LOUISIANA YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

Louisiana Model United Nations
2024 Topics

General Assembly Topics

General Assembly Topic 1
Natural Disaster and Emergency Relief

Natural disasters are becoming an increasing issue due to their severity and frequency across the globe. The definition of a natural disaster can include floods or wildfires as a result of other events. They can be disasters of geological origin such as volcanic eruptions, landslides, and earthquakes. Finally, they can be disasters of climatic or meteorological origin such as droughts, avalanches, cyclones, hurricanes, and tsunamis. These disasters will vary from country to country due to climate, infrastructure, structural preparedness, and emergency relief. However, all the disasters related to a weather, climate, or water hazard in the past 50 years have killed 115 people and caused US$ 202 million in losses daily, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). From 1970 to 2019, these hazards accounted for 50% of all disasters, 45% reported deaths and 74% reported economic losses. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) oversees various departments and is committed to providing food, shelter, medical care, and other essential supplies.
Disaster risk prevention management and warning systems will play the greatest role in mitigating natural disasters and properly preparing for emergency relief. It is estimated that for every dollar spent reducing disaster risk, seven dollars are saved from cleanup and recovery losses. 96% of the world's Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated to disaster-related activities is for post-disaster, while only 4% is allocated to risk reduction. After the Fukushima earthquake of 2022, Japan experienced severe damages of US$ 8.8 billion. An issue with their warning systems was communication itself, so they invested in tsunami alerts and an announcement system using drones to urge people to evacuate. These methods were created to eliminate the risk from future disasters instead of after the event.

The economies of countries can be severely affected by natural disasters as well. Economic damage can vary, but infrastructure and assets such as housing, schools, factories, roads, dams, and bridges can be lost. A country's natural resources may also be affected; for example, hurricanes can destroy forests and droughts can harm soil fertility. Farmers may also invest less in drought-prone areas for fear of losing money. The destructive effects of natural disasters have drastic effects on the different economic areas of a country, including imports and exports, production and utilization of raw materials, and damage to methods of transportation. The 2022 drought in China's Sichuan province resulted in US$ 7.6 billion in economic losses and decreased hydroelectricity output, forcing major industries like metal and electronics assemblers to power ration. A prolonged drought would have exponentially larger impacts across global grain, energy, and industrial markets due to supply chain disruptions within China. The worst effects of natural disasters are the invisible ramifications that ripple throughout the globe.

Natural disasters can have a profound effect on the development and education of children, uprooting their curriculum and lives. After the 2005 Hurricane Katrina, over 100 out of 128 New

Orleans public school buildings were destroyed, with the first elementary in New Orleans reopening three months after the storm. Many teachers were displaced and decided not to return, leading many schools to temporarily close. Delayed school openings can have repercussions on students' consistent learning and ability to perform well with the gap between their educational years. Monsoons in rural India are shown to have a drastic effect on performance, with students who experience droughts early in life scoring lower on tests and are less likely to be enrolled in school. A disproportionate amount of children affected by these natural disasters – especially those with low socio-economic status – have lost proper education, stability, and safety.

Healthcare systems often become overwhelmed during natural disasters. Healthcare workers face tremendous pressure, and there are shortages of critical supplies, leading to the difficult task of prioritizing patients based on needs. A 2015 earthquake in Nepal caused wide-spread damage, so it took more than three days after the disaster for international field hospitals to begin treating patients. Critical injury victims who required emergency surgeries had to rely solely on the resources of one hospital. Communication and transportation facilities were disrupted as a result of the earthquake as well, making it difficult to coordinate patient transfers to other hospitals. As a result of natural disasters, many hospitals must become self-reliant on depleted healthcare workers and medical supplies. This creates increased stress, an overload for workers, and longer waiting times for treatment.

As the effects of natural disasters cause more lives to be lost and damage all the resources of a country, it becomes necessary to address these issues before they start. Developing technology and working alongside countries with similar issues can allow the UN to streamline effective solutions. By creating governmental organizations to handle management or providing funding to education or healthcare systems, adequate emergency relief can truly be attained.

Some Questions to Consider: What is the rate of natural disasters in your country? What types of natural disasters affect your country? How severe are your country's natural disasters? What are current emergency relief policies that protect citizen's safety? What measures does your country take to alleviate natural disasters and how quick is the response time? What resources does your country have for vulnerable, high-risk groups? What role can the UN play in natural disaster relief with funding and policy?

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General Assembly Topic 2
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Infrastructure

Homelessness is an urgent issue; 1.8 billion people throughout the world have inadequate housing. This is defined by when people don't have a stable place to live, leading them to sleep on the streets, in shelters, or with other temporary accommodations. Nearly 15 million people are "forcefully evicted every year," according to un.org. Homelessness continues to be a worsening problem as approximately 3 billion people are projected to be homeless by 2030.

Countries with the largest homeless population:
1. United States: The United States has a substantial homeless population, with estimates varying widely but often exceeding half a million people.
2. India: India also has a significant homeless population. In some urban areas, homelessness was a significant issue driving away tourists.
3. Russia: Russia faced homelessness challenges in its major cities, with estimates of several hundred thousand homeless individuals.
4. Brazil: Brazil's larger cities have a large homeless population.
5. China: China's rapid urbanization and income inequality have led to homelessness issues, especially in major metropolitan areas.

According to data from the World Economic Forum, approximately 150 million people are confirmed to be homeless. This number has been growing recently due to poor health care and immigration. The main reasons for homelessness are the increase in layoffs, wage decrease, and the reduction of work hours. According to a study at the University of Southern California, 46% of the homeless population of Los Angeles, California are in this situation because of employment reasons.

Natural disasters are also affecting housing; the effects of natural disasters can be seen more greatly in areas without proper funding towards their infrastructure and preparedness towards the disasters. In 2010 there were severe earthquakes in both Haiti and Chile, but while Haiti's was less severe in magnitude, the damage was much greater. Port Au Prince, Haiti had over 300,000 people injured and 1.5 million rendered homeless, while Chile had 521 deaths and less widespread catastrophe and displacement. This can be attributed to Chile's more developed infrastructure and far greater funding into buildings or bridges made to withstand earthquakes. The World Meteorological Organization said that it was urgent to adapt infrastructure to withstand prolonged high temperatures and to raise vulnerable people's awareness of the risks.

Affordable housing can increase tourism and morale among citizens, allowing tourists to feel safer and residents to feel comfortable in their city. The less people are worried about homes and their health, the more they can focus on working and helping economies. Japan, for example, has the lowest rate of homelessness and the third highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to investopedia.com. This can't be a coincidence. Japan also has one of the highest life expectancies, proving that the less their citizens have to worry about housing and health, the more they can focus on their economy. The United States' Low-Income Housing Tax

Credits Program of 1986 has helped over 45,000 housing projects. In 2020, the UN passed the first resolution to reduce homelessness which pushed states to gather more information on the homeless population and implement programs. The UN-Habitat and the Institute of Global Homelessness have partnered together to spread awareness and collect data on homelessness in hopes to find a solution.

Addressing homelessness requires a combination of efforts: affordable housing initiatives, support for mental health and addiction services, and policies that aim to reduce poverty and inequality. It's an urgent problem that affects millions of lives and needs our collective attention and action.

Some Questions to Consider: What is the homeless population in your country? Is the majority of the homeless population immigrants? How can countries help other countries fund infrastructure Acts? How can homeless people access essential services like healthcare, education, and job training? How can countries collaborate on a global scale to address homelessness and related issues? How can we improve data collection and monitoring of homelessness to develop evidence-based policies? What are the root causes of homelessness in your country?

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General Assembly Topic 3
Healthcare and Education for People with Disabilities

The United Nations recommends that countries work towards complete rights for people with disabilities to have access to equal healthcare and education. Under the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), disabilities are defined as long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder one's full and equal participation in society. The CRPD states that states must ensure and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people with disabilities without any kind of discrimination on the basis of disability, including the right to education and healthcare.

The United Nations reports that an estimated 15% of the world's population lives with disabilities, and not every nation can accommodate them equally. For example, in Germany, those who can not work more than three hours a day are eligible for a pension as long as they have contributed to social security for the past five years. In France, there are housing benefits and support for disabled persons and households with disabled children. Additionally, workplaces with more than 20 employees must have at least six percent of their workforce made up of people with disabilities. Disabled people are also given government compensation, with thirty percent for those who work part-time, and fifty percent for those who are unable to work. The rates are determined by average salaries over ten-year spans. These examples demonstrate how support for disabled persons is possible and can provide higher and more equal standards in both healthcare and education. However, many nations do not have standards for healthcare or education in place.

People with disabilities' right to education without discrimination is recognized in Article 24 of the CRPD, adopted by the UN in 2006. The CRPD establishes that all people have the right to equal opportunity, and full participation in society, and reserves the right to education without discrimination based on disability. State parties who have ratified the CRPD must ensure people with disabilities have access to an inclusive and accommodating lifelong education system. To achieve this, countries should ensure people and children with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system and provide reasonable accommodations to achieve effective education, maximize social development, and maximize personality development. Taking appropriate measures to employ and train teachers qualified to help people with disabilities, such as being fluent in sign language or braille, at all levels of education.

The CRPD also reserves the right to healthcare without discrimination based on disability. Article 25 of the CRPD recognizes that people with disabilities have the right to the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination based on disability. Countries should take all appropriate measures to ensure access to health services to those with disabilities. Efforts must be made to provide the same quality and standard of free or affordable health care as provided to those without disabilities, as well as specific services needed because of a person's disability. Ensuring that facilities for services are as close as possible to a person's community is especially important for many disabilities as it is required of health professionals in these facilities to give the same quality and information (informed consent, dignity, autonomy) as

given to people without disabilities. Any form of discrimination in health or life insurance as well as denial of healthcare services based on discrimination of disabilities should be prohibited and laws put in place to prevent.

Disability inequality and poverty often have correlations, as countries with lower GDPs and higher poverty rates lack accommodations or standards for equality for those with disabilities. For example, the region with the most standards in place for people with disabilities is Europe, while Western Africa has the least legislation to regulate disability equality. Still, countries with high rates of poverty have shown legislative improvement, such as in Niger. As of 2021, Niger has a poverty rate of 41.8% but has shown new legislation to prevent discrimination. These laws include consequences, such as fines and potential jail time for offending corporations in cases of workplace discrimination. Countries within the United Nations, especially those who have ratified the CRPD, must take action to combat the discrimination in education and healthcare against people with disabilities. Ensuring equal access to education, providing necessary healthcare, and preventing disability-based discrimination are just a few ways countries can begin to achieve this goal.

Some Questions to Consider: Are there any current policies in place to assist people with disabilities with their access to education? Is the necessary healthcare accessible for each person's specific disability? Do those with disabilities have access to education that allows them to fulfill their potential? What barriers prevent your country from assisting disabled people from receiving a full education? What is your country's approach to giving disabled children access to education?

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Eco/Soc Topics

Eco/Soc Topic 1

Hazardous waste management is the collection, storage, processing and disposal of dangerous waste. Waste management isn't limited to hazardous waste, but encompasses issues such as: management of electronic waste (e-waste) from electronics that are disposed of, solid waste management, and recycling. Waste management issues, whether they relate to processing, disposal, or treatment, have many effects on the planet, such as air and water pollution, decreased biodiversity, and exacerbating negative effects of climate change. Improper handling of e-waste can also lead to a plethora of detrimental impacts. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, poor e-waste management can lead to the spread of disease through contaminated drinking water from open landfill runoff, "which puts a strain on the health of urban dwellers and the environment." Countries on all sides of the socioeconomic spectrum face the issue of hazardous waste management and must mitigate negative public health and environmental impacts on the planet.

According to data from The World Bank, "the world generates 2.01 billion tons of municipal solid waste annually, with at least 33% of that not managed in an environmentally safe manner," and global waste is projected to grow 70% in the next 30 years. Hazardous practices include not properly separating household waste from hazardous waste, unrestricted waste dumping, mishandling of landfills and their operations, and utilization of open-air incinerators (Abubakar et. al.). Waste management solutions vary. One possible model that can be used by countries, given by the World Bank, is investment in solid waste management projects by providing financial sustainability for governments regarding cost-effective waste management solutions, educating the public regarding reusing, recycling, and waste reduction, developing public health solutions, creating stronger waste management infrastructure and policy solutions, and reducing the negative impacts of climate change.

Another issue relevant to waste management is E-waste. A United Nations report states in India, e-waste is often sold and metals are extracted from it, and "the residues which contain heavy metals and toxic organic traces are often dumped in the open." Additionally, there is evidence that poor e-waste management is having a negative impact on women and children's health. A report from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that around 18 million children and 12.9 million women are "working in the informal waste sector, which potentially exposes them to toxic e-waste and puts them and their unborn children at risk." Children are especially at risk, since their bodies aren't able to rid toxic substances as quickly, and exposure to e-waste has been linked to ADHD, increased risk for cancer and lung diseases, and negative birth outcomes. Data shows that e-waste is only growing, and this will become a bigger problem in the coming years. The European Union, Rwanda, Chile, and many other nations have developed legislation regarding e-waste, but many policies have only scratched the surface of the problem.

Questions to consider: Does your country have existing legislation regarding e-waste management? If so, how comprehensive and impactful is this legislation, and does it protect women and children from the harmful effects of e-waste? What are your country's policies and regulations on waste management? Do any regulations exist on technology manufacturers in relation to e-waste? How can sustainability be incorporated into waste management? How might the state of current waste management be contributing to climate change and ecosystems in your country? What are the public health implications improper waste management may be having on your country? How should education and information regarding waste management be made available in your country?

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Eco/Soc Topic 2
Gender Inequality

Gender Inequality is the biased treatment of people based on gender, which results in different freedoms (in terms of legal or social barriers) for different genders. Gender is not limited to sex assigned at birth. The Human Rights Campaign defines gender as "one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves." Just as gender exists on a wide spectrum, so too does gender inequality. The United Nations Development Reports utilizes the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which is used to measure gender disparities in populations based on the reproductive rights, empowerment, and labor market force of both men and women. They use indicators such as maternal mortality ratio, adolescent birth rate, secondary education, seats in the government, and labor force participation to determine overall inequality. Denmark has the lowest score of 0.013, which indicates low inequality and overall positive progress, while Yemen has the highest score of 0.820, which indicates high inequality and low progress. Countries vary widely on this index, though the general trend for the world has not improved since the 1990s. The lack of progress is concerning, as gender inequality globally can foster environments of abuse and hinder overall social mobility.

Besides this index, there are many other ways gender inequality reveals itself, including gender based wage gaps, lack of opportunity in both the workforce and in education, sexual assault, etc. Worldwide, women make 77 cents for every dollar a man makes, regardless of position, education, or any other factors. Women and girls make up the majority of hungry and impoverished people. Overall, women are more likely to be illiterate and uneducated compared to their male counterparts. They consistently hold less powerful positions in government and business.Women are also more susceptible to domestic abuse and sexual violence than men. These figures only take into account traditional gender roles and fail to recognize those who do not fit into the binary. The United Nations, in reference to Vulnerable Groups like the LGBTQI+ community, described how LGBTQI+ people are mistreated in their workplace, school, hospitals, and families. They also explain how they are frequently singled out for physical attack. Despite receiving some of the worst treatment and discrimination, queer individuals are excluded from most traditional measurements of gender inequality. Queer groups, though they have their own statistics regarding their treatment, are usually separating and ignored when discussing the idea of gender discrimination.

The treatment of individuals based on gender is a complex topic with economic and social factors affecting countries in different ways. Historical context of gender, religious perceptions of queer identities and the community, and the role gender has played in cultural hierarchies, play major roles and vary widely from country to country. It is important to take into account that the issue is a highly individualized one for each country, as there are many different perspectives and influences at play.

Some Questions to Consider: What is the GII of your country? Is it trending in a positive or negative direction?? Why is gender inequality a global issue? How does this affect your

country's workforce, student body, or general society? How does your country view gender socially? Is this affected by religion or other outside factors? What barriers exist in advancing gender equality? What is your country's stance/actions concerning the LGBTQI+ community?

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Eco/Soc Topic 3
Labor Rights

The United Nations International Labor Organization published the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 1998. It outlines the tenets of labor rights across the world such as: the right to collective bargaining, elimination of compulsory labor, abolition of child labor, end of discrimination in employment, and establishment of safe working environments. Many countries exclude different groups of workers from labor laws, and three quarters deny workers their right to strike or collective bargaining, which is the right to unionize with your fellow laborers and work as a collective to better your workplace or pay.

Unemployment increased globally after COVID-19 pandemic and has yet to fully recover. The average global unemployment rate is between 5-10%, which is still well above the pre-COVID-19 rates of 3.5. Employment is the most important factor in the upwards economic mobility of a country and is affected by factors both specific and general.

A job alone does not guarantee a decent living nor labor rights. Wages vary greatly across the world and are dependent upon many factors. Not all countries have a livable minimum wage, and many have significant and disproportionate wage gaps across class and gender. Working conditions also impact workers in important ways. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the amount of time spent at work should account for adequate rest, paid annual leave, maternity/paternity leave, part time work, and reasonable overtime. The environment should be free of dangerous occupational accidents and ensure the worker's physical and mental safety.

According to ILO, unions are "organizations of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions." They exist for nearly every type of work and in nearly every country. Unions ensure laborers' right to collective bargaining, discussion of wages, and protection from employer abuse. Union membership is directly correlated to improved working conditions and fairer wages. Many countries view unions as anti-capitalist and place heavy restrictions on their power as well as barriers to union recruitment. In some countries, such as Bangladesh and Mexico, unionists have been killed and subjected to extreme violence. While other countries, like the US, do not approach the issue with violence, lobbyists spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to suppress and lessen the powers of unions. The ability to freely discuss wages is both a social and policy issue. In some places it is seen as taboo, but in many others, it is illegal or even met with violence.

Some Questions to Consider: What is your country's unemployment rate? What is your country's inflation rate? What is the minimum wage in your country? What are the current labor disputes your country is experiencing? What rights do laborers in your countries have? Are there any barriers to forming unions? How is discussing wages and collective bargaining

viewed in your country socially and legally? What are the general working conditions in your country?

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Security Topics

Security Topic 1
Nagorno-Karabakh

In 1921, Joseph Stalin established Artsakh (later known as Nagorno-Karabakh) from Armenian land and gave Soviet Azerbaijanis jurisdiction over the state. Throughout the next 70 years, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh lived under this authority and experienced brutal policies of ethnic cleansing from the Azerbaijani government that sought to dissolve the state. In the late 1980s, 99% of Nagorno-Karabakh voters chose to restore Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenian authority (Armenian National Committee of America) with support from the United States. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the region, which was home to a 95% ethnically Armenian population, declared its intent to Join Armenia, but Azerbaijan did not want to lose the area. On January 6, 1992, Nagorno-Karabakh formally declared its independence from Azerbaijan following the fall of the Soviet Union, resulting in two separate wars. Roughly 30,000 lost their lives in the first war, and Armenians established territory outside Karabakh, linking it to Armenia. A few years into the first war, both states began to make attempts at peace. Over the next twenty years, diplomats and authorities held peace talks and drafted agreements across the world. The countries could rarely reach a consensus on these agreements and one party always wound up breaking them when they did sign them. While the two never officially came to an agreement, extreme violence and outrage eventually dissipated.

Towards the end of last year, however, Azerbaijan began to put pressure on Nagorno-Karabakh again by imposing a blockade that prevented people from receiving fuel and food. Soon after, Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh resorted to strictly rationing food and were unable to use cars. On September 20, 2023, Azerbaijan launched a military attack on Nagorno-Karabakh, reigniting the conflict. Azerbaijan began shelling Nagorno-Karabakh, causing its citizens to flee to Armenia. So far, several thousand soldiers and civilians from both sides have died, and hundreds more are critically wounded. Ultimately, Azerbaijan reclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has led to numerous conflicts and tensions in the region. Resolving this complex and deeply rooted issue requires careful diplomacy, compromise, and the willingness of all parties involved to engage in peaceful negotiations. Diplomatic efforts, facilitated by international mediators such as the OSCE Minsk Group, have been underway for years. Addressing the rights and concerns of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is crucial for any lasting solution.

It's important to note that resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict requires a genuine commitment from all parties involved, as well as the international community, to find a peaceful and just solution that respects the rights and aspirations of all affected populations. The process will likely be challenging, but sustained efforts, dialogue, and cooperation are key to achieving lasting peace.

Some Questions to Consider: Does your country have an alliance with either Armenia or Azerbaijan? If not, what would your country's involvement with one side or the other mean for your relationship with them? Does your country have alliances with any countries in the region that have been affected by the conflict? Has your country ever been accused of ethnic cleansing? What's your country's typical response to human rights violations? Do they get involved? Do they stay removed?

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Security Topic 2
Syrian Crisis

The multifaceted and ongoing Syrian conflict began in 2011 when the Syrian National Army (SNA) rebelled against the government of Syria, as part of the wider wave of the Arab Spring uprisings in which several Arab countries revolted against their government. After the rebellion, Syrians initially attempted to design democratic reforms and begin the release of prisoners, but the situation deteriorated quickly. The situation escalated into a civil war due to the government's brutal crackdown on protesters and the rise of various armed opposition groups. International involvement further complicates the conflict, with different countries supporting different factions. Turkey shares its southern border with Syria, placing many of its civilians in harm's way, and there have been hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees flooding into Turkey and Greece. Turkey has backed the Syrian National Army by supplying them with ammunition, weapons, and vehicles. Other countries like the United States have also pledged support for the Syrian National Army (SNA), and sent non-lethal supplies like food, water, and medical supplies. Countries like Iran and Iraq have been sending supplies to help the Syrian government.

The crisis led to a severe humanitarian catastrophe, with millions of people displaced both within Syria and neighboring countries, and put a significant strain on regional stability. Human rights violations, including the use of chemical weapons and the targeting of Syrian civilians, have been widely reported. Efforts towards a political resolution and humanitarian aid have been ongoing, but finding a lasting solution remains a significant challenge amid the complex web of regional and international interests.

The war recently ended with the surrender of the Syrian National Army and the government taking back control from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the SNA. The SNA had a large amount of land, but as a result of a few large-scale battles, ISIS took hundreds of miles of land from the SNA; however, . ISIS was mostly driven out by Syrian forces. The main problem now is providing aid to the people affected by the war in the region.

In late 2023, Syria, Turkey, and surrounding regions were racked with two massive earthquakes. Over 55,000 people were killed and thousands more wounded. Both sides of this conflict lost massive numbers of civilians and military personnel alike. It is likely that casualties from the earthquakes were worsened due to the Syrian war slowing humanitarian efforts. Adding to this, refugee camps were decimated and thousands of people were displaced during the earthquakes.

Now that war has almost come to a stop, a new problem has arisen: millions of Syrians lack access to basic resources and shelter. Humanitarian groups have been trying for years to aid the Syrian people, but the current government has not been receptive to these efforts and the humanitarian groups have been stretched thin by also sending aid to countries like Ukraine. This lack of access has hindered efforts to alleviate the food crisis for many Syrians. Syria has also experienced severe droughts, which scientists believe are exacerbated by climate change.

Droughts have had a devastating impact on agricultural production, leading to crop failures and food shortages. International humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations and various other humanitarian groups, have been providing aid to the people of Syria; however, the scale of the crisis and the challenges of delivering aid to a country that is not receptive to the aid make it difficult to meet the needs of everyone affected.

The conflict has also taken a severe toll on the Syrian economy, marked by hyperinflation and economic instability. This has resulted in widespread difficulty for many people in affording basic necessities, particularly food. The situation is exacerbated by high unemployment rates and a scarcity of economic opportunities. Consequently, millions of Syrians have been internally displaced or sought refuge in other countries like Turkey and Greece. This displacement has created additional challenges, especially for families struggling to secure a consistent food supply. Both within Syria and in neighboring countries, refugee camps encounter difficulties in providing adequate food to the displaced populations.

Some Questions to Consider: Has the war in Syria affected your country? (Consider trade relations, military capacity, and immigration among others) How is your country addressing the war in Syria? (Consider political relations and humanitarian issues) Has your country provided aid to either side of the war? What resources does your country have that it could contribute to humanitarian aid?

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Security Topic 3
Artificial Intelligence

AI, or artificial intelligence, is created and trained by human programmers using data and algorithms. AI systems are tools designed to process information, recognize patterns, and make decisions based on the data they have been trained to use.

AI developers load statistics into their program, and the algorithm writes information based on the question the user inputs. The system will then restate the question in order to start this chain reaction of prediction. Once it has rewritten the question, it repeatedly uses statistics to analyze what it's already written and then determine what it should write next. Some governments have already begun passing legislation to regulate the use of AI in the work sphere. Many countries have published ethical guidelines and principles to guide the development and use of AI. These documents often emphasize transparency, accountability, fairness, and human rights. For example, the European Commission has developed guidelines for trustworthy AI. The United States has begun considering AI conflicts in the hiring process such as concerns that artificial intelligence may soon be able to fill the role an applicant seeks. China has also implemented temporary measures to prevent companies from releasing AI products without first screening them for security issues. Some applications of AI include its use in chatbots, self-driving cars, smart food delivery, fraud prevention, and personalized learning. AI's quick evolution has caused experts to voice concerns regarding misuse, fraud, and scamming. Tech giants such as Elon Musk and Bill Gates, who could gain much from these developments, have spoken out about the dangers AI poses to personal security, while organizations such as the Government Accountability Office warn that failure on the United States' part to implement AI systems into the Department of Defense could set national defenses behind those of the rest of the world.

A major problem with how AI systems work is that they do not have ethics in the same way humans do. They do what they're told without question. They don't possess feelings, beliefs, or consciousness. This model has proven harmful in experiments such as Stanley Milgram's 1961 Shock Experiment and the 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment. These systems process data and make decisions based on mathematical algorithms and patterns without any inherent moral understanding. However, AI ethical concerns arise in how it is used and the decisions it makes. Because AI systems lack consciousness, they don't have an understanding of right and wrong or good and bad. They can give biased information if there is an imbalance in opinion on an issue on the internet. For example, if someone asks an AI chatbot a question about an issue, it may give an answer that corresponds with the group who has published more articles for their argument, as there is more information supporting that specific view.

While AI itself doesn't have ethics, the ethical considerations in AI technology pertain to how it is developed, implemented, and regulated by humans. Ethical AI practices involve ensuring that the data used to train AI systems is unbiased, that the technology is used responsibly, and that decisions made by AI align with human values and societal norms. Ethical guidelines and

regulations are crucial to ensuring that AI is developed and used to benefit society and minimize harm. Data protection and privacy laws are crucial for regulating AI, especially concerning the collection and use of personal data.

Some Questions to Consider: What does limiting use of AI look like? Does your country's constitution/laws already outline provisions for technology? How do the concerns raised above relate to existing legislation in your country regarding human rights, cybersecurity, and technology use? Does your country practice censorship? Could AI pose a threat to this measure of control over media in your country? Does your country regulate private entities such as AI companies? Would it make exceptions for this unprecedented development?

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