



Tennessee YMCA Model United Nations

SECRETARY GENERAL'S WELCOME

Hi all,

Welcome to our 2021 Model United Nations. I'm Ella Bullock-Papa, your Secretary General. On behalf of the secretariat and all your officers, we are so glad to have you (in person)! The purpose of this conference is to learn more about the world we live in. By working together at this conference, we practice diplomacy, learn the impacts small actions can have on a global scale, and discover how critical discussions can produce innovative solutions.

I'd like to briefly discuss my priorities in each of the four committees.

In the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM), we focus on humanitarian issues. If you're hearing a resolution for the 15th time about water sanitation, you're in SOCHUM (kidding- mostly). Other ideas include women's rights, refugee issues, human trafficking, racial discrimination, and so on. This conference, I'd like to focus on the protection of LGBT+ rights. Although acceptance has generally gone up in recent years, there are many countries where simply being a queer person is illegal. I hope to see creative proposals championing acceptance. Second, I hope delegates will focus on how to navigate a not-yet-post-COVID world. We have seen over and over (in particular, in India this past year), how a single country's struggles with disease can be greatly assisted or exacerbated by their neighbor's actions- leading me to the firm conclusion that global directives and collaboration are the path forward.

The Economic and Financial Committee focuses on economic growth which impacts the world economy. Eradicating poverty and food insecurity are examples of possible resolutions. This year, I'd love to see some resolutions focusing on sustainably pulling communities out of poverty. I would encourage delegates to familiarize themselves with ecotourism, green energy, and infrastructure, and consider how they could be beneficial in their areas. Just don't ask for half the UN budget, no matter your potential returns.

In the Disarmament and Security Committee, you'll evaluate resolutions focusing on international security and peace efforts. This conference, I'd like us to focus on the shifting power dynamics in the Middle East, especially given the United States' departure from Afghanistan. The UN has already sprung into action by allocating some medical resources to the area, but there is a disturbing amount left to do. Second, I would encourage this committee to discuss solutions to drug production and conflicts (not just in Latin America). When just one or a few countries focus on reducing illicit substances, we typically see the 'balloon effect', where production is simply pushed into other countries. In

fact, drug production, worth about 320 billion dollars worldwide, has remained relatively stable over the past few decades, even as location has shifted. Clearly, global solutions are the only ones that will work.

Finally, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee focuses on issues not well captured by the others (and decolonization, of course). Want to talk about outer space? You're in the right room. This conference, two important topics to discuss are misinformation and natives' rights. The spread of social media and the internet has allowed an abundance of misinformation- sometimes maliciously created, and often unwittingly spread- to dominate the online sphere, influencing governments around the world. Russia's 'grey zone' tactics of destabilizing a region through targeted misinformation are only becoming more prevalent. It is imperative that the UN take unified action on this cross-border issue. Second, the May discovery of over 250 native children buried in British Columbia prompts us to re-evaluate colonization and how it still affects us today. I strongly urge this committee to consider natives' rights and how to protect them around the world.

Finally, some advice: Remember that a kind discussion changes more minds than an argument. Remember that, in the end, you don't need to change anyone's mind. And of course, remember that your officers are here to help!

At this point, I'd like to thank you all for your time and effort. The best part of any conference is learning something new from a peer who came prepared to creatively broaden our horizons. These conferences are made by us- by the work we put in, by the passion we bring. I can't wait to see what we create!

Best,

Ella Bullock-Papa

Secretary General
Tennessee YMCA MUN 2021
Conference B



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SECRETARY GENERAL'S AGENDA

Model United Nations B– Ella Bullock-Papa

1. Disarmament and International Security

- **Middle East Power Dynamics:** The Taliban's recent take-over of Afghanistan amid the US's departure from the region has created a volatile new situation in the Middle East. Already, ISIS-K is seeking to delegitimize the new government and shame the US through a series of terrorist attacks. These are not the only parties with stakes in the region. Russia is closely allied with Iran and continues to engage by having oil price wars with Saudi Arabia, and by interfering in the Syrian war. The Middle East's largest trading partner is the EU, yet the difficulty of building a foreign policy consensus among the 29 nations slows and muddles their diplomatic and economic efforts. China's attempts to convince countries to opt into its Belt and Road Initiative is forcing it to maintain an essentially impossible neutral stance. The US in turn criticizes China for being a 'free rider', who is taking advantage of the security the US provides while not assisting itself, although it is highly unlikely the US would actually support an increase in the Chinese military presence. Interregional conflicts hardly take the backseat. Israel and Palestine's conflict continues, with the recent renewing itself after Israel's bombing of Hamas sites in Gaza. Iran and Saudi Arabia's mostly cold war continues. Religious and minority factions jockey for power in nearly all of these countries- civil wars continue in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. And this is just an extraordinarily brief summary. While the Afghanistan conflict and others mentioned here provide excellent starting points for research, none of them can be easily solved with just one resolution. In fact, I recommend avoiding a simplistic, problem 'solving' approach, which 99 times out of a hundred fails to recognize the nuances of a situation. Instead, the UN is well equipped to make some progress- which is far, far better than nothing.

I urge delegates to consider resolutions aimed at addressing the roots of these conflicts. What are the actors' motivations? Are there countries incentivized to remain in conflict, and if so, how can we remove that incentive? What role should the UN play as far as sending Peacekeepers goes? How are the economic goals of each country intertwined with their foreign policy? What would a stable region look like- and is it worth the potential cost to human rights? After all, stability could mean allowing one actor to essentially control the region.

- **Drug production and conflicts:** In order to understand and respond to the dynamics of illicit drug production, the international community must work in accordance with one another in an attempt to prevent the "balloon effect". The balloon effect occurs

when one country bans production of illicit drugs, and the production simply balloons into another region. According to the UNODC, globally the consumption rate based on production capabilities of illicit drugs has remained between 167 million to 315 million. Even with shifts in location of production, the number of consumers has stayed relatively constant since 2013, thus giving rise to a need for immediate action. Delegates should focus on truly connective solutions. Beyond that, they should focus on addressing the roots of the problem. What drives the drug conflicts? Money, of course. But why are they so expensive anyways? Why are these conflicts so dangerous? How are women impacted by this issue? How do men uniquely struggle with it?

2. Economic and Financial

- **Ecotourism:** Ecotourism is tourism in wildlife areas designed to support and promote the conservation of wildlife. It has historically been used in many countries, often tropical. Yet there are now at least two glaring issues we must confront. First, countries are allowing 'ecotourism' which is actually only harmful to the environment. As statistics and research shows, ecotourism has begun decreasing the abundance and diversity of multiple organisms while also altering food and water quality in those ecosystems; therefore having a profound environmental impact on the area. Second, how can ecotourism continue as global pollution continues and climate change ramps up? What can be done on a global scale to protect such a valuable economic and humanistic resource? I encourage delegates to view ecotourism as not only an economic booster but also as a method of sustainable conservation. Through a global lens, you must consider how to best protect and grow the industry, and how that might affect not just your own country.
- **Green energy:** 'Green energy' is a common topic at this conference and in the political sphere in general. But what does it look like in practice? It is not, after all, the UN's responsibility to subsidize (let alone provide free) energy used by only your country. Instead, consider how the UN could support your region through green energy. Think about what is required for green energy to succeed- a quality source, of course (like lots of wind), but also infrastructure and ways for the public to actually use it. There are a myriad of benefits to an electrical grid that is not isolated to any one area, just as there are many benefits to having a grid sourced from multiple resources. Instead of single mindedly pursuing a world running on solar energy, focus on how to best build a reliable grid that can keep running throughout crises and changes in climate. I urge delegates to approach this topic with nuance, keeping in mind creative, cost effective solutions.
- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure projects are typically viewed as each country's individual responsibility. However, I hope delegates will consider infrastructure in a broader sense. What can you bring to the global economy by increasing your own

trade and production capabilities? How can global, shared infrastructure like ports and rails impact you at home? What about internet infrastructure? This is an especially urgent topic given China's continued focus on their Belt and Road Initiative. This project, often lauded as a 'new silk road', spans across East Asia to Europe. While this infrastructure has many benefits, the debt to China smaller countries are incurring as part of this project are worrisome on the global stage. Concerns about China's almost feudal relationship with these countries raises security concerns. Beyond that, environmental concerns are rising as new construction drains resources and claims previously untouched land. Interestingly, this forces us to consider: how can the UN protect the sovereignty of participating nations were we to embark on an infrastructure project? What does environmentally sound infrastructure look like? What makes infrastructure a good investment for the global community?

3. Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural

- **Protecting LGBT+ Rights** Despite generally growing acceptance of LGBT+ individuals, the LGBT+ community remains marginalized on a global scale. Hundreds of thousands of people live in countries where their sexual orientation results in penalizations involving corporal punishment, imprisonment, or even complete social outcasting. In fact, over 80 countries worldwide criminalize such relationships in some shape or form. While these laws and viewpoints are of course inherently problematic and must be changed, the UN cannot change individual country's laws. Instead, I strongly encourage delegates to look into what issues might be fueling this lack of acceptance. By creatively addressing the root of the problem, I hope to see unorthodox but effective solutions.
- **Not quite post-COVID world:** As developed countries with the resources for lockdowns and vaccines begin to move past the COVID pandemic, third world countries continue to be hindered by the disease. Current United Nation databases report a lack of capacity and downright vulnerability. Their problems range from the economic effects of the pandemic to rising humanitarian concerns. I'd like to guide delegates to consider the barriers preventing your own country from success- and how you might see that barrier reflected in other countries as well. When writing your resolution, I hope you'll consider the following: How do gender and ethnic discrimination impact the distribution of health care services? How can limited supplies of vaccines and medical equipment be best distributed? What would it take to increase that supply- and can it be done sustainably? What are safe ways to insure that worldwide trade and production continues? Perhaps most importantly- what vulnerabilities led to the pandemic having such an effect on this scale? And what can we do to prevent another?

4. Special Political and Decolonization

- **Misinformation:** Misinformation between borders has grown with the rise of globalization and high-tech. With expanding access worldwide, misinformation, often defined as fabricated content presented as factual data, has crossed borders opening possibilities for subsequent conflict. Multiple internet and social media groups reference studies in which misinformation surpassed factual content on their databases. As a result, such information can lead the online sphere and subsequently influence government profoundly. Such conflicts have already been observed like with the increasing prevalence of Russian grey zone tactics; thus, rapid UN responsiveness to this issue is key. I advise delegates to consider how the definitions of misinformation, propaganda, and so on impact how we view information. 'Bans', for example, can be incredibly politicized partially because of the connotations of the terminology we use. I also encourage delegates to consider how the UN can realistically contribute to and monitor the resources and information available on the web. Finally, please take care to approach this in a way your country would see fit: China proposing a resolution that would try to cut down on internet censorship doesn't make much sense.
- **Natives' Rights:** The United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007. The resolution urged and recognized collective human rights in various areas including spiritual beliefs, land allocation and more. However, native communities still face extreme impoverishment, unemployment, violence, and overall inequality. With the recent discovery of buried native children earlier this year, it forces us to reassess global behavior towards native groups and search for ways to protect these groups. In what ways does historical colonialism still surface today? How can indigenous people- made up of groups basically defined by their specific language and culture- be addressed on the global stage? What issues do they seem to have in common? I also want to encourage delegates to avoid a 'savior' mentality. It is essential to respect the people you're discussing as capable, human people, and to use their knowledge of their situation as your guide.