Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2014 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2014 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA} format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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UN Economical and Social Council

The world's economic, social and environmental challenges are ECOSOC's concern. A founding UN Charter body established in 1946, the Council is the place where such issues are discussed and debated, and policy recommendations issued.

As such, ECOSOC has broad responsibility for some 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system, including 14 specialized agencies, 9 "functional" commissions, and five regional commissions.

The Council holds regular meetings throughout the year with prominent academics, business sector representatives and 3,200+ registered non-governmental organizations. ECOSOC's biggest gathering, however, is reserved for the summer, when it holds its annual, month-long substantive session in July.

Held in alternate years in New York and Geneva, the session is divided into 5 segments — High-level; Coordination; Operational Activities; Humanitarian Affairs; and General — which cover both global issues and technical, administrative questions.

With its focus on pressing development challenges (employment, education, health, etc.), the High-level segment regularly attracts policy-makers from the top ranks of government. The segment's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and biennial Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) has been a notable success, too, focusing on select themes drawn from the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

Source: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml

Rights of Indigenous People

Topic Background

Throughout history, civilizations have continually worked to colonize and expand their boundaries throughout the centuries. As new countries colonize and dominate the area, the original inhabitants of the land, or the indigenous people, are at risk of losing their unique heritage. Today, according to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, today there are more than 370 million indigenous people in about 70 countries worldwide . Some examples of the indigenous population includes the Inuit of the Arctic, San, and Khoi groups in South Africa, Native Americans such as the Sioux and Nez Perce tribe, and tribal peoples in the Philippines.

By the conclusion of World War II, international organizations began to promote decolonization efforts; however, independent governments began to assimilate the indigenous population to their own. These indigenous groups have resisted, yet many have lost their lands and resources, and as a result, have often lost control over their own way of life.[i]

The 21st century has presented many problems for many of these indigenous people and their lifestyles. Increasing industrialization has threatened the communities and homes of indigenous peoples as increased deforestation and resource depletion threaten the wildlife. In addition, the climate change has affected many indigenous groups who rely on the climate for food production and survival.

Indigenous peoples are often socially discriminated against or perceived as less than human by the rest of the populace because of their unique cultural traditions. As a result of racism and the language barrier, often times indigenous groups are denied job opportunities, and medical care.[ii]

Finally, many of these indigenous groups are routinely raided for minerals, timber, farmland, oil and other highly desired natural resources. Many times the national government allows industries to develop an area, without consulting the indigenous groups that live in the said region[iii]. The lack of political representation is apparent as some governments refuse to recognize the laws or codes of conduct of an indigenous group.

Past Actions

The issue of the rights of indigenous people dates back to the existence of the League of Nations. In Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations the members accepted the duty of promoting the well-being and development of the indigenous population. The League used the term "indigenous" to distinguish between colonial powers and people living under colonial domination[iv].

After the League of Nations dissolved, the United Nations continued to address the rights of indigenous people. When the United Nations was founded in 1945, the Charter of the United Nations included a "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories" which called upon member states to protect the culture of people

living in these territories and help them develop self-governance. The people living in these territories included indigenous people.

Later, in 1981, the United Nations created the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The group allowed representatives of indigenous peoples to participate in drafting the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.[v]

After more than two decades of debate, on 13 September 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration emphasizes the "rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations."[vi] Although the Declaration is not binding, it aims to encourage countries to cooperate with indigenous peoples to solve issues such as decentralization, multicultural democratization.

In Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22, the member states created an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council. On July 28th, 2000 The Permanent Forum on the Indigenous Issues[vii] was created to advise the UN and raise awareness of the issues of indigenous peoples. In addition in 2001, the Commission on Human Rights decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people has a mandate to gather, request, receive, and exchange information on alleged violations of their human rights.[viii]

In addition to the wok of the United Nations, various non-government organizations aid in the plight to develop the rights of the indigenous people. Several of which include Native Planet and Cultural Survival, which are two that aim at self-empowering indigenous peoples and preserving world ethnic cultures. Cultural Survival is one NGO that holds a consultative status with the United Nations, and works to uphold the rights outlined in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[ix]

Possible Solutions

The United Nations aims at improving the status of indigenous peoples so that they are equal to all other peoples in terms of political and social status.

In order to achieve such equality, this committee should focus on addressing 3 subcategories:

- **Political representation:** Many indigenous groups are not allowed to exercise it's own customs or codes of conducts within the distinguished government. The international community must figure out how to allow these indigenous groups to have political representation, while the same time respecting a nation's sovereignty. Solutions would aim at allowing indigenous peoples to have representatives lobby for themselves in their national government.

- **Increasing social tolerance:** Social media campaigns or proper education could be implemented to teach civilians about the unique cultures of the indigenous population. By increasing awareness, the international community is able to bridge the gap between the dominant culture and indigenous culture in an area.

- **Defining the term "indigenous":** Many countries argue over the definitive definition the rights of indigenous people roots from the vague definition of "indigenous". Indigenous people do not have a formal distinct definition, but there are several factors that qualify a group of people as indigenous. Such characteristics include a distinct language, culture and belief and historical continuity with pre-colonial times. Some examples of indigenous peoples include the Inuit of the Arctic, Native Americans, hunter-gatherers in the Amazon, and Massai in East Africa.

Further Research

Guiding Questions
- Does your country have indigenous communities? What is your country's history with its indigenous communities?
- How does your government define indigenous?
- How can the international community ask governments to accommodate the needs of indigenous peoples, without infringing on national sovereignty?
- What international actions can be done to incorporate and respect indigenous communities?

Research Sources
- Official United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/61/295
- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: www.ohchr.org
- State of The World's Indigenous Peoples: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP_web.pdf

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[i] Indigenous Peoples: valuing, respecting, and supporting diversity http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/index_full.htm

[ii] Amnesty International: http://www.amnesty.org/en/indigenous-peoples

[iii] Who are Indigenous Peoples: http://www.culturalsurvival.org/node/10275

[iv] Commission on Human Rights ECOSOC: http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/e06a5300f90fa0238025668700518ca4/2b6e0fb1e9d7db0fc1256b3a003eb999/$FILE/G9612980.pdf

[v] UN Chronicle – Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples: http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/chronicle/cache/bypass/home/archive/issues2007/thesolidarityofpeoples/pid/21703?pagination=true&ctnscroll_articleContainerList=1_1&ctnlistpagination_articleContainerList=true

[vi] Frequently Asked Questions Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/FAQsindigenousdeclaration.pdf

[vii] United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples.aspx

[viii] Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: http://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/ipeoples/srindigenouspeoples/pages/sripeoplesindex.aspx

[ix] Cultural Survival: http://www.culturalsurvival.org/what-we-do