

AMERICAN MODEL UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AT AMUN REPRESENTATIVE HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION	3
I. THE UNITED NATIONS	
• Origins of the United Nations, Purpose of the United Nations, How the United Nations Seeks to Achieve Its Purpose, Structure of the United Nations.....	4
• Bloc Politics	5
II. THE SECURITY COUNCIL.....	7
• Issues in Africa.....	7
• Issues in Asia.....	10
• Issues in the Middle East.....	12
III. THE HISTORICAL SECURITY COUNCIL - 1961.....	15
• The Situation in the Congo	16
• The Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean.....	18
• Other Open Issues.....	18
IV. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	20
• The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)	
• The Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Security and Disarmament.....	20
• General and Complete Disarmament: Consolidation of Peace Through Practical Disarmament Measures ..	21
• The Second Committee (Economic and Financial)	
• Environmental and Sustainable Development: Promotion of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, Including the Implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005.....	23
• Sustainable Development and International Economic Cooperation: Integration of the Economies in Transition into the World Economy	24
• The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)	
• Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the Twenty-Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly	26
• Programme of Activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People	27
• The Sixth Committee (Legal)	
• Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention of 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Armed Conflict	29
• Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.....	30
V. THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY	32
• Protection of Medical Missions During Armed Conflict	32
• Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).....	33
• Southern Africa Humanitarian Crisis.....	34
• Transparency in Tobacco Control	36
VI. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL.....	38
• High-Level Segment: The Contribution of Human Resources Development, Including in the Areas of Health and Education, to the Process of Development	38
• Humanitarian Affairs: Special Economic, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance	39
• Economic and Environmental Questions: Science and Technology for Development.....	41
• Social and Human Rights Questions: Advancement of Women.....	42
VII. THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE	44
• <i>Republic of Guinea v. Democratic Republic of the Congo</i> : Ahmadou Sadio Diallo.....	44
• <i>New Zealand v. France</i> : Nuclear Tests Case (historical case: 1974)	45
• <i>Mexico v. The United States of America</i> : Avena and Other Mexican Nationals	46



2003 AMUN INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Secretary-General

Ryan Donovan

Under-Secretaries-General

Matthew Corso, *Research*

Rene Hendrix, *Publicity*

Karen Heymann, *Administration*

President of the General Assembly

Sarah Morse

Vice President of the General Assembly

Kelly Ziemann

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2003 American Model United Nations Conference would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals, without whom this *Issues at AMUN Handbook* would not have been possible:

Editor-in-Chief:

Adam Wolfe

Editors:

Matthew Corso

Brian Endless

Background Writers:

Marian Adly

Allison Atterberry

Jeremy Boss

Don Carey

Matthew Corso

Mario Crifo

Heather Denlinger

Christina Drennon

Brian Endless

Rachel Fritzler

Adam Goldstein

Justin Holdridge

Tim Hoppe

Kevin Ingram

James Ison

Ryan Kennedy

Michael Kenny

Chandra Linton

Brent Maxwell

Sara Mullen

Sarah Naeger

Lacy Parrish

Michael Selby

Bethany Sheppard

Vivek Srikrishnan

Eric Thomasgard

Chad VanderVen

Jacqueline Whitt

Erica Williams

A special thank you for the printing services provided by:

Harlan Aldort, Graphic Design & Printing, Chicago, Illinois

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE WRITE OR CALL:

American Model United Nations International

5005 West Winona

Chicago, Illinois 60630

Phone: (773) 777-AMUN

Fax: (773) 777-1963

E-mail: mail@amun.org

Web: www.amun.org

© Copyright August 2003, by American Model United Nations, Inc.
Reproduction of any part of this handbook may be made only by written
consent of American Model United Nations, Inc.

ISSUES AT AMUN 2003

INTRODUCTION

The *Issues at AMUN Handbook* has been published to assist Representatives in their preparations for the American Model United Nations (AMUN) Conference. When utilized to complement the research students do on the nation they represent and the topics of discussion, this handbook provides Representatives with all the substantive information they will require to function effectively at the simulation. Its sister handbook, *AMUN Rules and Procedures*, provides an overview of the committee/council rules and conference logistics with which Representatives need to familiarize themselves for the simulation.

The following pages contain brief overviews of the topics to be discussed in the Committees and Councils at the 2003 Conference. These are intended as a guideline and basis for Representatives' further research of the issues involved. In keeping with this, each overview includes a bibliography to guide Representatives on appropriate sources of additional information.

The overviews give a brief background into each topic and state some areas of current United Nations (UN) and international activity on the topic. In many cases, the overviews will frame the topic in terms of a few, limited parts of a highly complex issue. For example, the general issue of "the Environment" may have dozens of sub-issues -- in such a case, the overview may provide direction for Representatives to concentrate their research on "Ozone Depletion" and "Limiting the Destruction of the Rain Forests," only two of the many smaller issues. This format allows Representatives to go into greater detail in their preparations, without the need to research all aspects of the multifaceted main issue.

Chapter I - The United Nations is provided as essential background to give all Representatives a common ground about the history of the UN. This section begins with the origins of the UN and covers some important points about the organization. Finally, focus is given to problems confronting the UN today.

AMUN's philosophy in providing these topic overviews is to give Representatives *direction* in their research, but to leave the work up to them. **These overviews are not intended to be the sole source of Representatives' research on the topics prior to the conference.**

USE OF THE INTERNET

Note that many of works cited in this *Issues at AMUN Handbook* are resources located on the World Wide Web. Full text of many of AMUN's periodical sources are available to AMUN participants on-line. Feel free to visit AMUN's homepage at www.amun.org for a full list of recommended research links.

Three on-line sources of particular note are the United Nations homepage (www.un.org), *UN Wire* (www.unwire.org), a daily briefing on UN issues provided by the United Nations Foundation, and the *New York Times* on-line (www.nyt.com). These sources are heavily referenced throughout the issues briefings in this handbook. Additionally, the on-line copy of this handbook, also available from AMUN's homepage, contains direct links to all available documents cited in the *Issues* bibliographies.

For a more thorough discussion of on-line research sources, see "Utilizing the Internet" on page 14 of the *AMUN Rules and Procedures Handbook*.



CHAPTER I.

THE UNITED NATIONS

Representatives participating in American Model United Nations should be familiar with the history of the United Nations, as well as the rapidly changing role that the organization plays in international affairs. This section is intended to provide a brief background on the UN system and on some of the issues it faces today.

ORIGINS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations came into existence on 24 October 1945. On that day, the United Nations Charter became operative, having been signed by the fifty-one original members.

The concept of all nations' uniting together in one organization designed to settle disputes peacefully was born of the desire of civilized nations to avoid the horrors produced by the First and Second World Wars. The United Nations developed as a successor to the League of Nations, which represented the first attempts by nations to achieve this unity. The League failed in large part because the United States never joined as a member.

In 1942, President Roosevelt first coined the term "United Nations," when the Declaration of the United Nations was signed by forty-seven nations in support of the Atlantic Charter. In 1944, the United States, United Kingdom, USSR and China met in Washington, DC at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, where the first blueprint of the United Nations was prepared. In 1945, the final details for the United Nations were worked out at the Yalta Conference. Fifty-one nations gathered from 24 April through 26 June in San Francisco to draft the Charter of the United Nations, which was signed on 26 June 1945.

PURPOSE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The primary purposes for which the United Nations was founded are detailed in Chapter I, Article 1 of the Charter. These are:

1. To maintain international peace and security;
2. To develop friendly relations among Nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinctions as to race, sex, language and religion;
4. To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

HOW THE UNITED NATIONS SEEKS TO ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE

Since 1945, the United Nations has established itself as a forum for the discussion of international disputes. Also, Member States recognize that the United Nations has an established machinery which can be utilized as the means of solving international problems.

The United Nations seeks, both through its principal organs and various subsidiary bodies, to settle disputes through peaceful means, without resort to the threat or use of force. It should be recognized that the United Nations is not a world government, nor does it "legislate." Rather, the actions of the United Nations, as evidenced by resolutions passed by its bodies, have a strong moral persuasive effect. The Member States frequently find it within their own best interests to follow UN recommendations.

STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has six primary bodies:

The General Assembly (GA): The GA is the central organ of the United Nations. The GA has been described as the nearest thing to a "parliament of mankind," as all Member States are members of the GA, and each member has one vote. The GA makes recommendations on international issues, oversees all other UN bodies which must report to the GA annually, approves the UN budget and apportions UN expenses. On the recommendation of the Security Council, the GA elects the Secretary-General and holds the authority to admit and expel Member States. Voting in the GA is ordinarily by simple majority, although on "important questions" a two-thirds majority is required.



The Security Council (SC): The Security Council is charged with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It has the power to employ United Nations forces and direct action against threats to the peace. Fifteen members sit on the Security Council, including the five Permanent Members (China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States) along with ten “at-large” members who are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

A majority in the Security Council consists of nine members voting “yes.” However, a “no” vote by any of the Permanent Members has the effect of vetoing or blocking motions.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): ECOSOC is the primary body dealing with the economic, social, humanitarian and cultural work of the United Nations system. ECOSOC oversees five regional economic commissions and six “subject-matter” commissions, along with a sizeable system of committees and expert bodies. ECOSOC is composed of fifty-four Member States, elected by the GA for three-year terms.

Trusteeship Council (TC): In 1945 there were eleven Trust Territories, which were regions without their own governments. These eleven regions were placed under the TC, which helped them prepare for and achieve independence. With the admittance of Palau as a UN Member State in 1994, the TC has now completed its original mandate. The TC today is inactive, but is formally composed of the permanent Security Council members.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ): The International Court of Justice, or World Court, is the primary judicial organ of the UN, and decides international legal disputes. All UN members are automatically able to bring matters before the ICJ; however, States must agree to accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ before it can decide a dispute involving that state. Fifteen judges serving nine-year terms sit on the Court.

Secretariat: The Secretariat is composed of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Staff. Approximately 16,000 people are employed as the staff of the UN, one-third of whom work at the UN headquarters in New York City. The other two-thirds work for various subsidiary bodies of the United Nations. The Secretary-General serves a five-year renewable term.

In addition to the six main bodies, the United Nations includes a large “family” of specialized agencies and programs which the UN administers. Examples include the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

BLOC POLITICS

The system of “bloc politics” in the UN is one in which nations have organized themselves into groups based on areas of mutual interest. These blocs tend to be made up of nations with similar political, historical or cultural backgrounds. They are often formed on a geographic basis, but this is not exclusively the case. By organizing themselves with other nations that hold similar interests, bloc members hope to increase their influence above the level that they would have as a single nation in the General Assembly.

Bloc politics in the UN today is a misunderstood and rapidly changing phenomenon. The necessity of blocs in the UN was formally established in 1957, when four regional groups were endorsed by the General Assembly: the Latin American, the Asian and African, the Eastern European and the Western European and Others. Since that time, the bloc system has grown to encompass many of the political, economic and military organizations of the world. Examples of the major blocs include the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the European Community (EC).

Major changes in the utilization of blocs at the UN have occurred within the past five years, as explained below. Please note, however, that these groups do not have “official” standing as caucus groups at the UN, but are rather groups that meet, depending on the circumstances, to attempt to reach a consensus on various issues.

Blocs are often thought of as “Voting Blocs,” but this is a definite misnomer. They can be more realistically seen as “Caucusing Blocs:” groups which discuss issues together based on areas of mutual interest, but that often do not reach full agreement on all issues. A key consideration is that every country in a bloc will have different priorities **based on its own national interests**. Countries will often discount bloc considerations and vote in their own best interest in these priority areas.



Blocs usually attempt to form a consensus among their members which will allow them to act as a cohesive group. The effectiveness of any given bloc in exerting its positions in the General Assembly will often depend upon its ability to form a consensus among its own members. These acts of compromise form the basis of UN politics, and often must occur within the various caucusing groups before they can begin to apply to the UN as a whole.

Bloc politics have changed considerably in the last few years. Their viability as a political tool is diminishing; blocs are falling out of use. The most historically cohesive bloc, the Warsaw Pact, has ceased to exist as a military and political unit. Several other blocs, including the Western, are undergoing structural changes that will have a profound effect on the future of UN politics. The more organized blocs at present are the African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity), the Organization of American States, and the European Community.

One often misinterpreted area of bloc politics is that of the “Third World,” or developing bloc. A “Third World Bloc” has never existed. In actuality, several blocs of developing countries have existed. The Group of 77 (now consisting of 125+ nations) is the largest and is still sometimes thought of as the Third World Bloc. There are, however, developing nations which are not members of this organization, and many members also belong to several other organizations, particularly the Non-Aligned Movement.

Representatives should be aware that the Member State they represent may no longer actively participate in bloc politics, or may vote outside of its traditional bloc based on circumstances. For example, at the June 1992 Environmental Summit in Rio de Janeiro, several Group of 77 countries including India, a previous leader of the bloc, ignored bloc positions on environmental issues and followed their own national interests when participating at the Summit. The most accurate thing which can be said about bloc politics today is that they are in a state of flux. Many states are increasingly neutral on issues on which they once held strong views and that were shared with other members of their respective bloc. Other states are becoming increasingly independent on issues, or are concerned only with regional issues. One example of a new bloc which has formed in recent years is the “Alliance Against Biopiracy,” formally known as the “Group of Allied Mega-Biodiverse Nations,” which was formed to work together on sustainable development and similar issues. This group is comprised of 12 of the most biodiverse countries on the planet (China, Brazil and India, among others), with a combined total of over 70% of the world’s biodiversity within their collective borders.

For the purposes of the AMUN Conference, blocs will not be treated as “official” bodies. Representatives are encouraged to caucus in their bloc groups **only when appropriate**. Please remember there are many issues which cross bloc lines and many opportunities to invite an “involved nation” to another bloc caucus in an effort to achieve a consensus.

