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Four Key Takeaways from SOCHUM

By Arya B Vijay

The New York Times

11 June 2019



In the second Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (SOCHUM) committee session, there was a great development in the debate. Over the past two days, SOCHUM has been discussing safeguarding populations displaced by disasters. The first committee session yesterday proved fruitless following a very clear division. This morning's session, therefore, proved to be of utmost importance, as it was necessary for the establishment of an agenda and the progression of discussion.

With SOCHUM in a precarious position, the first session of the day needed serious developments. Here are some takeaways from the second of seven SOCHUM committee sessions.

1. Definitions Created Conflict

In this morning's committee session, there was a great amount of debate over the definitions with regards to the issue of "safeguarding populations displaced by disasters." Currently, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) finds that "IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement."¹ This definition created conflict in the session this morning. On the one hand, some delegates, like the delegate of Sri Lanka, found that there was no need to further define IDPs. On the other, some delegates, like the delegate from the United States of America (USA), felt that there were various understandings of the term IDPs and there was, therefore, a need to create a definition accepted by all to progress debate. Delegates were often seen diverting from the topic, only for a new delegate to bring up the point that there was a necessity for a definition.

This creates an unfortunate situation whereby nations may not be able to agree on their priorities- while some discuss the possible solutions to safeguard populations displaced by disasters, others keep going back to the necessity to define the terms. Should this conflict continue, a stalemate is likely and debate is unlikely to progress. SOCHUM needs to come to a consensus on this issue to solve this problem.

2. There is a clear formation of blocs

In this morning's committee session, there was a clear division between members of SOCHUM. In the first unmoderated caucus, an unofficial discussion, delegates were discussing the issue separately until a bloc of delegates called for a united discussion. Delegates who were not part of the group's discussions did not voice any changes to the agenda listed by them—even though they could read through the summarised plan, they did not know the rationale behind this decision simply because they were participating in other conversations. In the second unmoderated caucus, the delegate of El Salvador called for other delegates' attention. Since delegates were discussing within their own blocs, everyone ignored him.

Such division makes it near impossible to come to a general consensus. Everyone was discussing the issue with people who shared similar agendas and failed to consider those who may not have agreed with them. When a resolution is eventually created, some members of the committee are unlikely to agree to pass it since it may not consider their interests. SOCHUM needs to solve this in order to ensure that the majority of interests are met.

3. Solutions Posed Creates Progress

Despite the division, various nations spoke to introduce solutions. For example, the delegate of Brazil proposed to create a legal entity to protect the displaced. The delegate of Canada also proposed the creation of platforms to teach refugees English so as to integrate them into society. Some proposals were seen as ineffective and unfeasible, such as China's suggestion to create a new United Nations committee to safeguard the internationally displaced, which was shot down by Vietnam due to its infeasibility. Regardless, these discussions served as a good means to come up with feasible and adequate solutions to safeguard populations displaced by disaster. SOCHUM has done well in this aspect, and merely needs to consolidate the solutions and decide which solutions ensure that most, if not all, interests of the various stakeholders are met.

4. Working Papers Create Hope

In the second committee session, various working papers from the delegates of Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Russia were introduced. The first working paper was introduced by the delegate of Russia, which essentially opened the floodgates, resulting in the introduction of new working papers. These papers covered topics including suggested causes for protracted displacement, the background on the topic of safeguarding international displacement in countries (specifically Sri Lanka), and a suggested flow of debate. In the words of the delegate of Rwanda, "I think [the working papers are] good as they set the agenda for upcoming debates and introduce the problems [that need] to be discussed." Hopefully, this will allow

delegates to solve key issues and enable them to inch their way closer towards drafting a draft resolution.

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Infographic: Facing Xenophobia

By Erin Alisya Setiawan

The Onion

11 June 2019



ALJAZEERA

FACING XENOPHOBIA

How China's proposed Joint Ethnic Council (JEC) will work to tackle the pressing issue of cultural prejudice.

During SOCHUM's second committee session, the Delegate of China proposed for countries to monitor issues between different ethnic groups through a Joint Ethnic Council. The JEC aims to tackle xenophobia, a problem that China is all too familiar with.



The rise of xenophobia and racism in China is a result of Western influence.

A considerable amount of Chinese have visited West in which they have familiarised themselves with Western thoughts. In turn, they have taught many of these ideas in their homeland. Racism is one of the prevalent factors in Western behaviour.

HOW WILL IT WORK?



The council will be implemented within each country under the discretion of the country head.



The country head will then appoint representatives of different groups.



The representatives will have monthly meetings discussing the reports.



The reports of the meetings will be made public, including findings and time.

China's majority-minority difference is highlighted in the following:

1.386 billion

individuals residing in China as of 2017

90 percent

of which is comprised of Han Chinese

56 minority groups

comprise the remaining 10 percent

WHAT WILL JEC DO?



The proposed council will monitor issues between different ethnic groups to maintain peace.



JEC will accept reports, both anonymous and identified, of ethnic harassment.



VIOLENCE THREATS DISCRIMINATION

CRITICISMS



The Delegate of Vietnam criticised the JEC plan for being **inefficient**.



"People could easily lie to stir up more problems."



"The large diversity will cause problems in ensuring proper representations."

Nevertheless, the JEC is an excellent proposition in getting rid of the Western influence that has damaged countries through the ideals of cultural prejudice that divided nations' populations.

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Making 'Fake News' Great Again: Why Trump should not regret leaving UNESCO

By Radyani Prasasya

The Onion

11 June 2019



The second session of the UNESCO conference held today was disappointing, to say the least. As the only media reporting from the UNESCO chamber, The Onion barely even had anything to write about! We could not agree more with the statement that Richard Gowa, a European Council scholar, once said, "A lot of UNESCO's work is quite pointless".

The Trump administration should not regret leaving UNESCO after Ronald Reagan did the same in 1984. UNESCO has yet to learn from its mistakes to improve and produce more useful decisions. Despite sitting in the cold room for hours discussing the topic of digital misinformation, there was no clear solution given by the delegates of UNESCO.

The following contains a summary of the points of discussion that were raised during the second committee session:

Digital (il)literacy

Discussions on preventing digital misinformation only resulted in a perfunctory solution to educate the public through digital literacy. However, this solution is not likely to be well received by the public based on a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2018 in the US. Those with higher levels of education are, in fact, less likely to support actions to restrict false news. As many as 50% of adult respondents whose highest educational qualifications are high school or below want restrictions on false news, while as many as 64% of respondents who have graduated from college and 68% of the best college graduates want the freedom of information to be protected, even if it means false information can be published. Basically, half of our citizens don't mind fake news! Wouldn't be better if we also listen to the voices of our people, right?

A thick, boring handbook to promote the prevention of misinformation

We all like books that are full of words —black and white, thick, and boring. In fact, we spend time reading those books in college. In order to pass an exam, the thick book must be finished. Likewise, if this solution is implemented, as good parents, we will force our children to study the thick handbook to prevent them from exposure to misinformation.

Forgotten guidelines

"UNESCO has made guidelines on digital literacy for people with low skills and low literacy," stated the delegate of New Zealand. But it seems that UNESCO is indeed happy to make new documents as quickly and easily as their old guidelines have been forgotten. It seems like they are willing to create a new handbook with new guidelines every time bigger problems arise. After all, if the existing framework is not useful, isn't it easier to create a new one?

(Another) UN Office for Misinformation

The first question might enter one's mind would be: Don't we have enough UN bodies already? The answer: just make a new office! Such is the opinion of representatives of the Chinese government at UNESCO. It seems that he also realizes how pointless the work of this council despite its expensive membership fees. Thus we can hope China funds the new office instead.

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A Shift That The World Needs, But Not What It Deserves

By Fransiskus Gabriel

Al Jazeera

11 June 2019



The discussions of funding healthcare for Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) that was planned yesterday has been shifted by a group of delegates that represent More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs).

The Delegate of Mexico argued that the issues of emerging healthcare technologies should be discussed instead of the funding itself. He elaborated on the need to protect the consumer and the redundancy of providing funding for technologies for LEDCs due to their high vulnerability towards cybercrimes.

In addition, the Delegate of Croatia stated that the World Health Organization (WHO) already possesses a huge budget for health development and that a framework for funding already exists. The Delegate of Austria also reminded the council about a special body called the UN Technology Bank that is established for closing the technology gap, with a system that they believe is already reliable.

On the other hand, the Delegate of Pakistan stated that it is hard to follow the discussion because they lack the technology to relate to this discussion. No other state supported her opinion.

Rather suddenly, the council shifted from discussing funding to the data cybersecurity.

Al Jazeera sees this as being particularly ignorant of the fact that a lack of decent healthcare is still an issue in LEDCs, and that there are still many deaths worldwide because of the unavailability of health technologies to cure illness or injuries, especially in conflict areas.

In Syria, for example, doctors are struggling to provide the desperately-needed care to millions of Syrians in Northern Syria due to the lack of funding by the International Community, or what has been experienced by the doctors in Greece, where one of the hospitals suffers shortages of surgical supplies and staff. Most of these problems could be solved by providing technology to assist doctors in handling patients.

Al Jazeera acknowledges the importance of cybersecurity, which the council is currently discussing, but reiterates that the lives of people in LEDCs are at stake due to the lack of funding and technological support in healthcare facilities.

The gap between MEDCs and LEDCs should be recognised and addressed by the council as a challenge towards emerging health technologies, as there needs to be a standard by which all states provide health for the people.

However, we also consider the fear of the council towards the risks of health technologies that pose a threat for each country.

Following the motion proposed by the Delegate of the United Kingdom on discussing the root causes of the issues of health technologies, many delegates of different states voiced their country's concern towards these developments.

All of them agreed that the protection of data is still worrying since there is no program that can really protect the consumer from data breach and cybercrimes.

The mechanisms and solutions of this council are still being developed; let us just hope that these delegates represent their people's voice for the sake of humanity and better living.

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Healthcare: Now A Cyber Crisis

By Dilmin Bandaranayake

AFP News

11 June 2019

The delegates explained why the discussion held today was of paramount importance. The P-5 Nations took a big leap in leading the committee today, with the aim of strengthening cybersecurity. Cybersecurity was recognised as the top concern by all delegates of the committee, with respect to the prior concern of the safety of the medical field in their nations. Many delegates gave various solutions on how the issue can be mitigated on the basis and concept of "moving forward".

The modern world is based on modern technology. It is the key which unlocks the door to the success of the nation, according to the limited perspectives of the delegates. The delegate of the United States presented his opinion by identifying the ownership of medical facilities by private sectors as an issue, which is rather contradictory to the capitalist economic system that the country subscribes to. The delegate's intention was to split the ownership of medical facilities between the government and the private sector. The delegate also suggested that nations adopt firewall security measures. All nations are quite preoccupied with the cyber crisis in the medical field, while further concerns of high pertinence were not taken into consideration by the delegates.

The delegate of Mexico took the spotlight in today's session. The concept of "WHO" was presented by this delegate in the form of a presentation. The delegate explained the WHO concept as: Who should you help?, How is it implemented?, and the Objective of the Entire Process. The concept of WHO (Who, How and Objective) was definitely the most memorable part of the day! The Mexican healthcare system is a result of private, public and employer-funded healthcare schemes.



The healthcare in Mexico is of excellent standards, with each city having at-least one first-rate hospital with affordable prices, generally half or less of what is expected in the United States. The Ministry of Health takes key measures to provide adequate healthcare facilities to the citizens.

The delegates of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Soviet Union suggested stripping down the issue to its base. The delegates mentioned the lack of experienced professionals in the cybersecurity sector. The fault was placed on the countries' Ministries of Education and it was suggested that they improve the education system. This would appear ironic as the Netherlands and Russia have, in fact, established excellent education systems. The literacy rate of the Netherlands is stable at 99% and the Russian Federation has the highest literacy rate in the world. This calls for a major change in the education system necessitating the fastest reverts from the Ministry of Education.

However, a sensible comment on the issue was made by the delegate of the United Kingdom, who stated that the responsibility of reforming systems lies in the hands of the government, private sectors and civil society. The concept of pinning responsibilities on every sector of society is well thought out and should be mirrored by the rest of council.

Overall, the delegates are working hard on the issue, but whether the new solutions presented by delegates will be effective remains to be seen.

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Efforts to Resolve The Protection Gap Fall Short

What started off as a hopeful conversation about closing the protection gap has resulted in the disappointing exposure of the delegate of Egypt's lies.

By Erin Alisya Setiawan

Al-Jazeera

11 June 2019

Amid a heated discussion about the growing protection gap, the Delegate of Mozambique took his position at the front of the council during an unmoderated caucus at the start of the session. Standing in front, he took the lead of the caucus, asking the rest of the delegates to remain seated and to focus on the issue.

Not long after he started speaking, the council became abuzz with everyone's own opinions and thoughts on what should be discussed. Eagerly accepting suggestions and comments from his fellow delegates while still standing his ground, the Delegate of Mozambique provided some promise that this SOCHUM session was going to be a fruitful one.

The aforementioned topic of the protection gap was one that all delegates, including the Delegate of Mozambique, were yearning to discuss. Even after the conversation shifted to reuniting families and indigenous people, the discussion

always came back to the protection gap. So what exactly is the protection gap?

The protection gap refers to the difference in treatment between refugees and internally displaced people (IDP). Officially, IDPs are not considered refugees. However, their dangerous situations and helpless conditions raise the question: why are they not? IDPs face problems of not receiving the same rights and protection they should be entitled to have. The government of the nations where IDPs reside in have a primary responsibility for protection, but the international community's role is simply complementary. So how will countries help the people who are actually trying to flee them?



Delegates took the stage to discuss this. The Delegates of Bangladesh, United Kingdom and Sweden voiced their agreements on the fact that IDPs should be accommodated in the same way as refugees, with the Delegate of Sweden even claiming that the number of IDPs is currently more than refugees. Another thing that the delegates agreed on was that the core of the issue centered around legal recognition. If IDPs are recognized in the same way that refugees are, which delegates argued should be a reality, then they would be entitled to protection and resources.

However, the Delegate of China argued that there is no conception and clarity about the issue, which has resulted in countries not recognizing IDPs as refugees. The Delegate of Egypt followed suit by saying that the council has to “focus on awareness”, as nations “do not recognize the rights of IDPs”. Ironically, however, the Delegate of Egypt seemed to be describing the situation in her country.

Officials of Egypt have repeatedly highlighted their country’s growing refugee and migrant challenge. The number of refugees in Egypt varies from report to report, but in a meeting in September 2016, President Sisi stated that Egypt was hosting about 5 million refugees and immigrants. This 5 million consisted mainly of Sudanese asylum seekers, some of who have been residing in Egypt for generations. The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) notes that the government considers the Sudanese population as not falling “into the category of asylum-seeking as understood in the legal and international sense.”

An agreement established between Sudan and Egypt in 1976 gave access to rights such as education, healthcare, property ownership and employment. However, after the assassination attempt on former Egyptian President Mubarak in 1995, which was allegedly the doing of the Sudanese government, Egypt decided to act aggressively towards the Sudanese.

This is a prime example of why the protection gap should be eliminated. An aid worker in Cairo spoke to Fanack, an independent online media organization, on the condition of anonymity. The aid worker said that African refugees are unable to enter the education system or seek legal employment, and that Africans face “huge safety concerns” from the local community. If conditions for African—and by extension Sudanese—refugees are this bad, imagine how hard it is for IDPs, who are not even officially considered to be refugees.

Presently, Egypt is not the only nation behind the protection gap issue. Regardless, when the Delegate of Egypt stood in front of SOCHUM and started preaching about awareness and recognition, it felt as if she was making a mockery of the council. By acting dishonestly, the delegate kept pushing back the council’s agenda of removing the gap. If the delegate continues voicing her support of the elimination of the protection gap, yet is aware of such heinous crimes unbeknownst to SOCHUM, then there would be no actual progress.

The protection gap should be taken seriously and actions should be taken accordingly, and removing duplicity from the council is essential to ensuring that effective steps and measures are taken. Until any nation finds the courage to call out Egypt for this, SOCHUM will not likely be able to move forward.

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SOCHUM: Too Little, Too Late?

By Arya B Vijay

The New York Times

11 June 2019



The third committee session of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) saw cooperation between delegates for the first time in two days. SOCHUM has had three committee sessions thus far, in which intense debate over safeguarding populations displaced by disaster has taken place. With only four sessions left in the conference, an important question must be asked: Are SOCHUM's efforts at achieving a comprehensive resolution too little, too late?

It has taken three long committee sessions for the members of SOCHUM to show a form of unity that actually allows for fruitful debate. According to a working paper introduced by the delegate of Mozambique this morning, SOCHUM will need to discuss 21 points and then draft a resolution, which then needs to be approved by two-thirds of the committee. Given the sheer number of discussion points that lie ahead of SOCHUM, the committee may not have much time left to spare. By failing to work together in the first two sessions, the committee has unnecessarily prolonged discussions on the agenda.

Delegates should genuinely reconsider their priorities. Creating a solution is evidently more difficult than creating an agenda, simply because a multitude of differences in opinions and implications need to be considered. Yet, SOCHUM spent almost three-quarters of their time creating an agenda which everyone agrees on. With little time left to solve this issue, SOCHUM will do one of two things—they will either produce an inadequate resolution that fails to impact

populations displaced by disaster because they wish to move on to the second topic as fast as possible, or they will take too long to come up with a resolution and this will give them less time to discuss their second issue, which is an equally pertinent topic. This may be a mere opinion, but it is likely to turn into a reality.

The delegates of SOCHUM should take a good, long look in the mirror. It is unfair and unjust to the people who are desperate, whose lives may depend on these discussions, to have squandered away this opportunity to put this issue to bed. It is easy to sit in an air-conditioned room and to debate on problems faced by the populations displaced by disaster. However, SOCHUM does not seem to realise that, as they speak, people are being displaced by both man-made and natural disasters, and face extreme challenges. They do not seem to realise that, as they speak, 68.5 million people are suffering from a problem that they did not have any control over.

Unless SOCHUM's coming session proves this article wrong and the committee comes to a resolution where the interests of the populations displaced by disaster as a whole are met, the delegates have proven, beyond all doubt, that they have been ineffective and unproductive in attempting to solve this problem.

To all readers: sit back, relax, and enjoy blundering in its finest form.

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Infographic: Artificial Intelligence

By Fransiskus Gabriel

Al Jazeera

11 June 2019

Artificial Intelligence THE CONTENTIONS OF

What happened?

Several countries have already possess A.I. technology to assist the needs of humanity, some of it includes health sector where the role of A.I mostly focused on diagnosing patients.

WHO gathers the member states to discuss the emerging technology

however, there's some contentions regarding the automation bias and the responsibilities of it.

"We should create a greater integration between doctors and programmers so the A.I. diagnose patient with doctors' method and reducing the risk of misdiagnosis"



"the accountability should not be on doctors? But they have the final say! obviously the responsibility is on the doctors."



which side are you on?

Justice



Doctors are not fully responsible for any actions due to the possibilities of malfunction from the A.I. system itself. therefore, programmers should be accountable too

Doctor's accountable

Doctors are trained, so they can diagnose patient based on their own knowledge and the use of A.I. is limited to when needed and as an alternative opinion. the doctor will give the final say. therefore every doctor should be held responsible for every misdiagnosis



So what's your opinion? share your thoughts on the comments below!

*Flag represents the delegate of the country



ALJAZEERA

UNESCO: Since Everything Is Impossible, It Is Better for Everyone to Go Home

By Radyani Prasasya

The Onion

11 June 2019

After a long discussion, UNESCO has finally reached this one topic to discuss solutions that could be applied globally. Thus far, they have only focused on each country and there are no clear limits to the existence of different biases and interests.

The following contains a rundown of delegates' responses to the questions posed during the Press Conference held earlier in the afternoon today. Commentaries on these responses may or may not be satirical.

Consider DPRK's way to prevent misinformation

There are no digital misinformation problems in North Korea, as their representatives at UNE-SCO have confirmed. Their country has gained the grace of their supreme leader so that their people live in prosperity and absolutely no hoaxes can spread amongst the people.

Even so, representatives of the DPRK were still present at the UNESCO to discuss ways to prevent digital misinformation. The noble intention of the delegate of DPRK to remain present has helped many countries. Perhaps UNESCO should learn from their ideology and worship the supreme leader. Dictatorship is the key.

Journalists should resign soon, work at fact-checker organisation instead

It is hard to be a journalist in this century when one mistake made by a journalist can affect all journalists at once. The Delegate of Japan and its allies are planning efforts to conduct journalism training.

The delegates seem to hold the opinion that journalists are very dangerous; see how all news agencies' work feature terrible biases. The Delegate of Germany encouraged UNESCO to support the proposal of a fact-checked information list database. There will be no freedom for journalists and partisan news agencies to stand on their own egotistical perspectives, they are just a hassle. Therefore, for those who want to endorse their own stance, it is recommended that you immediately seek a career change. Apply for a job in a fact checker organization so that you can play a vital role in checking news and information, all according to your bias.

The Delegate of China proposes talks on journalism ethics

Journalism ethics that can be implemented by everyone is certainly needed. It is not important how the mechanism to implement it, talks must be done. This topic was forgotten by everyone at UNESCO. How could Chinese representative, of all people, be the only one who remembers it?

Once again, UNESCO is useless

We are sad to report that there will be no end to this problem. The delegate of the Russian Federation told the Onion in a press conference that they were not here to abolish the problem of misinformation. Misinformation is a standard social problem, just like crimes that cannot be solved. Likewise, with freedom of speech and censorship, there is no way in which they can fit into each other. Everything the council has gathered to discuss has become impossible. There is no point in talking about all this and just wasting other people's time. Therefore is it not better if we just go home?

The Onion correspondent then wonders if readers also feel the same way. We feel sorry that we are unable to provide the most credible news you want. The Onion will try to work harder to get the information needed by our lovely readers around the world. We can only hope that these UNESCO representatives can return home peacefully.

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SOCHUM: A Silver Lining

By Arya B Vijay

The New York Times

11 June 2019

In their fourth committee session this evening, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) of the United Nations (UN) continued their discussions on safeguarding populations displaced by disasters.

In the lead-up to the fourth session, there had been much debate regarding the agenda and the plan of the committee. In fact, it took them three sessions to decide on a clear agenda and conflict was a norm. The progress of discussions was so slow that it seemed unlikely that a resolution would be reached by the end of the day. However, there is a silver lining.

In the clarification of problems faced by members of SOCHUM in safeguarding displaced populations, many nations were open about their problems. One such example would be the statement from the delegate of Ethiopia, who stated that aid provided to internally displaced people (IDPs) in Ethiopia was not enough. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, out of 2,137,000 IDPs, only 412,000 had made some form of progress in achieving a solution to their problems in Ethiopia. Delegates' openness to discussing the problems they had been facing was imperative, especially since a great amount of time had been wasted over the previous few sessions. Delegates were now aware of one another's problems, and could therefore propose suitable solutions which essentially neutralised these problems.

The delegates were also very willing to propose solutions in hopes of eventually passing a resolution. Take the delegate of Canada, for example, who proposed the setting up of a programme in the UN similar to that of the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) in Canada—in the event of a natural disaster, the Canadian Government provides financial aid to territorial and provincial governments. While most solutions have yet to be vetted, the committee can look forward to the upcoming sessions tomorrow, where they will have a variety of solutions for consideration. This ensures that the committee makes a well-informed decision in drafting a resolution, since they will be able to choose to include the most suitable solutions of those proposed so as to safeguard populations displaced by disasters.

SOCHUM is unlikely to finish discussions on both topics given that they have three sessions left and have yet to finish their first topic. The odds are completely against them. However, it is evident that SOCHUM has made significant progress in their last two committee sessions. SOCHUM has finally understood that they need to speed up discussions in order to have a truly successful conference. They still have a small glimmer of hope.

In order to complete discussions and progress to the second topic, they must review proposed solutions as fast as possible, while ensuring that they still come to a fair judgement of all proposed solutions. Delegates must therefore come together more often during breaks and when debate is suspended to discuss the feasibility of solutions. They must also consolidate solutions together as a committee and cannot afford to slip back into small, insignificant discussions in their own blocs in pursuit of their own interests.

While SOCHUM has blundered, the world can take comfort in the fact that the UN committee will not rest until they ensure the safety of those displaced by disaster, no matter how many committee sessions, or how many conferences it takes

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Is The Draft Resolution Proposed In The World Health Organisation (WHO) Feasible?

By Fransiskus Gabriel

Al Jazeera

11 June 2019

After a long, dynamic debate within the council of the World Health Organization (WHO), a Draft Resolution was finally introduced to the council by the Delegates of Ecuador, Iraq, France, Finland, and New Zealand.

Titled Draft Resolution 1.1 (DR 1.1), the Draft Resolution presented existing ideas from past resolutions. The first clause urges for collaborative efforts in multiple fields, between all countries in several medical fields, including technology, healthcare infrastructure and interstate partnerships. The first clause is similar to a clause that has already existed in the World Health Assembly Resolution 60 since May 2007.

In the World Health Assembly, it was already stated that the council urges all Member States to collect, verify, update and exchange information on health technologies.

Moreover, Clause 10 discusses funding matters and calls for a governing third-party body to ensure transparency in the transfer and distribution of funding.

However, it seems that the sponsors of the Draft Resolution do not recognise the Delegate of Austria's statement about funding—that the United Nations itself already has a body to take care of funding, and to distribute the technology. The body is called UN Technology Bank, which was established on 22 September 2017 after the introduction of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/251. It was created to take care of the distribution and funding of resources from developed states to least developed countries.

The existence of this body already fulfils the needs of Clause 10, which means that Clause 10 of Draft Resolution 1.1 proposed in the WHO committee is also redundant.

The next sections that the Draft Resolution proposed are far more idealistic.

The feasibility of these resolutions is questionable, as it clearly encourages a resolution that requires a high number of resources to be committed. For instance, Clause 14a mentions the creation of an external body to ensure the automation bias behind Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Clause 12, which suggests the employment of virtual reality as a form of training for surgeons, becomes a challenge itself because the creation of such virtual reality to form training is expensive and unfavourable. It is more important to create a simple but feasible solution, rather

than a complex but costly solution because it is more likely that the first one will work.

There are still several clauses that ought to be amended in Draft Resolution 1.1, and more background research on the possibilities and feasibilities of the resolution should be conducted. The discussions on the draft resolutions will continue, and hopefully, the resolutions provided by respective representatives of states that will be voted on tomorrow will fulfil the needs of better healthcare for a healthier humanity.

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Interview with Deputy Secretary-General, Sharmili Pillai

By Press Editors

11 June 2019

Currently in her penultimate year of study and majoring in political science at NUS, Sharmili has always been passionate about international affairs and politics. She takes keen interest in debating and speaking, something which she did not expect herself to venture into. Recognising the enormous yet amazing hard work and dedication behind the SMUN curtains, Sharmili feels that SMUN is her calling as a responsible leader to lead a new generation of passionate and capable individuals. Behind those severely high-degree glasses from being a childhood bookworm and mugging for three major national examinations, Sharmili loves great makeup and takes pride in dressing well, attributed to her obsession over several Hollywood and Bollywood stars. Most importantly, Sharmili hopes that delegates will find SMUN as grand as her imaginations.

1. Why did you join SMUN?

In 2018, I joined SMUN, and it was the very first time I was part of the organising committee of a very big conference. My positive experience was really what motivated me to do it again. I felt that my predecessors had inspired me to take on the torch from them and lead a team of passionate individuals who are able to bring a very big conference to life. So I guess it was the inspiration and encouragement that I received from SMUN last year that motivated



me to do it again, but this time with a bigger responsibility than what I was tasked to do last year.

2. What has been your favourite memory from the conference thus far?

I would say it's the people; or more specifically, my team. In spite of a lot of major crises, I think what kept us going was the people, every single one of my members. The kind of energy and dedication they have, and how committed they are to their jobs... I really mean it from the bottom of my heart when I say that there was literally no one who wasn't doing anything. Every person in the team was getting things done from the very start and they were always willing to step in, in any way possible. So the memory I would take away from the conference is definitely the interactions that I've had with its people.

3. What has been your greatest challenge in planning SMUN?

Ooh... I think one of the greatest challenges was attempting to overcome several crises that we really didn't expect. Some of us have never been through these situations before, but they were thrown at us just like that, without any expectations. We've really been put in a tough spot over the past 48 hours. Being thrown into unexpected situations is something I have never dealt with before, and stepping beyond what you're supposed to do really stretches your capacity to handle different situations. Even though we've had to deal with many challenges, these have also helped us step beyond our comfort zones, which is something I appreciate.

4. If you could choose an animal mascot for SMUN, what would it be and why?

Hm... I would probably choose a lion, because it represents bravery. My team hasn't had the best time dealing with all of the crises thrown at us constantly, but one thing that has kept us together is staying brave and embracing things as they are... We are a really strong team and even though every department has faced the worst challenges, they've continued to keep things together. I really admire everyone's bravery and their ability to overcome obstacles with strength.

5. Given that you're a Political Science major, do you harbour dreams of working at the UN?

Maybe one day! The UN changes and influences the world in big ways, and this conference is just a microcosm of that. The UN is an important organisation that can change the future, and it brings together people from all walks of life, so it's something that I definitely aspire to be in. If there is ever an opportunity for me to work in such an organisation, I'd take it as a blessing because I would be able to shape the lives, future and direction of the next generation.

6. Do you have any tips on surviving socials, or making the most out of them (sober)? Drink responsibly! We're looking at more than half of our conference delegates being under 18, so it's important to set a good example for the younger ones.

Interview with Liaisons Director, Aseera Shamin

By Press Editors

11 June 2019

Aseera is a freshman in NUS FASS, constantly debating on what her major should be. She is currently on the side of Global Studies, but, who knows, her heart may revert back to Political Science within the week. Although she has not been in the MUN circuit for the past few years, her experiences in the past were truly remarkable and she can't wait to have such similar amazing experiences in SMUN 2019. Aseera in her natural state is usually thinking about kittens, when she would be able to have her next nap, drinking an unnecessary amount of water, and making playlists.

1. Why did you decide to join SMUN 2019?

I joined MUN in Secondary school and I found it kind of fun, and I also organised a conference in the past, even though I didn't do much. SMUN was a university-level and international MUN, and I wanted the opportunity to be exposed to different perspectives and interact with delegates from different backgrounds from me.

2. What are you most looking forward to during the conference?

Probably interacting with the delegates because they're pretty cool, and also putting my problem-solving skills to the test with all the last-minute problems that arise during the conference.

3. What has been the most difficult during the organising and planning process for you and your team?

Probably working with surprise problems? They're really mind-blowing sometimes, and



they're not the type you get in school. They've forced me to really think on my feet—but of course there's a lot of opportunity for growth there.

4. Do you have any tips for delegates struggling with communication?

Well, you won't know till you try. Everyone started from somewhere, and everyone has their different pace of growth. So don't ever feel insecure about yourself!

5. What is your favourite social media site and why?

Instagram, because I'm a Gen Z kid (and there are a lot of hot people there). Okay, but seriously, I really appreciate aesthetic appeal—so I like Pinterest too, because I enjoy design and creative stuff, and pretty things in general.

6. What is your love language?

(Laughs loudly) Uh, what are the love languages again? Probably physical touch and words of affirmation. No, I wouldn't like to elaborate any more on that!

Interview with Operations Director, Melanie Tiong

By Press Editors

11 June 2019

Melanie is a post A level graduate who used to don grey-on-grey. She has chaired in university-level conferences and has experience standing in for unavailable or absent committee members in her other projects. She is interested in Singapore security-related issues and was 1st runner-up with her team in the Goh Keng Swee Nation Building Series Future Thinking Challenge. As the former vice-captain of her Hockey Team, as well as a strong advocate for the humanities, she hopes to learn from the more experienced members of the Operations Team to bring you a well-planned and smooth-running conference. When she has free time, she still continues working because she concedes that she has no soul and therefore does not deserve a life.

1. Why did you decide to join SMUN 2019?

I had some time after A Levels, and had gained a lot of valuable friends from my MUN experiences and helping out at different conferences. Although there were stressful experiences, there's never been a conference where everything's gone perfectly, and the best way to learn from those experiences is always to take them head-on. I genuinely enjoy the experience of trying to solve an issue that seems unsolvable and emerging victorious. I think MUN is just a way for me to experience that before engaging in anything more serious. It's really also really nice to help out my friends because Royston (Secretary-General) and Xuan (Outreach Director) have been really good friends to me through my MUN experience, so I decided to take on the role of Conference Manager for SMUN.



2.What have been the most joyous and most frustrating moments of this conference thus far?

The most frustrating thing about the conference so far was that there were things that we wanted to do and put forward for the delegates but ended up not being able to. It was either logistically impossible or just ended up not turning out in ways we didn't expect. For example, things like rooming or air conditioning issues were things we wished could have been better. We're really trying our best to make this the best experience for delegates. We definitely can't make it perfect but we're trying our best. I think that's one of the most frustrating things about a MUN—that even though you may want things to go as smoothly as they possibly can, not everything is under your purview or jurisdiction and things won't be perfect.

But of course, it balances out with working together with people you really respect and individuals who bring things into perspective. You learn to work with different individuals, and I think that's the best part of MUNs, not just as a member of the secretariat but as Chairs and delegates. You really need to work together, and I think that when that happens, those are really the best moments.

3.What is the strangest Operations request you've received?

(Laughs) There was this delegate who asked if Accommodations provided bed-changing services every day. Or if we provided towel-changing or room-cleaning services. Maybe if you paid us \$50 we could get a secretariat member to clean your room and change your sheets and towels for you. That was definitely the strangest thing I've heard.

4. Do you have any tips on how to run a smooth conference?

Definitely get a team you can communicate

well with. Communication is one of the biggest things when running a conference or when sorting out anything. Even outside of conferences, working together with a team towards any goal requires good communication. It is vital to running a smooth conference. You always want to know what the other person is doing, what has been done and what you want to be done. On the operations side of things, these are most important so that we can always sort things out and prioritise distribution of manpower. Communication is the basis of all things. If communication breaks down, the entire conference breaks down. We've already experienced a few mishaps but were thankfully able to resolve them before the start of the conference.

5. How do you run around the conference and manage things on those stilettos?

I had 4-inch heels yesterday and I literally had to run between the auditorium to the Operations and Programmes rooms and even upstairs. I did it barefoot a third of the time. Honestly, sacrifices need to be made, beauty is pain. Grow thicker skin on your feet, and deal with the blisters and pain. Invest in a more expensive pair, because some of the cheaper pairs you can get at Jalan Besar aren't going to cut it.

6. What happened to your grey-on-grey aesthetic?

Okay, is this about my NJ (National Junior College) aesthetic? First of all, it was a grey-on-white-on-red aesthetic. I still have it, because everything I own is either grey, white or red, but I've diversified. Now I have navy blue or black, but it's basically the same colours but in different variations. So what

happened to it... You know, as a Literature student, you learn that grey symbolises a lot of things. It certainly doesn't symbolise vibrancy or enjoyment or fulfilment or fun! It symbolises a prisoner or void or bad weather. It's not great. Do you ever want to be in a grey area? No! You'd want to be either a yes or a no. So yeah, that's why I got rid of it.

7. When are you going to retire?

Wow, such a tough question. As much as I say that I'm going to retire, I don't think I'm ever going to officially retire from the circuit. Even when I leave or stop participating as a delegate, there's always going to be things to do and more people to help or people who ask for help (laughs) even when I'm not part of the conference. At this point, I don't even think it's about being a part of MUN or the circuit or the committees. It's about the friends you've made. The fact that your friends are still in MUN means that you'll still be in MUN. So I guess when all my friends finally decide to retire, I can finally retire.

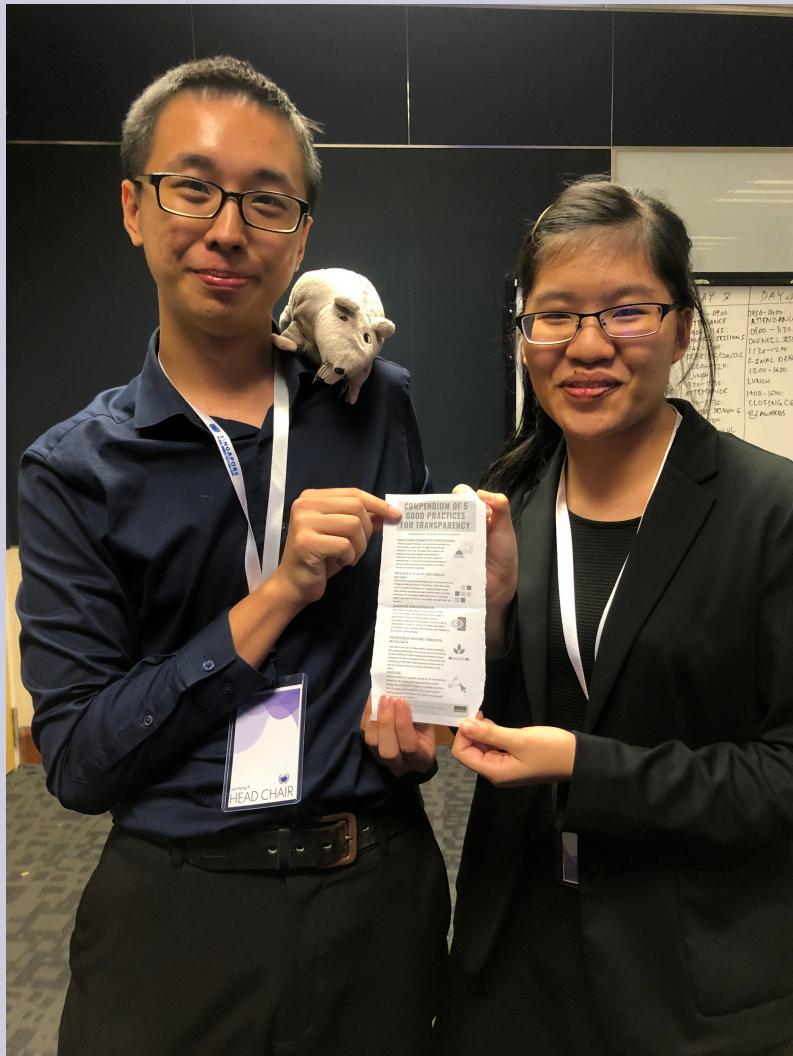
(Names of various members of the secretariat who are still in the Singapore MUN scene are shouted accusingly by those observing the interview)

(The interview concludes with half the room shouting "ROYSTON!")

Future MUN Delegates, Take Notes

By Press Editors

11 June 2019



Delegates of the European Council received a pamphlet painstakingly written and formatted by the Delegate of Germany earlier today. Both the Chairs and Press Editors were highly amused, and shared a good laugh about it after the suspension of committee on Day 2. A closeup of the document can be found below.

COMPENDIUM OF 5 GOOD PRACTICES FOR TRANSPARENCY

PROPOSED BY DELEGATION OF GERMANY

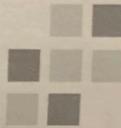
DIGITISING COMMITTEE PROCEEDING

Streaming public meetings, hearings, and proceedings live online allows citizens who are unable to see and hear meetings in real-time. This gives them a stake in the political process and a broader understanding of government decisions overall. All videos should be archived within 12 hours of the meeting technology can help to encode meetings live and publish to the Web through an automated workflow.



INTEGRATE IT WITH THE PUBLIC RECORD

Government meetings can be lengthy, and it can be hard to sort through and find the relevant information. That's why a best practice has been established, an "Integrated public record," which involves compiling agendas, minutes, audio, and video recordings, and any related digital documents in one place, making sure they're archived, cross-linked, and searchable by keyword.



PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

Once steps have been taken to stream audio or video recordings of public meetings online, the next step for government officials is to bring citizens into the conversation. Every government agency should provide an online forum or portal for citizens to debate, post ideas, participate in polls, comment, and otherwise give feedback in the decision-making process.



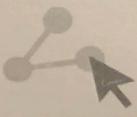
AWARENESS RAISING THROUGH META DATA

Meta data in the form of transcriptions, closed captioning, and tagging helps citizens find exactly what they're looking for and pushes government transparency forward. Citizens should also be able to download files and subscribe to new content via an RSS feed. These features are easy to set up and are critical for delivering timely information to the public.



INVOLVE

Involve residents in agenda setting for all deliberative forums for the union: Local governments should engage their residents in helping to define priorities for EU policy consultations. This could include holding agenda consultations to inform and register the opinions of the citizens.



EUROPEAN UNION | EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Delegates wishing to continue participating in future Model UN conferences should take notes, or risk having their thunder stolen by pre-conference preparations such as this!