

Horace Mann Model United Nations Conference XXII



**Social, Humanitarian and Cultural
Affairs Committee (SOCHUM)
Chair: Thomas Katzenbach '08
Assistant Director: David Moon '09**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee at HoMMUNC 2007! We look forward to meeting all of you and hearing your innovative solutions to these troubling world issues. The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly deals with a range of social and humanitarian affairs that affect populations around the globe. The committee's mandate includes issues regarding race, gender, and children, the rights of indigenous people, and the promotion of freedom and self-determination.

The first issue addressed in this guide that we will be discussing in committee is Growth and Responsibility in Africa. The failure of countries Africa to meet yearly indicators of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has brought major criticism upon the United Nations. It is your duty to devise solutions that will bring Africa back on track towards achieving the MDGs by 2015. The second topic, Refugees and Displaced Persons, is an issue that the UN has dealt with perennially. This year is a turning point, however, as the number of refugees worldwide reaches a record high due to new conflicts such as the ongoing war in Iraq, the situation in Darfur, and Lebanese instability. The UN is currently in the process of finding solutions to this catastrophic development. It is your job as delegates to address these two conundrums, so deep thought and extensive research is necessary.

This guide will give you a brief look into the issues we will be covering, but it should merely serve as a beginning to your research. Venture to the recommended sights listed in this guide and be sure to check out news articles, reference books, and the Internet. If you have any questions at all about this guide, the issues we will be discussing, or any general conference questions, please feel free to contact us at any time. Good luck preparing for the conference. We can't wait to see you in October!

Best regards,

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Topic A:

Growth and Responsibility in Africa

Meeting the Millennium Development Goals



Statement of the Problem (the Millennium Development Goals)

In September 2000, world leaders gathered at the United Nations Millennium Summit to discuss reassessing the role of the United Nations at the dawn of the twenty-first century. In it hope to “free all men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty,” the summit agreed to try to achieve a set of time-bound and measurable targets called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015. Since its adoption, the MDGs have been placed at the heart of the global agenda and have galvanized wide spectra of commitments to human rights, good governance, and democracy. They have functioned as a universal framework for global progress and a means for developing countries and their development partners to work together in pursuit of a greater future. The eight MDGs are summarized here:

The UN is confronted with new skepticism and adversity as this year marks the

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:
 - Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
 - Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
 - Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
3. Promote gender equality and empower women:
 - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
4. Reduce child mortality:
 - Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5. Improve maternal health
 - Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
 - Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
 - Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability:
 - Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources
 - Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
 - Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020
8. Develop a global partnership for development:
 - Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, which includes a commitment to governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally
 - Address the least developed countries’ special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction
 - Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States
 - Deal comprehensively with developing countries’ debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term
 - In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth
 - In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
 - In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

midpoint between the adoption of the MDGs and the 2015 target date. The lack of African progress is a main reason for skepticism of the MDGs. While yearly reports reflect a general positive trend throughout the world and an unprecedented cooperation between the developed and developing nations, the success is tragically uneven. As the most recent G8 Summit this June and *The 2007 Update on Africa and the Millennium Development Goals* point out, “sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to achieve any of its Goals.”

To this day, Africa is plagued with poverty, disease, illiteracy, and premature mortality, all of which show no sign of decreasing in frequency. We must remember that the MDGs are not merely trivial goals but rather benchmarks that demonstrate the living conditions in different regions across the world. All eight goals of the MDGs are all delicately intertwined. Only a shrewd and cooperative effort from both the developing and developed nations will uproot those problems that have haunted Africa throughout history. It is especially essential that the African nations achieve the MDGs not only to secure the safety and health of their inhabitants but also to furnish proof of the international community’s testament to Africa and the effectiveness of U.N. humanitarian program. It is up to you, delegates of SOCHUM, to reassess the previous 7 years’ development strategies and humanitarian efforts and come up with a solution that will bring about positive change in Africa.

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

In the last ten years, the world has witnessed a developing Africa that strives to take advantage of opportunities that are emerging from a rapidly changing world economy. However, African nations continue to fall towards the bottom of any list measuring economic activity despite its wealth of natural resources.

Over \$600 billion has been sent to African nations in the form of direct aid, but the money has had little to no long term effect. In addition, African nations have borrowed enormous sums of money in an attempt to alleviate their own domestic concerns. Tragically, a large percentage of these funds was either invested in weapons or was misappropriated by corrupt governments. Consequently, many newly emerging and progressing democratic nations of Africa are hindered by debts inherited from their corrupt past. Most export income generated by African nations goes out in the form of interest payments. In addition, many assets within Africa are owned by foreign interests, and thus the money earned by those assets, especially natural resources, is often sent directly out of the country. Large debts result in low spending on social services such as education, medical care, and development of infrastructure. Capital produced by the country then barely reaches its people. Statistics show that most African nations are unable to repay their debts without extending their debt payments indefinitely. Thus, as time progresses, African nations along with their people are buried deeper and deeper into debt and poverty. Most African nations favor debt relief; however, most plans made by Developed Countries alleviate debtor states’ burdens affect only those nations on the G8’s list of Highly-Indebted Poor Countries. Likewise, many pledges are simply not fulfilled.

Problems are evident on the international level but also within countries themselves. Despite large amounts of arable land south of the Sahara Desert, this land is

not distributed amongst the people of the nation for development and farming. In many countries, land is either subject to tribal ownership, or it is in the hands of descendants of European settlers of the late 19th and early 20th century. For example, according to a 2005 IRIN report, about 82% of the arable land in South Africa is owned by those of European descent. As such, many African farmers rarely have clear title to their own land and have to scratch out an existence as subsistence or tenant farmers. There are vast resources of unused land, which are often private property. In addition, many African farmers lack essential infrastructure such as irrigation and fertilizer, which forces them to rely on rainfall to water their crops. Thus, in years when there isn't enough water, an un-irrigated field crop yields nothing, drowning the family in further debt and hunger.

Africa has also made little progress in tackling food shortages and malnutrition. This problem is especially severe in Central, East, and Southern Africa, where almost half of these regions' combined population of 360 million is malnourished. Children and women are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of this issue.

Statistics show that while the proportion of people living on one dollar a day or less has declined from 45.9 percent to 41.1 percent since 1999, reaching the MDG target of halving the extent of extreme poverty by 2015 in Africa requires that the current pace be doubled. On the other hand, despite a high regional population growth of 2.3 percent a year, the rising number of extreme poor has leveled off, increasing only marginally from 296 million to 298 million in 2004. The proportion of youth under-five who are underweight, however, only declined slightly, from 33 percent to 29 percent, between 1990 and 2005. In spite of this marginal improvement, the poverty gap ratio in sub-Saharan Africa remains the highest in the world and the greatest proportions of children going hungry continue to be found in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa's economic malaise is a never-ending cycle, as it engenders more of the disease, warfare, misgovernment, and corruption that created it in the first place. Due to this poverty, the effect of natural catastrophes, war, and disease is augmented. Thus, help from developed nations must be combined with the collaboration of African nations to jumpstart the African economy.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

There has been significant progress towards universal primary education, with enrollment increasing from 57 percent in 1999 to 70 percent in 2005. However the huge gap of 30 percent remains, and the number of school age children are increasing. Whereas there are 348 million youths in sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 14, the number is expected to reach 403 million in 2015. Given the low enrollment at the beginning of the decade, some countries were able to present significant gains. Benin, Mali, Niger, and Swaziland increased their enrollment by around 20 percent while Malawi and Uganda demonstrated a rise of over 30 percent. However, there also have been countries where the enrollment ratio fell. Urban-rural disparities in enrolment are also too common. The enrollment ratio in urban areas is two or three times as high as in rural areas.

Failure to meet the education target will reduce the chances of reaching other MDGs because basic education is key to establishing a long term, continuous progression

of a nation. Basic education empowers children and enhances their self confidence, allowing them to make better decisions as an adult. An educated mother, for example, is more likely to marry later, space pregnancies better, and seek medical care for her child and herself when needed.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Women's participation in paid, non-agricultural employment has continued to increase very slowly but steadily. Still, this value stands at less than one-third. However, the good news is that the share of parliamentary seats held by women has increased substantially, from 7 percent in 1990 to 17 percent this year. There was also a faster increase for girls in terms of primary school enrollment; girls from 56 percent to 60 percent, and boys from 63 percent to 65 percent. During the 1990s, for every ten literate men, there were less than seven women who could read and write. However, currently, for every ten literate men, there are eight women who are literate. In Botswana and Lesotho, female literacy is actually higher than that for males. The smallest reductions in female/male disparity occurred in countries where female to male literacy ratios already were over 90 percent. In contrast, countries with the largest increase in the proportion of literate women to literate men are those with the lowest overall literacy rates and where primary schooling has expanded. Evidence shows that babies born to mothers without formal education are at least twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition or die before age 5 than are babies born to mothers who completed primary school. An educated girl is also the best guarantor that her children will attend school. Thus, girls' education is an important step to achieving the MDGs

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

One of seven children in Africa will not see their fifth birthday, and this situation has not been improving at a sufficient rate. Under-five mortality rates dropped from 185 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 166 per 1,000 in 2005, hardly making a dent in the objective of a two-thirds reduction by 2015. The death rate of Africa is now at twice the rate in the developing world as a whole and there doesn't seem to be an immediate solution to this problem. There is a large demographic disparity within these statistics as well. A child from a rich family invariably faces a much lower risk of premature death than a child from a poor family. On average, a poor child is twice as likely to die before turning 5 years old as a wealthier one. Thus, the general wellbeing and prosperity of Africa will make a major impact on this goal. Measles used to be among the leading causes of child mortality that could be easily prevented through immunization. Due to extensive vaccination campaigns, measles cases and deaths on the sub-continent fell by nearly 75 percent between 1999 and 2005. However it is unfortunate that despite the reduced amount of measles cases and deaths, the death toll of infants have not reduced on the scale expected and desired.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Complications during pregnancy and childbirth cause the death of approximately 250,000 women each year in sub-Saharan Africa. A woman's risk of dying from such complications over the course of her lifetime is 1 in 16, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world. The vast majority of maternal deaths could be prevented through appropriate reproductive health services before, during, and after pregnancy. Attendance at delivery by skilled health personnel who are trained to detect problems early is essential. According to surveys in 57 developing countries, 81 percent of urban women deliver with the help of a skilled attendant, versus only 49 percent of their rural counterparts. Antenatal care has been recognized as a core component of maternal health services and can serve as the gateway into a wider health-care system. Preventing unplanned pregnancies alone could avert around one quarter of maternal deaths, including those that result from unsafe abortion.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Inhabited by just over 12 percent of the world's population, Africa is estimated to have more than 60 percent of the AIDS-infected population. More than 10 million children are orphaned by AIDS. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa is spreading poverty, worsening gender inequality, and hindering governments to provide essential services.

About one-third of those currently living with AIDS are between 15 and 24 years old. Adolescent girls are at particularly high risk of a disease which gender could not be more central. Teenage girls are five to six times more likely to be infected by the HIV virus than boys their age, and poor adolescent women with little or no education face the greatest risk. It is important to understand that millions of youths in Africa do not know how to protect themselves against HIV. Recent studies have found that half of the teenagers in sub-Saharan Africa did not know that a healthy looking person could be HIV-positive. In many countries, silence, shame, stigma, and superstitions make the virus so prevalent in many societies. These social walls especially thrive in a climate of ignorance and illiteracy, making education a key to defeating this deadly disease. However, this is really a self-perpetuating system, as the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to undermine the education system. Absentees and deaths among teachers are high to the point where several African countries are losing more teachers than the number of new recruits. AIDS also reduces the demand for education as it makes families unable to pay for schooling and degrades the quality of education, making parents and children lose interest in school. Even if infection rates drop in the next few years, half of all 15-year olds alive today in the most affected nations are at risk of dying of the disease. HIV/AIDS has, therefore become the leading cause of death in the African continent. Not only does it seriously impede the growth and stability of the African nations but also has begun to destroy the hard-won development gains of nations like Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

Health spending in Africa has historically been inadequate. This situation was often compounded by the distorted spending priorities of the many military regimes across the continent. In certain parts of Southern Africa there is even a widespread denial that HIV does in fact cause AIDS. In addition, there are many myths attached to the use of condoms, such as the idea that they are used to limit the growth of the African population, and that condoms stifle the traditional power of the man in his community.

Although some may say that the lack of money is the only root of the problem, there is, in fact, a great deal of aid distributed throughout developing countries with high HIV/AIDS rates. Along side poverty are the problems of newly decentralized systems, lack of infrastructure, corruption, and misguided resources.

Access to drugs is increasingly recognized as a key component to AIDS strategies. New anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) can slow down and even reverse the progression of HIV infection, even delaying the onset of AIDS by twenty years or more. Access to the ARV therapy has increased more than eightfold since the end of 2003, with about 810,000 people on treatment. The use of ARVs must be continuous, however, in order to prevent the number of drug-resistant strains of HIV from spreading. In areas where drug therapy is expensive, such resistant strains have been observed as people have interrupted their treatment at times when they were unable to afford medication. Consequently, ARV treatment is still relatively expensive for most Africans; for those living below the poverty threshold (\$2/day), it is inaccessible.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Africa is rich with natural resources, but it has yet to establish effective systems to enable it to fully utilize their potential. In addition, the continent is losing its natural resources at a relatively faster pace than other regions: its wildlife population of unique species of animals and plants is coming under increasing pressure, its forests are being depleted at an alarming rate, and about 65 percent of agricultural land has been affected by soil erosion since 1950. The majority of people do not have access to electricity even in urban areas. More than 90 percent of the population in rural areas still depends mostly on traditional energy sources such as fuel-wood, charcoal, and animal dung.

Access to improved water in urban areas has also slightly declined during the 1990, as the urban population increased faster than the expansion of safe water supply systems. At the current rate of increase, the goal of reducing by half the proportion of people without access to improved water will not be achieved until the 2050s.

Lack of sanitation is also a major public health problem throughout Africa. Poor sanitation in public areas such as school buildings makes them unsafe places where diseases are easily transmitted. It impairs children's health and limits school attendance. About one in ten school-age African girls drop out at puberty because of lack of clean and private sanitation facilities in school. Improvements in water supply, hygiene, and sanitation, can reduce many premature mortalities as well as the incidence of diarrhea. Unfortunately, an additional 400 million people will need to be provided with safe water supplies to reach the target by 2015; this implies a tripling of the pace observed during the 1990s.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Most African countries are restless to replicate and scale-up the hard-worked progress they have made in the previous seven years. They require more and better quality official development assistance to finance public investments. While aid to sub-Saharan Africa greatly increased during the first few years of the Millennium, it remains virtually unchanged since 2004. Donors such developed nations need to accelerate their plans to succeed in maintaining the credibility of their 2005 pledge to double the amount

of aid to Africa by 2010. The prospects of achieving the MDGs depend in large measure on the extent to which African nations can increase their participation in global economy. Owing to the small size of markets of most African countries, increasing external trade from a diversified export base is essential to regain high rates of economic growth. The average growth rate of Africa's exports of manufactured goods was over 30 percent per year in the 1980s but has slowed down to less than 3 percent in the 1990s with exports largely concentrated on primary commodities. In total, Africa's share of global trade remains at less than 3 percent.

There has also been a steep decline in the flow of official development assistance (ODA) to Africa. Combined with the weak trade performance and the continent's inability to attract foreign direct investment in significant quantities, the reduced flow in ODA further constrains Africa's growth and poverty reduction efforts.

Africa's heavy debt is another important constraint. As of the end of 200, the continent's total debt stock was estimated at \$206 billion, up from \$177 billion in 1990.

Conclusion

You will need to come up with innovative and lasting solutions to the humanitarian crisis in Africa. The solutions must result from a collaborative effort from all the delegates. Make sure to remain on point with respect to policy. The resolution we are looking to pass will hopefully contain humanitarian and economic (and political if necessary) solutions to the imminent MDG crisis. Despite the lack of progress towards achieving the MDGs, the goals remain achievable in most African countries. Yet time is running out to make the needed practical investments, and social, and economic changes in the suffering African region.

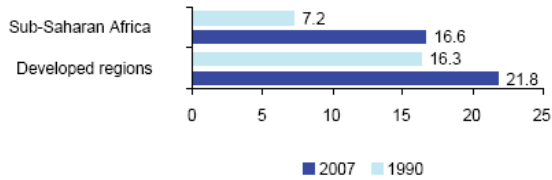
Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- What can immediately be done to tackle the eight development goals?
- What type of infrastructure needs to be built to create a long-lasting solution?
- How is the debt crisis in Africa to be solved?
- How will Africa achieve self-sustainability?
- What needs to be done by the United Nations and what needs to be achieved by the national governments prior to receiving any aid?
- What, if anything, do individual nations need to contribute to Africa in order to achieve the MDGs?
- Who will be in charge of administering, receiving, delivering, and coordinating the aid?
- Will other organizations need to be sought to assist the United Nations?

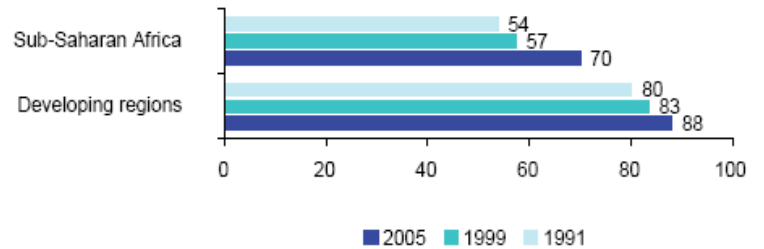
Recommended Sites:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.html>
<http://www.g-8.de/Webs/G8/EN/Homepage/home.html>
<http://www.millenniumcampaign.org>
<http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>
<http://www.africa-union.org/>

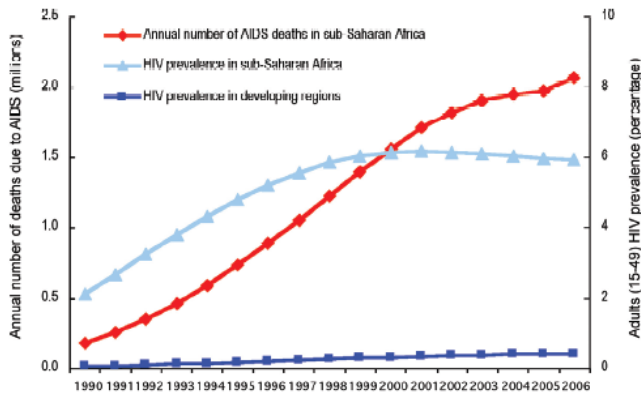
Share of women in single or lower houses of parliament, 1990 and 2007 (Percentage)



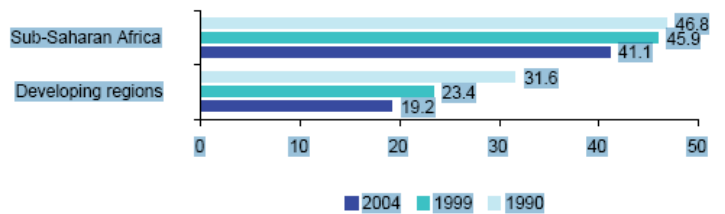
Total net enrolment ratio in primary education, 1990/1991, 1998/1999 and 2004/2005 (Percentage)



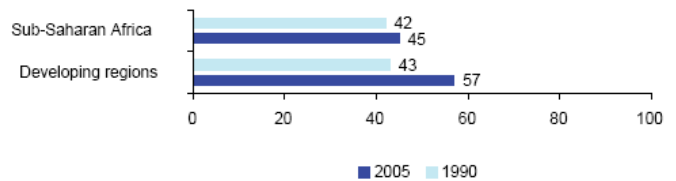
HIV prevalence in adults aged 15-49 in sub-Saharan Africa and all developing regions (Percentage) and number of AIDS deaths in sub-Saharan Africa (Millions), 1990-2006



Proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day, 1990, 1999 and 2004 (Percentage)



Maternal health: Proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health care personnel, 1990 and 2005



Statistics tables from the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

Topic B:

Refugees and Displaced Persons

A Worsening Global Crisis



Statement of the Problem:

While the last hundred years have yielded fantastic technological, scientific and industrial advances, yet humanity still grapples with humanitarian crises. The Darfur crisis, the War in Iraq, the Lebanese crisis, and poverty in Africa are but a few examples of events that have not only put entire governments in mayhem, but also, destroyed the civilization, lives, and liberties of millions of human beings. Perhaps the most tangible of the remnants of these events are the refugees. For the first time since the turn of the century, the number of refugees increased, by 12 percent, to almost ten million in 2006. Fortunately, the United Nations has been deeply involved in this process, as the international body works to strengthen its response to humanitarian crises. However, there is a limited amount of resources and a humanitarian aid to support the number of refugees. The international community needs more than ever to develop a shrewd plan to both reduce the catalysts that have displaced these people, and a plan to most effectively and efficiently provide humanitarian aid to those who have lost their homes.

Basic Terminology:

A refugee is a person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.

An asylum seeker is a person who is seeking to be recognized as a refugee through legal means.

An internally displaced person (IDP) is someone who has been forced to leave their home for reasons such as religious or political persecution, war or natural disaster, but has not crossed an international border.

A displaced person is a person who has been forced to leave his or her native place.

A returned refugee is someone who has returned voluntarily to their country of origin or place of habitual residence.

Africa and the Sudan Situation

The Darfur Crisis:

The dire situation in Darfur dates back to March 2003 when the predominantly Muslim militant groups of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) started attacking government forces and installations in the western region of Sudan. The militants justified their attacks by accusing the government of President Omar al-Bashir of oppressing black Africans in favor of Arabs in the state of Darfur. The government, caught by surprise by the militants' attacks, had very few troops in the region. Thus in response, it mounted a campaign of aerial bombardment in support

of ground attacks by an Arab militia recruited from local tribes, called the Janjaweed. At least 200,000 people have been killed and about 2.5 million people have fled their homes in the past four years of fighting.

An Update on the Crisis:

October 9, 2006: the Food and Agriculture Organization lists Sudan's Darfur region as the most pressing food emergency in the world.

November 18, 2006: Sudan agrees to the deployment of UN peacekeepers

December, 2006: Violence in Darfur worsens due to the lack of support from the under funded and under armed African Union forces

March 31, 2007: Janjaweed militiamen massacre up to 400 people in the volatile eastern border region of Chad near Sudan.

April 15, 2007: African Union peacekeepers are targeted and killed

April 18, 2007: President Bush gives a speech criticizing the Sudanese government and threatening the use of sanctions if the situation does not improve

May 3, 2007: Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and Chadian president Idriss Deby signs a peace agreement aimed at reducing tension between their countries

June 17, 2007: Oxfam announces that it is permanently pulling out of Gereida where more than 130,000 have sought refuge.

Humanitarian Aid:

The U.N.'s main humanitarian objectives in Sudan were to protect refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and others of concern. There is also an effort to improve the general refugee program in Sudan by enhancing the quality of asylum and providing access to services and opportunities for self-reliance to urban and camp-based refugees. However, for the crisis in Sudan is a prolonged catastrophe, a multi-year resettlement program for long-staying refugees is an essential component. Furthermore, village assessments and mass-information campaigns for the voluntary repatriation of Southern Sudanese refugees continue. About 270 village assessments have been completed and the information obtained from water, health, and education sectors is used to guide foreign humanitarian aid. In Darfur, the U.N. has set up the Um Shalaya and Mukjar camps for Chadian refugees. The UN has also expanded its protection presence in the field, and regularly monitors border and rural areas. It has also established 34 women's and 12 youth centers.

However, the lack of security remains one of the greatest constraints for U.N. operations in the sub region. The security situation in many areas of Southern Sudan is unpredictable, mainly because of attacks on civilians by militias and other armed groups. The security situation makes it especially difficult for executing effective humanitarian

operations in Darfur. Without improved security, road access to rural areas, settlements will be harassed by bandits and armed factions. In addition, the presence of land mines is an obstacle for repatriation to many areas. Unfavorable climates compounded by poor infrastructure (impassable roads, feeble bridges, etc.) continue to hinder movements and repatriation efforts. Repatriation is also affected by outbreaks of epidemics. Although outbreaks of cholera and meningitis can be brought under control, there are not enough vaccines and medical facilities to account for recurring outbreaks.

The Rest of Africa:

The consolidation of peace in several countries in Africa allowed the U.N. to make significant progress in achieving durable solutions for a number of displacement situations. However in some parts of the continent instability became worse, leading to more displacement. This was the case in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Sudan, and Somalia. Renewed fighting in Senegal also led to the displacement of more than 6,000 people in 2006. The lack of infrastructure and basic services combined with unpredictable funding are the major constraints of humanitarian operations in Africa.

CASWANAME (Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa, the Middle East)

Lebanese Crisis:

2006:

The 2006 Lebanon War began in July 12, 2006 when Hezbollah militants in Lebanon launched an anti-tank missile attack on two armored Humvees patrolling the Israeli side of the border, killing three Israeli soldiers and wounding two. Additionally, the Islamic militant group seized two Israeli soldiers and took them to Lebanon. Early the next day, Israel began attacks on civilian infrastructure including the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut and the main Beirut-Damascus highway. The conflict killed more than a thousand Lebanese, severely damaged Lebanese infrastructure and displaced 974,184 Lebanese and 300,000 Israelis.

2007:

The 2007 conflict began in May 20, 2007 when fighting broke out between Fatah al-Islam (an Islamist militant organization lined to al-Qaeda) and the Lebanese Armed Forces in a Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli called Nahr al-Bared. There have also been minor clashes in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon in addition to several terrorist bombings around the capital, Beirut.

An Update on the Crisis:

May 20, 2007: Fatah al-Islam begins shooting at Lebanese security forces who returns fire near the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp, spreading violence. Militants

subsequently attack a Lebanese military post at the gate of the camp. At least 27 Lebanese soldiers are killed in the fighting as well as a number of civilians and militants

May 21, 2007: Fatah al-Islam claims responsibility for two bombings that took place in Beirut

May 23, 2007: A bomb goes off near a government building in Aley injuring five people.

May 21 -31, 2007: Militants continue battling the Lebanese army at the outskirts of the refugee camp while Lebanese tanks and artillery surround the camp.

June 1, 2007: Tanks massed outside the Nahr al-Bared camp start a ground offensive. At least 19 people are killed along with Abu Riyadh, a senior leader of Fatah al-Islam

June 4, 2007: Bomb explodes in an empty passenger bus in Beirut wounding seven passengers

June 3-4, 2007: Violence spreads to Ain al-Hilweh, another Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon.

June 9, 2007: After an unsuccessful effort for diplomacy, the Lebanese Army attacks Nahr el-Bared once again. The troops take heavy damage due to booby-trapped buildings and other Fatah al-Islam positions. 11 soldiers, 16 militants and 2 civilians are killed and another 100 soldiers wounded

June 11, 2007: Two Lebanese Red Cross workers are killed as they evacuate civilians

June 13, 2007: Car bomb kills at least 10 people and injures 11.

June 19, 2007: The Lebanese army takes many of the main positions in Nahr el-Bared

June 24, 2007: A car bomb on the border with Israel hits a UNIFIL armored personal carrier killing six Spanish soldiers

July 12, 2007: Lebanese army launches new assault towards the center of the camp.

September, 2007: Siege of the Palestinian refugee camp Nahr al-Bared following clashes between militants and the military. More than 300 people die and 40,000 residents flee before the army gains control of the camp.

During the course of this conflict most of the 31,000 Palestinians that lived at the refugee camps fled the fighting to other camps.

In addition to the rise in the population of refugees due to the two most recent Lebanese conflicts, all 12 official refugee camps in Lebanon suffer from serious problems: nonexistent adequate infrastructure, overcrowding, poverty, and

unemployment. In fact, Lebanon has the highest percentage of Palestine refugees who are living in abject poverty. The number of Palestine refugees in Lebanon is currently 409,714 people and virtually all suffer social and civil right problems. They have limited access to the government's public health or educational facilities and no access to public social services. Considered foreigners, Palestine refugees are prohibited by law from working in more than 120 trades and professions. It is important to note, however, that Lebanon is one of only a few nations which provides some sanctuary to Palestinian refugees.

The War in Iraq:

The War in Iraq is an ongoing conflict which began on March 20, 2003 with the United States' invasion of Iraq under the rationale that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction. The invasion soon led to the defeat of Saddam Hussein and his government as U.S.-led coalition occupied Iraq and attempted to establish a new democratic government. This led to a seemingly unending struggle with the Iraqi insurgency, civil war between the Sunni and Shia Iraqis, and al-Qaeda suicide and road side-bombings.

Refugees from Iraq have increased drastically in number since the beginning of the invasion, demonstrating by the approximately 3,000 Iraqis fleeing the country per day. An estimated total 2.0 million people have fled the country, summing to nearly 7 percent of the total Iraqi population. The U.N. has also reported that within Iraq there are an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced people. Most ventured into Jordan, Syria and Egypt, creating large demographic shifts and creating great tensions among the nations. These refugees are mired in poverty as they are generally barred from working in their host countries.

Jordan:

By December 2006, Jordan has taken in roughly 750,000 Iraqi refugees since the war began. Jordan has classified newcomers not by the title "refugees" but instead "visitors," disinclining the Jordanian government from extending to the Iraqis the same benefits enjoyed by 1.5 million Palestinian refugees also residing in Jordan. Jordanians express resentment to the refugees as they apply pressure on the Jordanian economy.

Syria:

Syria had taken roughly a million refugees by December 2006, half of them Iraqi Christians. Most of the refugees settle in and around the city of Damascus. Syria has maintained an open-door policy to Iraqis fleeing the war. Syrian authorities worry that the new influx of refugees would limit the country's resources like oil, heat, water, and electricity, which are all becoming scarcer.

Egypt:

Egypt is not a border country of Iraq, but nonetheless has a refugee population of 150,000.

United States:

In early February 2007, the United States and the United Nations developed a plan to settle several thousand refugees in the United States. The U.N. aims to register close to 200,000 displaced persons, the U.S. aiming to settle at least 5,000 of this group in the United States by the end of 2007.

Sweden:

Sweden currently accepts more than half of all asylum applications from Iraqis in Europe. In 2006 alone, more than 9,000 Iraqis fled their country and came to Sweden. Sweden's immigration authority anticipates up to 40,000 Iraqi's seeking asylum in 2007.

At the end of July 2007, the NGO Coordinating Committee in Iraq (NCCI) and Oxfam International issued a report that said that one-third of the population in Iraq was in need of aid. The report shows that 70 percent of the population lacks proper access to water supplies, proper sanitation. Almost 30 percent of children experience malnutrition. The escalation of violence and the lack of international presence outside the north of Iraq have hampered humanitarian operations for internally displaced persons. Due to funding shortfalls, a number of humanitarian operations were also suspended. These included the registration of refugees in central Iraq and the establishment of aid information centers.

The Rest of CASWANAME:

The North African region has seen an increase in the flow of migrants and asylum-seekers from sub-Saharan Africa passing through on their way to Europe. The migrants continue to arrive spontaneously. The absence of national strategies to address these changes in demographics often results in loss of life and serious human rights violation.

In Yemen, the number of asylum-seekers and migrants crossing the Gulf of Aden from the Horn of Africa rose to more than 25,000 in 2006. The extremely perilous journey, which is usually managed by a smuggling organization, continues to take a high toll on lives. The growing influx has prompted Yemen to seek more international help to fortify its asylum program.

U.N. operations in Central Asia are confronted by a deterioration of the protection environment as Central Asia has shifted from a region that mainly hosted refugees to one that is producing refugees who seek asylum. There is a gradual shrinking of asylum space, and an increasing number of highly politicized asylum cases.

Asia and the Pacific:

Sri Lanka:

The Sri Lankan Civil War is an ongoing conflict dating back to 1983. There has been periodic fighting predominantly between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It is estimated that the war has claimed the lives of more than

68,000 people since 1983 and has caused great harm to the economy and infrastructure of the country. The security situation in Sri Lanka greatly deteriorated in 2006 as dramatic upsurge in violence and human rights violations led to the displacement of 200,000 people within the country.

Water, food, shelter, clothing and health are essential to the survival of millions of people who have fled their homes. However, aid agencies are overspent and under funded. They are regularly forced to choose between lifesaving programs such as vaccinating infants from disease or providing school programs. Children are frequently most at risk. Children have become easy targets for recruitment by government militias and serve as combatants, porters and sex slaves. The persistent failure of donor governments to provide adequate funding for relief efforts has made a critical impact on the humanitarian aid process today. International humanitarian agencies also continue to struggle to provide effective protection to Internally Displaced Persons. States fail to provide adequate protection and assistance to these people because the displacement is the result of conflict in of which the national government is part. No single U.N. agency has the responsibility for responding to IDPs, and thus, the global response to the needs of IDP's is often weak.

Conclusion

The most desirable way to end forced displacement is for people to quickly return home and reintegrate into their original society. This can only happen when the conflict in the nation has ended and when humanitarian emergencies are overcome by international aid. Effective peacekeeping operations can transform conflict and bring about a stable peace so that displaced people can return home. Yet under-funded peacekeeping missions with weak mandates can only keep a temporary lid on the crisis situation.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- What can immediately be done to solve the international refugee crisis?
- How can the United Nations handle this crisis without violating the sovereignty of its member nations?
- How can the United Nations solve the refugee problem across the globe with the efficiency of solving it in only one region?
- What will be needed economically and physically to solve the refugee crisis?
- Where are refugees to be returned and who will handle the placement of refugees?
- What will the naturalization process of these refugees be?
- For refugees in war torn areas, what will the process be of returning them to their homes?

- What kind of supervision, if any, will be needed when refugees are either returned or relocated?
- What kind of aid is needed for such endeavors?

Helpful resources:

<http://www.refugeesinternational.org>

<http://www.unhcr.org>

As both topics cover vast, and vital issues, neither can one predict the direction of debate, nor can there be a clear division of opinions or policies among the member states. The issues at hand require more than anything a combined global effort, and thus compromise and discussion will play a key role in debate. As there is no silver bullet to these issues, we are looking for creative and yet practical approaches to these international crises.