



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

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