

A NEW YEAR, A NEW LOOK, AND THE SAME SHENANIGANS!

DENISE WHITFORD, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Welcome to HSMUN 2010 delegates! Although the conference is still months away, the staff is already busily working to make sure that this year's conference will be amazing! Registration is underway and country assignments will be available in just a few weeks. The committee blogs are filled with relevant news and research links, and the background papers will be appearing on the website very soon! Here in the Press Corps, we wish to ensure the best HSMUN experience possible, so we are introducing a new and improved United Nations News!

With a new size and format, along with a fresh new staff, we hope you love the changes! We are honouring the mission of the United Nations Environment Programme by moving to a more "green" approach to the news. Pre-conference editions of the UNN (November and January) will be available by e-mail and online, while editions of the UNN during the conference will be available in print. Our new size will allow us to use less pages, but don't worry – we'll be ensuring the same high level of quality in our content. In addition, the press corps will be becoming involved in the



committee blogs, so keep an eye out for our articles!

The UNN is just a taste of HSMUN and the power of the press corps – Be Vigilant! The columnists, photographers and film staff have keen eyes and sharp hearing. Ensure that you are prepared to be decorous representatives of your nation's diplomatic mission, or you may face the consequences. While that confidential letter from the State Department or Mission may not be that embarrassing, you don't want to (dis)grace the front page of this paper for all to see! We also plan to feature some of the most interesting and outrageous events of the conference at the closing ceremonies, so watch out for that video camera!

DELEGATES, LEARN FROM THE BOY SCOUTS: BE PREPARED!

REBECCA THOMAS



"Liberalism is the best doctrine for international relations...actually...realism. I changed my mind... Liberalism is the more left one, right? I like left." This comment sounds ridiculous, but believe it or not, this columnist has heard worse! I am not a stranger to hearing comments made by delegates who have not done their research. You may be asking: "Golly, what should I do so I can avoid looking like a fool?" Well, I am glad you asked! Delegates who prepare a position paper, visit the HSMUN blogs, and watch the news will not only be the envy of their fellow delegates, but will be eligible for HSMUN 2010 Awards.

Preparing a position paper will force you to research and get acquainted with what

your country stands for, and why. Know some basic facts about your country, and know its closest allies. It is also important to relate your committee's topic to your country. Does your country devote time and money to address the topic under discussion? What efforts has your country made? Are there any proposed solutions? Answers to these questions will come after research.

Google is a place to start. Try to search for your country's official website, where diplomats post a general introduction to their country's international standpoints. The official United Nations website is excellent because you can find information on the past resolutions made by the Security Council and General Assembly, in addition to information regarding the current issues the GA faces today. Information is just one click away!

If you feel simply overwhelmed with the influx of information that Google spits out at you, check the HSMUN Blogs where our dais have taken it upon themselves to post some links to narrow down your search topics. The blogs are updated regularly to match current events and to help you get associated with your committee, but nothing can keep you from snagging the Best Delegate Award more than not staying on top of current events. Newspapers and political magazines can be accessed at your public library, and up-to-the-minute newscasts are on our television stations every day.

The fate of this year's conference rests in your sanitized, H1N1-free hands. If you have researched well, then you will be prepared. If you are well prepared, then the moderated and unmoderated caucuses will be intellectually stimulating and enjoyable. And nothing says HSMUN 2010 more than 'intellectually stimulating and enjoyable!'

HSMUN DATES!

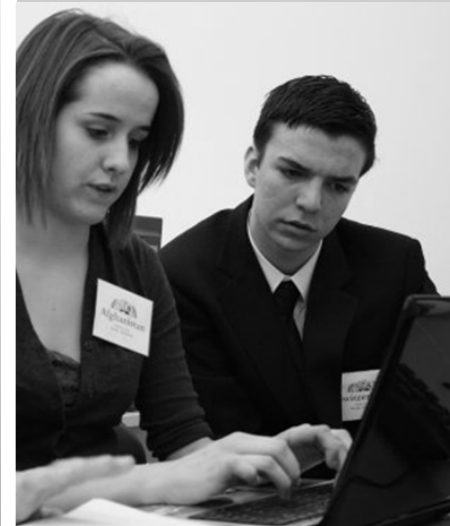
Position Papers Due
Early February

Thursday, February 18
6:00 - 9:00 pm
ETLC, NREF (U of A)

Friday, February 19
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
ETLC, NREF (U of A)
6:00 pm - 12:00 am
Crowne Plaza Hotel

Saturday, February 20
9:30 am - 3:00 pm
ETLC, NREF (U of A)

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DEVELOPMENT AID: COMBATTING THE GLOBAL RECESSION

SARAH FLOWERS

As early as 2007, the global community has experienced a recession – the worst international financial crisis since before World War II. During this time of instability, it has been said that out of the one hundred-sixteen nations listed as developing countries, ninety-four have been affected by the economic slowdown. The World Bank has estimated that the crisis will push nearly another forty-six million people into poverty during 2009. “We need to react in real time to a growing crisis that is hurting people in developing countries,” World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick said. Action is needed by governments and multilateral lenders “to avoid social and political unrest.” The action of which Zoellick speaks is his plan involving the G-20 – twenty industrialized

nations pledging a total of \$1 trillion to provide a worldwide stimulant to boost the global community. With the support of developed countries, the World Bank created the Vulnerability Fund in order to provide aid to developing nations. This fund asks nations to dedicate 0.7 percent of the money being spent on stimulating the economy to provide relief for unindustrialized countries. The framework of the Vulnerability Fund will contribute the means to support infrastructure projects and safety net programs, as well as to provide financing for small and medium enterprises. The G-20 has agreed to support this expansion of multilateral development bank lending to \$100 billion annually for the next three years, for a total of \$300 billion.

The World Bank has cautioned that the financial cost of helping poorer countries would surpass the current

monetary resources of multilateral lenders; however, this type of aid could prove to be critical to political security, particularly as concerns continue to emerge regarding unrest in poorer nations (such as those in Eastern Europe). United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stated that “there is an urgent need to increase the volume, quality and reliability of aid flows. This is central to a coordinated global recovery plan.” The United Nations’ plan to cope with the economic crisis includes economic development that is both clean and green, with a focus on preserving the environment while providing support for nations to recover from the crisis. Plans to acquire food security through agricultural investments have also been put in place, as the United Nations hopes that it will allow for the hungry to feed themselves.

WHAT A DUMP! ADDRESSING THE SAFE DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTE

ELZBIETA MYRLAK

When Italian authorities announced in September 2009 that up to thirty vessels carrying nuclear waste may have been sunk in the Mediterranean by the Calabrian mafia, the international community was outraged. Illegal radioactive waste disposal, however, is not a recent development; it has been common since the 1950’s when states first began investing in nuclear technology. Despite this fact, public knowledge about toxic waste is severely limited, and debates surrounding its safe disposal arise only when shocking cases, like that of the mafia operations, are unearthed.

Radioactive waste is more than just used nuclear reactor fuel; it includes contaminated clothing and tools, medical byproducts, and uranium milling wastes. Although it is now found in almost every country in the world, there are still no functional long-term disposal plants for high-grade waste. Proper and safe removal of radioactive particles is too expensive and too technologically advanced for many states, and thus most nuclear waste is officially in “temporary” storage at the nuclear reactors, hospitals, and laboratories where it is used.

While UNEP, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Basel Convention have instituted numerous treaties and research studies, progress in individual states is slow. Public disapproval and fear hinders the passage of legislation which would allow for the building of permanent underground repositories for high-level nuclear waste, which is believed to be the safest and most sustainable solution to the problem. The USA was perhaps closest to creating the first such facility at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, but the



plan was scrapped by the Obama administration in March 2009; Finland and Sweden are currently foremost in their attempts.

It is not difficult to see why such repositories, especially ones suitable for international use, have not yet been built. There are few places in the world which meet the stringent geographical requirements of such a site, such as: a flat topography, low precipitation levels, high rates of evaporation, a dense sedimentary formation, no underground mineral or fresh drinkable water reserves, a stable climate with low erosion rates, and low seismic activity. Furthermore, there is an obvious need for the site to be in a politically stable and technologically advanced state. Thus far, no site has been found which would encompass all of these criteria, and therefore many countries have been forced to invest in research to find alternative methods of waste disposal.

The alternatives found within the last decade are promising ... and not yet suitable for large scale use. They include recycling of spent fuel, Solvated Elector Technology, bioremediation using radiation-resistant bacteria, and space disposal using Beamed Energy Propulsion. Their current unfeasibility and exorbitant costs, however, have led many states to use a much cheaper (and much more dangerous) process: illegal waste

disposal. Despite the fact that many states are signatories of the “Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal,” new cases of illegal dumping and environmental contamination are frequently unearthed.

One prominent discovery of illegal radioactive waste disposal occurred following the tsunami which hit Somalia in December 2004. The tsunami’s crashing waves destroyed hundreds of rusted nuclear containers dumped in the country by Swiss and Italian firms during Somalia’s civil war in the early 1990’s. The materials, which included radioactive uranium, cadmium, lead, and mercury, leaked and spread from the remote beaches where they had been stored to villages along the Indian Ocean coast, causing a variety of radiation-related illnesses in the local population and severely contaminating the environment.

Meanwhile, the latest case of illegal dumping involved the operations of the aforementioned Italian mafia. A mafia informant claimed in September 2009 of having participated in the sinking of three missing vessels carrying nuclear waste off the Calabrian coast. Like in the Somali case, paying off the mafia to remove toxic waste was a much cheaper alternative to safe storage and disposal for Italian firms. While no conclusive evidence has yet been released from the investigation currently under way on waste containers found in one of the ships, Italian officials now predict that toxic waste from up to thirty hijacked vessels might currently be strewn about the Mediterranean seabed. If this is true, the environmental effects will be catastrophic, and the world might finally realize the true cost of illegal dumping.

HIGH SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS PRESS CORPS 2010

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in January!

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