



Tennessee YMCA Model United Nations

SECRETARY GENERAL'S WELCOME

Hello Delegates!

My name is Ava Foley, and I have been given the honor of serving as your Secretary-General at the 42nd annual Tennessee CCE Model United Nations Conference. On behalf of the Secretariat and myself, I'd like to welcome you. I am ecstatic to serve the conference that has shaped me into the leader and advocate I am today as Secretary-General. In the past nearly half a century, our conference has become a safe space for personal growth and discovery, and I know it will continue to do so for the next half a century. As such, we must encourage our fellow delegates to discover the various perspectives and dimensions of international politics with compassion, understanding, and an open mind. The goal of Model United Nations is to ignite a passion for international causes and produce bright-minded delegates who are eager to advocate for a better world. This conference will consider the four primary UN committees: **SOCHUM, ECOFIN, DISEC, and SPECOL**. The remainder of this letter will highlight international affairs that align with the missions of each committee that may be used as inspiration for the resolutions you will write.

The Disarmament and International Security (DISEC) Committee works to achieve and preserve international peace. Prioritized affairs of this committee involve **disarmament**, especially regarding nuclear and chemical weapons, arms regulation, and global cooperation to maintain international peace. Unfortunately, world peace has yet to be achieved, as demonstrated by the recent unrestrained violence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As technological innovation rapidly progresses, so too does the **extremism of war crimes and the impact of these acts on innocent civilians**. Only through vigorous and unified accountability efforts can we hold perpetrators of horrific and unacceptable atrocities accountable for their crimes and end the blind eye that is often turned towards the perpetuation of violence. Conflict-related sexual violence (CSRV) is a war crime that is severely under-prosecuted internationally and disproportionately affects women around the world— thus acting as a cement wall toward gender equality and human rights. However, these atrocities do not need the presence of humans and can be perpetrated through automated means. In the modern era, drone warfare has become a frequent tactic to target specific individuals. Unfortunately, the immaturity of this technology has led to programming faults that have caught innocent lives in their crossfire. The necessity for **regulation of technological and automated warfare** cannot be understated. Drones are included as members of the illicit arms trade, which is prolific internationally and is frequently the resource and foundation for perpetuated violence.

The impact of the illegal arms trade spreads further than just violence against unsuspecting women, men, and children; the lack of regulation in these trades has a destabilizing effect on

international and domestic economies. The Economic and Financial (ECOFIN) Committee focuses on **promoting sustainable economic growth and development for a more equitable future**. Their goals lie primarily in globalization, eradicating poverty, and agricultural development. An urgent issue and prevalent topic of ECOFIN is the **global response to climate change**. In recent years, there has been an insurmountable rise in catastrophic natural events that are a direct consequence of man-made technology, as is evident with the recurrent flooding in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The international community has yet to meet this pivotal moment and address climate change in a foundational way. Climate change has also impacted agricultural trade, with many countries and regions suffering from food insecurity and nutritional deficits in available agriculture. These dire circumstances are further worsened by the interruption of armed conflict on food supply chains in vulnerable regions. Although Sustainable Development Goal Two is to reach “zero hunger” by 2030, if we continue as we are, we won’t achieve it. Thus, I am urging you to place greater emphasis on the impact of climate change and armed conflict on people’s accessibility to a basic need and a basic human right.

Inaccessibility to nutritious food is not the only human right that is currently unfulfilled. The Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian (SOCHUM) Committee prioritizes the fundament of human rights globally; specifically, it works to **promote the equality of women, protect children, and advocate for fundamental freedoms**. Despite increased conversations and awareness surrounding human rights, barriers to the accessibility of these rights still exist for vulnerable populations such as women, the LGBTQIA+ community, and refugees. Many women and girls have been subjected to practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which seek to undermine their right to bodily autonomy. Further areas of concern include lack of equitable access to education, lack of economic autonomy, and gender-based violence. We must redouble our efforts to achieve gender equality and work to incorporate this goal into our global policies. Further, it is also imperative that the rights of those who identify as members of the **LGBTQ community are protected**. LGBTQ+ people are often subjected to stigma, extreme violence, exploitation, and in some cases, discriminatory laws that criminalize their identities. We must champion efforts to combat discrimination and stigma by educating populations about the LGBTQ+ community. These issues, along with other human rights concerns, intersect with the abuses endured by refugees as more individuals are displaced by armed conflict. Many refugees face racial and cultural discrimination that hinders their right to seek asylum and assimilate into new settings. Moving forward, there needs to be an increased focus on **creating equity in the asylum-seeking process**. The necessity of addressing human rights cannot be emphasized enough—I urge all of you to take a scrutinizing eye to your resolutions and ask yourselves how they fit within the lens of the advancement of human rights.

The final committee this conference will highlight is the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), which covers a broad range of issues related to decolonization and special political missions. SPECPOL is responsible for the oversight of UN

peacekeeping operations and thus is responsible for **confronting allegations of sexual assault and ineffectiveness**. Accountability is just as important for peacekeepers as it is for other bodies; a focus must be placed on promoting community engagement among peacekeepers, fair and thorough investigations into allegations of misconduct, and integrity in peacekeeping missions. Finally, territorial disputes are a hindrance to international peace. Some of these disputes have escalated to the point where civilian lives are caught in the crossfire, as is the case in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The international community must work to **create peaceful resolutions to territorial disputes** that prioritize the human rights of all parties involved.

These issues are daunting but necessary to address. As we work to propose solutions, please remember that you are not alone in your desire to forge a better future. Our conference has remained a community and learning environment for not only the future politicians, leaders, and changemakers, but the passionate advocates of today. Each of you must take responsibility for maintaining this community by treating your fellow delegates with the respect and empathy they deserve. Remember that the issues we discuss are not hypothetical— behind every statistic is a human being, some of whom may be in the room with you. I know I speak for all of the conference officers when I say that we eagerly await your arrival in November, and in the meantime, are working hard to ensure that you have the best experience possible! I am immensely grateful for all of your hard work and can not wait to see the direction you decide to take our conference!

The countdown to MUN begins!

Warmest Regards,

Ava Foley

Secretary General

Tennessee YMCA MUN 2022

Conference A



Tennessee YMCA Model United Nations

SECRETARY GENERAL'S AGENDA

Model United Nations A – Ava Foley

1. Disarmament and International Security

- **War Crimes:** There is no single document that codifies a complete list of all war crimes; however, there have been several documents beginning in the late 19th century that have gradually defined a list of war crimes. The most notable include the 1949 Geneva Conventions, ratified by all member states of the United Nations, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC or “the Court”). There is also considerable overlap between these documents and international customary law. It is important to note that war crimes are committed with the knowledge of their context and intent— those who commit war crimes are aware of their actions. Some notable war crimes include willful killing or serious injury, torture, extensive destruction, and appropriation of property, taking of hostages, intentional attacks against civilians and civilian objects, and intentional attacks against humanitarian or peacekeeping efforts. A more nuanced facet of war crimes is Conflict-related Sexual Violence (CRSV), which includes rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, and other forms of sexual violence. CRSV is a major threat to safety, peace, and human rights, although it continues to be met with impunity. The UN has engaged in efforts to increase accountability for war crimes, but, as we have seen recently in Ukraine, they persist. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: What gaps need to be filled in existing UN efforts to combat/prevent war crimes? What structures can be put into place to increase accountability for war crimes? How can the UN work collaboratively with states and other international bodies to combat war crimes?
- **Drone Warfare:** As the technology used in distance warfare has evolved, unmanned aerial vehicles have increased in prevalence. However, the immaturity of this technology has led to a host of issues, the first being its inaccuracy. In recent years, drones have been responsible for countless civilian casualties despite their purpose to precisely target a specific person. The word countless is an accurate adjective to describe the number of civilian deaths. Because of the secrecy surrounding intelligence operations, there is not an exact count of civilian deaths. There is a severe lack of transparency regarding the impact and use of drone strikes, especially on the civilian casualty rate. This issue is further complicated by states’ use of drones outside the states where they are engaged in armed conflict. Moreover, there are very few regulatory frameworks for drone use. It is difficult to situate drones within current international laws and regulations as they do not fit within existing

definitions and legal concepts. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: What would increased regulation of unmanned aerial vehicles look like? Should drone strikes be authorized by the security council as other uses of force are? What measures could be enacted to increase transparency about drone usage and civilian casualties?

- **Regulation of the Arms Trade:** While international bodies debate whether or not to implement regulations, weapons continue to rapidly proliferate. These arms have fanned the flames of internal conflicts, resulting in increased suffering for populations and interference in global development. While steps have been taken to regulate the arms trade, arms obtained through official methods can still be destabilizing and contribute to human rights abuses. This is compounded by the fact that some of the world's largest arms exporters, such as Russia and the USA, have not ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UN's primary effort to regulate the global arms trade. Other signatories choose to circumvent the ATT's regulations. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: Which aspects of the ATT need to be strengthened? What measures should be implemented to increase accountability and transparency for signatory states? How can the UN encourage more states to become a part of the effort to regulate the arms trade?

2. Economic and Financial

- **Climate Change:** The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that humans have an immense and indisputable impact on the global climate. While this means that humans are a major cause of the climate emergency, it also means that humans can respond to and combat it. The international community must work collaboratively to reduce emissions and overcome political and economic influences on climate policies. It is not an option to stand by idle—the world is rapidly approaching the point of irreversible damage. While long-term solutions are essential to reversing the damage to major global ecosystems and climate systems, it is also important to address the current impact of climate change. Catastrophic flooding, desertification, and wildfires as a direct result of man-made climate change have devastated communities and individuals' livelihoods across the globe. Most recently, devastating flooding in Pakistan and Afghanistan has left close to 1,300 people dead and nearly 7 million people in need of humanitarian aid. Unjustly, it is often the states that contribute least to the climate crisis that bear the brunt of environmental changes and disasters that result from it. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN provide support to the economies and people in climate crisis hotspots? How can the UN support policies that promote sustainable development?

- **Food Insecurity:** Sustainable Development Goal Two is to reach “zero hunger” by 2030; however, projections show that the world is not currently on track to achieve this goal. Despite efforts from the UN to reduce global hunger, as many as 829 million people still go hungry. This is a nearly 150 million person increase over pre-pandemic numbers. Conflict and climate change continue to be the largest interrupters of local economies and global food supply chains. Food insecurity will only worsen without intervention as both conflicts and the effects of climate change increase in scope. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN take conflict-sensitive approaches to combat food insecurity? In what ways can the UN work with NGOs dedicated to eradicating hunger?

3. Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural

- **Women’s Rights:** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognized gender equality as a human right. In the decades since then, the UN has championed women’s rights internationally and has organized dozens of conferences, commissions, and organizations for women. While there has been lots of positive progress, there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality. Areas of concern include gender-based violence, equitable access to education, and economic and political autonomy. 35% of women have experienced physical or sexual abuse from a partner or non-partner sexual violence. Female genital mutilation (FGM) continues. Further, in the past year, millions of Afghan women have lost their access to education and endured other violations of their human rights. These issues are just the surface; millions of women are still constrained by traditional gender roles. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN expand upon policies that have already proven to be effective in creating gender quality? What new policies should be enacted to further deconstruct gender roles? How can we better prevent gender-based violence?
- **LGBTQIA+ Rights:** In 70 countries, private, consensual same-sex relationships are punishable by law, and in five of those countries, punishable by death. Further, many members of the LGBTQIA+ community are at an increased risk of arrest, extortion, stigma, and violence. In dozens of countries, LGBTQ people’s identities are undermined and unrecognized. Discrimination against LGBTQ people is a violation of human rights. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN address the stigma against the LGBTQ community? What does accountability for discriminatory acts look like?

- **Protections for Refugees:** Approximately 89.3 million people have been forcibly displaced; of those, 27.1 million are refugees, 53.2 million are internally displaced people, and 4.6 million are asylum seekers. This number has been increasing over the past decade as more people are displaced by persecution, climate change, and armed conflict. Most recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has resulted in millions of internally displaced people. The instability of migration leaves refugee populations disproportionately vulnerable to human rights abuses such as discrimination, exploitation, and arbitrary detention. Many of these abuses are motivated by racial prejudice and xenophobia, causing more instability and conflict as refugee populations clash with native populations. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN ensure the safety of migrants who chose to articulate the abuses they have faced? What steps can be taken to address the racial discrimination targeted at refugees? What would permanent living solutions for refugees look like?

4. Special Political and Decolonization

- **Integrity of Peacekeeping Missions:** United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) are uniquely positioned to help countries create conditions for lasting peace. While UNPKO does have a positive track record in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, there have been grave allegations of misconduct. Reports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo allege that UN peacekeepers sexually abused local women and opened fire on anti-UN protestors. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN hold peacekeepers accountable for their actions and ensure that their missions are effectively carried out? What reforms should be made to current peacekeeping mandates to prevent future abuses?
- **Territorial Disputes:** Territorial disputes, both large and small, exist across the world. Some of the most notable disputes include Western Sahara, Crimea, Taiwan, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many of these disputes are close to boiling over or already have—endangering the lives and human rights of thousands of civilians. In August 2022, forty-four people died after tensions flared between Israel and Palestine. Further, many Palestinians have been forcibly displaced and left “stateless,” increasing their risk of being subjected to human rights violations. Above all, resolutions to these disputes should prioritize civilian lives and human rights. I urge delegates to consider the following questions when developing their resolutions: How can the UN maintain a focus on human rights while also finding mutually beneficial solutions? How could these conflicts further escalate, and how can the UN work preemptively to prevent escalation?