

Hilton 2019

United Nations Economic and Social Council

Committee Overview

This committee will be run Harvard Style, meaning resolutions will not be written until the date of the conference. However, it is expected that all delegates come to committee with a working knowledge of all the topics as well as the policies of the country they represent. Additionally, it is encouraged that each delegate write at least one position paper, as this would make you eligible to receive an award. Position papers are to be handed in on the first day of the conference.

The Economic and Social Council is a principal organ of the United Nations that is tasked with advancing sustainable development. Keep in mind that this council has a leading role in creating innovative solutions that promote economic, social and environmental progress. When researching try to understand the 'big picture' of the topics and think of creative ideas to solve the problem at hand. Most of all, have some fun researching and remember that model UN is not a competition.

Committee Description

Improving Economic Opportunity for the Romani People of Europe
Fostering Economic Development for Farmers in India
Desertification in the Sahel Interrupting Economic Development
Addressing Overwork Deaths in East Asia

Chairs

Kenny Romano | kennyr98765@gmail.com

Hello delegates! My name is Kenny Romano, and I am a junior at Webster Schroeder High School. This is my first time chairing and my third year in Model UN. In addition to Model UN, I play the trumpet, play tennis in the spring, and participate in other clubs such as Masterminds. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. See you at Hilton!

Luke Stowell | lokedstowell@gmail.com

My name is Luke Stowell and I'm a senior at Webster Schroeder High School. This will be my first time chairing, and I'm totally stoked! Other than MUN, I'm the captain of Schroeder's Speech and Debate team, I've been in countless music theater productions, and I'm really big on astrology. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you have. I can't wait to meet you all!

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Improving Economic Opportunity for the Romani People of Europe



The Romani, or Roma, are an Indo-European ethnic group of people who originated in Northern India. The Romani people are known for their nomadic nature, and even today some migrate at least seasonally along routes that have no regard for national boundaries. Estimates believe that there are several million Romani that live across the world, but they live predominantly in Europe.

Like many other nomadic groups in history, the Roma people have been used as scapegoats. The Roma are also called gypsies, a pejorative term that coincides with the stereotypical image that the Romani are thieves, tramps or criminals. Due to a general distrust from their settled neighbors, they have faced legal persecution, discrimination, and even genocide in

the past. Romani persecution reached a peak during WWII, when hundreds of thousands of Roma were killed by Nazi authorities in the Holocaust.

In modern times large groups of Romani have settled in countries such as Spain and Wales. However, their different nature has caused many local authorities to attempt to assimilate them, or, as is the case within many Eastern European nations, forcibly attempt to halt their migrations. In France, Romania and other countries, the Roma people still face prejudice and violence. For example, in March of 2019, a group of young men attacked a Roma camp near Paris with sticks and knives, burned vans and beat Roma men.

Although some groups of European Romani have comfortably established themselves, the majority of the Romani live in overwhelmingly poor conditions and exist on the margins of society. The Romani typically live in isolated ghettos where crime and unemployment are high.

In addition, many Romani living in Central and Eastern Europe face an acute problem with education. Many Romani children are directly sent to classes with learning disabilities. In Hungary, where there is a sizeable minority of Roma, only one third of Romani children continue studies into an intermediate level. Many young Romani are also educated in subjects that only provide them with very limited chances for employment. This education crisis is a root cause for the low socioeconomic status that many Romani find themselves in.

To make matters worse many Romani avoid their settled neighbors because they fear persecution and believe that any outsiders are spiritually unclean. Many attempts to improve infrastructure or provide relief to Romani families by local authorities have been unsuccessful because the Roma are, many times, suspicious of any aid. The UNHRC has worked to improve the treatment of Romani people throughout many European countries, however, much economic aid has been insignificant.

How can the UN facilitate more positive relations between the Romani and their settled neighbors? Could the Romani be absorbed into the communities of their host country without losing their culture and identity? What should be done to improve education for Romani children?

Sources:

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<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Roma>

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Hilton 2019

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Fostering Economic Development for Farmers in India



Farmers in India are deep in a socioeconomic crisis. Since the 1990s, a large number of Indian farmers have had immense difficulty providing for themselves and their families, reducing many to poverty. The effects of the farmer's economic adversity are widespread, from basic unemployment and abandonment to a stark increase in suicides throughout rural India.

The agricultural sector is India's largest and is a notable global provider. It is among the top producers of countless fresh products and accounts for a fifth of the nation's GDP. However, the rural India in which farmers work and reside is home to the nation's poorest; bad infrastructure and lack of education show the neglect of these lands by the Indian government.

Many farmers are helpless. The majority are entirely uneducated on farming as a modern practice. They cannot access the information they need to be economically prudent, nor do they have the proper means to market the products they harvest. The farmers encounter no trouble farming, but a great deal in making a living by doing so as they are lost in an economy astronomically larger than they are prepared to deal with.

The farmers' lack of education is not the only limitation they face. The rapid shift toward technological and service markets have left the millions who work in the agriculture industry behind. India, along with many other nations, has invested into modern, more advanced industries as a priority in the last 30 years. Agriculture, while still employing half of the nation's massive labor force, is feared to have been forgotten.

In terms of policy, the poor are considered only as consumers, and costs of basic goods, such as food, have been cut. For the myriad impoverished farmers, this means they cannot generate a profit or make an effective living. Further, any money farmers owe to lenders or banks grows more impossible to pay off as the crisis wears on. The consequences of such economic malady are an incredible fragility - one month of drought or one bad growing season could ruin a whole family. These are unsustainable conditions.

Any efforts by the Indian government to ameliorate this issue have been negligible, but it is important to bear in mind its sovereignty. It is up to the United Nations and this committee to take proper action in support of India's suffering agricultural workers. As the Economic and Social Council is dedicated to sustainable development, so must this committee resolve for their present and future welfare.

What are the provisions necessary to restart the agricultural economy in rural India? Why should the Indian government be more worried about the farmers' crisis? How can the UN support this sector of India's economy without imposing on national sovereignty?

Sources:

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<https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/india-s-future-prosperity-depends-on-extending-opportunities-to-farmers/story-FaeCMo5iYlceh3Wr4hX2N.html>

<http://www.fao.org/india/fao-in-india/india-at-a-glance/en/>

Hilton 2019

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Desertification in the Sahel Interrupting Economic Development



The economy of Sub-Saharan Africa has had some success for the past century, but still remains incredibly fragile. The Sahel, the land directly south of the Sahara Desert, does indeed possess the resources necessary to sustain a population, but the long standing issue has been the question of how to correctly manage these resources. Unfortunately, the people of the Sahel now face a whole new problem: Desertification, or the Sahara Desert pressing South into this otherwise arable region by way of environmental conditions. This area has long been one of the most food insecure in the world. Several initiatives have been put in place to provide economic aid to the 10 Sahel countries and development is a work in progress. For the majority of

those in the Sahel, agriculture is overwhelmingly the most important industry. Those who do not work on basic farms keep livestock or are nomadic herders.

It is partially by way of agriculture and land despeciation that the dry desert encroaches upon the territory of the Sahel and the land loses much of its opportunity. The interruption of rain patterns halts irrigation. Much of the low-lying vegetation which animals use to graze becomes buried. Hot air and dust erode the soil, and crops cannot germinate, much less can they grow. Plainly, through desertification, the formerly bountiful “green belt” reduces to an addition to the expanse of the Sahara.

Were the Sahel to become entirely desert, it’s already impaired economy would practically disappear. There would be nearly zero food produced anywhere in a region where the people depend on locally produced goods for day-to-day survival. For some of the world’s poorest nations, this means wiping out up to half of their economy, which the agriculture industry constitutes.

The nations beneath the Sahara are far too underdeveloped to deal with this environmental crisis. Many of the Sahel’s 10 nations are of primary concern to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s 2063 Agenda because of the low quality of life. While the population has seen a notable urbanization in the past three decades, that does not mean the millions are prepared for any shortage in resources - many have predicted a migration crisis sourcing from the Sahel should the current crisis intensify.

Desertification is a long term problem which would be difficult to reverse, so it warrants a long term, permanent set of solutions. Presently third-world nations such as those of the Sahel could be excellent world contributors under the right conditions; it is necessary that strides are taken in the direction of security and growth for their people.

What can be done to prevent the desertification of the Sahel? How can these economies develop even under poor environmental conditions? How can sustainability be maximized so as to prepare for the worst?

Sources:

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<https://www.africanews.com/2019/03/25/call-to-action-to-ramp-up-collective-efforts-on-sahel-land-restoration/>

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Addressing Overwork Deaths in East Asia



The Japanese word *karoshi* literally translates to “death by overwork”. *Karoshi* deaths are a cultural phenomenon that has impacted Japan for decades. Stress-related ailments, suicides, and attempted suicides have caused the death of thousands of Japanese workers. *Karoshi* became a mainstream issue in the 1980’s following the deaths of upper-level executives in Japan’s booming industries. When 31 year-old journalist Miwa Sado (who had worked overtime for 159 hours in the month before her death) died of a heart failure in 2013, and a 24 year-old employee of Japanese advertising behemoth Dentsu committed suicide in 2015, *Karoshi* deaths had again become a prevalent issue.

Their deaths caused the Japanese government to begin putting in work-place policies to combat the *karoshi* epidemic. The task to provide a healthy work-life to Japan’s workaholics, however, is difficult. *Karoshi* deaths are mainly the result of Japan’s intense work culture that began following the country’s devastating defeat in World War II. Japanese leaders had established policies that rewarded workers for their loyalty, devotion and increased time on the job in order to reinvigorate Japan’s economy. Japan’s average workday is nothing abnormal, but Japan has enforced no maximum for overtime hours and many employees are even expected to put time in off the clock.

Overwork deaths, however, are not unique to Japan. Many countries have followed in Japan’s footsteps, and have begun suffering from the costs of intense overwork. In South Korea overwork death is called *gwarosa*, and it has also taken the lives of many. In contrast to Japan, the problem in South Korea stems from the fact that South Koreans have some of the most demanding work weeks on average. The South Korean government reduced the maximum workweek from 68 hours to 52 hours last year, however, the new legislation has not yet been enforced on many South Korean companies. China is possibly the most notable example of a country who has suffered from overwork. In China’s fast paced and competitive work environment many work gruelingly long work weeks, especially in China’s rapidly growing technology and service sectors. Some estimates place work deaths in China at a staggering 600,000 per year. China also appears to lag behind Japan and South Korea in recognizing and addressing overwork deaths. In Japan, South Korea and China, overwork deaths have ruined families. Without action, more people will inevitably continue to suffer and die from overwork. Experts believe that intense work cultures are also responsible for many social problems such as low birth rates, and many East Asians feel that such intensity has had a negative impact on their respective cultures.

How can overwork deaths be reduced in East Asia? What can the UN do to educate people in East Asia about the negative consequences of overwork on an individual’s health? Should the UN monitor or punish companies where employees have died from overwork?

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<https://www.ft.com/content/d5f01f68-9cbc-11e8-88de-49c908b1f264>