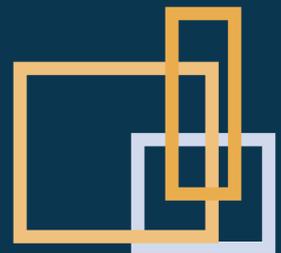


ISSUE ONE



TORCH



**SINGAPORE MODEL
UNITED NATIONS
2020**

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EDITORS' LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2020 edition of TORCH!

We would like to present our team's work, comprising the Press delegates, Editors, Designers, and Secretariat. Through the publications ahead, we aim to consolidate the conference's happenings into a readable and re-accessible memory for all.

SMUN 2020 marks SMUN's Press Corps' largest delegation team in recent SMUN history, allowing for a broad and colourful range of perspectives to be brought to light throughout the conference. We are excited to see how this leads to more dynamic council settings. The news agencies you should expect to see include:

- Al Jazeera,
- Ars Technica,
- BBC News,
- Breitbart,
- German News Service,
- Korean Central News Agency,
- New York Times,
- Rappler,
- Russia Today,
- South African Broadcasting Corporation,
- South China Morning Post,
- Sydney Morning Herald,
- The Straits Times,
- Xinhua News Agency, and
- Yomiuri Shimbun.

As you can tell, the Press Editors have selected many different press agencies, all of which have their own biases and writing styles.



This year, due to unexpected global circumstances, we have the privilege of experiencing an extremely unique SMUN, wherein the usual conference has been converted into an online one for the first time. While the Secretariat continues their promise of a high-quality conference, having access to articles written with a critical lens has become a key manner for delegates to obtain information, as well as find out more about other councils. We also live in a society so blinded with misinformation and slanted news articles, that we often fail to consider what goes into the making of them. We urge all delegates to read between the lines of the upcoming press articles and perhaps, even utilise them to your advantage during council debates.

We have also included various interviews with our very own SMUN chairs to give you a deeper insight to the personal lives of those creating your SMUN experience. With an international cast dedicated to providing a memorable experience for you, they also have their fair share of interesting tales to share.

We hope that in the articles and interviews to come, you will find yourself discovering critical points, impressive views, humorous anecdotes, and other inspiring tidbits.

During the course of the conference, TORCH would like to highlight your efforts to solve the different issues your respective committee faces. We encourage you to participate, speak up, and plan wisely. The conference will provide a great learning experience and a chance to meet other people with similar advocacies or different views, broadening your perspective of the world!

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy perusing TORCH 2020.

Warm Regards,
Press Editors

United Nations delegates unite against POTUS in historic moment

Jaden Ong

Al Jazeera

13 June 2020

In a landmark moment in United Nations history, the delegates of the UN's Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), broke away from convention to discuss the 'Root Problems of Donald Trump.'

Earlier today, the DISEC was scheduled to speak on the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants. However, in a historic turn of events, the committee chairman called for a discussion on the issues of the current President of the United States. Twenty delegates volunteered to speak on the matter.

The delegates' comments were unanimously and overwhelmingly negative. Most delegates criticised Mr Trump over his 'incompetence' in his handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, while others attacked Mr Trump over his 'racism'.

In light of the recent killing of George Floyd, African delegates were particularly critical. Many decried Mr Trump, one delegate even saying that '[he] is the root cause... he is the problem.'

Some delegates were particularly invective in their criticism. Delegates described Mr Trump as a 'racist' and compared him to a 'cheeto'. One delegate even called voting Americans to action by saying, "Let's make the world great again by not re-electing Donald Trump."

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This level of unity against Mr Trump has never been seen before, not even when he was laughed at during his address to the UN. At this point, it's difficult to determine what next actions America will take, but the ramifications of this reproach will nonetheless be enormous. Stock prices will likely fall in the countries whose delegates made inflammatory remarks while fears of sanctions run high among country leaders.

The days following today will serve as a testament to Mr Trump's character and ability as a president. In the past, he has responded to critics with mockery and name-calling, but a blow



such as this might prove too humiliating for mere playground insults. And although Mr Trump has never used his executive powers in response to an insult, national and internal pressures may compel him to counterattack his attackers in an effort to keep up his strongman image.

Indeed, it seems that the political effects of the delegates' statements will further tarnish his already falling reputation and that a counterattack would be the way to re-establish his political power. However, Mr Trump must tread lightly in his defense of himself, for it will be far too easy to break the camel's back at this point and usher in new waves of anti-American and anti-Trump sentiment across the globe.

'LET'S MAKE THE WOLRD GREAT AGAIN'

The recent rebuke against Mr Trump is an example of the rising levels of anti-Trump sentiment worldwide and the actions being done to counteract his influence. However, this incident is unique in that it includes international and local solidarity against him. Regardless of America's next actions, the current governing body of the United States has been deeply wounded by the delegates' statements.

This solidarity will embolden anti-Trump supporters to continue to fight back against him. In their eyes, Mr Trump's humiliation is a win and a blow to the grandiose appearances which he and his followers puts up. The discussions, debates, articles, and memes on his humiliation will dominate much of the dialogue in the near-future, bringing more and more of the apolitical to fight — whether it be for Trump, or against him

Considering his declining approval ratings, it's hard to argue that Trump supporters are going to start coming out to fight for him. It seems more likely that the ones to be brought into politicism are the ones which a functioning democracy needs the most. Instead, it will be the minorities, the youth, the poor. It will be the previously marginalised and ignored groups of people who will walk towards a new world, one made great again.

Viewpoint: Deepening of cracks in the Global South

Chu Jia Ren Felicia

BBC News

13 June 2020

Growing differences in global South's approach to growth hindering cooperation.

Built on historical similarities and struggles, the South-South Cooperation (SSC) was enacted 40 years ago as a platform for the Global South to band together for growth.

Since then, there has been growing differences such as differing political stances and rising inequality. Such issues include the US-China rivalry resulting in countries having to choose alliances, and the vast inequality between countries in Africa, as compared to China and India.

In addition, the very definition of what the SSC stands for makes the idea of “cooperation” unclear.

Ever since +BAPA40, the goal of reaching the Sustainable Development Goals have become of top priority.

However, the pathways to these goals remain as divided as ever. The lack of growth experienced by the Global South in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, has made nations increasingly desperate for the security and sustainability of their own economies, as expressed by the Global South during the latest United Nations Economic and Social Council.

For one, countries have not been able to definitively agree on the intervention by the Global North. This includes how, and who in the North should intervene, especially when it comes to loans. Various ideas have been thrown around ECOSOC today, such as Oman's belief that such a framework should not be focused on an eventual output that would simply benefit the North, and Sudan's belief that the North should not be considering the claiming of territory as one of its interests. Without a common agreement by the majority of the Global South, their lobbying power is heavily weakened.

Furthermore, there is also a lack of a common consensus on whether free trade or trading blocs are more favourable, and in what areas. This has resulted in the formation of multiple fragmented blocs, with few members in each, rendering them ineffective.

One thing rang clear, the South is increasingly uncomfortable with the North-South income disparity. Echo-ed throughout the conference, delegates brought up the lack of progress throughout these years.

The North has benefitted from the majority of the economic growth. The income gap between the average person in the North and the average person in the South has grown from \$9,000 in 1960 to \$35,000 in 2017. Hence, the Global South moves further away from its desire of not needing to rely on the North.

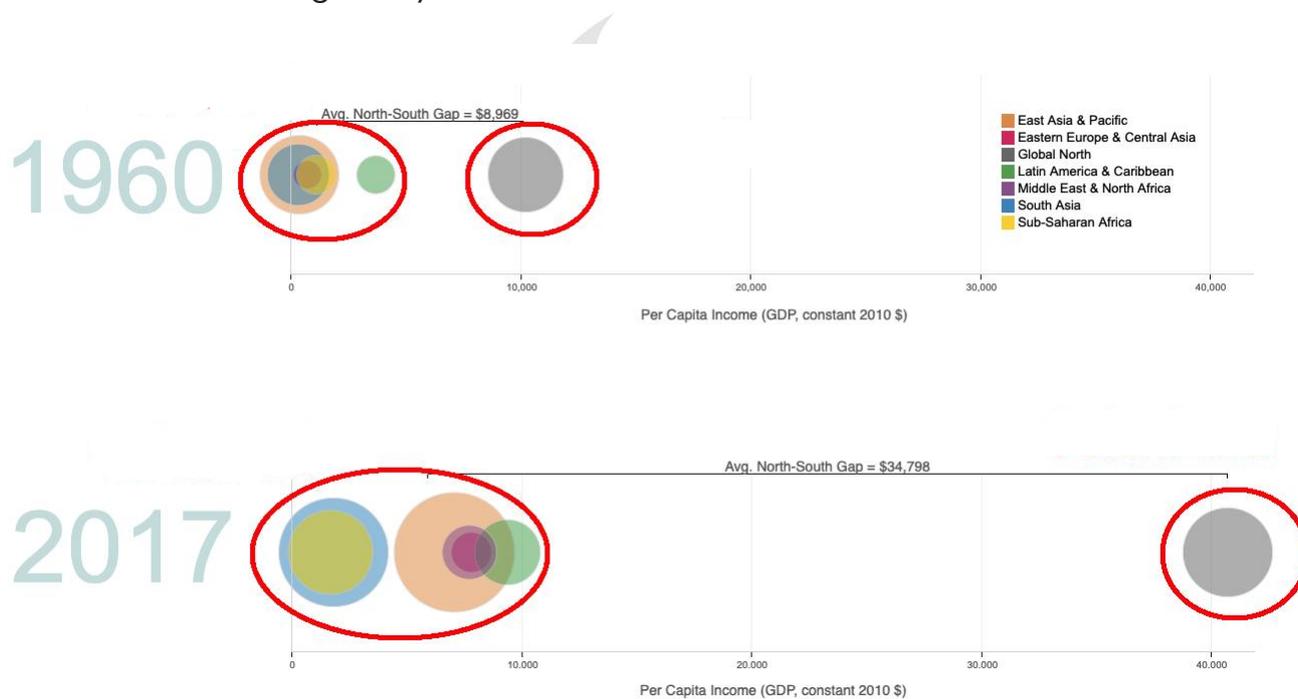


Figure 1. World Inequality Database (WID) in collaboration with Huzaifa Zoomkawala

The eventual outcomes of such conferences mean the changes in the lives of billions for better or worse. As the future of people in the South stays ever reliant on the shoulders of their leaders, strategic actions have never been more important.

Red flag laws and their fallacies

Naomi Khara
Breitbart
13 June 2020

"Guns don't kill people; people kill people."

As the US Senate came together to discuss the topic of gun control, their debates have only gone to prove even more how the left opposes the ideas of the founding fathers. Just as Senator Ted Cruz brilliantly said, "We should take an oath to uphold the constitution." Guns are not the problem, but the criminals who are murdering people are.

Democratic Senator Gillibard says that "political parties should be put aside," but we can not support the left if they continue to advocate for the violation of the United States' citizens. Both parties can agree that background checks are essential for those who are deserving of guns can gain access and those who aren't should be barred from obtaining firearms. Although the discussion between the senators had begun to deteriorate as time went on, the chairs were able to direct the Senators to a more productive debate.

Although ideas were being thrown around, no one had made any significant points until Senator Roy Blunt, and his sponsors produced a detailed solution to the problem. The Republican party had taken into consideration the lives that have been lost due to gun violence. They also considered those who want the right to protect themselves, which the left tends to forget. As a senate, they need to tackle the most pressing issues the Republican senators have really pushed for. Senator Roy Blunt's efforts to continue to guide the discussion in an effective way which should be recognized. His working paper had detailed many various stages of background checks that people can go through to gain a gun as well as providing mental health help to those, especially in impoverished and violence-prone areas. However, these red flag laws can also provide even more grievances if someone's guns are seized. They are an infringement on the citizens' constitutional rights. Red flags laws are too unclear to make any real impact on the issue while continuing to infringe on the rights of the people. Convicted defendants are unable to make their case until the final hearing, which makes it hard for them to defend themselves and lose a right even though they are innocent.

All in all, the Republicans should try to push for more citizens to freely exercise their rights as stated in the United States Constitution to bear arms. The left will continue to push for gun control to promote their own political ambitions and agendas on this country. Despite the slow start to debate, I hope that the Republican Senators will continue to advance debate and come up with more solutions to this pressing issue.



TORCH

Free and fair re-elections should be held

Raina Saerang
German News Service
13 June 2020

Germany's plan to help resolve the Venezuelan crisis.

Although the delegate of Germany did not say much in the general meeting, an exclusive interview with the German delegation conveyed a strong interest in helping Venezuela to overcome this crisis.

As it is known, Venezuela is now experiencing several crises including, political, economic and humanitarian crises. Starting from the economic crisis that occurred under Maduro's authority and responsibility, leading to a deep humanitarian crisis regarding health and malnutrition issues.

Moreover, Venezuela must also address their political problems regarding Maduro's illegitimate leadership after an unfair election in 2018. Responding to the situation, the National Assembly decided that under their responsibility, Venezuela would experience a power vacuum, until a re-election. Finally, on 23 January, 2019, Juan Guaidó came to take responsibility that was misused by Maduro after he declared himself as Interim President of Venezuela.

Unfortunately, Maduro's reaction to this problem made the situation worse. Instead of accepting his mistakes and defeat, he instead called on the international community to make allies, in order to support his leadership. Obviously, this will only worsen the situation, and force the international community to choose between himself, the illegitimate "president", or Juan Guaidó.

Seeing that the situation is far from fair for Venezuelans, in an interview with the delegate of Germany, she said that Germany would be proactive in dealing with Venezuelan crisis, especially in regards to their political crisis that seems to have intentions to disrupt international security.

In addition to that matter, together with other European Union countries that attended the general meeting, Germany believes that the political crisis is an important and basic thing to



be resolved as soon as possible, in order to determine the future legitimate and responsible president.

Thus, Germany supports and recommends that under the Venezuelan International Organization, a free and fair re-election should be held. Only then, will Germany fully recognize Guaidó's leadership as interim president of Venezuela. As stated directly by the delegate of Germany, "The country believes that Venezuela will get better once free and fair elections are held, and Germany fully supports Guaidó's leadership."

Besides the matter of a legitimate president being determined fairly and freely, the delegate of Germany also said that the country would continue to help resolve the humanitarian crisis that runs rampant in Venezuela, by continuing to provide humanitarian aid to Venezuela.



TORCH

American imperialism divides the UNSC

Didi Amzar Bin Harun

Korean Central News Agency

13 June 2020

While the UNSC gathers to resolve the Venezuela Crisis, imperialist ambitions take precedence over the Venezuelan people.

Pyongyang, June 13 (KCNA) — “A few weeks ago, the world was shocked by a video of an American police officer kneeling atop George Floyd’s neck, causing his death. This is exactly what the US’ sanctions are doing to Venezuela!”, exclaimed the Venezuelan delegate upon her arrival into the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session regarding the ongoing Venezuelan Crisis.

Since August 2017, the Trump administration has unjustly imposed economic sanctions and froze assets of Venezuela’s oil industry. This is essentially “suffocating” the Venezuelan people and their economy, as Venezuelan oil revenues account for more than 90% of its exports earnings. As such, Venezuela has gone into a deep economic crisis and in the words of the USA delegate, one that is “more severe than the American Great Depression”.

DISUNITY WITHIN THE UNSC

Currently, the UNSC has gathered for another session in an attempt to resolve the dire situation within Venezuela — however very little progress has been made.

The UNSC has instead shattered into two different blocs, being led by the delegates of France and China respectively. Disagreements over the impact of sanctions on the Venezuelan people, prioritisation of humanitarian aid and differences in the international community’s approaches to the Venezuela Crisis has prevented progress and much-needed collaboration within the council. The divided discussions over Venezuelan affairs and sovereignty had started more than 4 hours before the arrival of the Venezuelan delegate, showing an inherent lack of consultation and trust between the UNSC and the legitimate Maduro government to begin with.

More shockingly, during a bloc discussion in the midst of an unmoderated caucus within the UNSC, it was overheard that the German delegate had remarked that “Maduro is not a



democratic leader”, despite Maduro being legitimately elected into power in March 2013. The Belgian delegate had also slanderously commented that “even China is doing illegal business with Maduro and the Venezuelan military”.

From this, it is clear that certain member states harbour deep-rooted prejudices against the Maduro government and its allies, particularly the USA and the EU members.

A VOICE OF REASON

Amidst the confusion and disunity within the UNSC, it eventually agreed to summon a United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur, through the Arria Formula, to provide his expert views on the impacts of economic sanctions upon the Venezuelan people.

Throughout the 10-minute long Q&A segment with the rapporteur, he emphasised on the following points:

- The main priorities within the Venezuela Crisis should be to ensure the security and political stability of the nation, as well as the safety and livelihoods of the Venezuelan people.
- The freezing of assets over government-linked oil companies in Venezuela will impact the economy directly — with economic problems trickling down to the Venezuelan people.
- The UNSC should look for a more succinct solution, not just limited to sanctions. Sanctions against Venezuela itself in-fact, according to the Charter of the Organisation of American States (OAS), lack solid credibility on how it exactly “threatens the national security” of the USA.

Based on these inputs, it shows that the USA and its allies are merely intending to destabilise Venezuela with little regard on the well-being of the people, Venezuelan sovereignty or the proper legal, political processes within Venezuela.

THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD — PEACE, TRUST & REVITALISATION

On the other hand, the Chinese-led bloc — consisting of the People’s Republic of China, Venezuela and St. Vincent — primarily focuses on engaging and holding peaceful dialogues and consultations with the Maduro government, so as to resolve the ongoing crisis.



Rather than continually impose further economic sanctions on Venezuela and driving the economy further down the drain, the delegates of China and St. Vincent tirelessly advocates for the Montevideo Mechanism, which was initially suggested by the Mexican government to work towards stabilising the region — but has since been largely sidelined by the Western powers.

On top of that, the Chinese-led bloc intends to work closely with the Maduro government on resolving the economic crisis. This would allow for the Venezuelan people to recover and regain the stability needed to resolve the political crisis and their affairs on their own — rather than pinning their hopes on the self-declared interim president, Juan Guaidó, as suggested by the USA and her deluded allies.

In an interview with the Venezuelan delegate, she pleaded that the international community should, “Give us a chance, a single chance, to prove our capabilities. Lift the sanctions, at least amidst this current coronavirus pandemic. No problem can be solved so easily and so quickly.”

CONCLUSION — A WARNING AGAINST WESTERN INTERFERENCE

From the first day of discussions in the UNSC alone, it is clear that the USA and its misguided allies are willing to disregard international law and justice, in order to topple the Maduro government and replace it with one that is “friendly” to their own interests. The undisguised, imperialists' interference into the Venezuelan internal affairs and the lack of unity within the UNSC highlights the complete disregard for the UN's core principles of peace, fairness and self-determination.

The DPRK stands firm alongside the Chinese-led bloc and praises it for collaborating closely with the Venezuelan delegation, in the face of such imperialist tyranny within the UNSC. The DPRK strongly believes that Venezuelan issues should be resolved peacefully, according to the independent will and decision of the government and people of Venezuela.

DISEC making little progress in the discussion of disarmament

Evan Ignatius Tan

Rappler

13 June 2020

The Disarmament and International Security Committee, on the topic of disarmament, hardly discusses disarmament.

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) opens debate on the topic of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants today.

Delegates of countries that need the DDR have raised their voices on the issues that need to be solved in their nation. However, as the first committee session nears its end, the only opinions asserted are the existing solutions of first-world countries and the pleas of third-world countries in need of a solution.

The discussions have meandered without a proper focus, making the debate session confusing to listen to. It seems as if all delegates wish to take center stage and ensure that their countries' needs are prioritized.

DDR: THREE CONCEPTS OR ONE SINGLE PHRASE?

Rappler has noticed that many delegates have compressed the problem of DDR into one single issue. Despite the option to split debate into three sections of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, many delegates have taken inspiration from existing solutions and have shared their findings during debate time.

A moderated caucus was raised on the "Problems and Possible Solutions on DDR," which Rappler has noticed to be a broad scope for discussion. While the delegates could have taken one step at a time by discussing a plausible, efficient method for disarmament, they decided to take on DDR as a whole and showcase their wide array of knowledge on the different DDR systems. They fail to realize that many DDR programs depend on the unique situation of each country.

Within the moderated caucus, it was evident that delegates have little idea on what they are proposing, from the shallow understanding of existing DDR solutions to the reiteration



of the issues from delegates of third-world countries. This can be noticed further during the press conference when the delegate of Afghanistan reports to Rappler on the measures he wishes to take to ensure a neutralized foundation for a DDR program, by stating that he wants to follow past UNSC resolutions.

If the DDR programs issue still exists, then the resolutions passed by UNSC have not worked, something that the delegate of Afghanistan may not understand fully.

Overall, most delegates have not understood the scope of debate fully and should begin the next council session by defining the acronym of DDR into its essential components.

THE SINGULAR IDEA FROM UKRAINE: S3I

However, one delegate has shown to have well-developed ideas. Rappler has spoken to the delegate of Ukraine on her proposed solution that she calls “S3I”. This solution stands for Strengthening the Border, Involving the International Mediators, Implementing Security Sector Reform, and Implementing the Amnesty for Ex-Combatants.

According to the delegate, this solution, which would work for Ukraine, can be changed with regard to each country’s needs. Rappler believes that the delegate of Ukraine realises the problem that a “one size fits all” solution would not work. Rappler also believes that this idea may potentially be a game-changer to debate. However, other delegates seem to let this solution slip past their ears. Rappler urges the committee to listen to original solutions such as the abovementioned.

THE SEMI-SILENT DELEGATE WITH A GOOD GRASP OF THE TOPIC

Another delegate that has shown Rappler to be one that may perform outstandingly is the delegate of the Philippines.

An exclusive interview with the delegate of the Philippines has revealed a delegate with the potential to excel in the debate. “Though DDR is [an issue] across the world, it is really important to have more coordination in a national level, and it is a viable solution in taking advantage of national NGOs to make the process of [implementing] DDR easier.”



However, Rappler has noticed that the delegate has not been participating much in the debate. Rappler hopes the delegate of the Philippines may gain council presence and share his well-developed ideas with the rest of the committee.

Looking at DISEC as a whole, how will the first day of a convoluted debate turn out? Only time will tell.



TORCH

Feigned intelligence from our global superpowers, once again

Stephanie Anne Min Long

Russia Today

13 June 2020

The United Kingdom laments the 'lack of technologists'; the United States possibly never exploited data at all.

'To fix a pipe, you should call a plumber. To fix a software, you should call a software engineer.' These were some of the motherhood statements echoed by the delegate of the United Kingdom, as the first SOCHUM session this afternoon gathered all delegates for an elemental discussion on one of the 21st century's most salient issues, that is of digital privacy.

In what sounds like the most practical and clear-cut, yet highly deceptive manner to solve this problem, the delegate proceeds to claim that 'this issue, being technological in nature, should be solved by a technologist.' Understandably, this seems like an embarrassingly futile attempt to escape the complexities of this problem. This hypocritical sentiment is predicted to grow more influential in some other delegates throughout the remaining council sessions.

Firstly, the United Kingdom delegate claims that there is a 'hierarchy of importance' regarding devising solutions to this issue, which supposedly precedes technological factors, followed by ethical ones. The other delegates embark on conventional trains of thought, discussing enduring concepts such as government data surveillance, national security, and personal data protection. While the United Kingdom brings an interesting prospect to the table, it is professing that there is a lack of technologists in state legislation.

Undeniably, the need for trained data specialists and software engineers are paramount in this issue, to develop fool-proof methods to combat unlawful data exploitation and hacking vendettas. However, it is known that this issue has transcended technological boundaries — social and cultural fabrics have been affected; power plays have been taken advantage of. As this delegate continues to reiterate that this issue should be 'looked at more holistically, since legal protection is not enough', we are instead welcomed to witness the British government laying bare their inherent contradictions and ironies.

The delegate of the United States has also reflected hypocrisy complementary to that of the United Kingdom. Embodying the misleading and textbook-like fashion of the American



Dream, this delegate mentions that it 'abides by the rule of law that cares for civil liberty and privacy'.

Indeed, this claim was shamelessly made not just in the face of the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal and in countless data breaches from America's Tech Giants. This claim comes from the delegates of Oman and South Africa: '(the United States has) collected the biggest amounts of data and surveillance' and 'needs to be condemned.' When being raised during the press conference for clarification, the United States then retorts that 'Oman has no sufficient information to prove that (the United States) has collected big amounts of data from citizens'.

Without a doubt, the premise of this unorthodox claim remains to be non-existent, provided it is even virtually possible to be acknowledged in the first place. Moreover, the delegate of the United States has amazingly proven himself to be a true and loyal heir to the Trump administration. The delegate embodies the enigmatic aura as well as the questionable reasoning of the man himself, that propelled him to such a contorted statement.

Putting outrageous political remarks aside, the delegate of Russia has also made a few claims during the discussions.

When discussing where to draw the line between data sovereignty and excessive mass surveillance, the delegate of Russia stated that 'countries should have faith in their government.' The sentiment of this delegate is an opinion shared by several other delegates, who strongly believe that governments have the duty to maintain their citizens' security, which includes them having the right to access the personal data of citizens. This can be in the form of installing facial recognition systems in roads and traffic infrastructures, amongst other measures.

Furthermore, the delegate of Russia also mentioned that citizens have the right to request for the deletion of their personal data from government databases, in order to comply with their privacy preferences.

With all said and done, let us wait and see if delegates can see eye to eye with each other, or perhaps continue to let the curse of politicians in oblivion infest.

Exploring the roots of the STEM

Tanvi Bhat

South African Broadcasting Corporation

13 June 2020

2 motions have passed and countries have put forth solutions to promote STEM in LEDCs.

UNESCO is trying to promote STEM in LEDCs, as STEM education is highly important for a country's economic development, welfare and also encourages the usage of technology which will be helpful for the people living in LEDCs. For example, farming can be easily handled by robots controlled by people in villages. This can only be done if funding is provided by economically developed countries as well as holding tutoring sessions for the teachers, such that they can engage with their students better.

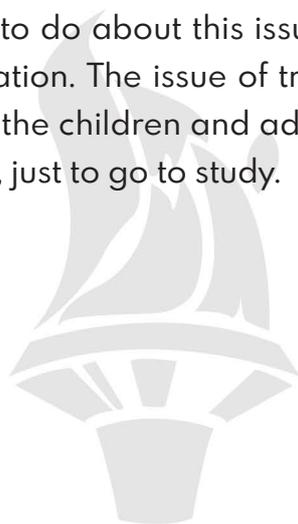
The current state of STEM in most of the LEDCs seems to be very lacking as countries like Jamaica, Brazil, and South Africa have already invested a lot of their money from their GDPs to mend their education system, but have still failed to make considerable difference. "After spending 6.35% of GDP in education we have still ranked 48th for the quality of education!" exclaimed the delegate of Jamaica. Though Russia provides national non-profit courses to students, it is still online, and "55% cannot access the internet" mentioned by the delegate of Jamaica. Though South Africa is one of the richest countries in its area, people still can't afford for STEM and this is why the South African Broadcasting Company has decided to open a new channel just for education wherein students can watch videos to learn about different things which they may be interested about.

Madagascar put forward a motion to discuss the factors hindering the advancement of STEM in LEDCs, wherein many countries have put forth their suggestions, focusing on improving infrastructure, and by raising awareness regarding the importance of STEM. Firstly, most of the countries like Russia and South Africa, have identified that one of the factors of the lack of interest in STEM, is that LEDCs don't understand the importance of STEM. Without raising awareness by holding workshops or seminars, the people living in LEDCs won't get a better understanding of how important STEM is for their jobs as well. They should be informed on how their jobs may get affected. For example, drip irrigation is now widely used, instead of farmers pouring buckets of water to their crops every morning. The usage of tractors should be learnt as well, since weeding the crops takes much more



time and effort. Such complications only exist with the lack of insight into STEM.

Many countries like the Central African Republic and Brazil, even mentioned the lack of infrastructures and facilities provided in LEDCs which help maintain a good environment with proper chairs, tables and exposure to nature and sunlight, for the students to study in. Though, a lot of time would be needed for developed countries like Russia and the United Kingdom to reach an amount of funds, such that enough materials and manpower can be utilised. Chile also mentioned that 'less than 30% of women' are researchers and wishes to work on gender parity as many LEDCs seem to have stereotypes regarding women in STEM related fields. This is a paramount issue, and it is necessary that awareness should be raised as women are usually told to perform house chores and evade any interaction with any 'manly' activities, of which studying is included. None of the countries have mentioned in detail on what they were going to do about this issue, as they perpetuated and simply repeated the merits of STEM education. The issue of transport services has also not been mentioned, which is concerning as the children and adults living far from the schools have to walk 3 hours on uneven grounds, just to go to study.



TORCH

ECOSOC cooperates to cooperate

Trivikram Pattanayak
South China Morning Post
13 June 2020

Delegates in the council agreed to cooperate with the exception of a few unusual opinions.

Progress in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is at an impressive pace. The delegates were possessing the awareness that cooperation is the need of the hour to determine an outcome for the prolonged Global North-Global South divide, the conventional gap between the 'more developed economies and countries' and 'the lesser developed economies.'

The Delegate of Ethiopia, for instance, remarked, "Peace cannot be achieved without cooperation." Delegates of member states which have comparatively smaller economies also voiced thoughts to solve other crises such as global poverty, such as the Delegate of Luxembourg. However, it is still unclear on how they intend to assist.

Other countries also declared on first solving the lapses in the South-South cooperation (SSC), the unofficial term to describe the much-needed cooperation in the lesser-advanced economies to aid in their development. The Delegate of Morocco, for instance, rightfully stated the overpowered North (which includes states such as the United States and the United Kingdom) and aptly declared developing the cooperation in the countries of the South. "It is vital to foster mutual relations in the South-South cooperation before moving onto the North," he further commented, which is a crucial point to consider.

Many countries in the Global South have suffered for decades throughout the previous Century, with both economic and political instability dominating their modern history. It is only in recent years that the pace of development has picked up in many states.

The Delegate of China, meanwhile, maintains his ground while also efficaciously highlighting the focus of the situation: the urgent need for cooperation, which China has initiated by historically setting up numerous projects in developing countries in Africa.



However, some nations exited the realm of reality and began to make demands which were indeed unrealistic, such as the Delegate of Nicaragua. “Real contribution to the development of the South-South cooperation includes funding as support to developing member states,” an idea which is far from feasible, especially considering Nicaragua’s comparatively under-developed economy and hence lack of understanding in the global economy.

The South-South cooperation may not be a successful coalition when various member states have varying political ideals and agendas. A common example includes the world’s most populous nations, China, and India. Both economies have had an eye-watering growth rate, which tops six percent each year, and as such, have the potential for being the economic powerhouses of the Global South. However, the Indian ideals of democracy may be a barrier to further development in the region. A billion inhabitants having a billion opinions would undoubtedly give rise to scenarios where these ideals may clash with each other and hinder progression. The Chinese fundamentals of the government possessing unsurpassable power are the primary reason for China’s superior growth in the recent decades.

However, several delegates were not present to discuss these crucial elements to their own development. These include New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, and Spain, whose representations were called out helplessly by the Chairpersons, who repetitively called out, “Delegate? Delegate?”. These states are comparatively prosperous and developed. It is not surprising for them not to consider debating about the development of the lesser-developed economies.

Even countries with a lesser economic capacity expressed a higher level of participation in the committee, setting aside discussions for their own internal, political crises for the sake of the global community. “The delegate seeks to cooperate with the African Union and the European Union to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal”, the Delegate of Sudan cited.

Then there was the Delegate of Ukraine, who had entered a more emotional tone, calling out individual countries to share ‘their own experiences with each other.’ She also added, “It is important that the Global South opens itself up to promote cooperation.”

Even though there are a few bumps on the road for ECOSOC, there is an overall sense of progression and commitment amongst all the delegates who are at a steady pace to solve the divide between the Global North and the Global South.

Difficult day for the WHA to find common ground

Jonathan Edrick
Xinhua News Agency
13 June 2020

What is it that needed to be addressed? What's the problem that needed to be prioritized?

The delegate of Turkey sums it up best, the WHA has good plans and mechanisms, but its execution is always in shambles.

Discussions are underway at the World Health Assembly (WHA) today. After the opening statement from all delegates, one voice can be heard clearly. International cooperation is necessary to eradicate the communicable disease. This is undoubtedly a great step toward international cooperation. This willingness to come together to fight a common foe is unprecedented.

Three points stand out from the first session. The lack of sufficient funding and healthcare personnel, the need for better education, and the continuous stigmatization of people who contracted a communicable disease. All delegates strive for the same eventual goal. The management, containment, and eradication of communicable diseases.

This noble goal is however immediately tainted by the behavior of all delegates who have their personal interests and are willing to fight for them. The delegates want to tackle the same problem, but they are poles apart on what they want to focus on. The first moderated caucus is utterly pointless, as soon as shown by the need to call another caucus, as stated by some delegates. This is made worse by the willingness of each delegate to continually bicker about what they should do, instead of addressing their initial problem of what the problem is at hand.

The delegates of Saudi Arabia and Canada are very vocal in addressing one particular problem, stigmatization. They voiced this concern on numerous occasions, insisted that being stigmatized is a major problem for the infected, they argued that by being stigmatized by society, they are less likely to seek medical care. The delegate from Tajikistan on the other hand points out that the stigmatization problem is not more important than problems such as HIV/AIDS transmitted by drug abuse.



The delegate of Ethiopia brings out sanitation as another contributing cause of communicable disease, as with many other Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC), this is later supported by many other delegates. Another point of concern is antimicrobial-resistant drugs, this is also a hot issue debated by the delegates. At the end of the first session, it is still unclear what the delegates wanted to do moving forward. We are waiting to see what the delegates would eventually draft after the session is adjourned.

The frontrunner for the draft resolution seems to be Saudi Arabia's idea. The delegate gives a statement. As this delegate had mentioned before, this delegate firmly believes that stigmatization is a very pressing topic. However, the committee failed to see the point. Many delegates mindlessly mention that focusing on "stigma" is very specific, but later contradicting themselves by raising motions to discuss only "HIV"?? Hypocrisy. They have failed to understand that we need to start somewhere, so eventually, for the sake of debate, this delegate conceded to "infrastructure and accessibility". The delegate for Saudi Arabia's plan titled "Improving Infrastructure and Primary Medical Aid in LEDC" looks promising. Obviously, there is opposition.

For instance, the delegate from Ethiopia questioned whether the plan would help refugees, numbering at around 900,000 souls. Other delegates such as the delegate from Turkey proposed an alternative plan. Instead of just funds, the delegate proposed the idea of professional training for medical personnel.

The Saudi's plan is not simply giving money and aid to the LEDC nations, upon further explanation, the delegate of Belgium insisted that the More Economically Developed Countries (MEDC) should not purely be funneling money to LEDC nations, but rather the MEDC nations should be promoting self-sustenance through capacity building.

While there's a frontrunner draft resolution, it is clear that all the squabbling and internal disagreement in the prior session had taken its toll. Furthermore, the delegates seem to fail to incorporate technological development to overcome this gruesome problem. It is disappointing that nearing the end of the day, nothing has been achieved by the assembly.

Despite the good nature of the assembly, we find that the presence of the Taiwanese delegate and their right to vote in the assembly is completely unacceptable. Taiwan is a part of the People's Republic of China under the one-China policy. Furthermore, the action of the delegate of Taiwan in demanding international recognition and denouncing China afterwards is distressing.

Interview with ECOSOC Chair: Adrian

Press Editors

Adrian is a Freshman undertaking Developmental Studies, and also proclaims to be a liberal rights activist. In 2019, he gave a speech pertaining to development in London as well. Other than studying, activism, and MUN, he also enjoys a staple sport in Philippines — basketball.

What are you studying now?

I'm currently studying Development Studies — how to harness development in terms of political, economic, sociological, and institutional structures. Basically, the promise of how things could be better. In my freshman year now, I'm focusing on economic theories and the standards of living of people on a macro level. In the second semester, we'll be studying Marxism and other such alternative theories of development. In the future, I plan on pursuing a course in Public Policies because I like researching it and finding out how it will affect people at large.

What do you like about basketball?

I think it's more of a cultural thing. When Philippines was colonised by America, the Americans brought along basketball with them, which has now become the main sport that everyone loves. If you go around asking about basketball, you'd hear "Oh Kobe Bryant? Michael Jordan? Yeah I love basketball!" in every single village with a community. Regardless of social class, there will be a court everywhere. What I like about basketball the most is more than the sport. It's fun and there are really good players, but it's about the community. 90% of the time you'd have friends who'd play and talk about basketball.



How was your experience giving a speech in London?

I was invited after a pretty long process. I first took part in a debate in Canada, I guess I performed pretty well so they invited me to speak in London. One of the listeners back in Canada was actually looking for a youth speaker to speak about their view of development — which linked to what I was going to study!

Anyway, they invited me to the UK but I told them I'm not very rich. They then told me they were paying for the trip. Then I remembered that I needed accommodation too. "Don't worry! we are also providing accommodation!" was what they said — so I went to the UK last September for two weeks.

It was really fun. I gave the speech at the Global Grand Challenges Summit where engineers and policy makers from all over discuss how to harness energy for better development. The topic of my speech was basically how to change our views towards development. Our main standards for development are the GDP, etc., but there are other measures like the Happiness Index. So I asked that maybe we should look away from conventional measurements and look towards other measurements instead.

How has your work as an advocate impacted you?

I would call it activist work; advocacy is more of a relaxed form of activism and much less confrontational. Like a promotion. Activism is more of challenging the system to achieve change. Before I became an activist, I was a debater — still am, but more of an activist now.

Back then [as a debater] was when I was cementing my views on politics. In Philippines, there are several social problems. The income wage gap is large, the powerful land owners exploit farmers, we're losing our indigenous people, and laws aren't always applied properly. After President Duterte was elected in, he has been greatly violating human rights. Under him, 10,000–20,000 people have died in his war against drugs. For example, the police usually have to make an arrest, right? Now, they just shoot those who aren't compliant. This is where I'm critical of the government.

I had a friend with an uncle. He had a history with drugs, but for two years he hadn't taken any illegal substances. On the way back to his home, he was shot dead by a policeman. The policeman didn't even bother to arrest him. My friend was pretty rich, but he wasn't even able to pursue a lawsuit case because the local court kept dropping charges. That's something I'm trying to change, even if he [Duterte] has provided us with free medical bills and college.

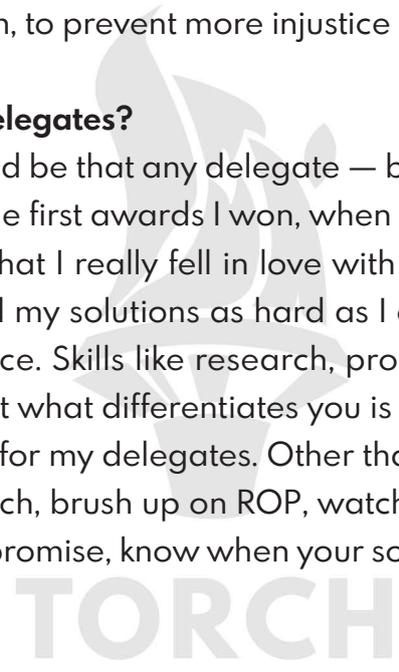


I was also part of a team that went to slums in Manila to console families that lost their members due to the drug war. There were people crying because they had lost their fathers or sons and daughters who were killed because drugs were planted in their bodies. It is common knowledge that police officers had quotas that they had to meet to get their bonuses. It's horrible!

Right now, I'm just trying my best to change all of this through advocacy and activism. It's kind of dangerous, especially under Duterte, where many activists have already been killed. All of these cases were dropped by the local courts. My life could be on the line even if I'm not that well known as an activist. It's blatantly unjust and that's what I'm fighting against, and it's very hard. That's how it has changed me. It made me see the masses, the commoners, the marginalised in our society and gave me a heart to see them. Something has to change and we need to challenge the system, to prevent more injustice and death in the future.

Any tips for your prospective delegates?

The first most important tip would be that any delegate — be it a veteran or not — should fall in love with your topic. One of the first awards I won, when I was starting with MUNs, the one thing that helped me win was that I really fell in love with the topic I was researching. This made me want to push forward my solutions as hard as I could. If you love your topic, then everything else will fall into place. Skills like research, procedure, negotiation, and speech can be learnt along the way, but what differentiates you is your love for the topic. That's one of the most important tip I have for my delegates. Other than that, of course there's: prepare well, don't cram, do your research, brush up on ROP, watch videos on ROP, know your topic and stance, know when to compromise, know when your solutions are needed or not and be assertive! That's really it.



Interview with UNESCO Chair: Andita

Press Editors



Andita, or Andy as her co-chairs affectionately call her, is currently studying International Relations and has chaired UNESCO at SMUN for two years in a row. When she is not MUN-ing or studying, she sings and draws.

Tell us more about your area of study!

To be honest, I ended up here (in International Relations) by accident. When I went for the admissions, it went something like this: I have many interests, but which one should I pursue for real? I don't know, I can't choose so I guess I'll choose what seems feasible. I ended up choosing International Relations. Let's just say I fell in love with the study, not just because of the fact that I do MUN and that it was useful, but IR taught me how to view the world and the inner workings of politics — like with the COVID-19 pandemic going on. As an IR student, we see the roles of the government in the pandemic, but also how international organisations are acting on it and how this was impacting international trade. IR is not about hard skills like technology, engineering, or data analysis, but it's something that equips you with the knowledge to view the world through macro and microscopic lenses. Everything that you do, your country does, will impact the world, so just choose your leaders wisely.

How did you get into singing?

(Laughs) Which chair did you hear that



from? Both my parents were active in church and city choirs, and we were raised in an environment where my parents would bring us along to join the choirs so it was largely self-taught I guess! I did join several vocal courses at one point, though, because of time constraints with school, I couldn't continue them in the long run. I used to be in the choir in school, and learnt a lot from there. I still find singing very entertaining and therapeutic for me. Unfortunately, I am unable to be part of the university's choir now because it's quite taxing but I still sing a lot on my own and I've performed for several campus events. I guess it's something that allows me to release my stress and express my feelings, but also allows me to bond with others.

How do you feel about chairing UNESCO twice in a row for the same conference?

Honestly, when I signed up for SMUN 2020, signing up for UNESCO was kind of a comical choice in that it would be funny if I tried out for UNESCO again and got accepted, and I did! I got accepted into the exact same council with the exact same role so I guess Caleb was confident that I would be able to manage another crisis in UNESCO. I just hope he made the right choice. Though, I hope that there won't be another weird crisis like last year.

Any tips for your prospective delegates?

Don't be afraid to participate. Especially because I mostly chair beginner councils, I've noticed that many delegates, whether it's their first, second, or third MUN, they don't think they are smart enough or that their English is good enough. All I can say is, just join in. Be it in unmods or mods, it would be such a shame if you came all the way to SMUN and just felt afraid all the time without making friends or speeches. Everyone is just as afraid as you are! I hope they find comfort in that no one pays attention more than they do to themselves and everyone is just rooting for each other, so just calm down and mingle around, join the debate! MUN is just a simulation. It's not going to hurt you if you feel like you've not done anything at your first MUN. There are always more conferences to come so don't be afraid and just join in, speak up, and keep improving! Best of luck to everyone!

Interview with WHA Chair: Jun-Kai

Press Editors

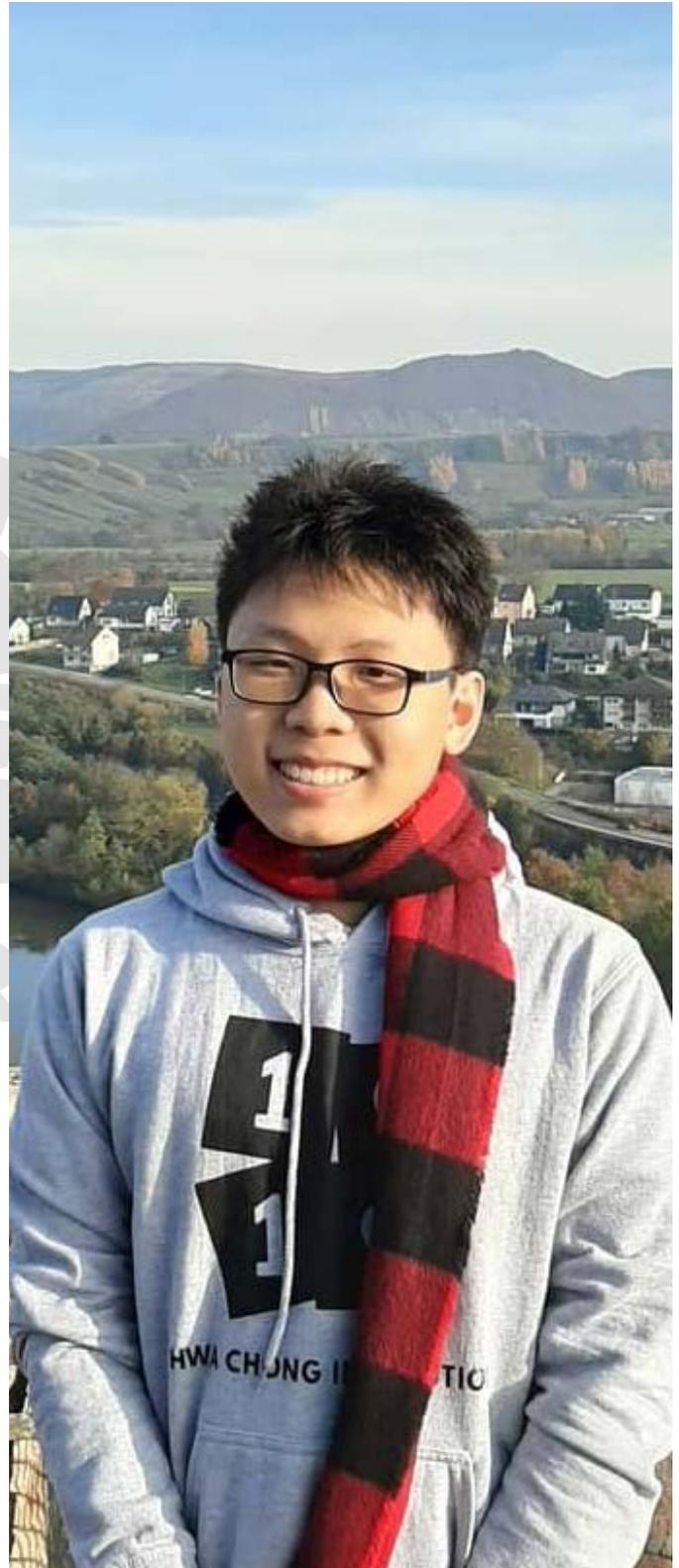
Jun-Kai is a JC2 student currently studying at Hwa Chong Junior College and takes a third language, German, with the Ministry of Education Language Centre (MOELC). A common face in the Singapore MUN circuit, he is often seen in various different peculiar outfits, such as a bright red Santa Claus blazer. He is also the Head Chair of the WHA here at SMUN 2020.

What made you so interested in German/Germany?

Is this for MOELC? No? (Laughs) German is cool because I think the grammatical structures are really fun and it's quite adaptable to an English learner. Why do I like Germany? Well, I don't actually like it in particular, but I feel that it has a very relaxed pace of life. It's very quaint and on the verge of being boring, but not a bad kind of boring. Just like a normal life. Also, the weather is good which is a major plus factor since it's just so hot in Singapore.

Do you have any tips for delegates who are thinking of learning a third language or just another one?

I think that's a bit difficult to give since they'd have to be Primary 6 right now if they want to learn it with MOELC. But in general, I'd say you need to know what you want to go for, what you want to learn the language for. You need to know your interests first. If





you're learning a language because you want to speak it, then go with that. Or if you to enjoy some piece of entertainment better, then go with that as your motivation. I learnt German not because I liked Germany in the first place, but because I thought it was a cool language, so that's why I went for it rather than learning football. I don't like football. My other options were Spanish and French. I'm not sure why I decided not to go and learn them but I feel like if I took them, I would also give you the same explanation, because they just seemed like cool languages.

Every language sounds cool in some way. I think it's the aspect of "foreignness" that makes them interesting. Chinese would be appealing to me too if I weren't so bombarded with it in such a negative manner that made it difficult and a chore to learn. I would probably have had more interest in it!

It almost seems like you have the perfect clothes for every occasion! Where do you get your interesting outfits from?

I don't have the perfect clothes for any occasion! I wouldn't say I'm fashionable. I bought my blue blazer in Thailand. It was a very chance-purchase. It was cheap so I just thought something along the lines of "that looks nice" and bought it. I bought my Santa blazer in Europe, and it was also pretty cheap. I mean, I'm not obsessed with fashion but it's just that I don't want to look ugly.

Do you have any other hobbies?

I watch a lot of TV. I mean, if you go to my Instagram you'll see a [redacted] ton of TV and movie related things. I have a whole story highlight dedicated to reviews. Obviously, I like music a lot as well. I'm not a very interesting person as far as hobbies go, I think I'm more interesting as a person in conversation.

What makes a good TV show/piece of music to you?

A good piece of music is something you can bop to, or something you can relax to depending on what the goal of that piece of music is. If it's supposed to be a bop and it's not, then it's not a good song. Classical music is usually fine, it just gives a very calming vibe. If a song has lyrics and the lyrics are horrible, then it can really suck out the energy from a song and just ruin the vibe. For TV shows... I don't know. If it's interesting, you'll know it. I think a good TV show has drama in it even if it's supposed to be funny.

Any tips for your prospective delegates?

Please have good Wi-Fi connection! Please don't quit the conference halfway through and

don't be sneaky and try to lobby people in PM (private messages) where we can't see. If we can't see anything, then it's not beneficial to you anyway since we won't credit you for it. Also, stay on topic and don't try to push it in a direction that doesn't make sense. You'll know that it makes sense if the rest of the council thinks it makes sense. If the rest of the council is competent, then it should be clear when you're making sense or not, whether you're going off topic or when you are staying on topic and making a good point. The other point is that I personally don't like it when people use the same content over and over again. It's very noticeable and does not help the council at all.



TORCH

Interview with Crisis Staff: Jannah

Press Editors

Jannah is currently taking a gap year and is often seen at MUN conferences with a variety of penguin plush toys. She is also a part of this year's Imperial German Cabinet, SMUN's very own Crisis simulation. Not to mention, she specialises in "high-stakes" councils such as the United Nations Security Council and other Crisis councils.

How have you been doing?

Quite frankly, I think I am fine, considering that I'm on my gap year and there really isn't anything much to do in my life besides applying for internships, learning about myself, and teaching myself new things. I was also researching on several overseas institutions. I've been sleeping a lot, my sleep schedule is kind of crazy but what's new? As for internships, I've been trying to apply and look into internships at OnePeople.SG, the Asian Civilisation Museum, and the IRO.

Regarding discovering and learning, I've been getting back to learning about physics and things I dropped because of my studies. It's been fun. I've been teaching myself new languages through Duolingo and reading a lot more. I used to learn Swedish and I'm relearning Latin now. Duolingo is quite fun, but I would say if you wanted to enrich your experience more, immersing yourself in your language isn't that hard.

Is there a backstory to your stuffed companion(s)?

Here's the thing — I have 3 penguins, all of them are named by my friends. The first one that most know, is named "Salte", the original one. He's the one who was originally at DHAP 2019 and there's another one called "Cinnamun". Like Cinnamon, but with a MUN at the back! The last one is "Peppermun", like peppermint, but again with MUN at the back. It just gets worse from here on out (laughs) it was a dumb joke.

Here's the backstory for Salte: to spell Salte's name, there's an "e" at the back because during DHAP 2019, my experience was just mostly going up and being salty that I couldn't say anything, since I was Cuba in the Cuban Missile Crisis. So it was like, "Okay, I guess I'll just endure this for now." As per my brother's request, who I was delling with at that time, he said, "Why not we just call him salt with an "e" at the back because we're silently salty." It's pretty dumb but it's a funny memory.



For Cinnamun, it was a gift from a friend who is actually chairing the same committee as I am now! Cinnamun is technically my favourite because he is very squishy and also, I brought him during OPMUN last year and everyone couldn't stop hugging him. I call them my emotional support penguins because everytime something happens in a MUN, I just bring them along since everyone needs something to hug, especially in Crisis.

Have you always been interested in Crisis? Why?

For me, being in Crisis and being in MUN in general is an accident. I got into MUN because a friend of mine told me I should. I was supposed to go for RMUN, but my school didn't allow me to go, so out of spite, I applied to go to HCCRI. I didn't actually think I would get in, so when they sent me the email it went, "Oh yeah here are your payment details," and I was very surprised! That's my origin story, I guess.

For Crisis, I went to Crisis as a second timer. Originally, I was supposed to be in the US Senate for SJIMUN 2018, but something got mixed up and I ended up in Crisis. While that Crisis was questionable and wild, at best, with the snakes that existed in the cabinet. I was one of the snakes but it was in my portfolio, don't blame me. Ever since I went for Crisis, I just felt like it was such a nice place to be compared to GA (General Assembly), which was weirdly enough quite slow and boring. Which is also why I'm attracted to the UNSC. A lot of people describe me as a UNSC-Crisis delegate, because I don't really go to GAs as much anymore. I'm always one for very high stakes, especially in fast paced councils. Such as DHAP 2019. I'm sure you know what I mean. Also, there were no missiles in Cuba!

What is the single weirdest thing that has happened in your MUN journey?

Where do I start! I've been in the circuit for 3 years and at this point, it's just... please bless my soul. I think Crisis is where all the memes happen and single-handedly, SMUN's Crisis last year was one of the best and weirdest experiences. I'm very passionate about Asian-Japan history and I had a lot of information. To see it come to life was just a great experience for me.

What I did not expect was: first of all, there was the entire issue of the delegate accidentally replacing his wife with his son. His wife was a rogue who ran away and there wasn't anyone to take care of his field, so he wanted to put his son in charge. However, because he phrased it so weirdly, "replace my wife with my son," the Crisis team just took it that way. You have no idea how funny it was to see the political actors walk into council, saying with a straight face that his father was "an honourable man (who committed incest)." It took so much effort to hold in my laughter.

The second thing was that there was one delegate who was completely chaotic in council. He was very disruptive but I have to admit he was pretty great. At one point, he wanted to travel to Nevada and wanted to fight the Russians? I think the biggest thing, was that everyone didn't like this delegate, so everyone decided to just give him a 95% tax rate (laughs). He got so mad and kept asking who put it on him and everyone just stared at him. Honestly, he put it on himself. Originally, it was a 99% tax rate but he complained so the council just decided to lower it to, I don't know, by 4%, and then we stopped. Nothing boring ever happens in Crisis.

Any tips for prospective delegates?

First of all, in a Crisis, always check your portfolio powers so that you know what you can do. As much as Crisis is very fast-paced, and you can never plan out everything, always make sure that your goal is very clear to you, so that you can manipulate that goal in order to fulfill your own agenda in the current situation that the Crisis has planted you in.

Treat Crisis like a relationship. It's really chaotic if you don't have communication with your backroom and your frontroom. Nobody knows what's going on and it's going to go terribly if you don't communicate.

Another thing is just have fun. Crisis only becomes toxic if you make it a toxic place, especially with the snakes and delegates who try to get on top of each other. I think the most important thing in Crisis is to have fun, and at least admit when you don't know something because it will be like that sometimes.





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