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## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL BACKGROUND GUIDE 2012

Written By: Jenna Gleaton, Director; Katrena Porter, Assistant Director



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26 - 28 October 2012

## **Message from the Secretary-General Regarding Position Papers for the 2012 NMUN-DC Conference**

At the 2012 NMUN-DC Conference, each delegation submits one position paper for each committee assignment. Delegates should be aware that their role in each committee impacts the way a position paper should be written. While most delegates will serve as representatives of Member States, some may also serve as observers or NGOs. To understand these fine differences, please refer to the Delegate Preparation Guide.

Position papers should provide a concise review of each delegation's policy regarding the topic areas under discussion and establish precise policies and recommendations in regard to the topics before the committee. International and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions, and programs of action of relevance to the policy of your State should be identified and addressed. Making recommendations for action by your committee should also be considered. Position papers also serve as a blueprint for individual delegates to remember their country's position throughout the course of the Conference. NGO position papers should be constructed in the same fashion as position papers of countries. Each topic should be addressed briefly in a succinct policy statement representing the relevant views of your assigned NGO. You should also include recommendations for action to be taken by your committee. It will be judged using the same criteria as all country position papers, and is held to the same standard of timeliness.

Please be forewarned, delegates must turn in material that is entirely original. NMUN/NCCA will not tolerate the occurrence of plagiarism. In this regard, the NMUN Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to remind delegates that although United Nations documentation is considered within the public domain, the Conference does not allow the verbatim re-creation of these documents. This plagiarism policy also extends to the written work of the Secretariat contained within the Committee Background Guides. Violation of this policy will be immediately reported to faculty advisors and may result in dismissal from Conference participation. Delegates should report any incidents of plagiarism to the Secretariat.

Delegation's position papers can be awarded as recognition of outstanding pre-Conference preparation. In order to be considered for a Position Paper Award, delegations must have met the formal requirements listed below. Please refer to the sample position paper below this message for a visual example of what your work should look like at its completion. All papers must be typed and formatted in the same manner as this example. The following format specifications are required for all papers:

- Length must not exceed two single-sided pages
- Margins must be set at 1 inch for the whole paper
- Font must be Times New Roman sized between 10 pt. and 12 pt.
- Country/NGO name, school name, and committee name must be clearly labeled on the first page
- Agenda topics must be clearly labeled in separate sections
- National symbols (headers, flags, etc.) are deemed inappropriate for NMUN position papers

To be considered for awards, position papers need to be submitted by e-mail in .pdf or .doc formats by 1 October 2012. As proof of submission, include yourself as an e-mail recipient. Please use the committee name, your assignment, and delegation/school name in both the e-mail subject line and in the filename (example: GA1st\_Cuba\_Mars College).

1. Send one complete set of all position papers for each of your country/NGO assignments to the Secretary-General at [secgen.dc@nmun.org](mailto:secgen.dc@nmun.org).
2. Send a copy of your position paper for each assigned committee to the corresponding committee e-mail address listed below. Please note, the e-mail addresses will be active on 4 September 2012.

Committee	E-mail Address (after 4 Sept.)
General Assembly First Committee (GA1st)	<a href="mailto:ga1st.dc@nmun.org">ga1st.dc@nmun.org</a>
Security Council (SC)	<a href="mailto:sc.dc@nmun.org">sc.dc@nmun.org</a>
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)	<a href="mailto:ecosoc.dc@nmun.org">ecosoc.dc@nmun.org</a>
Human Rights Council (HRC)	<a href="mailto:hrc.dc@nmun.org">hrc.dc@nmun.org</a>
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	<a href="mailto:iaea.dc@nmun.org">iaea.dc@nmun.org</a>
World Health Organization (WHO)	<a href="mailto:who.dc@nmun.org">who.dc@nmun.org</a>

Once the formal requirements outlined above are met, Conference staff use the following criteria to evaluate Position Papers:

- Overall quality of writing, proper style, grammar, etc.
- Citation of relevant resolutions/documents
- General consistency with bloc/geopolitical constraints
- Consistency with the constraints of the United Nations
- Analysis of issues, rather than reiteration of the Committee Background Guide
- Outline of official policy aims within the committee's mandate

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact the Conference staff.

Sincerely,

Michael Aguilar  
Secretary-General  
NMUN-DC

## Sample Position Paper

The following position paper is designed to be a sample of the standard format that an NMUN position paper should follow. Papers may be no longer than two single-sided pages. Only the first two pages of any submissions will be considered for awards.

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*Delegation from*  
**Canada**

*Represented by*  
**University of Jupiter**

### *Position Paper for General Assembly Plenary*

The topics before the General Assembly Plenary are: Breaking the Link between Diamonds and Armed Conflict; the Promotion of Alternative Sources of Energy; and the Implementation of the 2001-2010 International Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa. Canada is dedicated to collaborative multilateral approaches to ensuring protection and promotion of human security and advancement of sustainable development.

#### **I. Breaking the Link between Diamonds and Armed Conflict**

Canada endorses the Kimberly Process in promoting accountability, transparency, and effective governmental regulation of trade in rough diamonds. We believe the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is an essential international regulatory mechanism and encourage all Member States to contribute to market accountability by seeking membership, participation, and compliance with its mandate. Canada urges Member States to follow the recommendations of the 2007 Kimberley Process Communiqué to strengthen government oversight of rough diamond trading and manufacturing by developing domestic legal frameworks similar to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. We call upon participating States to act in accordance with the KPCS's comprehensive and credible systems of peer review to monitor the continued implementation of the Kimberley Process and ensure full transparency and self-examination of domestic diamond industries. We draw attention to our domestic programs for diamond regulation including Implementing the Export and Import of Rough Diamonds Act and urge Member States to consider these programs in developing the type of domestic regulatory frameworks called for in A/RES/55/56. Canada recognizes the crucial role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the review of rough diamond control measures developed through the Kimberly Process and encourages States to include NGOs, such as Global Witness and Partnership Africa Canada, in the review processes called for in A/RES/58/290. We urge Member States to act in accordance with A/RES/60/182 to optimize the beneficial development impact of artisanal and alluvial diamond miners by establishing a coordinating mechanism for financial and technical assistance through the Working Group of the Kimberly Process of Artisanal Alluvial Producers. Canada calls upon States and NGOs to provide basic educational material regarding diamond valuation and market prices for artisanal diggers, as recommended by the Diamond Development Initiative. Canada will continue to adhere to the 2007 Brussels Declaration on Internal Controls of Participants and is dedicated to ensuring accountability, transparency, and effective regulation of the rough diamond trade through the utilization of voluntary peer review systems and the promotion of increased measures of internal control within all diamond producing States.

#### **II. The Promotion of Alternative Sources of Energy**

Canada is dedicated to integrating alternative energy sources into climate change frameworks by diversifying the energy market while improving competitiveness in a sustainable economy, as exemplified through our Turning Corners Report and Project Green climate strategies. We view the international commitment to the promotion of alternative sources of energy called for in the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Control (UNFCCC) as a catalyst to sustainable development and emission reduction. Canada fulfills its obligations to Article 4 of the UNFCCC by continuing to provide development assistance through the Climate Change Development Fund and calls upon Member States to commit substantial financial and technical investment toward the transfer of sustainable energy technologies and clean energy mechanisms to developing States. We emphasize the need for Member States to follow the recommendations of the 2005 Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference to strengthen domestic policy frameworks to promote clean energy technologies. Canada views dissemination of technology information called for in the 2007 Group of Eight Growth and Responsibility in the World Economy Declaration as a vital step in energy diversification from conventional energy generation. We call

upon Member States to integrate clean electricity from renewable sources into their domestic energy sector by employing investment campaigns similar to our \$1.48 billion initiative ecoENERGY for Renewable Power. Canada encourages States to develop domestic policies of energy efficiency, utilizing regulatory and financing frameworks to accelerate the deployment of clean low-emitting technologies. We call upon Member States to provide knowledge-based advisory services for expanding access to energy in order to fulfill their commitments to Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Canada urges States to address the concerns of the 2007 Human Development Report by promoting tax incentives, similar to the Capital Cost Allowances and Canadian Renewable and Conservation Expenses, to encourage private sector development of energy conservation and renewable energy projects. As a member of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, Canada is committed to accelerating the development of renewable energy projects, information sharing mechanisms, and energy efficient systems through the voluntary carbon offset system. We are dedicated to leading international efforts toward the development and sharing of best practices on clean energy technologies and highlight our release of the Renewable Energy Technologies Screen software for public and private stakeholders developing projects in energy efficiency, cogeneration, and renewable energy. Canada believes the integration of clean energy into State specific strategies called for in A/62/419/Add.9 will strengthen energy diversification, promote the use of cogeneration, and achieve a synergy between promoting alternative energy while allowing for competitiveness in a sustainable economy.

### **III. Implementation of the 2001-2010 International Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa**

Canada views the full implementation of the treatment and prevention targets of the 2001-2010 International Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Especially in Africa, as essential to eradicating malaria and assisting African States to achieve Target 8 of Goal 6 of the MDGs by 2015. We recommend Member States cooperate with the World Health Organization to ensure transparency in the collection of statistical information for Indicators 21 and 22 of the MDGs. Canada reaffirms the targets of the Abuja Declaration Plan of Action stressing regional cooperation in the implementation, monitoring, and management of malaria prevention and treatment initiatives in Africa. To fully implement A/RES/61/228, Canada believes developed States must balance trade and intellectual property obligations with the humanitarian objective of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. We continue to implement Paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health into our compulsory licensing framework through the Jean Chrétien Pledge to Africa Act. We urge Member States to support compulsory licensing for essential generic medicines by including anti-malarial vaccines and initiating domestic provisions to permit export-only compulsory licenses to domestic pharmaceutical manufacturers, similar to Canada's Access to Medicines Regime. Canada calls upon Member States to establish advanced market commitments on the distribution of pneumococcal vaccines to developing States in cooperation with PATH and the Malaria Vaccine Initiative. We emphasize the need for greater membership in the Roll Back Malaria initiative to strengthen malaria control planning, funding, implementation, and evaluation by promoting increased investment in healthcare systems and greater incorporation of malaria control into all relevant multi-sector activities. Canada continues to implement the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) New Agenda for Action on Health to reduce malaria infection rates among marginalized populations in Africa, increase routine immunizations rates, and reduce infection rates of other neglected infections. Canada will achieve the goal of doubling aid to Africa by 2008-2009 by providing assistance to the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. We urge Member States to increase donations to intergovernmental organizations and NGOs that support malaria programming in Africa, exemplified by CIDA's contribution of \$26 million to the Canadian Red Cross. We continue our efforts to provide accessible and affordable vector control methods to African States through the Red Cross' Malaria Bed Net Campaign and the African Medical Research Foundation Canada by supplying insecticide-treated mosquito nets and Participatory Malaria Prevention and Treatment tool kits.

## **Official Welcome**

The 2012 National Model United Nations Washington D.C. (NMUN-DC) Conference team and your Director, Jenna Gleaton, and Assistant Director, Katrena Porter, would like to welcome you to the Human Rights Council. Jenna graduated from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and currently lives in Fort Worth, Texas. Katrena is a first year law student in Louisiana and spends her free time doing NMUN. Everyone at NMUN-DC has worked diligently to prepare for this conference, and we hope that you will conclude the weekend at the conference with a greater appreciation for the international work being done to protect human rights.

As we know from our combined four years on the dais, Model United Nations is a great opportunity for delegates to gain a new set of skills and expand their knowledge. We have worked hard on this background guide to include vital information on the topics before this committee. It is intended to serve as a starting point for your research and help you delve deeper into the topics. Your preparation will aid you throughout the conference and allow you to represent your Member State's policies and positions to the best of your ability.

The Human Rights Council has played a significant role in bringing increasing international attention to the protection of human rights. During your preparation, we stress that it is vital for delegates to understand the wide range of issues falling under human rights to ensure an educational and dynamic simulation during the conference.

It is our privilege to be a part of your experience at NMUN-DC, and we look forward to working with all of you and watching your work unfold.

## **History of the Human Rights Council**

On March 15, 2006, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) was created via General Assembly (GA) Resolution 60/251. The GA elects 47 UN Member States to make-up the Council. After its first year, the Council produced and put in place an institution-building plan to help moderate and direct its workings and objectives. The most significant of these mechanisms are the Universal Periodic Review, the Advisory Committee, and the Complaint Procedure. An additional mechanism established by the HRC, the United Nations Special Procedures, works in conjunction with the HRC to address specific human rights problems in various countries. The HRC acts as a forum for Member States, non-governmental organizations, and other intergovernmental bodies to interact and focus on human rights issues. These interactions can serve as a way to alert the Council of human rights violations, discuss planning for solving these issues, and allow Member States to address their own duties in regards to the Council. In the Council's work, strong emphasis has been placed on reviewing human rights violations of Member States and acting as an international forum for discussion, as well as taking action in the event of emergencies and abuses. The HRC can also suggest international laws related to human rights to the General Assembly.

Over the past two years, the HRC has attempted to strengthen its institutional capacities and efficacy, occasionally facing criticism. Several outcomes of these attempted reforms include appointing new rapporteurs (including that of Iran), creating commissions of inquiry, improved funding mechanisms for technical assistance, and the assignment of independent experts. There has also been a strong drive to prioritize human rights in various areas including through the writing of a resolution that allowed the creation of a special rapporteur to protect Freedom of Assembly and Association. The HRC also recently founded a Working Group of Independent Experts to prevent Discrimination Against Women, and endorsed a statement entitled "Ending Acts of Violence and Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity." The 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council was held in Geneva from February 27 to March 23, 2012. Several topics of focus at this session included the situation of human rights in the Middle East and Africa, eliminating discrimination on the basis of religion, as well as the right to food, adequate housing, and rights of the disabled and children. While these few topics were addressed, countless others remain to be discussed at future sessions. As long as there are human rights violations present throughout the world, the HRC will be there to combat them as best as it can, promoting global cooperation as it goes.

## I. Implementing Human Rights Education in Political Transitions

- Why is implementing human rights education essential during political transitions? How do the United Nations and the international community as a whole accomplish this?
- Where have human rights education programs been implemented successfully in political transitions and how can they be applied to other countries in the process of transitioning?

In 1948 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), which outlines the human rights Member States agreed should be given to all people; some of these rights include the right to freedom, to be free from torture and slavery, to equality, to education, to work, and various others granting people their rights to “life, liberty and security of person.” The preamble of the UDHR states that: “[E]very individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms.” As such, the UDHR stresses the importance education plays in upholding the rights it outlines. In addition to the UDHR, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education Training (Resolution 6/10) are also key documents that emphasize the necessity of human rights education in the promotion of human rights. Human rights education refers to programs, groups, or organizations established for the purpose of educating citizens, teachers, and government officials on the basics of human rights and how to uphold those rights.

The documents mentioned, such as the UDHR and Vienna Declaration, have led to the creation of other treaties, resolutions, and organizations that also underline the importance of human rights education. For example, Amnesty International is an organization that has established human rights education programs that make various teaching tools available to activists and teachers. Making tools available and sharing teaching curricula are the primary ways human rights education happens. Another resource that was created to promote human rights education was the Human Rights Education Web site, run by the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. This Web site provides teachers and students with information on human rights in general and the importance of educating individuals about those rights. It also contains tools for teachers and students to use in the classroom to learn about human rights. Amnesty International and the Human Rights Education Web site are just two examples of types of human rights education programs. Other types include international non-governmental organizations, localized programs, state implemented programs, and any other group, organization, or program that utilizes its resources for educational purposes. Considering all of these different types of human rights education, states can choose whether to implement specific programs and how to go about doing so. Global movements and organizations such as Amnesty International, however, have the information readily available for anyone that wants or can obtain access to the information.

Human rights education is an important factor in upholding human rights and the Amnesty International Web site explains it best by stating that “learning about human rights is the first step toward respecting, promoting and defending the rights of all people.” Promoting and implementing human rights education is first and foremost essential for states to be fully knowledgeable on the wide range of human rights and what upholding those rights entails. Human rights education is secondly vital for guaranteeing those rights by equipping citizens with the knowledge to know what they are due, instilling in people a belief in the importance of human rights, and strengthening political systems. This can become especially fundamental when a country faces a political transition, which can include the changing of political parties, election of a new president, creation of a new party or government, or a newly established democracy. Unfortunately, some forms of education that require state implementation can be difficult to apply and maintain during a time of political transition because of political party or group differences, lack of resources, military control, and a multitude of other factors that have the potential to hinder any form of political or economic progress.

One case that demonstrates the important, but difficult act of implementing human rights education programs during a time of political transition is Afghanistan. The “Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Afghanistan and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights” illustrates how factors, such as those mentioned above, can intervene by calling attention to the continued attacks and conflicts, throughout 2011, between the Afghan National Security Forces and the International Security Assistance Force. These conflicts have only added to the human rights atrocities and prevented programs from stabilizing within the country. Though there has been increased conflict, there have also been some areas of success

in human rights education and training in Afghanistan. The report illustrates the potential for success by discussing the Human Rights Unit of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (OHCHR/UNAMA) and the work it has done with other organizations including those focused on human rights education. One of OHCHR/UNAMA's endeavors was with the European Union's Police Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL). According to the report, OHCHR/UNAMA and EUPOL worked to "provide training to Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) staff on police accountability and investigation skills." Through this program, OHCHR/UNAMA and EUPOL hope to teach AIHRC how to notice where and how human rights are being violated and how to prevent those violations.

Overall, the case of Afghanistan illustrates how one country is utilizing resources to establish successful and stable educational programs during a time of political transition. The many different ways human rights education can be used and implemented further illustrates its importance in making international progress. Given this, delegates and the HRC need to consider how similar programs and initiatives can be implemented in countries where there has been even less success, and how national and international actors can aid in the process. Only by doing so will human rights education programs be successful and the chance of political stability increased.

## **II. Supporting the Work of Civil Society Organizations**

- How can the Human Rights Council achieve its goals of globally empowering and protecting human rights by supporting Civil Society Organizations?
- What steps can the Human Rights Council take to support Civil Society Organizations? How could this type of support impact the international community and global affairs?

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are found in most parts of the world under a variety of aliases. While the term refers to those organizations that reflect individuals organizing with other individuals outside of government or business, in general, they are seen as non-governmental and non-profit organizations (NGOs and NPOs) that use their unique position in society to play a vital role pushing for progressive causes. This role includes being able to leverage citizens together to hold officials and states accountable to citizens, act as an agent outside of government to call for greater transparency, and better reach and address citizen concerns on a local level. Examples of these groups include trade unions, student groups or clubs, sisterhoods or brotherhoods, charities, and various other organizations with similar qualities. CSOs, depending on their focus, therefore, can be beneficial to states and regions by reporting human rights violations, spreading information, offering safe havens for victims of wrongs, as well as simply being integrally involved in their communities.

The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) sees interaction with CSOs as promising because of the many overlapping goals they frequently share. These goals consist of objectives such as improving the general well-being of the public, eliminating discrimination, giving the community a voice, and advocating for the end of conflicts. However, it must be stressed that not all CSOs hold these goals; some work to counter efforts at increasing rights while others can be simple associational organizations without a goal outside of bringing together those with common interests. Regardless, because of limited resources, CSOs may not always have the means to achieve their goals. In this case, the HRC may be able to help by providing CSOs further education needed to inform the public and by promoting training for future preventative measures regarding violations. Conversely, CSOs may be able to assist the HRC by providing a way to reach the public from within instead of attempting to access the people as a foreign entity.

One way that the HRC has attempted to work with CSOs is by providing them an arena in which to participate, especially regarding the Universal Periodic Review and Special Procedures mechanisms. In order to participate, an NGO wishing to participate (in this case, the CSO) must be in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) per ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of July 1996. When this stipulation is met, the organization is granted Observer Status, which allows them to attend all proceedings of the HRC, except deliberations under the Complaints Procedure; submit written statements and make oral interventions to the HRC; participate in debates, dialogues, discussions, and informal meetings; and organize other various events that are relevant to the HRC's work.

Demonstrating the importance of CSOs to achieving the goals of the HRC, in the past twenty-five years, CSOs have been the basis for many nonviolent uprisings across Eastern Europe, resulting in new borders for places such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria. More recently, in the Middle East, civil society in general and numerous CSOs have been able to force political leaders out of office, reorganize other political groups, and even partner on or force governments to hold elections in some countries. In other places, such as Liberia, a women's movement comprised of several CSOs helped to end the civil war, force drawn out political decisions, and organize rallies and sit-ins.

The importance of CSOs is not to be underestimated as they can hold the key to positively affecting world affairs by promoting human rights and helping the UN achieve its goals. However, dilemmas may arise when choosing how and when CSOs should be supported by the HRC. While certain CSO goals may overlap with those of the HRC, other ideas may inherently contradict the beliefs of the HRC. For instance, what happens when a CSO promotes an end to civil war, yet also promotes child trafficking? Should focus be placed on certain CSOs and not others? What is the criterion for deciding who to assist and who not to? There is currently much room for interpretation when it comes to interacting with CSOs. Establishing and drafting a viable, clear plan for working with CSOs can increase the potential of CSOs to be problem-solvers for local, regional, national, and even international human rights violations and issues. As the HRC continues its work, particular attention should be paid to CSOs and how the human rights situation may be improved, not by outside force, but through a country's own people. When small-scale changes are made, worldwide transformations can follow.

### **III. The Situation in the Middle East**

- What are the current major concerns in the Middle East and how are national and international communities addressing them? What is the significance of the Responsibility to Protect and how is it being implemented?
- How are the Human Rights Council and individual countries working to eliminate human rights abuses, especially those among women and children, in the Middle East?

Under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the United Nations (UN) attempted to create a tool for identifying human rights abuses and establishing guidelines for Member States to follow in order to prevent those abuses. The rights to religion, life, speech, and freedom from torture are some of the rights being infringed upon in the conflicts in the Middle East. Governments in the Middle East, as well as the international community, have a responsibility to their people to ensure that these rights are protected. Since early 2011, there have been numerous human rights violations throughout the Middle East costing the lives of thousands of citizens and bringing human rights issues to the attention of the global community. Two countries in particular that have witnessed these violations are Yemen and Syria. In a UN News Centre article, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) recently declared, "Yemen has all the indications of an acute humanitarian crisis." Additionally, Syria has suffered frequent human rights violations by the Syrian army according to the Human Rights Council's (HRC) "Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic."

During these times of unrest in the Middle East, women and children are among those facing the most hardships and human rights injustices. In Yemen, as of May 2012, nearly 30 children have lost their lives to attacks, and even more have fallen to diseases. In 2011, the Security Council requested that weapons not be used at peaceful demonstrations to prevent the deaths of civilians, especially women and children. This request has yet to be carried out by opposition forces. As a result of the lack of progress in Yemen, at the conclusion of the HRC's nineteenth session in 2012, the HRC urged the global community to continue to support Yemen both financially and physically in its efforts to end human rights violations and protect women and children. In Syria, according to the "Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic," close to 10,000 civilians have lost their lives since March 2011. Because of this, the Security Council approved the creation of the UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), which established "300 unarmed military observers" in the area. However, due to the increased level of violence, as of June 2012, the observers have had to withdraw. At the HRC's fourth emergency meeting on Syria, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of progress in Syria, especially in the protection of women and children. Within both Yemen and Syria, and the Middle East as a whole, it is important to observe and strengthen the human rights of women and children as they are the most vulnerable groups and have been the most affected by the attacks.

In addition to ensuring the safety of women and children, promoting healthy living and education should also be a priority because unhealthy living and disease are contributors to a high number of deaths, and proper education helps ensure the rights of women and children. In order to promote health, the WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the Syrian Ministry of Health worked on a vaccination campaign that, according to the United Nations News Center, affected "7.6 million children between the ages of six months and ten years across the country." This campaign was an effort to save millions of lives and illustrate the UN and international community's commitment to preserving and increasing children's rights to healthy living and medications. Additionally, it illustrates the UN and the international community's efforts to implement and maintain these types of programs despite the conflicts taking place in those zones. Another topic of concern, given the current situation faced by women and children in the Middle East, is the right to education. With recent attacks on schools and women being forced to stay home to take care of the sick and wounded, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for women and children to obtain proper education. Ultimately, the lack of education makes it difficult for women and children to survive because of their lack of skills, in the work place and at home, as well as knowledge of what they are due, such as human rights. However, while eliminating diseases and obstacles to education is necessary for guaranteeing women and children their rights, this cannot be accomplished without local and international governments first ensuring their protection.

Though the global community has worked to address the human rights violations in the Middle East through international efforts such as Kofi Annan's peace plan for Syria and the request of more global participation in Yemen, it has still failed to prevent the atrocities. One of the ways that the international community attempted to rectify this and enforce the protection of human rights was through the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). At the UN 2005 World Summit, "world leaders made a historic commitment to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity;" this commitment was agreeing to the principle of R2P. R2P outlined state and international responsibilities in protecting citizens. It places the burden on Member States, but also calls upon the international community to protect against human rights abuses. Unfortunately, R2P is failing in most cases in the Middle East because local governments are not acting according to the guidelines outlined in R2P and because the international community is struggling to receive the support it requires to act. This is especially evident in Yemen and Syria where certain Member States, either because they are allies of the countries in question or they simply refuse to intervene, are preventing actions from being taken. For example, in the fourth emergency meeting on Syria, Russia, China, and Cuba did not support condemning Syria for its actions, which hindered the progress of R2P by not having all of the international community's support in protecting Syria against human rights abuses.

Despite the difficulties in implementing and upholding R2P, and in light of the agreed upon principle of R2P and the situation in the Middle East, there are several questions to consider when analyzing how the HRC can utilize R2P to alleviate human rights abuses in the Middle East: To what extent can the HRC implement R2P? How and when can the HRC determine the appropriate time to apply R2P? In addition, aside from R2P, what can the HRC do practically to address the situation? When, or if, the UN Security Council and HRC decide to act, the situation in the Middle East will remain a focus of the international community if the human rights abuses continue to rise. The HRC serves a unique role, as it is able to report and try to depoliticize the issue; therefore, both Security Council and HRC action, along with international and national cooperation, are essential for eradicating as many of these injustices as possible.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

### ***History of the Human Rights Council***

General Assembly. (2006). 60/251. *Human Rights Council*. Retrieved on May 24, 2012, from: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/a.res.60.251\\_en.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/a.res.60.251_en.pdf).

*This document by the General Assembly officially created the Council. The Commission on Human Rights (on which the HRC was based) was previously a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council while this document establishes the Council as an inter-governmental body under the General Assembly. This General Assembly document sets forth the need to both preserve and elaborate on the Commission on Human Rights' previous work, while simultaneously addressing any shortcomings it may have had. It states where the HRC is to be held, what the goals of the HRC are (i.e. serving as an international forum, suggesting international law), and how the HRC might carry out these goals.*

Human Rights Council. (2007). *5/1. Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council*. Retrieved on May 2, 2012, from: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A\\_HRC\\_RES\\_5\\_1.doc](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_5_1.doc).

*The document 5.1. Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council establishes the mechanisms by which the HRC operates. Each procedure is broken down to the last detail, focusing on how they should function and how Members are elected. Rules of procedure are also discussed for regular and special sessions of the HRC.*

UN News Centre. (2012). *FAQ's on the Human Rights Council*. Retrieved on May 24, 2012, from: [http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/hr\\_council/hr\\_q\\_and\\_a.htm](http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/hr_council/hr_q_and_a.htm).

*This Web site is dedicated to frequently asked questions regarding the HRC. It gives a good basic breakdown of how Members are elected, what the Members are expected to do (i.e. working to protect human rights, including signing commitments and voluntary pledges), and how Members can be suspended for committing human rights violations. The page also gives a good explanation of how the HRC and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights are both distinct yet still work together.*

### **I. Implementing Human Rights Education in Political Transitions**

Amnesty International. (2012). *Human Rights Education*. Retrieved on June 5, 2012, from: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/resources/educators>.

*The Amnesty International Web site provides numerous links and additional information about how the international community is working together to address human rights. It is an example of an organization that attempts to educate on human rights. The teaching modules it utilizes are geared toward developing countries. This particular page delves into human rights education in specific and provides a good basic understanding of the definition of human rights education. It also mentions why it is important and the impact it has on countries.*

Human Rights Council. (2012). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Afghanistan and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights*. Retrieved on June 5, 2012, from:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-47\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-47_en.pdf).

*This report discusses the events in Afghanistan up to early 2012. It includes the results of numerous conflicts and the causes of those conflicts. It also discusses the difficulty Afghanistan is having with its political transition. Additionally, it discusses programs, organizations, and groups that have been created and are working together to address these conflicts and establish methods of human rights education to aid in the transitioning process. This report provides solid examples of different types of human rights educational programs. It discusses in more detail the Human Rights Unit of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, European Union's Police Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and various other programs and organizations set up to provide human rights education.*

Human Rights Council. (2007). *United Nations declaration on human rights education and training (Resolution 6/10)*. Retrieved on May 21, 2012, from:

[http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A\\_HRC\\_RES\\_6\\_10.pdf](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_6_10.pdf).

*This document goes into detail about the importance of human rights education by requesting the HRC Advisory Committee come up with a draft declaration on human rights education and training. This document by the HRC also asked the Committee to obtain ideas from various organizations and countries on what could be put in the declaration. Furthermore, the resolution requests that the Committee present a progress report to the HRC on the progress of the draft declaration. This resolution highlights the international community's commitment to human rights education and the HRC's attempts to increase that education.*

United Nations. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved on May 1, 2012, from:

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

*This source contains the full text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is important for delegates because it outlines the human rights that were agreed should be given to all people, and it is vital to know the basic structure of the issue and have a solid foundation for beginning research. This was a*

*groundbreaking document because it was one of the first to outline specific human rights. Some of the rights include freedom from slavery, torture, and arbitrary arrest, and the right to be recognized as a person before the law.*

United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. (2012). *Human Rights Education*. Retrieved on May 21, 2012, from: <http://www.humanrightseducation.info/>.

*This Web site shows various methods and tools for establishing human rights education programs. It contains information and tools for students, teachers, groups, and organizations. It also contains various links to other resources, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It will give delegates a better understanding of what the term means and how it can actually be implemented.*

## **II. Supporting the Work of Civil Society Organizations**

Human Rights Council. (2012). *Civil Society*. Retrieved on May 23, 2012, from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ABOUTUS/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>.

*This Human Rights Council Web site highlights several examples of CSOs. It also gives instances of how they may operate to improve society such as campaigning for equal rights, working to heal conflict, and distributing information. There is also discussion of the importance of the overlap between some of these organizations and the HRC, which is working towards equality and respect among peoples.*

Human Rights Council. (2012). *Civil Society Section*. Retrieved on May 23, 2012, from: [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/CivilSociety/CSS-OHCHR-Leaflet\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/CivilSociety/CSS-OHCHR-Leaflet_en.pdf).

*This is a leaflet from the Civil Society Section of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It discusses the importance of working with civil society to encourage people to support and defend human rights. Different mechanisms for implementing those rights are also mentioned, such as the Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review, and Special Procedures.*

Economic and Social Council. (1996). *ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31*. Retrieved on May 2, 2012, from: <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm>.

*Though the HRC is not part of the Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC was the first UN organ to allow NGO participation. As such, ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 is imperative in discussing the consultative relationship between the UN and NGOs. The document discusses at length how NGOs specifically interact with the HRC via observation, written submissions, and oral interruptions. It also discusses the recollection of the changes in the non-governmental sector and how this can affect the UN.*

Human Rights Council. (2012). *NGO Participation in the Human Rights Council*. Retrieved on May 2, 2012, from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NgoParticipation.aspx>.

*This Web site serves as a Frequently Asked Questions page for NGO Participation in the HRC. In short, it discusses what items are found on the standing agenda such as the Universal Periodic Review, technical assistance and capacity building, and human rights bodies and mechanisms. There are also several quick links provided which lead to vital documents for NGOs wishing to participate (i.e. NGO Written Statement Submission Form, Link to Oral Statement Request Form).*

Human Rights Council. (2006). *Universal Periodic Review*. Retrieved on May 2, 2012, from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRmain.aspx>.

*The Universal Periodic Review process is discussed on this page of the HRC Web site. The Review was designed to assess the human rights violations and situations in each of the 192 Member States every four years. The Web site covers the Review's formation and how it was simultaneously established with the HRC. Aside from the Review's creation, the Web site also talks about the goals of the Universal Periodic Review's founding as well.*

Trust Law. (2012). *Anti-Corruption Views – Middle East Turmoil Shows Risks of Ignoring Civil Society*. Retrieved on May 23, 2012, from: <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/blogs/anti-corruption-views/middle-east-turmoil-shows-risks-of-ignoring-civil-society/>.

*This article discusses the importance of civil society in connection with international organizations such as the UN. It goes into several examples such as the Middle East and Liberia in regards to civil society issues*

*there (i.e. the women's movement in Liberia, CSOs forcing leaders from power in Tunisia and Egypt). However, it also warns that if international notice is not taken and civil society is ignored, there may be consequences such as regional instability and unforeseen uprisings.*

### **III. The Situation in the Middle East**

Human Rights Council. (2012). *Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*. Retrieved on May 21, 2012, from:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-69\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-69_en.pdf).

*This report outlines the current events in Syria. It includes the conflicts taking place as of 2011, the cause of the conflicts, successful and failed attempts at addressing the conflicts, and requests and recommendations to end the violence and prevent additional deaths. Some of the recommendations include creating a political dialogue between the opposing forces to determine the best methods for eliminating the violence, informing the people detained why they are detained to ensure a proper trial, promising not to torture detained soldiers, and multiple others aimed at promoting peaceful solutions and ceasing deaths.*

Human Rights Council. (2012). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Yemen*. Retrieved on May 3, 2012, from:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-51\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-51_en.pdf).

*This report provides information on the state of affairs in Yemen and the steps being taken to improve on the situation as of 2011. It discusses the human rights violations and recommendations of the Office of the High Commissioner to address these violations, such as releasing prisoners that were taken for expressing their right to assemble, the increased cooperation of Yemen government with the UN, investigating torture incidents, and numerous others that are aimed at easing tensions in Yemen. This provides delegates with a specific example of a current situation in the Middle East and what is being done to address the human rights violations.*

International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect. (2012). *An Introduction to the responsibility to Protect*. Retrieved on May 3, 2012, from: <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/about-rtop>.

*This Web site explains in detail what the Responsibility to Protect is and how it functions. It also discusses how it came into existence and how it can be implemented within the international community. This page in particular outlines three stipulations of R2P. This Web site is essential for delegates to obtain a basic understanding of R2P and how it applies to human rights and the Middle East.*

United Nations News Centre. (2012). *As death toll rises, UN urges greater protection of civilians in Yemen, especially, minors*. Retrieved on May 21, 2012, from:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41982&Cr=yemen&Cr1=>.

*This article provides an example of a specific human rights violation. It gives details on the atrocities taking place in Yemen, especially those affecting children. The article further discusses how weapons and diseases are affecting the children in Yemen. Additionally, this article contains data on the number of civilians affected by disease and conflict.*

United Nations News Centre. (2012). *UN mission in Afghanistan condemns attacks on schools by insurgents*. Retrieved on May 21, 2012, from:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41984&Cr=Afghan&Cr1=>.

*The purpose of this article is similar to that of the one above. This provides another example of human rights violations against children. This article in particular outlines the effect conflict has on education by illustrating the difficulties children have in getting a proper education when schools are being bombed and invaded. Reading specific examples of these violations will aid delegates in their research and help delegates gain a better understanding of the topic.*