



HARVARD MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2012

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL & REGIONAL BODIES

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TOPIC AREA SUMMARIES

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Grace Qi, Director

Topic Area A: **Euthanasia**

In November 1999, Dr. Jack Kevorkian appeared on 60 Minutes and shows the controversial videotape of him administering lethal injection to Thomas Youk, a man suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease. A few weeks later, Michigan court convicted Jack Kevorkian of murder and sentences him to 10-25 years of prison. While euthanasia practices have been dated as far back as 5th century B.C., no clear resolution has been passed on this topic. Opinions are divided on this issue and governments hesitate to discuss this issue as any movement to pass a law on euthanasia will cause outrage from either extreme of the issue.

While the UN does not directly involve itself with euthanasia laws, it has intervened euthanasia policy-making. In August 2001, the Human Rights Committee expressed grave concerns in Netherlands increasingly relaxed euthanasia laws involving minors. The UN committee sent in investigation teams to research the sudden spike in physician-assisted deaths and urged the government to reevaluate their euthanasia policies.

Currently, the United Nations has not passed any explicit regulation on euthanasia. According to Article 55 of the UN Charter, the United Nations is committed to "promot[ing] respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." While human rights can have a variety of meanings, the UN adopted the definition to be: "the right to life, liberty and the security of person." While anti-euthanasia groups argue that the legalization of euthanasia is a direct violation of the "right to life", pro-euthanasia groups counter that taking away an individual's right to die is a direct breach of "the right to liberty". While the UN does not criticize euthanasia practices, it has a difficult time differentiating between legal and illegal forms of euthanasia. How clearly does patient have to make their voluntary will to die? What forms of euthanasia should be legalized? In the case that the patient is in a vegetative state, should the family be allowed to decide whether euthanasia should be used? There are an infinite number of circumstances to take into account and the United Nations has not been able to formulate a general resolution that will address each case.

In this committee, delegates are challenged to do something the UN has yet to do: come up with a resolution regarding euthanasia laws. Delegates should look at the moral and social impacts of euthanasia and utilize old cases as a springboard to debate.

Topic Area B: **Media Development and Censorship**

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to serve as a guideline to all future policies. In the preamble, the document states that the United Nations will dedicate itself to creating a "world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear." In Article 19, the document clearly addresses its views on censorship by stating that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Fast forward more than half a century later, UNESCO continues to give high priority to expanding communication institutions and increasing awareness of the freedom of speech. In April 2011, the UN allocated over \$2 million for 84 media development projects. Progressively, the UN is paying more attention to encouraging female journalists, training media specialists, improving efficiency of news transmission, and improving the quality of news. Most importantly, UNESCO promotes media independent of government and other decision-making institutions in order to establish democracy. These recent developments provide the groundwork for an in-depth examination of censorship movements present in many "closed" countries that reject the U.N.'s goals of expanding media.

While the United Nation clearly supports the freedom of expression, it has had an interesting relationship with censorship in the past. In January 2009, the United Nations tried to outlaw the criticism of Islam. This is mainly spurred by offensive Danish cartoons in 2005 which defamed the religion. Despite the opposition from the U.S., most European nations, Japan, India, and many other nations, the UN adopted this resolution. Such actions directly violate the United Nations' objective of maintaining a freedom of expression across the world. This brings us to the question: Are there UN-acceptable forms of censorship? If so, what are the criteria to these acceptable forms of censorship?

In committee, delegates should examine the current censorship laws in their respective countries and its relationship to the UN's future media development projects. Delegates reexamine past UN resolutions passed on censorship and question the discrepancy in policies between the different resolutions.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Akua Abu, Director

Topic Area A: Refugees of the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring revolutions have dominated the political landscapes in countries throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa, notably in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Libya. Demonstrations of civil unrest are far from over, as Libya's status remains in question, and the Syrian political landscape becomes increasingly hostile. The causes of the violence are numerous, including, but not limited to, religion, political representation, and resources. These conflicts have created a number of problems domestically and for the international community, not only in terms of stopping the violence, but also protecting the millions of men, women, and children displaced by the wars.

Millions of people all over the region have been forced to flee their homes, raising an important question: who is responsible for these refugees? The violent situations taking hold of many Middle Eastern countries have prevented many refugees from staying within their countries. However, neighboring countries have found it difficult to host these refugees with many countries immersed in political and economic turmoil themselves. The fate of these refugees remains important today, as many of have yet to return home, and violence in these countries continues.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in particular is responsible for the safety of most of the refugees found in this area of the world. It is expected that within these nations, as the violence increases, so will the number of refugees. A number of countries within the European Union have already begun to make statements about their immigration policies in regards to refugees from these recent protests, but should the refugee numbers increase quickly, it is crucial that the international community is prepared.

Topic Area B: The Ivorian Refugee Crisis

For almost a decade, Côte d'Ivoire has been plagued with conflict. The nation is still feeling the effects of the 2010-11 Ivorian political crisis, sparked by the refusal of President Laurent Gbagbo to transfer power to the internationally-recognized president-elect Alassane Ouattara. Gbagbo was finally captured in April 2011 following intervention by France and the United Nations.

Even now that Gbagbo has been removed, however, the effects of the violence that occurred in Côte d'Ivoire will last for much longer. The tens of thousands of refugees that fled from what was effectively a civil war have already put a serious strain on neighboring countries. Liberia in particular has taken in a large number of these refugees, and, with limited resources, is already unable to fully provide for them. Prior to the outbreak of violence, Côte d'Ivoire was also hosting a large number of refugees, many of whom had fled from Liberia. This situation has created an interesting dynamic in Western Africa that the UNHCR seeks to address.

This is not a situation that solely concerns West Africa either. While many of the refugees are fleeing to the countries bordering Côte d'Ivoire, other countries have become involved in the conflict and the refugee situation. The United Nations took part in airstrikes to remove Gbagbo from power, and France in particular has played a significant role in its response to the conflict. The situation has clearly become global in scope; solutions to the refugee crisis will involve the larger international community.

United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC)

Lisa Wang, Director

Topic Area A: **Military Use of Children**

Throughout history and cultures, the use of children in warfare is widespread and is currently found in all inhabited continents. There are several references to the practice in antiquity, from squires in Medieval Europe to drummer boys at the Battle of Waterloo. Children were used extensively in World War II as members of organizations as diverse as anti-fascist insurrection groups to Nazi propaganda youth campaigns. In the twentieth century, conflicts in Uganda, Vietnam, and Sierra Leone are particularly notable for their heavy use of children.

Today, Amnesty International reports that 350,000 children under the age of eighteen are serving in direct combat action. In over twenty countries, more than 1.1 million children under the age of fifteen are used as porters, sex slaves, guards, spies and land mine testers. Robbed of an education and thus the hope of a better future, these children grow into adults that perpetuate the cycle of violence in war-torn countries. Grippled in a society of perpetual conflict, the only adults that they can trust to provide food, water, and shelter are military, paramilitary, and guerilla soldiers. They are often forced to kill their family members and commit devastating atrocities such as forced labor, rape, and torture. Clearly, the physical, psychological, and social damage can be insurmountable.

As early as 1949, the Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions encouraged states to “take all feasible measures” to prevent the use of children under fifteen in armed combat. Following this precedent, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict), the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and UN Security Council Resolution 1261 take the proscription further, banning the conscription of children under fifteen and classifying the use of child soldiers as a war crime. Despite these heightened measures, the practice continues to be rampant. The abuse of these children’s rights and the flagrant violations of these international protocols need to be addressed promptly by the international community in the most appropriate organ, the Human Rights Council. Not only must the council discuss ways to mitigate the practice of using children in combat, it must also decide the most appropriate international definition for the practice and work through legal issues that arise from the practice.

Topic Area B: **Prison Systems**

Compared to Topic Area A, Prison Systems have been rarely addressed on an international level because of respect for national sovereignty over individual criminal systems. We will discuss this topic at two levels – civil and military prison systems. Each area has its own historical precedents and national security implications, as well as international applicability. However, it remains to be decided whether or not a standard of prisoners’ rights should be applied equally to those held under these two disparate systems.

Despite being frequently relegated to domestic jurisdiction, the human rights abuses of civil and military prisoners warrants international discussion on the types of treatment acceptable under various human rights protocols (including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). In prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, and immigration detention centers around the world, brutal practices are observed in the name of national security and the “common good.” Recent accusations of torture have been directed at countries as varied as the United States, France, Afghanistan, China, Angola, Israel, and Brazil (just to name a few). Cases of assault or rape go unreported or unaddressed, and resulting physical and mental health issues are blatantly ignored. Prisoners are deprived of the right to information, the right to worship, and the right to seek redress for their grievances.

Several questions can be addressed under this topic. Broadly, are rights an inherent part of human nature, or are they privileges that we sacrifice when we turn against the society that grants them to us? What has been the historical development of international prisoners’ rights? Is it an appropriate time now for an international bill of prisoners’ rights? If so, states should be prepared to address the following specific questions: How should pregnant women be treated while imprisoned? What should the voting rights of ex-prisoners be and who should determine them? Should immigrants in detention have access to the same kinds of rights as prisoners (i.e. access to lawyers)? What is a fair way to implement petitions and reviews for parole? What should be the global consensus on capital punishment, in particular for subgroups such as juvenile delinquents, mentally disabled prisoners, and pregnant women? At the end, the main theme of this discussion is: “Should we develop an international code of standard for prison treatment? Is this expression of human rights feasible and/or needed at an international level?”

The council will truly be heading into uncharted territory with this topic, and its decision has the chance to usher in a new dimension of the international human rights framework, or to ultimately determine that such a controversial topic should remain in the national purview, at least for the time being.

UN Futuristic Commission on Population and Development, 2100 (CPD)

Nora Garry, Director

Topic Area A: **Population Control**

In the topic area of population control, delegates will be encouraged to address the issues that have developed regarding overpopulation. By the year 2100, the world is almost entirely dominated by urban centers. Linked with the growth of urbanization is the growth of certain populations. As housing and land become limited, states are struggling in designating the most efficient method for handling the consequent problems. The problems which arise from overpopulation include poor living conditions, lack of public services, and unemployment. These problems are universal. However, in some nations, there are unique situations which add elements of challenge to the committee.

Conceived by the United Nations in the year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals sought to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty and set the foundation for a global partnership for development. Today, the first goal appears dangerously unrealistic; it seems that the second can only be realized by the crisis of the first.

The passage of a century has witnessed an unprecedented explosion in population. Exponential growth has drastically affected the structure and density of states and the manner in which governments cope with their citizenry. The grave difficulties that result from the issue of overpopulation have challenged the international community to respond creatively and decisively.

Throughout the world, formerly rural areas have been eclipsed by the rise of dominant urban centers. Scarcity of housing and food is exacerbated by a burgeoning population. Citizens face unemployment, poor living conditions, and a lack of public services, while states attempt to deal with the resultant political unrest. Cognizant both of the paucity of resources and the necessity of action, the Commission on Population and Development will meet to discuss the topic of population control.

Topic Area B: **Resource Allocation**

The topic area of resource distribution is closely interlinked with the topic of population control. Throughout the world, population is skyrocketing; however, natural resources are distributed unevenly. Though some countries have adequate resources to cope, the burgeoning population places unparalleled stress on other areas of the world, creating large-scale humanitarian crises resulting from hunger, poverty, water access, and nutritional deficiency. The disparity between conditions in well-endowed and struggling countries further complicates the issue, fostering secondary problems such as massive emigration and crime. The delegates must attempt to address the wide range of difficulties while solving the central problem.

As a result of the exponential growth in population and of the rise of urban centers, resources of all sorts are becoming limited and scarce. Some nations are capable of providing food, shelter, and protection for their citizens, while at the same time, preparing for the future. However, on the other hand, the burgeoning population places unparalleled stress on many newly developed nations. Not only must these nations attempt to rectify the evident issues of population growth, but most importantly, they must find a proper method of distributing their resources. Lack of proper distribution will result in humanitarian crises that stem from factors such as hunger, poverty, lack of water access, and nutritional deficiencies.

The constructive dialogue between well-endowed nations and those struggling to keep up with the newfound urbanization is necessary for the development of many nations; otherwise, the rise of immigration and crime will continue in the resourceful nations. It is the duty of the Commission on Population and Development to propose effective and efficient tactics for the proper distribution of resources among and within nations.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Evan Covington, Director

Topic Area A: **Emergency Preparedness**

Covering nearly 52% of the Earth's surface, the Asia-Pacific region is subject to some of the most frequent and lethal natural disasters in the world. Additionally, the Asia-Pacific region holds nearly 59% of the world's population and an astonishing 70% of the world's natural disasters. Member nations of APEC have acknowledged the challenge to sustainable growth and sustainable infrastructure posed by natural disasters that continue to affect the region.

In response to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in December 2004, APEC officials adopted the APEC Strategy on Response to and Preparedness for Natural Disasters and Emergencies while also establishing the Task Force for Emergency Preparedness (TFEP). These initiatives underscore APEC's dedication to ensuring civilian and economic safety while enhancing the region's ability to prepare and respond to impending catastrophes. APEC leaders have acknowledged that a large-scale disaster on one country can have crippling effects on other nations in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Emergency Preparedness remains one of the key focuses of APEC countries as there is an enormous overlap between civilian safety and economic prosperity. The recent 2011 earthquake in Japan not only devastated civilian livelihood but also unleashed a series of unexpected emergencies across the country including flooding, landslides, building and infrastructure damage, tsunami waves, and nuclear radiation releases from power plants. APEC member nations realize more than ever the need to further strengthen efforts to build community resilience and preparedness for emergencies and natural disasters. From risk management and in-crisis action plans to long-term recovery strategy, emergency preparedness remains a multifaceted yet critical challenge for APEC member countries and the entire Asia-Pacific region.

To ensure economic sustainability and prosperity, APEC countries must work together to create comprehensive strategies and solutions that will better prepare the region for disasters and facilitate post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. However, human security must not be compromised in these initiatives to ensure economic growth. For all we know, the next major emergency might be as close as the day after tomorrow.

Topic Area B: **Food Security**

From sustainable agriculture to hunger eradication, food security remains a top priority for APEC member nations. One may define food security as access by all to sufficient food for an active and healthy life. The agriculture industry is one of the world's largest employers; however, the Asia-Pacific region is home to nearly two-thirds of the world's one billion malnourished people. A direct cause of this is due to steady increase in food prices over past years has prevented nearly 19.4 million people from lifting themselves out of poverty.

APEC member nations continue to struggle with food security in two areas: accessibility and availability. Furthermore, rising energy costs that cause increases in the price of fertilizer make it more difficult for people already struggling in the Asia-Pacific region to produce food for a living. These costs are often passed on to the consumer rendering those with little monetary support helpless. The growing demand for food from emerging economies has placed an enormous stress on the food causing APEC and non-APEC nations to search for alternatives.

Growing competition between bio-fuels and food poses another serious threat to food security in the Asia-Pacific region. Countries like China who seem to have an insatiable demand for oil and increased consumption of food by nearly 1.3 billion people will continue to threaten food security for the Asia-Pacific region. Ensuring food security is one of the most important responsibilities leaders of nations undertake.

However, to connect food security to temporary enhancements in domestic self-sufficiency not only inhibits plans for also can carry considerable risks in diverting attention from programs implemented for true security. Ensuring food for the growing Asia-Pacific region cannot be attained without international cooperation – especially that of APEC member nations. The livelihood of the general public and economy relies on the innovations and strategic plans APEC member nations develop to ensure adequate supplies of safe and reliable food products. With this in mind, it is imperative that APEC nations begin developing new plans and finding solutions to ensure food security before time runs out.

African Union (AU)

Benjamin Hsu, Director

Topic Area A: **Climate Change**

As Africa sets out to tackle the first Millennium Development Goal (the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger), climate change is one of the biggest obstacles crippling the efforts of many African countries. Africa is no stranger to strange and extreme weather patterns. The ongoing drought in the Sahel region of Africa (affecting countries such as Niger, Burkina Faso, etc.) has created not only a water crisis but also a food crisis due to the lack of proper irrigation for crops. These droughts are not only characteristic of the Sahel region, but a severe drought has also been striking East Africa, particularly in Somalia.

As a result of droughts, food prices have gone up, causing malnourishment as children are unable to obtain the nutrients they so

desperately need. In fact, one out of four children in southern Somalia is acutely malnourished. In addition, floods are also a big problem as heavy rains and flash flooding have caused great damage to crops and livestock. In a continent where only nine countries have allocated at least 10% of their budgets to agriculture, any severe weather patterns have devastating effects on the food supply of the region.

Delegates of this committee will discuss the impact climate change has on malnourishment and hunger in the context of Africa—specifically in which ways does it exacerbate the problem, and from there approach the topic from two lenses:

1. Actively pursuing policies that will curb the effect of climate change in Africa
2. Actively setting up safeguards and implementing long-term measures to counter the effect climate change has on the problem of hunger and malnourishment.

Delegates must also think of how to mobilize countries to start investing in the future. Many of the consequences of climate change are long term. These effects have a slow onset, and although it seems more practical to tackle the immediate problems, how are the long term problems going to be addressed? Issues such as the resilience of agricultural production systems and the protection and rehabilitation of damaged agricultural ecosystems need to be addressed.

Another very interesting side of the problem is the debate over biofuels. Although biofuels have the effect of mitigating climate change, they have also been linked with spikes in food prices in recent years. There is much debate concerning the competition biofuels bring about for land and water to grow crops. Delegates will also discuss how to implement sustainable forms of bioenergy, beneficial to both the climate and to the eradication of hunger and malnourishment.

Topic Area B: **The Role of China in Africa**

With an economy growing at lightning speed, China's needs to meet its own demand of raw materials, energy, and other supplies have led it to reach out to Africa as a haven for natural resources, oil, and other goods. Trade is mutually beneficial to both sides and trade has been growing ever-so fast, especially in the past decade. From 2002 to 2003, Chinese trade with Africa doubled to \$18.5 billion. Currently, China is Africa's largest trading partner with trade worth up to \$90 billion in 2009, with the US ranked 2nd with \$86 billion. One of the biggest commodities China imports from Africa is oil. China is the 2nd largest consumer of oil in the world (just after the US) and imports about one third of its oil from Africa. The biggest suppliers of African oil to China have been Angola, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Sudan.

China has done much to benefit Africa. Experts have said that the infrastructure (including but not limited to dams, bridges, and roads) built by Chinese firms are not only low cost and good quality, but also are built much faster than other firms take to build them. China has been known to build many hospitals, schools and offices, lay a fiber-optic network, train Angolan telecommunications workers, and cancel debts totaling up to about \$10 billion.

In light of this, many experts and skeptics also believe that China has ulterior motives behind its benevolence. Many argue that China is using these shows of good-will to exploit Africa and garner African support for its controversial political moves. Among the reasons for the first concern, some point to China's tendency to underbid local firms and not hire Africans. Some deals even require that 70% of labor be Chinese.

Another main concern with China's dealings with Africa is its policy of "non-interference". This policy, which is the most important tenet of Beijing's foreign policy to Africa stipulates that China will do business with any African country that has a resource China is looking for—regardless of what the West thinks of its government or its human rights record. As China's presence in Africa grows faster than ever, each African country must think critically about how much is too much, how much is too little. Especially in light of China's participation in the support of dictatorships by its supply of arms, the AU must ponder the long-term consequences this will have on the spread of democracy and the fall of dictatorial regimes.

European Union (EU)

Christian Garcia, Director

Topic Area A: **Monetary Policy**

The fate of the European Union is coming into question following the recent recession and a series of sovereign debt crises, of which Greece is the most prominent. The ability of this supranational organization to manage an asymmetric economic environ-

ment has come into question. How can a single institution safeguard the economic futures of 27 member states? That, delegates, is the question you must answer at conference. Fresh, innovative policy solutions seem to be the only remedy to the current crisis.

The financial stability of the Eurozone has felt the impacts of these events and many believe that the time has come for a reevaluation of the Union's approach to monetary policy. The effects of the crisis have manifested themselves in a prominent fashion—in 2009 the European Commission at Brussels forecasted an extraordinarily weak GDP growth rate of 0.1% and even predicted negative growth for countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, and Ireland. The impact of global economics was later coupled with the region-specific European sovereign debt crisis. The most famous example of this was the Greek debt crisis of 2010. The recent €110 billion bailout package offered to Greece has been a highly debated issue and is one we should explore. With the economic stability of Portugal and Ireland on the brink, should you administer the same antidote to these economically ailing nations?

The administration of the Euro and the Eurozone by the European Commission has been called into question and further leadership doubts can only aggravate the already weak economic European Situation. You must assure the world and most importantly, the European people, that this body is capable of constructing an economically prosperous and viable monetary policy.

Topic Area B: **Energy Policy**

As the world slowly comes to realize the unsustainability of current energy policy and consumption habits, Europe must join the globe in coming to terms with this sobering dilemma. The European Union represents 450 million energy users. The energy demand of the European Union currently rises from 1-2% a year; the problems posed by rising energy demands are only coupled by the fact that European Union depends on energy supply that is 80% fossil fuel-based.

The greatest challenges posed by creating a “greener” more sustainable energy policy for the European Union are in attempting to find equilibrium between the demands of current economic conditions and the realization of an effective policy aimed at reinventing how Europe will power herself in the future. This equilibrium must be met by surveying the energy needs and capabilities of the 27 member states.

Europe needs to chart a new sustainable course for the future. As the delegates of the European Union, it not only demonstrates your commitment to an environmentally responsible Europe, but also demonstrates your commitment to a Europe that holds a respectable position on the world stage. Many new technological innovations will be born out this new awareness for alternative energy sources.

You must ensure that Europe spearheads the effort in creating new energy capabilities. The member states of this Union must be stewards of a stable European energy-base for the future.

Organization of American States (OAS)

Courteney Smith, Director

Topic Area A: **Political Corruption**

Political corruption has been a long-standing issue across Latin America. The majority of the countries in Latin America scored between a 1 and a 4 on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index in 2010, which measures the perceived level of government corruption in various states, with a score of 10 being the least corrupt.

At the same time, however, many states in South America have made great strides in recent years to reform their governments, creating more effective oversight committees and inflicting harsher punishments for people convicted of crimes like embezzlement and bribery. Political corruption is, first and foremost, from the perspective of OAS, which encourages representative democracy, a threat to the continuance and practice of democratic principles. A corrupt government cannot and does not serve at the will of the people. Less ideologically, but nonetheless importantly, political corruption allows for the continued spread of criminal enterprises, including the drug cartels that are currently terrorizing much of Central America.

There are several schools of thought on what makes a state ripe for political corruption, and the merits of these, as well as solutions to these problems, will be the basis of debate. The OAS has historically dealt with the issue of corruption by trying to insure free and fair elections, through multinational observer teams, though this ended for the most part in 2002. It will be the task of the delegates to find a sustainable solution to these issues and take the states of the OAS towards a further commitment to democracy and more prosperous future.

Topic Area B: **Expansion of Free Trade**

There is an historical precedent for discussion of free trade and its expansion to include all of the American states. As recently as 2003, government officials from 34 out of the 35 member states of the OAS met to discuss the possibility of establishing the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Talks floundered, however, as developed nations and developing states clashed over subsidies and agriculture.

There are many arguments to be made for free trade, including economic benefits and moral concerns. This is particularly relevant to the more rapidly developing states in OAS because they can continue to capitalize on growing economies and, at the same time, advance the argument that free trade worked towards reducing poverty, since it would make more expensive items, most of which are manufactured in the developed world, more readily accessible. Another argument that many economists make in favor of free trade is that it can reduce the likelihood of war. This is particularly important for the more volatile regions of Central and South America, where, though outright war is unlikely, lack of control over drug lords and traffickers keep tensions high.

At the same time, there are plenty of arguments against the expansion of free trade and it will be the duty of the delegates to work out a trade agreement that benefits the greatest number of states.

Historical League of Nations, 1933 (LoN)

Eric Bersin, Director

Topic Area A: **Disarmament**

With the close of the Great War, it is time for the nations of Europe to examine the causes of this most catastrophic conflict. Indeed, one of the primary motivations for creating the League of Nations was to prevent such a tragedy from occurring again. Naturally, the first course of action has been to promote disarmament. The competitive building of national armies, naval forces, and industrial might was what allowed the War to grow to the extent that it did; reducing the collective pool of weaponry and military potential is necessary in order to ease tensions and promote negotiation over violence.

Of course, this has not been nearly so straightforward. In the course of the Great War, it became clear that those countries that were prepared for war were the ones who were most successful. While one might have hoped that less-armed countries would have been able to remain neutral, the newly adopted strategy of “total war” has made neutrality an idealist relic - see the Rape of Belgium.

Thus, the delegates of the League of Nations must find a balance. We must provide the means for countries to safely disarm themselves, such that they may retain what is necessary for reasonable self-protection without threatening the security of their neighbors.

Topic Area B: **The Future of Europe**

Aside from preventing another Great War, the League of Nations also has the responsibility to promote social peace and propriety. Post-Great War Europe has exhibited anything but this. The peace negotiations leading to the Treaty of Versailles barred Germany from input, leading to a settlement dictated entirely by the victors. The “Guilt Clause” built into each peace settlement placed direct blame on the Central Powers – specifically Germany - for the losses and damages of the war, as well as providing self-validation for subsequent reparations. This codified a conflict between the peoples of European countries themselves, pitting citizens of England and France against those of Germany. Mental associations and stigmas like these are among the forces that lead to poor economic relations, ethnocentric tensions, and in extremes, hasty military action.

But the most pertinent issue at the moment is the global economic depression that is quite literally tearing the world apart. Where some countries were doomed to fail given initial conditions from the close of the Great War (namely the Weimar Republic), others were dragged in by the collapse of banks (Austria) and over-inflation (France). Regardless of the forces that brought down individual nations, the results across the world are the same: decreased trading, low production, and mass unemployment. Without affirmative action to reverse the effects of the depression, there can be no doubt that the peoples of Europe will only grow more hostile to one another. Finding a solution is key in repairing the social damage brought on by the Great War.