



جامعة جورجتاون
كلية الشؤون الدولية في قطر

Model United Nations

Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar

1. About the Social, Humanitarian Cultural Committee(SOCHUM):

Commonly known as the “Third Committee”, the United Nations Social, Humanitarian and Cultural committee is an avenue for the delegations to discuss agenda items relations to social, humanitarian affairs and a range of human rights issues that affect people all over the world. With 193 nations represented, the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural committee is the largest committee in the United Nations tackling issues of global welfare. Chaired by H.E. Stephan Tafrov of Bulgaria, the third committee of the General Assembly works tightly with the United Nations Human Rights council, the Committee also discusses the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self- determination. The Committee also addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control. (un.org)

Assisting the chair are three vice chairs: Mr. Mario von Haff (Angola), Mr. Thorvardur Atli Thórsson (Iceland), and Ms. Maya Dagher (Lebanon) and Ms. Adriana Murillo Ruin (Costa Rica) as the rapporteur. In its past sessions the United Nations Social, Humanitarian and Cultural committee has drafted various resolutions regarding sustainable development and human rights, which include several country-specific resolutions.

2. Introduction to the North-South Divisions

One of the issues that SOCHUM will discuss and find solutions for in Georgetown Model UN is the North and South Divisions.

The North-South Divide is a broad socio-economic and political division between the wealthy, developed “North” and the poorer developing countries of the “South” of the world. By definition, the “North” includes United States, Canada, Israel, and Europe, and the “South” includes Africa, Latin America, and developing Asia such as China and India. The idea of categorization of countries according to economic and political status came about in the cold war,

with the initial division of the East and the West. Despite the term “North and South Division”, the geographical definition of this divide according to the location of the country is somewhat outdated, as countries that are economically developed are increasingly getting grouped into the “North”, such as Australia, and the countries who are not deemed as “developed” is getting grouped in the “South”. Currently the classification of “the North” has extended to include the United States, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia, Israel, Japan, The East Asian Tigers(Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), Turkey, and Australia. The “South” includes Africa, Latin America, parts of Eastern Europe, parts of the Middle East, Central and Southeast Brandt Line Asia.

There are several issues surrounding the North and South Divisions:

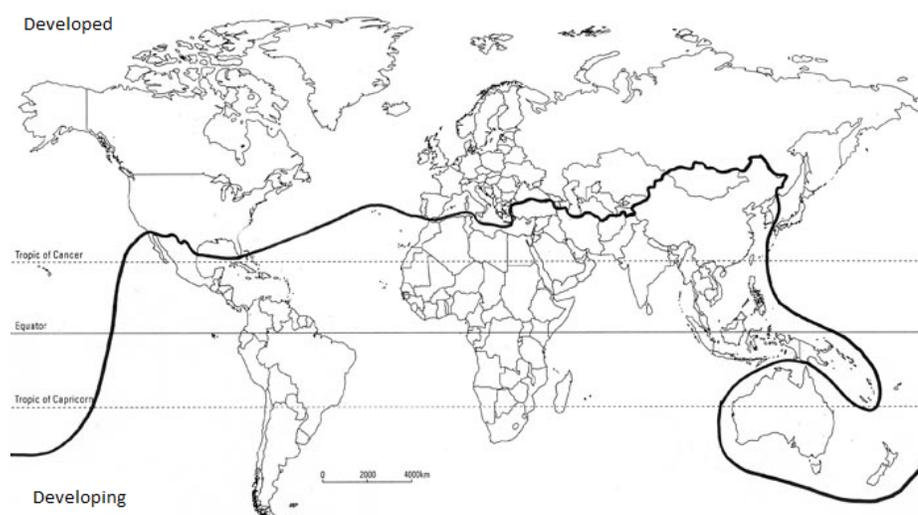
Economic Problems

The North – with one quarter of the world population, controls four fifths of the world income. Over ninety percent of manufacturing firms are owned by the north, and almost all stocks and bonds are traded in the west. The South has billions of dollars to the West, and they suffer from inflation according to change in prices and currency in the West. The economics of the South are becoming increasingly depended on the West as some countries even peg the value of their own currency to U.S dollars.

The South – with three quarters of the world population controls one fifth of world wealth, which mostly come from the export of raw materials and resources. The countries in the “South” are often subjected to the West’s resource bases, as the Western Countries strive to establish their own trade route of raw materials. This divide was strengthened and solidified during the age of colonialism, where the South became completely dependent on exports of raw materials and resources to the west.

For more specific figures, see the attached links.

Development Gap



The Brandt Line (20/80 line, or North and South Divisions)
Source: International Monetary Fund

Placing a greater emphasis on the “rich” and “poor” countries, the development gap in the North-South Divisions is one of the biggest problems. In fact, the North-South Divisions is also being known as the “Development Gap” in the world.

First and foremost, we can see the gap in development through the figures of the Human Development Index (HDI). The Human Development Index is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income indices used to rank countries into four tiers of human development: very high, high, medium, and low. Created by the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and the Indian economist Amartya Sen in 1990, the Human Development Index is a widely accepted value of measuring a country’s development in the world, and has also been adopted in the United Nations Development Programme.

The Human Development Index figures of the “Northern” Countries far exceed that of world average, and that of the “Southern” countries are far below. This has several implications beyond the quality of life: it represents the capability for “sustainable growth and influence in the international community. Countries that are struggling to increase the quality of life of its citizens and the countries that are dependent of foreign labor and foreign export are less likely to play a big role in world economics and politics. Moreover, since its citizens are so focused on getting by everyday life under poverty, it is less likely that corrupt or incapable regimes will change and the country will develop.

Issues are much great in regions of Africa, where most of the population lives under absolute poverty of \$2 per day. They lack specific resources and infrastructure for development, and thus its citizens have little nutrition or education. This leads to a cycle of underdevelopment, corruption, poverty and disease, which furthers the gap between the rich and poor economies in the world.

Digital and Technological Divide

The Global digital divide is also a significant problem in the North-South Divisions. Living in a world that is moving toward globalization, privileges such as internet usage and broadband access have become a necessity for developed nations, while it has become another world for developing countries. According the US census Bureau in 2012, only 15.6% of the entire African Continent has internet access, in contrast to North America and Europe that have over 70%. (US Census Bureau, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>)

This global digital divide is a specific factor in the North –South divide that is almost entirely geographical. The divide follows the logic that the uneven distribution of internet technology in the world causes countries to fall behind education, technology, labor, democracy, tourism, and economy. This divide also discriminates the goods and services that are available to those who have access to the internet and those who do not – leading to differences in the quality of life and wages. Therefore when the lack of the internet is spread widely into specific countries, it puts them in a severe disadvantage in today’s digitized global era.

The digital gap is viewed as one of the harder obstacles, as developing countries will have to overcome obstacles such as physical, financial, socio-demographic, institutional, political, and cultural access. From the cost of employing and educating IT technicians, education on information literacy and setting up databases and websites to the absence of a specific region's presence, language or culture in the internet, this problem is worsened every day with the increase of internet use.

The larger and more serious problem is that due to such problems pertaining to the North-South Divisions, a cycle of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer is established. The economic, development, and the digital gap are precisely the factors that hinder the solutions for North-South divisions and feed the increasing gap and the problems that arise from it.

It will be the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee's responsibility to come up with ideas and debate on how to break this cycle – allowing underdeveloped countries to pursue sustainable growth and development.

3. Possible and Existing Solutions

Despite the divide, there have been constant efforts to curb the divide. With an increasing trend in sustainable development, equality, and environmentally friendly growth, the theories for joined growth include free and unhindered trade in the world, South- South trade and aid, and the Millennium Development Goals.

Free trade between the North and the South, and unhindered capital flow

Economists have argued for the free trade between North and the South, allowing capital flow and countries in the south being economically involved in world economics and trade. With unhindered capital flow from tariffs and taxes, they have argued that third world countries will have access to the West's technology and capital, allowing them to independently operate and manage them, leading them towards sustainable development and growth.

This theory however has met with skepticism from Southern economists, stating that capitalism with two nations of unequal power will lead to neo-colonialism, and thus called for a "New International Economic Order " to restructure the world economy. Their demands included linking prices of commodity exports to manufactured imports, transferring of technology from North to South, canceling or rescheduling debts of Third World, improving representation in economic players—World Bank, UN Security Council, standardizing prices for raw materials, solving food crises, and "opening up of the North's market for manufactured or semi-processed goods of the South." (Oluwafemi 2012)

South – South trade, aid and cooperation

As countries like Brazil, China and India experience rapid development in the South, there is not only evidence that such countries are developing South-South aid but also this form of south-South aid is more effective than that of North-South aid.

Economists see the solution in topping the West's political and economical dominance in the world. They call for cooperation within the South's economies to strengthen their economies as a whole.

In 1978, the United Nations established a unit for South-South cooperation, and according to Global Envision, since the 1990s South-South cooperation has been successful in decreasing dependence on the aid programs of developed countries and in creating a shift in the international balance of power. Currently efforts call for ore strategic cooperation measures such as looking forward to improving further include joint investment in energy and oil, and a common bank. Among other regional trade agreements which were reached during the 2009 summit was Venezuela signing an oil agreement with South Africa and a memorandum of understanding with Sierra Leone to form a joint mining company. (*Craford and Fiorentino, World Trade Organization discussion paper 8*)

http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/discussion_papers8_e.pdf

A clear example of this transfer of knowledge and aid can be seen in the case of Brazil in 2010. Commonly referred to as "The Global Model in Waiting", Brazil has developed an increasingly successful model of overseas aid provision of over \$1 billion annually (ahead of many traditional donors), which focuses on technical expertise and the transfer of knowledge and expertise. (*Cabral and Weinstock Brazil: an emerging aid player*)

<http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6295.pdf>

Other means of cooperation include political and military alliance in the Regions of the South. With political unity, researchers argue that it will give the South more political standing when it comes to the Global arena. With a joined political goal, the representation of the South's views and opinions will be increasingly represented in venues like the United Nations.

The challenges for South-South cooperation include not having enough capital to start economic cooperation, such as starting a joined bank. A lack of capital to start this initiative has been a big obstacle to starting working for a solution. Another critique points out that when it comes to political unity, some countries in Africa have corrupt regimes that are both incapable and indifferent, thus providing obstacles for political unity and peace. Due to such states, the voices of the relatively well of countries in the South and African Region such as Brazil and South Africa will have more influence in the South.

United Nations Millennium Development Goals

A final version of this ongoing effort is the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) set in 2005. The UN MDGs are a set of eight goals agreed as a blueprint to meet the

worlds poorest. The eight goals are: Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger, Achieve Universal Primary Education, Promote Gender Equality and empower Women, Reduce Child Mortality, Improve Maternal Health, Combat HIV/AIDS and Malaria, Ensure Environmental sustainability, and a Global Partnership for Development.

Since its introduction, the 2013 progress reports of the United Nations MDGs imply that it is a slow but solid to provide basic necessities to underdeveloped nations.

UNMDG progress report can be found here: (I strongly urge the participants to go over the progress report to see which areas need improvement, and more specifically, what the “South” can do to tie the MDGs with their development)

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/2013_progress_english.pdf

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>

4. Individual and Institutional key actors

By far, the principal South to South Cooperation activities are economic in nature, and either bilateral or triangular (i.e. in partnership with a third country or multilateral organization). In particular, China, India, Brazil, and Egypt have invested in areas rich in extractable natural resources. (<http://www.globalenvision.org/library/3/1371>)

Directly related:

China

- As a leading figure in Asia and a nation looking forward to “reclaim its glory and influence”, China has cancelled over 10 billion dollars in debt to African states and invested heavily there in oil exploration and timber development. China has also partnered to develop - and co-own - production facilities and infrastructure across Africa, such as electrical facilities and a railway in Zimbabwe. China has taken a similar approach to Latin America where it is investing in infrastructure projects related to natural resource extraction.

India

- As a nation with a similar role to China in South-South cooperation and in the world, India has invested in farming initiatives in Mozambique and biofuels development in West Africa.
- Moreover, it is establishing larger and larger presence with its citizens making up a large labor force in the Gulf Region, increasing dependency of Gulf State Labor to India.

Brazil

- Brazil has invested in and assisted with biodiversity projects in Mozambique, biofuels technology in various developing countries to promote renewable crops such as sugar and wood, and HIV/AIDS relief in Latin America.

South Africa

- As a leader in Africa, South Africa has aggressively pursued partnerships across Africa including the Inga Dam in the Congo which provides electricity.

United States

- The United States as a leader in world economy have introduced plans for third world growth, the transfer of sustainable technology and free trade. The role that the United States play through its intervention in recent Crisis like Syria, Iran, Zimbabwe and Rwanda along with its economic sanctions is going to play an immense role in such countries engaging in sustainable growth and trade

Western European States (UK, France, Germany, Russia, Spain....etc)

- With the recent Eurozone Crisis, Western European Countries are looking forward to engaging in trade other than the United States to save its economy.
- Moreover, Denmark and Netherlands are known to be the leading figures in sustainable and environmental growth, and is also known to provide the technologies to African Countries in recent history.

Egypt

- Egypt is helping Tanzania with irrigation projects.

Japan

- As the economic center of the world, Japan has invested in African initiatives such as the agricultural investment program, New Rice for Africa (NERICA), and microenterprise development. Other Japanese initiatives include technical assistance for food production in Cambodia, environmental management in Malaysia, and water management projects in North Africa and the Middle East.

Indirectly Related

United Nations Development Programme

- With the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Development Programme is the largest and most efficient distributor of aid to third world countries

World Trade Organization

- The World Trade Organization's role in the facilitation of trade both in North-South and South-South is vital. As a mediator, it helps countries overcome classic Economic difficulties such as the prisoner's dilemma, and is a channel through which the South Countries can pursue joint economic development and free trade.

Gulf Cooperation Council

- Without a doubt the richest region in the South, its massive oil reserves and foreign capital is slowly turning the Gulf into a "North" state. The question now is sustainable development; how will they create a self-sufficing economy when their oil runs out? How will they manage infrastructure without foreign labor? The answers to these questions are critical for improved quality of life, education, and infrastructure for the GCC.

5. Questions to think about

1. The problems and solutions are quite clear on principle: what are the more practical obstacles (individual interests of countries, sanctions, political unrest) that prevent this from happening?
2. What are your views on the recent intervention of Syria, Iran, and the theme of "War of Terror" and "Spreading Democracy" by the United States in worsening or curbing the North-South Divide? The South does need basic renovations to its infrastructure – is America's way of provision for the good or for the worse?
3. Were the UN Millennium Development Goals successful? Should this continue as a means to close North and South Division?
4. It is the world's responsibility the wellbeing of all of its constituents. However, is it the responsibility of the UN – mostly from the West – to salvage the gap? Isn't this the gap that gives them dominance politically and economically? Do they have a responsibility or is it more of an interest?
5. The lottery of Birth – the concept that you cannot choose most of the things that are given to you (nationality, race, religion, physical feature) – how does this play a role in North-South Divisions? Can this be a case for equality? A case for responsibility from the UN and the West?
6. Look at number 10 on this article: <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/42-mind-blowing-maps-have-missed-the-world-atlas.html> from what you see, is the North-South divide a

symptom of a great problem in history? If it is, how do we go about solving it, and holding those accountable?

7. What role does Brazil play in South America? China and India in Asia? How are they different from the role Japan plays in Asia and Singapore in Central Asia?
8. What would be the biggest challenge for economic and political cooperation in the South?
9. How can **YOUR** country be a part of the solution?

Additional Sources:

These will help. Take a look!

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/42-mind-blowing-maps-have-missed-the-world-atlas.html>

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<http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/finance/2011/finance110907.htm>

http://ieet.org/index.php/tpwiki/North-South_Divide

<http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/courses/PoliticalScience/357B1/documents/TherienBeyondNorthSouthDivideTwoTalesWorldPoverty.pdf>

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Web.

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<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/2013_progress_english.pdf>.