

**Louisiana Model United Nations  
2021 Topics**

## **General Assembly Topic 1**

### **Healthcare and Poverty**

Global poverty is one of the most prevalent problems the world faces today. It is defined by the World Bank as the number of international people who survive on less than \$1.90 per day. Poverty is generally described as an economic issue, representing the financial status of people and their access to basic necessities, especially medical treatment. Therefore, this issue is directly parallel to public health as the world's poorest countries display the lowest life expectancies. According to the World Health Organization, at least half the world's population does not have access to essential healthcare services, and large numbers of families either spend 10% of their budget on healthcare or are pushed into extreme poverty, due to healthcare expenses.

Over 736 million people in the world live under this threshold of \$1.90 per day, and children account for more than 50% of the world's poorest citizens. Poverty is a barrier to accessing healthcare. Those who are poverty-stricken cannot afford to maintain good health, and impoverished countries are plagued by lack of knowledge and resources on efficient healthcare practices. Several regions in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia do not have access to practices such as family planning or infant immunization. These practices are becoming more available in other countries such as Turkmenistan, but then they have their own problems of lack of financial protection. In Southeast Asia, children under the age of five are three times more likely to die than children of the same age group in the Americas. The infant mortality rate in Africa is about six times the rate in Europe, and the death rate of children under the age of five is more than eight times greater. Nigeria, India, and Pakistan had the most deaths of children under the age of five in 2019. Around 10 million people in developing countries die every year of illnesses that could have been prevented, such as tuberculosis, HIV, and malaria. These three diseases killed 1.6 million Africans in 2015 and could have been prevented with bed nets or antibiotics.

Meanwhile, there are several developed countries that are committed to universal healthcare, such as Taiwan, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United Kingdom. These countries' governments play a significant role in guaranteeing their citizens' access to healthcare. For example, England's National Health Service provides comprehensive medical care with no fees at any point of service. France's publicly financed insurance is compulsory, and all residents are covered for a wide range of services.

However, there are developed countries who only provide limited healthcare access to their citizens. The cost of healthcare in the United States is more expensive than any other country. Annually in the United States, almost three trillion dollars are spent on healthcare, which works out to be \$8500 per person. Twenty-five percent of Americans are delaying getting medical help because of the skyrocketing costs. Over one million Australians have decided not to see doctors due to the costs, which can amount to anywhere from \$300-600. While most of these developed countries cannot be considered plagued with global poverty, there are still large numbers of citizens that can't afford healthcare because of the expenses.

Is your country considered developing and if so, do the various problems listed above apply to your citizens? How efficient are the healthcare programs already established in your country? How has poverty affected healthcare within your own country?

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## General Assembly Topic 2

### Election Security

Election security is a wide-ranging topic, extending from the authenticity and legitimacy of the voting process, which includes protections against voter fraud and verifiability of vote counting, to larger campaigns of foreign governments, agencies, or actors trying to influence the outcome of an election, through legal or illegal means.

While election security has recently been in the news with the United States' 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, the topic is relevant worldwide. Despite its own problems, the United States has been one of the most prolific offenders, interfering in at least 81 foreign elections between 1946 and 2000, such as in Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and many former Eastern Bloc countries. It has also orchestrated numerous coups to overthrow governments that are unfavorable to its interests, such as in Iran, Chile, Brazil, and Argentina. In these countries, American-backed regimes have been known to regularly violate human rights and sell native resources, which could be used for the development of the country, to foreign corporations. These actions violate a nation's right to self-determination, which is a core belief of the United Nations, and go against the will of the people.

France is also a major perpetrator, especially within its own former colonies, regularly intervening in elections and sovereign governance in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, and Togo. Since the 1960s, France has interfered in its former colonies' affairs over 40 times, and has assassinated national leaders at least 21 times. These actions have left former French colonies severely underdeveloped and economically disadvantaged, even more so than other former colonies. These countries often are coerced into extremely unfavorable deals with France as a result of the influence France has in "choosing" leaders.

Countries that regularly participate in electoral interference say that it is for the betterment of both countries. They cite increased trade and commerce, as well as closer diplomatic ties as reasons that interference is justified.

Electoral interference is largely done through financing candidates or through the dissemination of media. Examples include a Chinese campaign to spread misinformation related to the 2019 Taiwanese election, or Russian cyber-attacks in the 2014 Ukrainian Presidential election. Currently, the UN offers supervision of ballot casting and counting services to any country that requests it. However, it does not in any way protect or attempt to stop foreign election interference.

Does your country have a history of interfering in foreign elections? Has it been the victim of foreign interference? Have your allies been involved in this? Do they benefit from election interference or do they suffer because of it? How can the UN offer more services to supervise and protect elections?

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## General Assembly Topic 3

### Energy Accessibility and Sustainability

Energy sustainability is defined by the World Energy Council as sustainability based on three core dimensions: energy security, energy equity, and environmental sustainability of energy systems. Energy security is the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price. Energy equity is the distribution of costs and benefits of an energy system. Environmental sustainability of energy systems is how effectively a country can receive energy while maximizing the costs. According to the World Data Center, 13% of the world does not have access to electricity of any kind. While access in some countries, such as India, has increased from 43% to 85% over 5 years, other countries, such as South Sudan and Chad, have below 7% of energy access among their populations. The United Nations has made it clear that at the current pace of investment for energy, they will not meet the energy goal for the global population having access to renewable energy by 2030. The investment for each country to put forth money for the energy fund needs to nearly triple the current investment from \$400 billion USD to \$1 trillion USD.

The total world energy, as of 2016, consisted of 80% fossil fuels, 10% biofuels (ethanol, biodiesel, renewable hydrocarbon, etc.), 5% nuclear, and 5% renewable energy (hydro, wind, solar, geothermal). The United Nations stance on energy is that every country should have access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy. In 2016, only 60% of the world, or about 4.5 billion people, had access to clean fuels for cooking. Three billion people globally did not have access to these same clean fuels needed to provide meals, electricity, or heating for themselves or their families. Some countries, such as Iceland, have turned their efforts to producing and consuming renewable energy, with 100% of their country using renewable energy. Iceland's renewable energy is currently operating at 75% hydropower and 25% geothermal energy, with 87% of clean water using geothermal energy for sanitation.

Biofuels are used as a main source of energy within countries such as the United States, Canada, most European countries, and China. Countries that currently produce mass amounts of products, such as sugar, corn, and vegetable oils, can be used in conjunction with fuel to produce a biofriendly substance. Examples of bio-friendly fuels are bioethanol, biodiesel, biomethanol, and pyrolysis oils. While some hope these biofriendly substances can replace gasoline and petrol, it should be noted they also release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, so it is arguable they come at a similar cost as fossil fuels.

Hydropower, wind power, and geothermal energy are the top three sources of renewable energy within the world today. Renewable energy is energy efficient and does not produce any carbon emissions, but is more expensive upfront and is dependent on the available geography of a country.

How in line with the UN's stance on energy is your country? Does your country have a sustainable energy source? Does your country already have energy programs in place that other countries could adopt? How has your country benefited or suffered from using renewable energy? Biofuel energy? Fossil fuels? What restrictions does your country face in making energy affordable and accessible?

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## Eco/Soc Topic 1

### Ethical Production of Goods

Ethical production is the approach of making any given product in a moral way, doing as little to harm those involved in production, the environment, the consumer, etc. as possible. In a fast paced, predominantly capitalistic world, the competition between major corporations has increased, thus diminishing the presence of fair trade and ethical practices. Unethical practices might include, but are not limited to, bribery, sexual harassment, poor working conditions, child labor violations, and unfair competition. The issue at hand is that unethical does not always mean illegal, and what your country may define as unethical may not be the same for another, considering there is no global standard.

Increased attention has been drawn to disasters stemming from unethical business practices. A notable occurrence is the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, when a building that housed multiple garment factories collapsed from hazardous working conditions, killing at least 1,132 people and injuring over 2,000. Disasters like fires, building collapses, injuries on the job, and more have transpired with little to no employer accountability. For many families, the usually minimal compensation, if any exists, is not enough to recover from any injury due to unethical practices, which can put them at risk of, or push them into, poverty

As for the environmental impact, one hundred energy companies are responsible for 71% of all greenhouse gas emissions, globally. Businesses have been known to hide or mislead their emissions estimates from the public and investors. Fast fashion, rising in popularity throughout the world, requires a significant amount of water and pesticides to grow the resources required for their business. This excessive use of chemicals has the potential to harm surrounding land due to hazardous runoff.

Does your country face suffer from unethical practices? Does your country rely on unethical trade? Do you have policies to prevent corporate corruption? How concerned is your country with the environmental impact of unethical practices?

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## Eco/Soc Topic 2

### Global Housing Crisis

The UN estimates that close to 2 billion people in developing countries live in overcrowded and unlivable conditions, with no access to potable water and lack of sanitation, among other things. Studies show that living in crowded environments correlates directly with adverse health conditions, both mental and physical. This further correlates to a lack of education available in such areas. Furthermore, homelessness touches the lives of more than 100 million people globally (at least 2% of the total population), and is said to rapidly increase with urbanization.

Adequate housing has been defined by the United Nations as a fundamental right of all people, meaning everyone has “the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.” Many countries have been unable to sustain this ideology due to rapid development and overpopulation. China is said to need over 200 million new housing units to support its people, which is double the amount of housing units that currently exist in the United States.

The problem, though, is extremely multifaceted. Modernization of economy, natural disasters, and changing political regiment are all key contributing factors in what housing is available in a country, and how accessible and livable it is. Twenty percent of the world’s population does not have access to adequate housing, and it is the job of the UN, under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to find a solution.

Does your country currently face a housing problem? Is there livable housing that is readily available to your citizens? What steps has your country taken, if any, to combat the side effects of urban growth? Does your country maintain a standard of living that mirrors the United Nations ideology? What contributing factors can you specifically address? Do you have the resources available to help yourself or other countries?

Country	# homeless	Data year	Homeless ratio to population
Nigeria	24,400,000	2007	16.58%
Indonesia	3,000,333	2004	1.36%
China	2,579,000	2011	0.18%
India	1,770,000	2011	0.15%
Honduras	1,000,000	2013	12.38%
Germany	600,000	2016	0.5%
USA	554,000	2017	0.17%
UK	307,000	2916	0.48%
Bosnia Hercegovina	143,000	2010	3.73%
France	141,500	2012	0.21%
Italy	48,000	2014	0.08%
Greece	20,000	2013	0.18%

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### **Eco/Soc Topic 3**

#### **Clean Water Crisis**

Clean water, or drinking water, is water that is safe and sanitary for regular consumption. The United Nations General Assembly in 2010 declared that having sanitary water is not only necessary but considered a human right. Although many first world countries have had secure and stable access to clean water for many years, some underdeveloped countries still struggle with this issue today, notably Uganda, Papua New Guinea, and Eritrea. A study done in 2017 has declared that 785 million people, or around one in ten people, lack even the most fundamental level of drinking water. At least two billion people rely on drinking water that is contaminated with feces. This contaminated water may contain diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid, or polio. Some issues that have been cited as antagonists towards expanding safe access to water are climate change, increasing water scarcity, population growth, demographic changes, and urbanization.

However, countries with safe drinking water are not entirely unaffected either. According to the World Health Organization, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas, or areas in which the demand for water exceeds the available amount, by 2025. This issue clearly plagues not only impoverished countries, but also first world countries that will eventually be forced to address overpopulation issues complicated by demand for water.

The benefits of easy access to clean water are better immune-system health, a decrease in national medical expenses, increased school attendance, and improved physical health.

Does your country have secure water access? What is your country's main source of clean water? Does your country obtain water through ethical sources? If you do not struggle with water security, has your country taken steps to help countries who are struggling? If your country is struggling with water security, how have you taken steps to counteract this issue?

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## Security Council Topic 1

### Transnational Organized Crime and the Drug Trade

The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines an “organized criminal group” as a group of three or more persons that was not randomly formed; exists for a period of time; acts in concert with the aim of committing at least one crime punishable by at least four years' incarceration; works to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit. Despite offering a very specific definition of an organized criminal group, the United Nations does not offer a definition of transnational organized crime. This lack of specificity was decided by the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and is due to the extremely complex nature of crime that extends beyond the borders of a certain country.

The UNODC recognizes drug trafficking, which makes up 0.4-0.6% of global GDP, as one of the most prevalent activities in which organized crime groups participate. Hot spots for drug trafficking, identified by the World Drug Report curated by the UNODC, include the Americas, where cocaine is produced in South America and trafficked north to be sold, and Europe, where cocaine flows primarily from the Andean countries to Western and Central Europe.

The drug trade is affecting our world by fueling the organized crime groups that span the globe. Not only do these groups commit human-rights atrocities within their own right, such as the trafficking of women and children for work and sex, but they also promote corruption and instability in government, which proliferates poverty and grief in countries through which drugs are trafficked.

The concern the United Nations expresses with cocaine trafficking is not only that it is occurring at an increasing rate, but that it is spreading to new regions across the world. Areas of growth in the cocaine trade include Brazilian cocaine being trafficked to Europe and Africa, and cocaine in the U.S. and Canada being trafficked to Australia. Cocaine is only one drug in a market that encompasses thousands and has new markets springing up across the world frequently. This issue is truly global, as drug trade has a presence in almost every country in the world.

Is your country typically the final destination for drugs being trafficked, or a stop along the way? Do drugs originate in your country, and if so, what is their destination? How does trafficking and drug availability affect the people of your country? Do groups that use drug trafficking as a source of income have influence in your country?

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## Security Council Topic 2

### The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Conflict

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a construction project in Ethiopia begun in April of 2011 intended to revolutionize the way of life for Ethiopian people by jumpstarting the creation of the country's electrical power infrastructure. Only 45% of Ethiopians currently have access to electricity, and this government-funded project aims to change that with the construction of a Hydroelectric power plant using a dam on one of the largest tributaries to the Nile River: the Blue Nile. The dam is located only 19 km from Ethiopia's border with Sudan. Sudan, initially opposed to the construction of the dam, has recently reversed its stance at the prospect of improving their country development. However, Sudan is not the only country downriver from Ethiopia.

Egypt is the second country downriver from Ethiopia and is almost entirely reliant on the Nile. Since construction is very near completion, Ethiopia wants to begin filling the reservoir that will allow the dam to function. Egypt is vehemently opposed to this prospect, and has been from its inception, as evidenced by their rejection of the Cooperative Framework Agreement in 2010. Ninety-five percent of Egypt's population lives on the arable land along the banks of the Nile, and Egyptians get 97% of their renewable water resources from the Nile. This includes drinking and irrigation water. Egypt believes when Ethiopia begins to fill the reservoir, the Nile's flow will decrease. The countries cannot come to an agreement on how the reservoir is to be filled, and tensions rise as Ethiopia moves closer to filling the reservoir without Egyptian consent.

The Grand Renaissance Dam is a source of contention that is a mark of an advancing world. The Ethiopian desire for development and progress cannot be criticized, but the methods by which this can be achieved could result in unintended consequences for others. Not only could this situation quickly become volatile in the form of conflict between the countries which could spiral, but even as a Cold War-esque standoff can be a mark of a country's stance on how they support the development of African countries.

What type of international relationship does your country have with Egypt? Ethiopia? Sudan? Does your country have a similar energy crisis to Ethiopia? What role does your country play in the development of the third world? Has your country felt its autonomy infringed upon by foreign developments?

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## Security Council Topic 3

### Terrorism

According to the United States' State Department, there are two types of terrorism: domestic and international. International terrorism is defined as violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored). While domestic terrorism is violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature. Terrorism is usually perpetrated by groups known as terrorist organizations. These include but are far from limited to: ISIL, Boko Haram, the Taliban, al-Qa'ida, The Lord's Resistance Army, and the National Liberation Front of Tripura.

Countries have lost thousands of lives due to terrorism. Over 27,000 people were killed as a result of violent conflicts with ISIL. Deaths from these conflicts between governments and ISIL increased by 78% in 2015, up from 15,000 the previous year. This includes conflicts with the government of Iraq, Yemen and the Assad regime. ISIL was also engaged in conflicts with other non-state groups, including attacks on groups in Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Yemen.

Violent conflict in Afghanistan has risen since the drawdown of the international troops in 2013. The Taliban is in insurgency, carrying out more terrorist attacks which have resulted in a 29% increase in deaths in 2015. Battle-related deaths from conflict with the Taliban also rose 34% from 2014 to 2015. The Taliban was able to briefly capture the city of Kunduz in northern Afghanistan in 2015, the first city to fall into the Taliban since their regime was removed from power in 2001.

What terrorist organizations are an immediate threat to your country? What preventative measures does your country already take to fight against terrorism? Do any groups identified as terrorist organizations by other countries have a role in the social or governmental structure of your country?

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