INDIANAPOLIS MODEL UNITED NATIONS BACKGROUND GUIDE 2018

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to IMUN 2018! We are excited to welcome you to discuss the some of the world's most pressing issues. In this packet, you will find a series of detailed topics for each committee. It is your responsibility to research your specific topics and your country's position on those topics.

We also ask you to write position papers for your respective committees, which are due prior to the conference. Based on our experience of Model United Nations conferences, we feel that only short papers are needed, designed to serve as starting points for the discussion. So you should limit each of your papers to two paragraphs, on a single page.

The first paragraph should briefly summarize the way in which your country has dealt with the topic so far, outlining any actions it may have taken - both domestically and abroad - as well as any political situations that may impact the manner in which you, as a representative of your country, might act on the topic.

The second paragraph should outline the aims and goals of your country in the discussion and negotiations on the topic. This might include any questions that your country hopes to raise during the debate, or any resolutions that your country would like to propose.

We look forward to seeing your position papers, and to seeing you at the conference on the IUPUI campus in March.

Sincerely,

Hadya Sow
Tania Gurdasani
Olivia Smith

IMUN 2018 Co-directors

IMUN 2018 COMMITTEES AND TOPICS

General Assembly (2 Committees)

- Climate Change and Global Security (GA1 and GA2)
- Biological Weapons and Warfare (GA1)
- Declining Rates of Education in Low and Middle Income Countries (GA2)

Security Council

- South China Sea and International Water Laws
- Political Upheaval in Venezuela

World Health Organization (WHO)

- Female Genital Mutilation
- Mental Health in Low and Middle Income Countries

Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

- Violence in South Sudan
- Land Rights of Indigenous People

Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)

- Preventing Weaponization in Space
- Small Arms Trade

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- Protecting Displaced Persons from Human Trafficking
- Integrating Refugees into Host Countries

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1 and 2

Climate Change and Global Security

According to the National Intelligence Council, 2025 will see an unprecedented increase in the scarcity of the world's resources. Impacting poorer nations more adversely than others, the next ten years will see declining levels of food, water and sustainable energy. This is a direct repercussion of climate change, which affects the entire world, and more specifically 'hot zones' such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, East Asia-Pacific, and the Arctic.

It is estimated that the impacts of climate change are more likely to be felt in countries with weak government structures. Weak states may risk failure or increased regional tensions from their inability to cope with sudden shocks (such as drought) and long-term stresses (such as decreased agricultural yield).

Climate change has the ability to influence each of the following:

1. Local resource competition.
2. Livelihood insecurity and migration.
3. Extreme weather events and disasters.
4. Volatile food prices and provision.
5. Trans-boundary water management.
6. Sea-level rise and coastal degradation.
7. The unintended effects of climate policies adaptation and mitigation.

Questions to Consider

- Is your country adversely affected by climate change? How so? What decisions have been made to build awareness of the situation and/or to take action? Is the government using the nation's resources to aid in providing sustenance?
- Looking at the list of implications above, are there any that would particularly impact your country? If so, which ones hold the highest priority and why?

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1

Biological Weapons and Warfare

Biological weapons are weapons made from biological toxins or infectious agents such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi. These are often similar to living entities that reproduce within their host victims. The purpose of such weapons is to kill or incapacitate humans, animals or plants as a form of war.

The alarming rate at which biological warfare has gained popularity among terrorist movements is based on its efficiency and the difficulty of detection. Biological weapons cost about 0.05% as much as conventional weapons and their production is often simpler. Another reason why these weapons attract terrorists is because they allow terrorists to premeditate and anticipate their next attack; the biological organism that is utilized can have an incubation period of 3-7 days before its effects appear.

Questions to Consider

- Is your country employing biological warfare? Has it employed warfare in the past or been affected by it in an act of terrorism?
- What is your country's take on using biological weapons to win a war?

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2

Declining Rates of Education in Low and Middle Income Countries

Obtaining a primary and secondary education is vital in building a foundation for success in individuals and nations. Around the world, roughly 57 million children of school-attending ages are not attending school. More than half of these children live in low and middle income countries. Among the reasons for this problem: the cost of schooling, the poor quality of teaching, a shortage of teaching staff, and the lack of schooling institutions in general.

   Girls suffer more than boys, because the encouraged to stay home alongside their mothers, while their brothers are afforded more opportunities, namely education. When girls do attend school, they are often forced to drop due to familial pressures. While there have been numerous studies and published reports that outline the benefits of providing education to girls, it has also been shown that when they do decide to pursue an education they are often susceptible to violence. However, when women are uneducated, research shows that they are even more likely to be victims of violence, live in poverty, and perpetuate the cycle when they have their own children.

Questions to Consider

- What are the statistics regarding education in your country?
- Is your country one of those where girls are denied an education?
- What fundamental problems (such as violence against women, poverty, and malnutrition) related to poor education does your nation face and how can they be addressed?

SECURITY COUNCIL

South China Sea and International Water Laws

The disputes regarding the South China Sea involve both island and maritime laws and involve several sovereign states within the region, namely Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC), Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) states that water-bodies are not 'owned' by a certain country, and that no nation can claim sovereignty over them. An estimated US$5 trillion worth of global trade passes through the South China Sea and many non-claimant states want the South China Sea to remain international waters in order to harness this opportunity.

Aside from the large value the trade might carry, the area is rich in oil and natural gas deposits. The Ministry of Geological Resources and Mining of the People's Republic of China estimates that the South China Sea may contain 17.7 billion tons of crude oil. With current laws not providing a solution to this issue, the dispute regarding the treasures of the South China Sea continue to rise. While China is a signatory to UNCLOS, it refuses to recognize the authority of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).

Questions to Consider

- Is China right to refuse to consider the court's ruling in this matter? Why or why not?
- What is your nation's stance on this issue?
- Does your nation agree with UNCLOS? Is your country a signatory?

SECURITY COUNCIL

Political Upheaval in Venezuela

Venezuela is in the grip of a major crisis. Hundreds of thousands of protesters demonstrating against the government of President Nicolas Maduro have been met by riot police almost daily. Despite having the world's largest oil reserves, Venezuela is suffering from a deep recession and hyper-inflation. Recent protests were triggered by a Supreme Court decision to strip power from the National Assembly, the opposition-held Congress — a move widely thought to be aimed at concentrating power in the hands of Maduro's increasingly unpopular government.

Venezuelans have been living through triple-digit inflation, chronic shortages of food and medicine, which are creating a humanitarian emergency. Shoppers, forced to wait in long lines to buy basic supplies, are often met by empty grocery shelves. Hospitals are suffering from acute shortfalls of everything from antibiotics to basic sanitation equipment like medical gloves and soap.

Venezuela seems locked in a downward political and economic spiral. However, what happens in Venezuela has far broader implications for international security. Venezuela's crumbling political order could have a spillover effect on regional stability and Colombia's fragile peace — as well as encourage the global expansion of transnational organized criminal and terrorist networks.

This sets troubling precedents. With high-ranking government officials and members of Maduro's family sanctioned or indicted in connection with drug-trafficking crimes, Venezuela has been dubbed a "narco-state." Colombian and Mexican cartels, present in Venezuela since the 1990s, are now expanding even farther into Venezuela. The country's political crisis thus may well fuel violent "narco-clashes" — or give the most powerful traffickers free rein to expand operations. Consequently, drugs may be more easily shipped from Venezuela along the major trafficking routes to European and U.S. markets.

The spread of violence may also give rise to a potentially massive refugee crisis, as more Venezuelans seek to flee their homeland. This time Venezuela's neighbors may be even less prepared for a massive influx. Overall, the potential knock-on effects of Venezuela's crisis are alarming: new threats to regional stability, the risk of renewed conflict in Colombia and the danger of unchecked criminal and terrorist networks. These concerns should not distract from the plight and suffering of the Venezuelan people that has been unfolding for many months, without respite. But they should be additional red flags to the international community to urgently consider how to alleviate this suffering — and prevent further escalation.

Questions to Consider

- Does your nation share regional boundaries with Venezuela? What concerns does this pose for you?
- Venezuela's unrest threatens Colombia's fragile peace. What can be done to address this concern?
- How might Venezuela's crisis fuel transnational criminal and terrorist groups?

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. FGM causes severe bleeding and health issues including cysts, infections, infertility, and increased risk of infant mortality.

FGM reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls. Globally, it is estimated that at least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of FGM. Girls 14 and younger represent 44 million of those who have been cut between infancy and adolescence, with the highest prevalence of FGM among this age in The Gambia at 56 per cent, Mauritania 54 per cent and Indonesia where about half of girls aged 11 and younger have undergone this procedure. Countries with the highest prevalence among girls and women aged 15 to 49 are Somalia 98 per cent, Guinea 97 per cent and Djibouti 93 per cent.

FGM is heavily practiced in low- and middle-income countries. However, countries around the world of all income levels are affected. Due to international migration, the practice is no longer restricted only to countries in which it has been traditionally practiced, but has become an issue of increasing concern also in western countries. Many developed nations such as the USA and several European countries have been increasingly confronted with FGM and its medical consequences. Attempts by immigrants to perpetuate the practice continue, regardless of existing legislation. The exact number of women and girls living with FGM in Europe is unknown, but is estimated to be around 500,000, and 180,000 girls are estimated to be at risk of being subjected to the practice.

To promote the elimination of FGM practice, coordinated and systematic efforts are needed, and they must engage whole communities and focus on human rights and gender equality. These efforts should emphasize societal dialogue and the empowerment of communities to act collectively to end the practice. They must also address the sexual and reproductive health needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences.

Questions to Consider

- What are the motivations for FGM? Consider the cultural, religious, traditional reasons for FGM and how they can be appropriately addressed.
- How does FGM affect your nation? Is your nation's healthcare system equipped to address this issue?
- Should medical doctors be encouraged to conduct the FGM procedure in order to prevent death in inevitable FGM operations?

Mental Health in Low and Middle Income Countries

According to WHO, 'mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual is able to realize his/her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and make a contribution to his/her family and community'. Mental disorder is defined by psychiatric experts as a 'clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome with sufficient personality, mind and/or emotional disorganization that seriously impairs individual and social function with an increased risk of suffering, death, pain, disability or loss of freedom'.

Mental health is the invisible problem in international development. WHO estimates that mental and neurological disorders are the leading cause of ill health and disability globally, but there is a noted lack of interest from governments and NGOs. Many countries also lack the basic legal framework to protect those with a disability. Human rights violations of psychiatric patients are common, with patients physically restrained, isolated and denied basic rights. There are therefore significant cultural barriers to overcome to deliver mental health policies.

With so many health issues affecting low and middle income countries, tackling mental health tends to be seen as something of a luxury. However, mental disorders are closely associated with other public health concerns such as maternal and child health and HIV/AIDS. Poverty, low education, social exclusion, gender disadvantage, conflict and disasters are the major social determinants of mental disorders. The main challenges in the mental health system include access, a weak referral system (curative, preventive/ promotive), skilled staff shortages and stock-outs of pharmaceuticals.

Questions to Consider

- What regulations exist in your country to protect people with mental health disorders?
- How can successful measures related to mental health be tailored to meet your country's needs?

OFFICE OF HIGH COMM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)

Violence in South Sudan

South Sudan is the world's newest nation, in the center of Africa bordered by six countries. It is rich in oil, but following decades of civil war it is also one of the least developed regions on earth - only 15% of its citizens own a mobile phone and there few tarmac roads in an area bigger than Spain and Portugal combined.

Tensions in South Sudan started as a political squabble and have escalated into ethnic violence after Africa's longest-running civil war. Under international pressure, the two warring sides eventually signed a peace deal in 2017 in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The deal paved the way for a permanent ceasefire followed by the formation of a transitional government, the drafting of a new constitution and, eventually, fresh elections. However, little progress towards these changes have been made.

Situations in refugee camps are just as volatile. Families survive on meagre rations and rates of mental illness – and even suicide rates among children – are rising. Vicious fighting between different ethnic groups also erupts in the camps, increasing the risk even for those not involved. There is also a concern about huge levels of malnutrition, the protection of children and gender-based violence.

An estimated 16,000 children have been recruited by armed forces and militias since the conflict began in 2013. South Sudan is on the brink of an all-out ethnic civil war that could destabilize the entire region. One million of South Sudan's estimated population of 12 million has fled to neighboring countries. Uganda alone is now hosting more than 450,000 South Sudanese.

Fierce conflict around Malakal, the capital of oil-producing Upper Nile region, continue to instigate fears that a reduction in oil production could have repercussions on world markets. Many foreign nationals have been evacuated.

Questions to Consider

- How does the situation in South Sudan affect your nation and others around the world?
- What efforts can be made to improve the situation in South Sudan without inciting further violence?
- What responsibility do neighboring nations have to Sudanese refugees?

OFFICE OF HIGH COMM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)

Land Rights of Indigenous People

Indigenous land rights are the rights of indigenous peoples to land, either individually or collectively. Land and resource-related rights are of fundamental importance to indigenous peoples for a range of reasons, including the religious significance of the land, self-determination, identity, and economic factors.

Indigenous peoples around the world have struggled and rallied to protect their land rights, including populations in Brazil, the United States of America, and Australia.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007 by a majority of 144 states in favor, 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States).

Up to 2.5 billion people depend on lands and natural resources that are held, used or managed collectively, which make up over 50 percent of the land on the planet. But they legally own just one-fifth. The remaining land remains unprotected and vulnerable to land grabs from more powerful entities like governments and corporations.

Some key facts:

- Secure land rights are a precondition for development. They increase incomes and advance a range of social benefits that extend beyond communities. Nations that recognize and enforce land rights reduce hunger and improve economic growth.
- It is a matter of human rights. This is particularly true for indigenous peoples, for whom international law recognizes the right to access and control their customary land.
- Achieving gender equality in land ownership would empower women and give them greater influence over the way that land is used. According to FAO, more women land's tenure would increase average crop yields some 20–30%, which could help reduce a 10-20% the number of undernourished people worldwide.
- Tanzanian women with secure land rights earn three times more income than those without; in India, secure land rights have been linked to a decrease in violence generally, including up to eight times less domestic violence.
- Forests managed by indigenous peoples and local communities store 37.7 billion tons of carbon - more than the world's 2013 emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes.
- Secure indigenous and community land rights can prevent the extinction of more than 4000 languages.

Questions to Consider

- Did you know that 90% of Africa's rural land is undocumented, leaving rural communities vulnerable to land-grabbing?
- How are indigenous populations treated in your nation? What is their history and historical treatment?
- How can changes in land rights affect your indigenous population, as well as your nation as a whole?

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (DISEC)

Preventing Weaponization in Space

Preventing weaponization in space is no new challenge for the United Nations. In response to proposed nuclear weapons bases on the moon, and general arms tension from the Cold War, 1963 saw the approval of the 'Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space'. This restricted member states from 'placing in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction or from installing such weapons on celestial bodies'.

At the surface level, it would even seem that this issue has become moot post- Cold War, with the need to ensure Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). However, with the increasingly uncertainty and mistrust among the United States, Russia, and China, this is once again an issue the UN must consider.

In 2015, Russia and China introduced a treaty called the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, or PAROS. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made a statement on January 15, 2018 discussing the current tension surrounding the weapons race in space, and this treaty in particular, saying 'We have one more highly important joint initiative with… It was submitted at the UN Disarmament Conference several years ago. Regrettably, this treaty has not yet been discussed due to the US position. All other countries understand the urgency of this problem but the United States continues nurturing plans to militarize outer space, I mean the deployment of weapons in outer space, which will, naturally, have very adverse consequences for problems of international security'.

However, as General John Hyten, the head of US Strategic Command, recently said in a public speech, 'They've [Russia and China] been building weapons, testing weapons, building weapons to operate from the Earth in space, jamming weapons, laser weapons, and they have not kept it secret'.

The Obama White House did not back the treaty, saying it did not adequately define what a 'weapon in space' was, and the Trump administration now seems unlikely to support it for defense purposes. Both the United States and China have tested anti-satellite weaponry, making it clear that weaponization of space is neither unlikely nor new, and will continue to creep forward even as these somewhat ironic treaties are introduced to perhaps distract from the actual activities of nations.

Questions to Consider

- What are the ramifications for your nation when considering the prohibition of weapons in space?
- With three superpowers all vying for control in this arena, how effectively can treaties be enforced? What are the competing motivations of these nations to either support or reject treaties of this nature?
- What does the future of warfare and space weaponry look like? What is the role of the United Nations in this often covert military issue?

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (DISEC)

Small Arms Trade

The United Nations supports the view that 'Illicit flows of small arms and light weapons undermine security and the rule of law. They are often a factor behind the forced displacement of civilians and massive human rights violations'. While not as shocking as nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, they still create huge issues in the security of the global community.

Although weapons have a role in protecting states, they can easily be used as 'force multipliers' in a negative context. The same weapons that police may use to maintain order might instead bring havoc on a large scale, when:

- government forces start misusing the arsenals at their disposal;
- arms from legal stocks are diverted into illicit use;
- already existing illicit arms arrive in crisis areas.

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs describes the implications of small arms: 'In post-conflict environments the presence of large numbers of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition can contribute to an upsurge in violent crime, as well as interpersonal and intergroup violence. Countries not engaged in armed conflict – or emerging from it – can also suffer from high rates of violent crime'.

On top of existing challenges, new technologies in small arms manufacturing and management are often established technologies with a history of application in other industries. Polymers, the use of 3-D printing, and modularity in weapon design all disrupt conventional law enforcement practices. These developments in weapon design and production could have consequences for international efforts to address the illicit trade in small arms, including tracing weapons and finding manufacturing origins.

Some current strategies to mitigate the violence that stems from small arms trade include reducing the existing stockpile, reducing the supply of new weapons, closing the gates between the legal and illegal markets, and reducing the motivation for acquiring guns. However, as we can see in countries on almost every continent, this continues to be a massive problem.

Questions to Consider

- How does small arms trade affect your nation? Does it promote widespread violence, is it minimized, or somewhere in between? What laws or practices are already in place?
- What is worsening the trade of weapons? Does it stem from drug trade, terror groups, government mishandling, ongoing conflicts, weak gun regulations?
- How can the United Nations address this issue on a global scale when the conditions vary so greatly from nation to nation? In particular, how can it address the growing problems presenting by technology use in small arms?

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Protecting Displaced Persons from Human Trafficking

As the 2016 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report highlights, traffickers 'prey on those who lack security and opportunity, coerce or deceive them to gain control, and then profit from their compelled service'. Unfortunately, there is no group that better fits this description than the more than the reported 65 million displaced persons worldwide. With this, a record number of persons displaced by often ongoing violence and conflict around the globe, the conditions have been ripe for human trafficking to flourish.

Refugees who are struggling to survive are one of the most susceptible groups, and often fall victim to false promises such as fraudulent job offers, shelter, or education, which seem extremely appealing in the absence of any lasting peace or security. Smugglers promise safe passage into Europe in return for payments that run on average from $3,400 to $6,800, according to a 2015 Interpol report. They then often use abuse to demand more money from their victims. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that refugees in this situation are 'repeatedly raped or forced to prostitute themselves in near slavery condition' in order to pay back their 'debts'. Victims are also often afraid to report their abuse in this situation out of fear that their illegal presence in the host country will result in their arrest, not the arrest of their trafficker.

Children account for more than half of the refugee population, and violence often leaves them with no parents and no financial security. According to the IOM, over 10,000 unaccompanied minor refugees have been reported missing after reaching Europe, and many of them are believed to have fallen victim to trafficking and sexual exploitation. Europol has also found evidence that the very same gangs who smuggle refugees into the EU then turn around and engage in sex and slavery rings.

An ongoing problem with this is that evaluations of humanitarian and emergency responses often overlook or simply omit the prevalence of labor and sex trafficking, which the 2016 TIP report also notes. Given the scale of the worldwide refugee crisis and the distinct vulnerabilities of refugees, systems of trafficking must be identified and stopped in these host countries.

Questions to Consider

- How is your nation affected by the worldwide refugee crisis? Is it in turmoil, creating displaced persons? Is it attempting to harbor or help displaced persons? What is your stake in the crisis?
- What factors are contributing to the ease of human trafficking? How can they be combated in displaced communities?
- What mechanisms can the United Nations construct to help investigate and mitigate the massive enterprise of human trafficking among refugees?

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Integrating Refugees into Host Countries

Millions of refugees around the world dream of being able to return to their home countries, but they are largely unable to because of ongoing violence and fear of persecution. For these people, finding a home in the country of asylum and integrating into the new community offers the promise of stability and a new life, but comes with many challenges.

According to the UNHCR, 'Local integration is a complex and gradual process with legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions. It imposes considerable demands on both the individual and the receiving society. In many cases, acquiring the nationality of the country of asylum is the culmination of this process'. They also estimate that in the last ten years roughly 1.1 million refugees around the world became citizens in their country of asylum. However, that is relatively small when compared to the nearly 65 million displaced persons globally, and indicates the scope of the resettlement problem.

As refugees continue to pour into host countries, various nations bicker over responsibility for the refugees, and many have focused on closing borders. Member states that still accept refuges agree 'integration' needs to happen, but that term is also convoluted. The two main camps want very different kinds of integration. According to the *Brown Political Review*, 'Assimilationists want newcomers to adopt the dominant values and common identity of a host country, while multiculturalists value respecting the identity of the newcomer and protecting cultural diversity'.

This, in turn, leads to more tension in the host countries and more hostility toward immigrant by those who do not feel they are 'assimilating', or simply see immigrants as a threat. These fears over migration are have been fueling a rise in populism and mistrust, and have undermined governments' abilities to deal with the flow of refugees. In many countries where the influx has been large, people think that there are two or three times as many immigrants as there really are, and have exaggerated perceptions of how much they cost the country. Even more extremely, half of Europeans think that refugees are going to take their jobs and social benefits. And regardless of actual migrant numbers, half the public in the USA and many European countries think 'it's too many'.

Questions to Consider

- What is the position of your nation regarding welcoming immigrants? How has that changed in recent years?
- Separate from quelling the sources of refugees (i.e. conflict, persecution), what mechanisms are most helpful in helping immigrants settle more long-term in these asylum countries?
- How can the United Nations promote a more welcoming culture for these resettling refugees? What can reasonably be done in the face of unpopularity and a crisis volume of displaced persons?