



Shenzhen College of International Education Model

United Nations (SCIEMUN) Conference 2024



UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Background Guide

**Topic: Assessing the Provision of Humanitarian Aid for
States in Structural Transition**

Committee: Human Rights Council

Topic: Assessing the Provision of Humanitarian Aid for States in Structural Transition

Deputy Chair: Lincoln Wang



Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Greetings and welcome to the Human Rights Council of SCIEMUN 2024. I am Lincoln Wang from Shenzhen College of International Education. I am currently a Grade 10 student and is excited over being the deputy chair of HRC for this year's SCIEMUN conference.

The two topics our conference will be covering over the 3 days include the structural transitioning of member states, and the promotion of educational equality for all. I hope SCIEMUN 2024 will prove to be both an enjoyable and enriching experience for all delegates, and that you will leave the conference with something memorable.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at s23395.wang@stu.scie.com.cn

Warm regards,

Lincoln Wang

Committee Background and Mission Statement

The Human Rights Council is a charter-based body that represents the highest level in the chain of command in the Human Rights department. It is comprised of 13 country mandates that monitor and support the independent experts of the treaty-based bodies under. The council conducts a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for all member states every 4.5 years, a review in which the humanitarian aspects of the member state is checked and monitored. The council can also mandate investigations into human rights violations, where commissions of inquiry seek accountability in a humanitarian situation and uphold international human rights laws whenever possible. Humanitarian issues can be reported by individual human right experts through the council's Special Procedures, where specific country situations and problems can be addressed.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has, historically, aimed towards “strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe”.

Founded in 2006 by the General Assembly, it has taken main responsibility for all issues threatening or violating human rights over the years. The Council was created for the common belief: the protection of the dignity of every individual human being is essential to the harmonious running of a community and the development of social welfare for a country. Since its founding, the Council has served as a platform for human rights defenders and victims to speak out against rights violations and push for change.

Throughout its establishment, the Human Rights Council has taken various responses, mostly through establishing commissions of inquiry, to address significant human right violations in the world. It has also focused on the continuous improvement of humanitarian situations in developing countries.

One main priority the UNHRC has on its agenda is the mitigation of discrimination against all women, addressing it as a basic human rights issue. This commitment has led to the adoption of resolution 7/24, which recognized the various forms of discrimination against women and the need to create a multi-faceted approach to

successfully tackle the issue. This resolution, combined with the almost universally ratified international treaty Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, created in 1979), has served as a launching pad for the efforts to eradicate discrimination against women.

A more recent development of the HRC achieved the adoption of the Resolution on Systematic Racism. Adopted in 2021, the resolution focuses on the problem of racism, particularly towards those of African descent. The resolution was created under the backdrop of increased tension and protest injustice following the murder of George Floyd. The resolution urged member nations to strengthen responsibility for human rights abuses and modify their enforcement methods.

Other smaller achievements of the HRC includes the Resolution on Human Rights and a Culture of Peace (2024), Resolution on Technical Assistance in the Philippines (2021), Resolution on Children's Rights and Healthy Environment (2020), just to name a few.

Limitations

Despite the goodwill and high moral ethics on which the Human Rights Council was created, it is not without certain deficiencies in both its management and judgment. Particularly, it has placed a disproportionate emphasis in the long-going Israel-Palestinian dispute over the occupation in the Middle East. Since its creation, out of the 280 condemning resolutions adopted by the HRC, 37% of them are targeted towards Israel. Being on a separate item on the HRC agenda, the situation is placed under constant monitoring by a rapporteur commission that is not subject to renewal. This has created an imbalance in its mission to respect human rights in an objective manner.

The Human Rights Council also has certain weakness in decision enforcing, limiting its powers to serve its function. Primarily, it is having difficulty towards punishing

countries that do not accept its decisions. While medium to long-term activities such as the promoting of universal human rights, activities that require extensive communication and engagement, are accepted by most countries, short term activities that address the present upholding of human rights, activities that immediately affect a country's policies, are often resisted. The Council in this case, unlike the Security Council, does not have the capabilities to enforce its decision.

In addition to its lack of hard power to enforce its judgement, membership problems are also apparent in its structure. Although the creation of the Council aimed to cover some of the membership deficiencies of its predecessor, the Human Rights Committee, there have been instances where certain member states are elected despite failing the election criteria.

Key terms

Humanitarian aid

Humanitarian aid refers to the short-term assistance given to people in need during times of crisis. It intends to alleviate suffering and save lives, taking up various forms, such as food and medical aid. It is different from development assistance in the context that humanitarian aid is only provided for emergencies, where the health and safety of a community is threatened. It serves as a short-term relief to reduce the imminent effects of the crisis to prevent a downward spiral of suffering, whereas development aid focuses more on the continuous long-term development of a country's situation. The UNHRC laid out four principles for all forms of humanitarian aid to follow: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. While all these principles are fundamental, some cases of humanitarian aid, such as in Liberia and Guinea in 2002, have reported abuses in its intervention.

Structural transition

Structural transition is often defined as the transition from an economy of low productivity to an economy of high productivity. Seen mostly in developing countries, this transition is achieved in few ways. The most commonly seen way involves a restructuring in economic activities across the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. Developing countries with a strong focus on labor-intensive activities in the areas of agriculture and manufacturing would aim to shift their focus towards service and technology, contributing to de-industrialization, usually through changes in its factors of production and labor workforce. Although the change is usually accompanying economic growth, some states choose to completely overhaul their economic structure.

Developing countries

Developing countries are generally described as a less industrialized state seeking to improve their social and economic prospects. With a mostly agrarian economy, they are often characterized by a lack of industrialization and slow economic growth. To be classified as a developing country, the UN has set several judging standards, such as standard of living, infrastructure, but most importantly, the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a measure of the development of the humanitarian aspects a country has. It is dependent on three factors: standard of living, literacy rate, and life expectancy. With a range between 0.999 and 0, developing countries usually fall below the threshold of 0.7.

Introduction

While the structural transition of a country takes place under the necessity for a state to become more developed and industrialized, some being the initial instigator of economic progress, leading to higher productivity and income, many are unsuccessful. Some countries, in the attempt to restructure their economy, have due to various reasons, allocated their resources from a sector of high productivity to a sector of lower

productivity. This has resulted in a growth-reducing structural transition, where the restructuring has not led to improved economic productivity.

In some cases, the economic stagnation has had humanitarian implications for its population. Implications such as increased income inequality, food insecurity, and displacement are all characteristics created by a failed restructuring. This has heightened the need for basic shelters and humanitarian intervention in these circumstances; hence, drawing the attention of the Human Rights Council.

The Council intends to address a variety of challenges when providing humanitarian help to states that are failing to restructure. Although standing frameworks regarding the general provision of humanitarian assistance do exist, such as the IHL (International Humanitarian Law), a specific framework for a human rights-based approach to restructuring has not yet been adopted as of writing this report. The specific form of humanitarian assistance is also not addressed, and while different humanitarian crises require different forms of assistance, a tailored approach to the provision of assistance in the given context should be given thought.

History and Current Situation

In a world that is ever changing and developing, countless countries have been through its development and modernization cycle. Some have been successful, changing from undeveloped countryside into a sophisticated metropolitan setting following years of industrial progress and development. Countries such as Vietnam, through careful reforms and private incentives, have become an industrial powerhouse in electronics and food processing, turning its country from a rural society into a developed urban environment. Successful cases such as the one highlighted have become the standard for which developing countries aim to cultivate their economies, as well as to avoid the downward spiral of economic stagnation that so many states present day seem to fall into. Amongst the successful cases of the structural transition of a developing country,

few are the instances where they are dependent on the continuous external assistance of the United Nations, particularly on the provision of basic humanitarian aid.

However, among the various attempts for developing countries to undergo structural transition, many have been ineffective. The case studies below demonstrate this point.

Yemen (1990-present)

Yemen is a noteworthy case study in its failed economic restructuring and the consequent role humanitarian aid played in its history. Almost the opposite of Vietnam, the political instability surrounding itself and the complex context with which it has been a part has severely reduced its capability to successfully transition itself to a more developed state. Instead, it has experienced significant backwards development within its state over the past decade, requiring extensive outside support to maintain the lives of its civilians. Following the reunification of North and South Yemen in 1990, the state has had many attempts in restructuring. The process became complex due to the disparities in economic systems and ideologies between the predominantly agrarian North Yemen and the Soviet-industrialized South Yemen. The situation escalated during the summer of 1994, when a civil war broke out between the two sides, partially resolving in the victorious unification of Yemen by the North. However, this was not without further destabilizing the already fragile economy, crippling its ability to provide for all its civilians, as well as leaving a tense unstable political government. Through the beginning of the 21st century, Yemen, under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has attempted economic development. Certain measures were introduced, such as the reduction of government spending and the privatization of public firms. However, success was limited. To worsen the situation even further, another civil war broke out in 2014 near the Red Sea, where the Houthi troops conducted a forceful abdication of the present president, throwing the country yet again into political disarray.

The political instability and ongoing civil war in the Yemen region have caused detrimental impacts on the Yemeni economy. The real GDP per capita has decreased by

53% as of 2023 since the escalation, with the average Yemeni family spending approximately 60% of their income on food and necessities. The Yemeni currency, the rial, has lost 80% of its value due to incompetent monetary policies, causing excessive inflation.

The economic repercussions led to one of the world's largest humanitarian catastrophes. Over the last decade, 4.5 million people have been evacuated from their homes due to widespread warfare and infighting. As of 2024, 18.2 million are in urgent need of humanitarian aid, lacking the most basic human necessities. The displaced also suffer from significant malnutrition problems, with more than 50% of the children under 5 suffering from moderate malnutrition. In response to the severe circumstance and human rights violation, in 2017 the Human Rights Council passed resolution 36/31, in which a mandate is created consisting of a Group of Eminent Experts that monitors and reports on the situation, as well as provide technical assistance.

In addition to the 2017 resolution, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), as of November 2022, has issued a \$1 billion aid package designed specifically to target Yemen's economic problems and its structural transitioning. The 3-year package tackles the restoration of major infrastructure, and improving the banking system, with an emphasis on boosting the private sector.

Recently, the Council has curtailed a detailed package in which humanitarian aid is sent to the area: the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The plan aims to target 11.2 million individuals in immediate need of assistance, also recognizing the need for a long-term solution to its economic problems. However, the plan is investment-heavy, requiring \$2.7 billion of funding to cover its expenses.

Ethiopia (1991-present)

The case of Ethiopia has some elements similar to the Yemen situation. However, the external factors destabilizing its nation and affecting its economic transition, such as those that have plagued Yemen, are not as strong an influence as the latter. After a

change of government marking the end of the Derg regime at the end of the 20th century, Ethiopia's structural transformation has been quite stable.

Timeline of Ethiopia's Structural Transformation

Date	Event
May 1991	The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) is established, toppling the 17-year Derg regime. The country turned from a previously authoritarian command economy to a partial market economy.
1992-2001	During this period, under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Ethiopia has embarked on a steady development process where its state-led development has gradually industrialized its agricultural society.
2005	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). The 5-year plan plans to tackle Ethiopia's poor living standards and low national through pushing growth and development.
2011-2015	The first of the Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP-I). A series of internal plans created by the Ethiopian government to reallocate its labor and resources to high productivity sectors. A strong emphasis is placed on infrastructure and industrial development.
2016-2020	GTP-II. Second plan that builds upon the achievements of the first, involves growing the industrial sector and improving rural development. Consolidating GTP-I gains and tackling macroeconomic issues were the main priorities.
2018	Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is elected. The minister undertook reforms raised expectations for economic liberalization and democratic improvements. However, there have been many obstacles to these improvements, such as internal disputes and problems with governance.

Bloc Positions

China

The People's Republic of China, classified as a developing country by the World Trade Organization, views structural transition as part of a larger scheme to achieve global connectivity. It focuses on the fundamental issues of general development, advocating for collaborative efforts in such endeavors to realize economic potential. China also encourages cultivating the social aspects of developing member states, spreading its cultures and traditions by means of tourism and cultural exchanges. Towards the effort, China has launched the massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a foreign policy project launched in 2013 that is dedicated to aiding member states with a slowing domestic economy, particularly those that are low on the human development index (HDI). Over the course of a decade, China has invested approximately \$1 trillion to the project, demonstrating its commitment towards strengthening economic interdependence.

Germany

Germany's approach towards structural change aligns closely with those of the European Union, being a member of the body itself. It places a strong belief the development of more productive sectors in a developing country should be conducted in a sustainable and green manner, somewhat aligning with the Green Deal policies created by the EU. Germany is of the opinion that the transition should consider the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN. In addition to its environmentally oriented perspective, Germany also puts heavy emphasis on human labor, advocating for investments in developing countries in career-training initiatives that provide people the tools they need to work in occupations with greater productivity.

Germany's several government branches that deal with international development, such as the KfW Entwicklungsbank (Development Bank) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), have acted on the nation's approach, making funds available and implementing projects in partner countries that

aid in economic development. Germany also signed multiple Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with developing countries in Africa, such as Ghana and Cameroon. These agreements intend to create long-term trading partnerships that support growth in the economy.

USA

The United States of America has had a multi-faceted approach towards states in structural transition. It has long emphasized the importance of transitioning the economy of a country through market-oriented methods as a stable way to achieve successful transition. It has encouraged the involvement of the private sector as an innovator of growth and an investor in sectors of higher productivity, spearheading economic change. This approach towards developing countries has been particularly heightened historically during the context of the Cold War, where the geopolitical interplay between the Soviet Union and USA has created tactical elements to the provision of humanitarian aid. This can be seen through the Marshall Plan in 1948, a 4-year, \$17 billion plan intended to alleviate many of the post-World War II humanitarian problems in Europe. Although the plan is directed “against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos” (Marshall, 1947), it can also be interpreted as a deterrence to the spread of communism in countries facing extreme poverty.

In a more modern context, sticking to its approach, the United States established the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in 2004, aiming to reduce poverty in countries that are “committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investing in their people” The US Agency for International Development (USAID) also plays a part in supporting developing countries achieve economic growth while demonstrating democratic values abroad.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

The UNDP is a governing body created by the United Nations. Founded in 1965, the body is solely dedicated towards achieving growth and progress by eliminating poverty and reducing inequalities in countries. The UNDP also aims to help achieve certain

SDGs, aligning its actions to meet the goals as well as following its mission statement. In its recent release of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, the body outlined its intentions to accelerate international development, making the SDGs more feasible. It urges for the structural transformations of developing countries to be “green, inclusive and digital” (UNDP, 2021). Working with nearly 170 countries, the UNDP adopts a more humanitarian approach to economic situations, urging more considerate development.

Possible Solutions

Transitional Development Assistance (TDA)

Transitional Development Assistance is a solution proposed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Drafted in July 2020, the German government body laid out a regulatory framework for which immediate humanitarian intervention and long-term development plans can be effectively coordinated and tailored. The solution is theorized to rapidly implement support structures that improve the population integrity of the countries in need with minimum political intervention, so that the crisis at hand can be dealt with locally and chances of reoccurrence are lowered. Incorporated amongst other UN organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN World Food Program, the plan is intended as a local remedy for improving socioeconomic circumstances of its surrounding living conditions. It aims to fortify civil societies and decentralized state institutions, decreasing the dependence on immediate humanitarian assistance.

The program is also incorporated as part of a larger concept formulated by the UNHRC and UNDP called the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI). In collaboration with the World Bank, it is a proposal that recognizes the need for adequate intervention towards refugee situations as part of achieving a sustainable and developed world.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN)

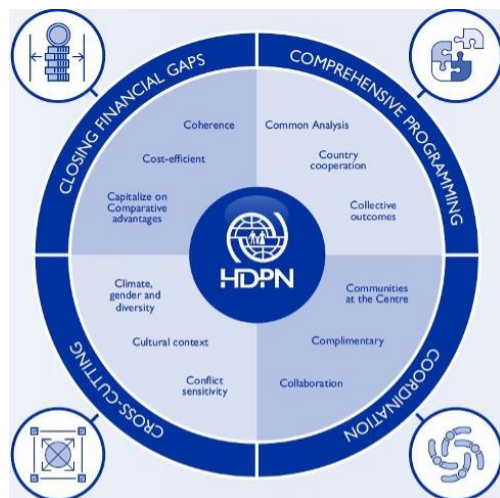


Figure 1: The Aims of HDPN

The HDPN is the product of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which focused on interconnecting humanitarian and development sectors to more effectively be able to react to crisis. Formally endorsed in 2019 by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the policy aimed to create a more solid connection between temporary humanitarian assistance and sustained

economic growth. It emphasized that all three processes of humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding, has to be simultaneous in its implementation in order for a crisis to be addressed successfully. In February 2022, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) launched a new program called the Nexus Academy. In the attempt to speed up nexus methods and advance complementing humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives, the Nexus Academy's primary focus entailed the promotion of collaborative learning and information sharing, as well as encouraging the adoption of comprehensive HDP solutions in humanitarian problems. The HDP Nexus's ultimate objective is to lessen people's needs, dangers, and vulnerabilities by assisting development, peace, and humanitarian actors in achieving mutually agreed-upon results.

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