292&sectionID=294>>.
- "Rome Declaration and Plan of Action." *FAO*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM>>.
- "Special Section: The World Food Crisis." *Time Magazine*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,911503,00.html>>.
- "United Nations Millennium Development Goals." *United Nations*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>>
-

- 
- /poverty.shtml>.
- "United States Reaffirms Commitment to Addressing Global Hunger and Food Security through Feed the Future Initiative." *U.S. Department of State*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/05/142037.htm>>.
- "UN's Emergency Plan against World Food Crisis." *Asia News*. 29 Apr. 2008. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/UN's-emergency-plan-against-world-food-crisis-12134.html>>.
- "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." *United Nations*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<[www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf](http://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf)>.
- "World Conference on Racism." *United Nations*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.
- <<http://www.un.org/WCAR/index.html>>.
- "World Food Summit: Basic Information." *USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.fas.usda.gov/icd/summit/basic.html>>.
- "World Summit on Food Security: World Summit." *FAO*. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.fao.org/wsfs/world-summit/en/>>.
- Yakovleva, Elena, Tatyana Bezrukova, and Evgeniy Malchikov. "Globalization and World Food Crisis." Voronezh State Academy of Forestry Engineering, Russia. Web. 01 Oct. 2010.  
<<http://www.icabr.com/fullpapers/Yakovleva%20Elena,%20Tatyana%20Bezrukova,%20Evgeniy%20Malchikov.pdf>>.
-