

## General Assembly Plenary

### Welcome

Dear Delegates,

Paola Eisner and Renee Qiaohan Li will your chairs for the General Assembly Plenary Committee, BUSUN's largest committee, for BUSUN 2010. Paola has been involved with Model UN since 2005 and serves as a member of the Secretariat for BUSUN and HAMUN as well as an active member of Model UN at Brown. She is concentrating in International Relations and Environmental Studies at Brown University as well as Apparel at Rhode Island School of Design. This is her second year serving on the GA Plenary Dias at BUSUN.

Renee Qiaohan Li is an international student from China. This will be her second year at Brown. She was involved in Model UN for two years in high school and has been involved in BUSUN since her freshman year. She is considering double majoring in Modern Culture and Media and Economics.

Questions and position papers can be sent to: [GA@busun.net](mailto:GA@busun.net)

### Committee Overview

The disorder and destruction of World War II prompted a group of 51 states to reinforce the values of peace and security through the concerted efforts of an international organization known as the United Nations (UN). The General Assembly (GA) was first established in 1945 under Article 7 of the Charter of the United Nations. Because of their numbers, developing countries are often able to determine the agenda of the Assembly (using coordinating groups like the G77), the character of its debates, and the nature of its

decisions. During the 1980s, the Assembly became a forum for the North-South dialogue – the discussion of issues between industrialized nations and developing countries. These issues came to the fore because of the phenomenal growth and changing makeup of the UN membership.

The GA is considered by many to be the most representative and democratic organ within the United Nations. With a membership currently comprised of 192 Member States, each state is given the rights to voice their countries various positions on a broad array of issues, debate the relative merits of competing resolutions and eventually vote on those resolutions. Each state is allotted one vote and all votes are weighted equally.

Keep in Mind:

Committee members should keep the issue of self-governance in mind when researching and writing resolutions about the three topics in question. The UN is required by the Charter to stand for the self-determination of all people, and as GA Plenary of BUSUN it is our duty to uphold this promise. The issues of voter intimidation, technologically funded terrorism, and the global traffic crisis all threaten this basic principle. Voter intimidation infringes with an individual's voice in electing a leader. Those who spread terror use violence and fear in an attempt to impose their minority ideology onto a majority in an attempt to forcefully subvert their self-determination. The Global Traffic Crisis, whose burden falls primarily on low and middle income nations, threatens the self-determination of individuals in those nations by curtailing their ability to control their own lives. We come together as the General Assembly Plenary of BUSUN to eliminate these existential threats to self-determination.

## Topic 1: Voter Intimidation and Manipulation in Elections

Voter manipulation and intimidation has been a major threat to the justice of election process in democratic countries, disenfranchising voters and weakening political systems. In national elections, successful voter manipulation and intimidation can have the effect of a coup d'état or the corruption of democracy.

Techniques of voter manipulation include gerrymandering, manipulation of demography and disenfranchisement, whereas voter intimidation can take the forms of violence or the threat of violence, attacks on polling places, legal threats and economic threats.

### Recent Development:

Today, voter manipulation and intimidation is a worldwide phenomenon. In recent years, credible reports of vote buying come from all regions of the world. With the aid of science, the political parties have turned the prediction and manipulation of voter turnout into a science. Elections involving the use of electronic voting technology are more prone to fraud in comparison to elections which use simpler technology. In recent years, the tactics of suppression have included dissemination of misinformation to minority voters, blanket challenges to voter credibility at the polls, and broadcasted warnings of criminal prosecution calculated.

### Bloc Positions:

States and areas with political and military crises are more likely to face electoral crises than states with a stable political environment. Countries like Sudan, Afghanistan and Lebanon top the list of countries with electoral fraud problems. Oftentimes, the battle against voter manipulation and intimidation also takes place

at the same time of the consolidation of democracy.

International organizations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Council of Europe and the African Union regularly deploy monitoring teams. The United Nations no longer provides monitoring services; instead it focuses on electoral assistance. Individual governments also participate in monitoring efforts, generally under the umbrella of an international organization. These national efforts are normally managed by the local electoral commission. A wide array of NGOs also participate in monitoring efforts. The Carter Center, for example, played a key role in building consensus on a common set of international principles for election observation.

### Questions to Consider:

What are the roles the international community and international organizations in regulating the issue of voter manipulation and intimidation? What have been taken and what actions can be taken to improve the situation?

What are the conflicts between the considerations of states and the concerns of the international organizations? What about the citizens of the states?

## Topic 2: The Role of Technology in Funding Terrorism

There are many methods of combating terrorism, but one of the most direct is obstructing a terrorist organization's means to get funding. Though the amount of resources necessary to carry out an attack varies on a case-by-case basis, without financial backing, terrorist attacks cannot be carried out. One of the plotters of the failed World Trade Center bombings of 1993, Ramzi Yousef, famously

stated that the attempt to bring down the towers in '93 wouldn't have failed if "I [Yousef] had enough money and enough explosives." Without money, terrorism is impotent.

To this end, the connections between terrorist funding and a new wave of technologically-aided terrorism have created new opportunities for funding. Terrorism has long been considered the "weapon of the weak" (Jackson), and terrorist groups have only begun to embrace technological advances in the last two decades. Technology is quickly becoming key to both terrorist attacks and terrorist networks. By utilizing social networking sites, radical jihadists have been attempting to curry support from populations all over the world that are usually not influenced or exposed to their ideas, even carrying the jihadist message to the United States. GPS, cell phones, and blackberries are known to be crucial in orchestrating attacks. And funding terrorism, which is at the very heart of a terrorist campaign, is increasingly dependent on technology. The level of dependency varies with the type of funding, whether that be through illegal drugs, diamonds, counterfeit money, identification papers, pirated CD's and videos, use of 'legitimate' business fronts, government funding, stolen cars, human trafficking, prostitution rings, manipulating the markets, and fraud schemes. Like videos used to spread the message of radical Islam to a more global audience, technology use allows for speedy money transfers to remote or distant parts of the world, allowing a minority to affect a global majority.

Questions to Consider:

What type of powers can the UN wield against nongovernmental enemies of human rights?

What type of advantages and disadvantages does the UN have as a global organization facing an increasingly globalized

issue of terrorism and how does that translate into effective policy?

Bloc Positions:

Countries affected by recent terrorist attacks will be most vehement on this issue, calling on the international community to act decisively. The technological shift described earlier brings high-income countries into unfamiliar positions towards terrorism. Lower to middle income nations are still the base of most terrorist activity and promotion, but as radical jihadist groups seek to expand their recruitment base, high income countries may find themselves facing threats from native citizens, changing the tone these countries take towards terrorism and what should be done to fight it.

### Topic 3: Global Road Safety Crisis

The issue of road safety is a global health crisis, and the figures are startling. Every day, 3,000 lives are lost from road-related injuries, and even more victims are disabled for life. The burden of these injuries - about 90% of the deaths - falls mostly on lower- and middle-income countries. This issue is especially relevant for BUSUN delegates since it is the second-leading cause of death worldwide for young people from 5-29 years (WHO 2004).

While road accidents are often seen as preventable, the problem could be mitigated by instituting and enforcing adequate legislation. This includes raising speed limits in busy urban areas, setting stricter limits for driving under the influence, and creating stronger regulations for helmet, seatbelt, and child-restraint use. Road accidents cause substantial health issues and demand resources that low- to middle-income countries could better use to further development, education, and health care.

In addition to the issue of traffic injuries, road safety and low levels of infrastructure also obstruct healthcare providers in low-income countries. In rural Afghanistan, for example, the difficulties of getting medical help to a rural location such as Badakshan is exacerbated by the poor quality of roads to that region (see links to read more about Badakshan).

#### Questions to Consider:

Why do traffic injuries occur more frequently in lower to middle income countries, and what can be done to counter this?

What has the UN as a body already done to lessen traffic injuries?

Why do the number of of traffic injuries continue to rise, and what needs to be done to reverse this trend?

What are some ways to circumvent the obstructions to aid posed by faulty infrastructure?

#### Bloc Positions:

This issue is especially important for low- to middle-income states where development and living standards are threatened by preventable traffic accidents and inadequate infrastructure, which impedes both internal services and foreign aid. Higher-income nations may have moral incentives for helping low- to middle-income countries..

#### Helpful Resources:

On the UN and General Assembly Plenary:

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charters/chapter1.shtml>

On Voter Intimidation:

<http://aceproject.org/>

(Electoral Knowledge)

<http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/tmpr11&div=21&id=&page>

[http://vote.nist.gov/threats/papers/threats\\_to\\_voting\\_systems.pdf](http://vote.nist.gov/threats/papers/threats_to_voting_systems.pdf)

On Technology funding Terrorism:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/15/us/15net.html>

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2007/RAND\\_RP1248.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2007/RAND_RP1248.pdf)

On the Global Traffic Safety Crisis:

[http://www.who.int/topics/injuries\\_traffic/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/injuries_traffic/en/)

<http://www.who.int/features/2010/afghanistan/en/index.html>

[http://www.transport-links.org/crse/Section%206/6.4\\_%20%20Road%20Safety%20as%20Health%20Problem.pdf](http://www.transport-links.org/crse/Section%206/6.4_%20%20Road%20Safety%20as%20Health%20Problem.pdf)