UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

STUDY GUIDE 2024

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we extend a warm welcome to the University of Navarra Model United Nations 2024, but especially the United Nations Human Rights Council. The leadership of this committee is composed of President Txell Reguant (double degree student in Law and International Relations), Vice-President María Teresa Egea (double degree student in Law and International Relations), and Secretary Camilla Gutiérrez (International Relations student).

Facing a complex and dynamic international landscape, the issues to be discussed within the committee collectively respond to the preventive and defensive needs of populations with a high level of vulnerability, both regionally and globally. Consequently, the debate that will take place at the 2024 session of the United Nations Human Right Council, focuses on two issues that affect the international community directly, and that is why member states are called upon to reach agreements using words and diplomacy.

The topics to be covered are:

- The Kafala System and its involvement in labour rights and increase in human trafficking.
- The relation between the fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation to children's health in developing countries.

Due to the social, political and humanitarian prominence of the topics to be discussed, it is essential that delegates come with a high level of preparation in regards to the essential themes of each topic. Additionally, the delegates must be ready to discuss the relationship between the agenda put forward by the Committee and their respective countries. In order to engage in fruitful debate, the Bureau expects all delegates to attend all UNMUN 2024 commitments, both before and during the conference. Active participation and preparation is of the utmost importance, as it will allow the committee to run smoothly and find innovative solutions. Thus, your resolutions can contribute, not only to eliminating the problems discussed, but also to creating a more hopeful future for the world.

For the proper preparation of delegates, a number of resources are at their disposal. These can be found both on the platforms provided by UNMUN 2023 itself and external resources accredited by the United Nations, some of which are listed at the end of this document. During preparation for the conference, media exposure is crucial. Identifying the relevant sub-themes of each topic and how these sub-themes correspond to the political, social and economic interests of their respective countries will enable delegates to form a well-rounded view of their country's position on the issue. In other words, it is imperative that the information acquired on each theme is analysed from the perspective of each country's interests.

The Chairing Team of this committee is ready and willing to help delegates at every step before and during the sessions as it is a unique opportunity to learn. Finally, we suggest that you take this Model United Nations conference as a moment to enjoy putting into practice all the research you have conducted in the leadup to UNMUN 2024. Open yourselves up to meeting the other participants, as the relationships you form will leave you with a pleasant memory of this unforgettable experience.

The Chairs would like to express their availability to each of the delegates within the Committee. The Bureau will do its best to respond to any questions, doubts or comments raised before, during or after the debate. We hope that your preparation will be reflected in the debate and that you take full advantage of the excellent opportunity that UN MUN 2024 offers.

Txell Reguant
President
treguantflo@alumni.unav.es

María Teresa Egea
Vice-President
megeadiaz.1@alumni.unav.es

Camilla Gutiérrez
Secretary
cgutierrezm@alumni.unav.es

THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The United Nations Human Rights Council: Safeguarding Universal Dignity and Equality

One of the main international initiatives to safeguard, advance, and promote human rights is the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The UNHRC, which was established on March 15, 2006, to replace the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, is a key international organisation tasked with addressing breaches of human rights, facilitating dialogue, and developing recommendations to protect equality and human dignity for everyone.

The UNHRC is made up of 47 member states that were chosen by the UN General Assembly using a procedure that aims for equitable geographical representation. Members can be reelected after finishing their three-year tenure. By ensuring a variety of viewpoints and a fair representation of the world's regions, this composition strives to increase the legitimacy and efficiency of the council.

The High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change emphasised the need for a more effective human rights body by highlighting the shortcomings of the CHR and recommending its replacement with a more reliable organisation. In order to inspire a renewed commitment to human rights ideals, the General Assembly created the UNHRC in 2006 with Resolution 60/251.

Mandate and Purpose: The UNHRC's main purpose is to advance and defend human rights throughout the world. It accomplishes this through a multifaceted strategy.

- MonItoring and Reporting: The council discusses potential violations and new problems as it attentively evaluates the state of human rights in various nations. The Universal Periodic examination (UPR) system, which entails peer examination of each member state's human rights record, is used in this procedure.

- Advisory Role: The UNHRC advises governments on a range of issues relating to human rights. It works with states to create strategies and stances that support international law and human rights norms.

- Thematic Mechanisms: To look into certain human rights issues, like freedom of expression, torture, and the rights of women, children, and minorities, the council appoints special rapporteurs, independent experts, and working groups. These techniques aid in-depth examinations and offer knowledgeable views.

- Statements and Resolutions: The Council adopts statements and resolutions in response to urgent events and to promote appropriate actions. Additionally, it has the ability to quickly respond to new issues by issuing remarks.

- Dialogue and Engagement: The UNHRC serves as a forum for open discussions, debates, and interactive dialogues that enable member states, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to exchange viewpoints, experiences, and concerns. This facilitates teamwork and a wider knowledge of complicated problems.

- Building Capacity: The council promotes efforts that will make it easier for nations to effectively protect and advance human rights. To enable institutional reforms and policy improvements, technical help and training are offered.

The UNHRC created the UPR mechanism, a key innovation that entails the ongoing evaluation of each UN member state's human rights record. This procedure ensures that nations are held responsible for their promises to upholding human rights and offers a forum for fruitful discussion and collaboration. To examine and provide reports on particular human rights situations or transgressions in particular countries, the UNHRC developed a number of special procedures, including special rapporteurs and independent experts. These methods give the council the ability to react quickly to developing problems and offer in-depth analysis.

Resolutions on general human rights issues and unique national circumstances are published by the UNHRC. These resolutions address the problems with human rights around the world and offer a plan for action and responsibility. Between its member nations, international organisations, and civil society, the UNHRC promotes a forum for productive discussion and diplomatic interaction. This forum makes it possible to discuss human rights concerns by sharing ideas, best practices, and cooperative strategies.

The United Nations Human Rights Council is a crucial international organisation committed to promoting the fundamental ideals of justice, equality, and human dignity. The council works to promote a society where human rights are respected, safeguarded, and defended for all people, regardless of their background or circumstances, through its numerous procedures, conversations, and recommendations. Despite ongoing obstacles, the council's dedication to these principles is still a glimmer of hope for those who want to see a more fair and compassionate society.

TOPIC A: THE KAFALA SYSTEM AND ITS INVOLVEMENT IN LABOR RIGHTS AND INCREASE IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Kafala System is defined as a network of sponsors (local individuals or companies) that employ foreign people to work in their host countries. Within this framework, each host becomes their legal guardian. Thus, they are obligated to provide them with housing and transportation.

The system was created with the purpose of protecting the rights of foreign employees who were working in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) and other Middle Eastern nations.

The system was originally created to hire Arab workers to complete cheap labor. Nonetheless, after the 1970s, the host states started to seek for individuals of Asia and Africa for ideological and financial reasons.

Over the years, the structure of this has weakened and has become controversial among the international eyes. It was highlighted by The Council on Foreign Relations that the Kafala System is linked to the interior ministry of each nation. As a consequence of this, the working rights of the employees cannot be directly protected under the law. Moreover, their visas are directly linked with their host, which makes them have total control over their legal status. All of this generates a vulnerable situation for the workers. Thus, they are more likely to experience exploitation and abuse from their guardians.

Risks of the Kafala System

As it was mentioned before, the Kafala System has created a dangerous situation for the life conditions of the workers. Because of this, some of the risks and consequences they are currently facing are the following:

- The host countries have no advancements nor interest in the implementation of acts that protect their workers rights. Nonetheless, the states who DO have laws regarding the condition of their employees, they often do not respect or enforce them.
- The legal conditions that have been generated in each nation have "restricted movement and communication" (The Council of Foreign Relations).
  - Often hosts confiscate their personal documents and electronic devices. In addition, they are placed in atrocious living conditions, which are not proper for their safety and health.
- Workers get legally tricked by their host through "contract substitution", in which foreign employees sign numerous conditions that are often in languages they do not know. Through this, they accept terms where they "accept" the poor conditions they are given by their employers.
- Hosts without consent sell the visas of their employees to other guardians.
- Hosts have all the legal power over the visa status of their employees.
- The system impedes workers from changing jobs or hosts since all their power was granted to their guardians (Migrants Rights).

Labor Rights & Human Trafficking

We could define human trafficking as: "Using force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act". Millions of men, women, and children are trafficked every year, and victims can be of any age, ethnicity, gender, or nationality. This crime can and occurs everywhere.

We could seriously consider the Kafala System as a potential issue of modern slavery. Millions of migrant workers from Africa and other areas of Asia travel to the Middle East under a system that matches people with employment and the promise of labor and the capacity to support their family back home. Prior to packing their bags, the majority of people are unaware that the labor laws in popular travel destinations like Jordan, Lebanon, and the majority of the Arab Gulf are particularly predatory towards non-citizens.

Many take advantage of the unequal power dynamics by engaging in cruel and exploitative actions. Private recruitment firms are frequently used by sponsors to find laborers in host countries. These companies trap migrants in debt servitude by demanding exorbitant recruitment fees that cannot be repaid with the meager earnings many migrant workers get.

Despite their educational backgrounds and professional skill sets, the majority of migrant workers from Africa and South Asia are restricted to low-paying occupations due to the persistence of racism and xenophobia in the area and around the world. Foreigners frequently face hostility, which even affects those who have been displaced within the region, such Syrian and Palestinian refugees. In actuality, kafala's introduction and widespread use in the region are largely due to its capacity to supply a sizable labor force to meet increasing economic demands while "preserving" a national identity for inhabitants of these nations.

The vast majority of domestic workers are women, and they experience some of the most horrifying abuses. Domestic workers regularly complain about their employers in the kafala-affected nations withholding their wages, refusing to provide adequate living circumstances, making them work exceptionally long shifts without breaks, and verbally, physically, and sexually abusing them.

Since the kafala system has been under fire for a while, various administrations have tried to enact improvements. As an illustration, Qatar introduced labor changes in 2020 that raised the minimum salary and allowed migrant workers to switch occupations without the permission of their employer. Despite these measures, which on paper seem to be beneficial, there is still a significant power gap that makes labor abuses possible. Employers still have control over a worker's legal status and have the authority to seize their documents. Additionally, workers are not permitted to form unions or go on strike, and it can be very challenging, if not impossible, to seek redress when their rights are infringed.

Keywords

- Modern Day Slavery: "When an individual is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain. Whether tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom. This includes but is not limited to human trafficking, forced labour and debt bondage."

- Labor Rights: The compilation of rights that grants individuals the opportunity to work and have proper conditions within the workforce. These prerequisites include a fair payment, a safe environment, proper respect, among others.

- Human Trafficking: "The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

TOPIC B: THE RELATION BETWEEN THE FAIR AND EQUAL ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION TO CHILD HEALTH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation to child health in developing countries is a topic of vital importance, and such access has been recognised as a universal human right by the United Nations since 2010. The passing of Resolution 64/292 by the United Nations General Assembly, and the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" is recognition of the international community's interest in the topic. With the recognition of water and sanitation as human rights and policy concerns, different projects have been implemented by UN agencies, especially UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). UNICEF is an especially relevant stakeholder in this issue because children are among the most vulnerable in situations of poor water access and hygiene. As the WHO has noted, insufficient access to water and sanitation may cause diseases such as diarrhoea, polio, or dysentery. This is The fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation to child health in developing countries is a topic of vital importance, and such access has been recognised as a universal human right by the United Nations since 2010. The passing of Resolution 64/292 by the United Nations General Assembly, and the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" is recognition of the international community's interest in the topic. With the recognition of water and sanitation as human rights and policy concerns, different projects

have been implemented by UN agencies, especially UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). UNICEF is an especially relevant stakeholder in this issue because children are among the most vulnerable in situations of poor water access and hygiene. As the WHO has noted, insufficient access to water and sanitation may cause diseases such as diarrhoea, polio, or dysentery. This is especially concerning for children, as contaminated water and poor sanitation are one of the main causes of death for children under 5, with UNICEF calculating that up to 800 children die from causes related to poor access to drinking water and sanitation every day.

Access to drinking water and sanitation is a global concern, and is an issue closely related with insufficient infrastructure. Consequently, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) projects have focused mostly on water tankering, treatment and infrastructure building. According to United Nations Water (UN Water) 2022 data, only 57% of the world's population uses sanitation services in accordance with SDG indicator 6.2.1a, which signals that there is still progress to be made. The regions most affected by unsafe sanitation services were Sub-Saharan Africa (24% of the population with safe sanitation services), Latin America and the Caribbean (49%), and Central and Southern Asia (50%). WASH projects focusing on water tankering consist of carrying water in containers, though this is time-consuming and is employed only in emergency situations. Most projects choose to focus on water treatment, which eliminates pollutants in water, and infrastructure development, such as filter systems. According to the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy Environmental Performance Sanitation and Drinking Water Index, some of the most affected countries in the world include: Chad, Ethiopia, or Afghanistan.

The relationship between the fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation to child health in developing countries is expressed through the interconnectedness between disease and stunting, poor educational performance and attainment, and reduced school attendance. UNICEF has expressed concern at the high prevalence of preventable diseases and the effects they have on children, with a particular focus on diarrhoeal diseases. Children experiencing these diseases can end up too sick to go to school for a period in time or may suffer cognitive impairments, thus further decreasing their chances of obtaining an education. Special emphasis is placed on the consequences of poor water and hygiene in young girls and women, as this exacerbates gender inequality.

Finally, new challenges for the improvement of water and sanitation include climate change and its impact on water resources. It is thought that climate change, alongside rapidly growing populations, will put increasing pressure on already scarce resources. This scarcity of drinking water and sanitation will continue to have adverse effects on the health of children.

Keywords

- Sanitation: Access to, and use of, excreta and wastewater facilities and services that ensure privacy and dignity, ensuring a clean and healthy living environment for all. (Note that "Facilities and Services" has been further defined as the 'collection, transport, treatment UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC) 3 and disposal of human excreta, domestic wastewater and solid waste and associated hygiene promotion' to the extent demanded by the particular environment conditions).

- WASH: Common abbreviation for Water, Sanitation and Health.

- Infant mortality: Probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of one, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of that period.

- Child mortality: Probability a newborn would die before reaching exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births.

- Developing countries: A country which, relative to other countries, has a lower average <u>standard of living</u>.

- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF): United Nations agency providing <u>humanitarian</u> and <u>developmental aid</u> to <u>children</u> all around the world.

- Water tankering: Rapid means of transporting water to areas in need during the initial phase of an emergency.

- Stunting: low height-for-age.

- Sustainable Development Goal: Urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. (Please note that this topic is most closely related to SDG 3, Good Health and Well-Being, and SDG 6, Clean Water and Sanitation).

- World Health Organisation (WHO): United Nations agency in charge of global health.

The relation between the fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation to child health in developing countries:

The question of fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation and its relationship with child health in developing countries has been of particular focus for the international community for the past decade. Access to drinking water is of vital importance to ensure This study guide will be divided into the following topics: a brief historical background, the different manifestations of the issue

(namely, child malnutrition and hygiene related illnesses, and reduced educational performance, with an additional focus on gender issues), WASH projects and the cooperation of different agencies, where in the world this issue is most prevalent, and the challenges to the achievement of equal access to water and sanitation. The aim of the study guide is for delegates to gain a general introductory insight on the topic, and consequently does not replace personal research.

Historical background:

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/292, which declared that access to drinking water and sanitation was a human right. The latter adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 further emphasised the idea that collaboration was needed to ensure that progress in areas such as health, well-being, or education was made worldwide. When analysing the issue of water and sanitation and child health, keep in mind the different SDGs this manifests itself, paying special attention to SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Common diseases related to poor access to drinking water and sanitation:

The World Health Organisation (WHO), which alongside the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), is one of the main drivers for progress in the issue, has stressed that poor access to water and sanitation causes up to 800 preventable child deaths a day. Lack of sufficient drinking water and sanitation are linked to cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. Some of these diseases, such as cholera, are caused both by drinking from contaminated water, further emphasising the need to follow WHO guidelines on drinking-water quality, while others are spread due to a lack of access to basic hygienic services.

In low income countries, diarrhoeal diseases are especially worrying. According to official UN estimates, children under the age of three will have around three three episodes of diarrhoea every year. During these episodes, children will not absorb nutrients correctly and will be at risk of malnutrition. Malnutrition will lead to impaired growth, which could result in stunted development, or lower height than normal.

The impact of unequal access to drinking water and sanitation on children's educational achievement:

The WHO has established that poor access to drinking water and sanitation creates higher infant mortality (probability of a child dying before their first birthday) and child mortality rates (probability of a child dying before the age of five). However, this issue also has adverse effects on cognitive development and educational achievement. According to one UN study conducted in Ethiopia, children in households without access to adequate water sources were more likely to have a cognitive deficit. This resulted in lower educational achievement and more difficulty accessing higher education.

UNICEF has further analysed the adverse effects of unequal access to drinking water and sanitation on young girls, stressing that this issue increases gender inequality. Girls and women are more likely to be in charge of fetching water, which is a constraint on their time. Additionally, insufficient menstrual hygiene facilities reduces school attendance in women, which explains the emphasis UNICEF has placed on the development of initiatives tailored towards this group. Such emphasis can also be found in SDG target 6.2, which describes the need to achieve equitable access to sanitation and hygiene for all, but paying specific attention to women, girls and others in vulnerable situations.

WASH Projects:

WASH Projects are the instruments being employed by UNICEF to enhance access to drinking water, which refers to water which is not contaminated and safe for human consumption, and sanitation.

Regarding drinking water, there are three main ways to ensure improved access to water; water tankering, water treatment and infrastructure building. Water tankering is not a very common mechanism, as it has many logistical difficulties. It consists in transporting water in specially designed containers made out of stainless steel to ensure the water is drinkable and taking it to emergency zones. Though useful in desperate situations, it does not increase an area's water supply. To this aim, WASH projects have focused on water treatment and infrastructure. UNICEF in particular is working on these projects in over 100 countries worldwide, with new emphasis on collaboration with other UN agencies, international financial institutions, NGOs, such as the WASH Alliance, WaterAid, or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, foundations, and private companies. Other international organisations collaborating in WASH projects include the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) and the European Union.

Specially affected regions:

According to data in United Nations Water (UN Water), only 57% of the world's population uses sanitation services in accordance with SDG indicator 6.2.1a. The regions most affected by unsafe sanitation services were Sub-Saharan Africa (24% of the population with safe sanitation services), Latin America and the Caribbean (49%), and Central and Southern Asia (50%). According to Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy Environmental Performance Sanitation and Drinking Water Index, which measures sanitation and drinking water, the 10 most affected countries in the world are: Chad, the Central African Republic, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Burundi, Madagascar, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau and Lesotho.

Challenges and difficulties:

In recent years, the link between climate change and water scarcity has been highlighted. The rise of global temperatures, more extreme weather events and flooding, among others are a challenge to areas already struggling with water scarcity.

This is especially true in the regions highlighted in this report, which have to face less resources at a time of demographic change. As a consequence, improvements in water treatment and infrastructure are of growing importance, with the fair and equal access to drinking water and sanitation in developing countries playing a pivotal role in child health.

Topics to discuss in the session:

- The link between water-borne diseases and child mortality.

- The impact of lack of access to water and sanitation on young girls and women.

- The development of infrastructure plans to enhance access to drinking water.

- The impact of insufficient water and sanitation on the educational attainment of children.

- The collaboration between international organisations in WASH projects.

- Enhancing public and private collaboration in the development of WASH projects.

- The role of international financial institutions in the funding of WASH projects.

- NGOs and their involvement in water

- The impact of climate change on water scarcity.

- The implementation of World Health Organisation drinking-water quality guidelines domestically.

OTHER SOURCES THAT MAY BE USED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

The most involved agencies in the relationship between access to water and sanitation and its impact on child health are the WHO, UNICEF, and UN Water. As such, their websites should be employed when carrying out research. As the largest international contributor to WASH projects, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civilian Protection website is also useful. For basic demographic and hydraulic information, the CIA World Factbook reliably portrays this data in each nation's profile. Finally, to research NGOs involved in WASH projects, employ the WASH Alliance webpage, or the official website of the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. To see whether your country participates in WASH projects, check on the Foreign Ministry website.

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