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UNITED NATIONS PEACE BUILDING COMMISSION

Agenda

Peacebuilding and Sustaining
peace in the Sahel region.

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Message From The Executive Board

Welcome to the fifth simulation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, (UNPBC). We as the executive board for UNPBC at WELMUN'19 are looking forward to an extraordinary level of expression of diplomacy and intellectual debate during the course of the committee proceedings.

This year at WELMUN, we will be discussing a singular agenda in the UNPBC:

Primary Agenda: Peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region.

Akin to the previous WELMUN, the purpose of the Executive Board will be directing the committee towards conducive debate. Ergo, we plan to refrain from entering the discussion unless deemed absolutely necessary. The plan is to keep the role of the dias limited to mere moderation. The delegates are urged to conduct conclusive and deep research that will allow them to lead the committee in the right direction and constructive debate. The Executive board, upon its discretion, might question the delegates on the sources of their information. We will also be giving a fairly high weight-age to questioning and analysis as that tells us how attentive a delegate is.

Even though everyone is expected to be well versed with the Rules of Procedure, the first time MUNer's must not get intimidated by the formality of the committee, because in the end, it is the content and manner of the debate that matters.

Feel free to contact the Executive Board regarding anything. (chair.unpbc@welhamboys.org)

Position Paper Deadline: 25th July 2019

Looking forward to meeting you this August.

Sincere Regards,
The Executive Board

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Introduction to the Poorest Region in the World

The Sahel is the geographical bridge between the Sahara and the Sudanian Savanna to the south. It has a semi-arid climate, and its name is derived from the Arabic word for 'coast' which is symbolic considering it is on the edge of the desert.

The Sahel part of Africa contains (from west to east) fragments of northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, the extreme south of Algeria, Niger, the extreme north of Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroon, Central African Republic and the extreme north of Ethiopia.

The Sahel stretches 5,400 km from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east, in a landmass that stretches from several hundred to a thousand kilometres in width, covering an area of 3,053,200 square kilometres. It is a mixed ecoregion of semi-arid grasslands, savannas, steppes, and thorn scrublands lying between the forested Sudanian Savanna to the south and the barren Sahara to the north.

The topography of the Sahel is mainly flatland, hence, most of the region lies between 200 and 400 meters. Various isolated plateaus and mountain ranges arise within the region but are classified as separate ecoregions because their flora and fauna are distinct from the rest of the landmass. Annual rainfall tithers between 100–

200 mm in the north of the Sahel to about 600mm in the south.

Native stakeholders and problems

1. A brief recourse about the causes of crisis?

Periodic drought and famine in the Sahel have birthed an international reputation of the Sahel as a vulnerable ecological zone undergoing desertification and requiring intervention from outside entities. Developmentalist discourses from the late colonial period (dominated by France) have facilitated the devolution of responsibilities and prerogatives that should rest on the state. At the same time, competition over political authority in the fragmented States of the Sahel has reinscribed and amplified ethnic differences, pitting Saharan populations against the governments of desert edge states. Terrorist organizations have used this to a great extent, filling the power vacuum with their own bloodthirsty regimes. External and internal radical religious (mostly Islamic) movements entangled with black market opportunists muddy the clarity of the ideological and political stakes in ways that further destabilize the region.

2. Economic Problems

The Sahel has been the forefront of economic transactions across the Sahara. The rich trade between the Mediterranean and Africa, and from a historical perspective, it has been dominated by federalist light riding 'Mongol-type' trader kings who got rich by trading, and/or mining. The potential for agriculture has been limited by a continuously erratic pattern of rainfall, which the French colonialists failed to realize and exploit. Desertification has also rendered the once agriculturally prosperous land widely useless, and this has created a slew of immigrants to the south and the EU. As



cattle and crops falter together, climate change has all but worsened the impact of the inconsistent weather. With investor confidence a government intervention virtually non-existent, the region faces a crisis that has economic connotations throughout the entire world, from the labour market in southern Europe to the illegal Russian arms trade, from the losses in revenue for the governments in the region to their reliance on international loans.

3. Cultural History

The Sahel has a rich history filled with the dark ink that dots the pages of books in the form of the devastating (but extremely profitable) slave trade to one of the richest and most integrated kingdoms in the world, directly affecting the future of Asia Europe trade for up to the 15th century. While there exist various fragments between the various nomadic clans, the uniting factor of Islam has almost pushed the region to the brink of unity various times, before it descended into fragmentation again. However, the diverse social practices, languages, crafts and other distinctive marks that represent a culture stand the risk of being eroded as people escape the harsh land and, consequently, lose their way of life. An example of this is a particular phenomenon is illustrated in the cultural loss that is widespread in the Syrian refugees in Germany, mostly incremented by the German cultural integration programs.

4. Consistent Famine Crises

Sahel's humanitarian crisis is mostly a result of the food crisis which hit the region in 2012. From the second half of the twenty-first century, desertification and soil erosion due to ever-increasing human population sought a problem for the Sahel if not tackled would pose a major problem for the people. Now with more than 80% of its land degraded or made unfit for farming or livestock rearing, reports suggest more than 20 million people are at risk of food

insecurity with 2.5 million of them needing immediate assistance.

It has been further complicated by violence in Mali which has displaced more than a million people from their homes. The influx of refugees from Mali presents a challenge to neighbouring countries like Chad and Nigeria who have little resources to support them

5. Political crises

Political instability has plagued some of the Sahel's countries for years. For example in Mali, the military coup of March 2012 brought an abrupt halt to 20 years of stable democracy. In its aftermath, the terrorists who used to occupied most of the northern region started heading south, intent on taking control of the whole country. In January 2013 a French led and Chad supported intervention stopped their advance. This conflict worsened the security and humanitarian crisis, in part by disrupting supply routes and causing food shortages.

The crisis in neighbouring regions like Darfur, Sudan, and the presence of an armed rebellion in the east did damage to Chad's security that will last for many years. During the 50 years of independence of Niger, there have been reports by the International Crisis Group of a think tank, the country has seen two armed rebellions, four coups, seven governments and promises of democratic change as well as reversals. As instability prevails in the region, this has led to porous borders, a political or security crisis in one country is often a serious threat to neighbours. These porous borders have led to an increase in criminal networks and drug traffickers. The UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has estimated that major illicit flows linked to criminal activities in the Sahel amounted to \$3.8 billion annually.

6. Humanitarian Crises

Even though the government had eventually escaped the crisis, the limited availability of resources because of the food crisis has led to a humanitarian crisis which has almost affected the entire population of the Sahel. The absence of

economic opportunities has led them to live in a cyclical debt trap. Desertification has made it impossible for people

to have basic water facilities, and Healthcare remains a distant dream for them. The growing insecurity at the borders has led to mass displacement and armed attacks in border regions with Burkina Faso and Niger have uprooted hundreds of families adding to the



devastation by the long-running conflict around Lake Chad Basin

7. The Lake Chad Basin Crisis

Lake Chad is a freshwater lake located where Chad, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon meet. Once the biggest lake in Africa of 25,000 sq.km providing a livelihood to more than 30 million people has now been reduced to a mere 2,500 sq km that can barely sustain the lives of all the people who depend on it. A mix of climate change, overpopulation and irrigation has turned this lake into a desert and has forced people to live in overcrowded camps suffering from extreme poverty, disease and violence. The ongoing military operations because of the Boko Haram has made matters worse. More than 17 million people have been affected in some way or the other with more than 2.5 million people displaced.

Pertinent Realities to Tackle in Legislation

The Sahel Crisis is a result of a complex intertwined web of problems which can make even the simplest decisions or actions impractical or illogical. With this in mind, the executive board would like the delegates to follow a logical flow of action and tackling problems in the order of their importance at the time. With that being said, we would want the committee to understand that the problems affecting the Sahel like the food crisis and the humanitarian crisis are very personal problems that affect every individual not a certain section of it and thus any solution that you come up with should be in line with the best interests of every individual in the Sahel region. the executive board would specifically like to draw your attention to the key issues that should be debated in the committee. Ergo, the most pertinent questions to consider are:

1. Trade Problems

What are the various economic challenges that prevent economic development in the region.

2. Investment in Armament

How do we ensure the correct use of international monetary assistance, while preventing the region from descending into a full-fledged civil war.

3. Immigration

Immigrants from this region are flooding their more fortunate neighbours, what do we do with those already there, and how do we stop more population drain.

4. Political Instability

The region faces a power vacuum with an extreme lack of governance in the region. Governments are unable to reach the population and integrate the tribals along with the national identity.

5. The Food Crisis

Rapid desertification and reliance on the fluctuating monsoon have created constant food crises that is only propagated by the pseudo monarchies set up by local warlords.

6. Population Growth

The population of the region relies on high birth and death rates. While this might not seem pertinent at the time, with the advent of medication and other measures of incrementing life expectancy, how do we counteract the subsequent population boom, and use the labour productively?

Major Areas of International Diplomatic Conflict

The Sahel has become a hotbed for conflict. The conflict between man and nature, the conflict between man and man, and everyone that can fight are fighting. Terrorist organizations that were pushed out of major countries by foreign powers have descended upon the desert with a vengeance. But terrorists need weapons. Where do these weapons come from? How are they paid for? How can the committee stop this inflow of arms without antagonizing the major external powers in the region? These are questions that the committee is urged to answer.

There is power vacuum created by lax governance in the region, and this is being exploited by the African branches of Islamic Terror outfits. Poverty, unemployment and rampant social disintegration have left the youth desperate for life. Thus, radicalization is a relatively easy task, and various arms producers have a reason to not change anything. Furthermore, there is diplomatic conflict over what course of action must be taken. The committee is urged to remember that the Sahel remains the poorest region in the world, and the population demographic is young and radical, with little consensus amongst the course of

action and vast amounts reserved for funding, but only a tiny fraction of them being used.

Important Analogy

Please visit the following link to read important documents and studies concerning the Sahel Region.

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/g5-sahel-joint-force-gains-traction/>

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/islamic-state-isis-africa-implications-syria-iraq-boko-haram-aqim-shabaab/>