LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Anita Butani
Undersecretary-General

Michael Yu, *Chair*

The Ivy League
Model United Nations Conference
Ninteenth Annual Session

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Delegates,

Hello and welcome to the Economic and Social Council of the 19th annual Ivy League Model United Nations Conference! Over the past year, our staff has been hard at work writing background papers and planning events to bring you a smooth-running, dynamic, and fun conference.   This year's Economic and Social Council is led by some of Penn's most experienced staff members, and covers topics that I hope you will find both pertinent and engaging.

To tell you a bit about myself, I am a sophomore from outside of Washington DC studying Management and Real Estate at the University of Pennsylvania. Between high school and college, I have participated in over twenty MUN conferences, in a variety of capacities both on staff and as a delegate. Outside of MUN, I work as a Team Advisor in the Management Department at Penn and I'm active in Penn's South Asia Society.

During conference, I will be working my hardest to ensure that your weekend is productive and stimulating, but it's up to you to truly capitalize on your ILMUNC 2003 experience. Research your country's position on the topics at hand, and be prepared to absorb yourself in intense and captivating debate. Over the course of the weekend, I would love to hear your feedback about the conference, so feel free to introduce yourself and tell me what you think. Between now and January 30th, if you have questions relating to ECOSOC or the conference in general, don't hesitate to email me at ecosoc@ilmunc.org. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you soon!

Regards,

Anita Butani
Under Secretary General, Economic and Social Council
Ivy League Model United Nations 2003

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Michael Yu and I would like to welcome you all to the 19th annual session of the Ivy League Model United Nations Conference, and to the Commission on Least Developed Countries.

I am currently a senior graduating from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in International Studies, Economics, and French Studies. I spent the last fall studying in Lyon, France; which was a really awarding experience, as I gained a new perspective on examining international relations. Plus, I only had class two days a week and was able to travel throughout France and to a few neighboring countries.

This is my third year working on the Ivy League Model United Nations Conference, having served on the dais for the United Nations Development Program two years ago and the Special Committee on HIV last year. As you can see, I have significant model UN experience in developing counties and I look forward to hearing your insights and debates in January.

Please use the assembled materials in our background guide to help start your research for this committee. Being well prepared will enhance the conference for you and your fellow delegates.

Until then, feel free to send me an e-mail about whatever you have on your mind: the conference, the committee or even questions about Philadelphia and college life. I look forward to meeting you all in January!

Sincerely,

Michael Yu
Chair, Commission on Least Developed Countries
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Topic One

The Population Strain in Least Developed Countries

Introduction

The primary purpose of the Commission of Least Developed Countries is to address intercontinental issues that are of particular concern to underdeveloped countries and that may be incompletely recognized in regional summits. Specifically, the committee deals with the 49 countries designated as the world's least developed by the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In these countries, growth remains stagnated despite globalization elsewhere, poverty is widespread, and the basic infrastructure to change is severely lacking. The bulk of attention is placed on developmental concerns – either the results of rapid development initiatives without corresponding attention to infrastructure and ability, or the existing circumstances which make such initiatives difficult. Overpopulation and the establishment of population control mechanisms is arguably an issue that falls within both categories. As the population strain grows in these countries, the pressure to launch effective programs to address the issue intensifies.

Statement of Issue

One of three criteria for qualification as an LDC is a population that is under 75 million. This means that the population problem for an LDC rests not in the presence of a large population in absolute terms, but instead on the inability of the governments to provide for that population due to a lack of ressources and/or infrastructure capacity. The result is widespread poverty, disease, malnutrition, and a host of other grave humanitarian problems.

All Least Developed Countries (LDCs) struggle with a population structure that is unsustainably high given their current economic conditions. Several have made overtures to enact population control mechanisms.[1] However, the question of the actual impact of a large population remains unsettled.

Some have argued that high population growth is actually necessary for rapid development, providing a large consumer base to promote industry and to provide a large enough labor force to work in the industrial sector.[2] Such arguments that high growth promotes development cite the historical population growth of current developed countries during their periods of industrialization.

Overwhelmingly, the opinion is to the contrary – that is, high population growth has a tendency to impede development. This argument holds that the benefits that can be derived from the natural resources of underdeveloped countries are at or near capacity.[3] Thus, additional growth has a tendency to reduce per capita benefit of these natural resources rather than to create pressure to improve resource extraction. There are further arguments that rapid growth also requires the reallocation of capital investment in supporting this burgeoning population as opposed to using these resources in industrial development.[4]

Changes in population size depend on three main factors: mortality, fertility, and migration.[5] As a result, the demographic structure of the population has important implications.[6] It is noteworthy that most underdeveloped countries have a significantly high birth rate, compounded with a high mortality rate. This situation generally leaves a small productive adult population whose efforts are largely consumed in supporting this growing younger generation.

The focus of this committee is not to simply recognize that a population strain exists, but rather, on how countries will choose to deal with this strain. The committee should look to establish clear fertility control measures as well as guidelines that address the limited resources and infrastructure which LDCs have to allocate to this issue.

History

Long-term population growth and development have a strong and consistent correlation throughout history. Indeed, the first major shift in population growth trends is thought to have occurred with the advent of agricultural techniques. These techniques, such as the domestication of plants and animals and the development of durable farming tools, enabled early communities to support a larger group of people on fewer resources. An equally strong impetus for growth likely arose from the creation of a market economy and the growth of urban centers.[7] Such development allowed a certain degree of specialization that improved agricultural efficiency. The increase in numbers also permitted the labor force to extend beyond farming and cultivating endeavors to more sophisticated, development-oriented practices, such as irrigation, reclamation, and terracing.

Population growth between 0 AD and 1650 AD was slow and matched a period of relatively low social and economic development in the West, where most changes were simple improvements on past techniques. Between 1650 and 1970, population growth took another upswing largely coinciding with the movement towards industrialization. Population growth during those periods matched an estimate of about 6 to 10 per cent growth per century, before 0 AD; 2.4 to 5 per cent growth per century between 0 AD and 1650 AD; and 65 per cent growth per century between 1650 AD and 1970.[8]

Despite recent declines in population growth rates, in absolute terms, population growth in 1994 was at an all time high.[9] Furthermore, declines in fertility rates in the less developed regions were markedly less significant than elsewhere.[10] Global population projections for 2015 vary from a low of 7.1 billion to a high of 7.8 billion with a median of 7.5 billion.[11] Figures for underdeveloped coun-

tries are more severe. Whereas increases in developed regions between 1995 and 2015 are expected to be 120 million, increases in less developed regions are expected to be 1,727 million – more than 10 times the growth of the developed regions.[12] Global population estimates for 2050 vary much more significantly, ranging from a low of 7.9 billion to a high of 11.9 billion, with a median of 9.8 billion.[13] The actual population will depend largely on the success of current and future population initiatives.

Relevant International Action

There are three significant conferences that form the major body of work with concern to population growth and control- The World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1975, the International Conference on Population at Mexico City in 1984, and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at Cairo in 1994. Of the three, the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo has had the most weight for least developed countries, being built upon the previous two conferences and with a particular focus towards developmental issues.

The ICPD understood population concerns and developmental concerns to be intrinsically linked. Consequently, many of the proposals from the ICPD Programme of Action broadly included developmental concerns: shortage of jobs, poverty, and lack of access to resources. The Programme of Action strongly encouraged the protection of equality and the provision of education to women who play a pivotal role in reducing fertility. Family planning and informed free choice were some of the principle policies endorsed. At the same time, reproductive rights, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were emphasized. The Programme of Action also acknowledged the varying cultural, religious, and philosophical backgrounds of nations. It further noted that developing countries may lack the resources to accomplish population initiatives themselves and encouraged support from developed countries and non-governmental organizations.

Analysis

The strong interrelationship between population and development necessitates a sophisticated examination of causality to determine where best to initiate policy.

Almost all of the least developed countries are currently pursuing some type of policy to limit population growth. While population growth may have fed innovation and rapid development in the Industrial Revolution, the current situation in LDCs is markedly different. These countries have severe developmental issues that are exacerbated by population pressure. Not a single country on the list of LDCs can provide the full basic necessities for its population. Alarming population structures threaten to make the situation worse: in most of these countries,

the bulk of the population is below the age of 25, which means that the coming years will bring a surge in population, straining already threadbare resources. Furthermore, while early industrialization fueled the expanded market for goods, the current breadth of the international marketplace precludes a similar outlet for the industrial products of developing countries. Simply put, the industrial output of most LDCs cannot compete on the international stage, and this fact tends to discourage industrialization.[14] Indeed, the arguments that population size is a hindrance to development are much more valid and widely accepted.

Resource capacity is severely limited in all LDCs. Basic necessities such as access to clean water are lacking for the majority of the population. Due to deficiencies in capital for infrastructure development, improvements in resource extraction are limited and access is seldom shared equally. The result is widespread poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, prenatal health concerns, and environmental degradation.[15] Limited capital and poverty restrict access to social services, thus reducing the efficacy of government health initiatives, reinforcing impoverished conditions.

In this situation, mortality, infant mortality, and morbidity rates tend to be very high, and quality of life for the majority of the population remains low and stagnant. The short lifespan of children results in a disturbing economic trend: poverty-stricken families increase the number of income-bearing family members by producing as many children as possible. The hope is that some will survive their abridged childhood to begin work at an early age, and in some cultures, care for their elderly parents when they reach adulthood.

Widespread presence of this practice clearly exacerbates the situation in a country. Increased population puts a strain on government and local resources, which further impoverishes the whole community. Children who are put into the labor force at a young age rarely receive an adequate education. This cycle continues as the uneducated workforce stifles development, thus perpetuating poverty.

From a population control perspective, the point of action in this cycle would be to aim at lowering fertility rates. However, the approach taken must be carefully examined, and should not impose on internationally recognized human rights. From the ICPD's Programme of Action, these rights include "the basic right of deciding freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children." The Programme of Action further emphasizes promoting voluntary fertility as opposed to the use of incentive and disincentive schemes. Many of the impoverished families may exercise their rights without knowing consequences. The short run benefit for them is likely higher with a larger family.

The additional recommendations against incentive and disincentive schemes present another potential difficulty for population control. Programs, such as China's

"One Child Policy," where state benefits apply only to the first child, are not sanctioned by this body.

Consequently, fertility control initiatives must either attempt to remove the circumstances which cause couples to have many children (for example: poverty, infant mortality rates, lack of education) or aim for some degree of cultural shift, by which individuals themselves must decide against large families. In both instances, such a decision requires a demonstration of the larger scale consequences of having big families and must provide options about alternative family structures and economic paths.

Education is a principal manner through which such a change can be enacted. Studies have shown a significant correlation in the level of education of women and the number of children that they bear.[16] Such education has included an emphasis on family health and development and its relationship to the investment of time on child rearing. Efforts to warn families about health risks to the mother that result from too many births or births that are too close together should be considered. Education to increase literacy can improve the quality of life, thereby reducing the need to have large families.

The resources necessary for broad-based education of children and adolescents in LDCs must be thoroughly contemplated by this committee. A lack of education and economic opportunities, as well as the disturbingly common trend of sexual exploitation, lead to an increased level of child bearing.[17]

Another significant factor in family planning programs is access to contraceptives and programs. Africa, home to 34 of the world's 49 LDCs, has the lowest level of contraceptive use. In fact, in most African countries it hovers around 20%. Contraceptive use has grown significantly in Latin America, the Caribbean, and East Asia. However, for the rural poor in almost any nation, availability is low or limited to certain forms.

Possible solutions

Family planning programs have been emphasized in all relevant international work. However, such documents as the ICPD's Programme of Action remain quite general. As a result, least developed countries have only vague guidelines on how to proceed. Responsibility for this ambiguity rests with the large body of representatives to the conference and the unique economic, social, and cultural backgrounds of the countries represented. As a meeting focusing on the specific concerns of countries in only the direst of developmental straits, this committee should be able to elaborate on the ICPD Programme of Action and provide greater guidance to LDCs. The committee must remain mindful, however, of the existence of numerous socio-cultural and religious differences among LDCs, which will no doubt necessitate broader terms or, at the very least, recognition of the unique regional backgrounds.

A variety of variables contribute to the overall fertility rate of a population: age of entry into sexual unions, permanent celibacy, amount of reproductive time spent after or between unions, voluntary abstinence, involuntary abstinence, frequency of intercourse, fecundity or infecundity as affected by involuntary causes, use or non-use of contraception, fecundity or infecundity as affected by voluntary causes, fetal mortality from involuntary causes, and fetal mortality from voluntary causes.[18] The committee should consider which of these variables can be potentially adjusted for their population policies and how such changes should be implemented. Indeed, many of the variables would be difficult or morally questionable to attempt to influence, and other variables should be approached carefully with relevant human rights protocols in mind.

Education is one approach and is considered central to family planning programs. Information is necessary for informed free choice. The content of such education currently rests ambiguous. It may be inadvisable to determine what should be taught in these programs, yet it would be beneficial to provide a stronger sense of direction on what should be emphasized. The Programme of Action stresses the equal treatment of women and the rights to reproductive health, and these may work as a starting point for the committee.

Access to information is equally important, and while according to the ICPD Programme of Action developed countries have a responsibility to help LDCs in their efforts, a simple capital infusion will not solve the problem. Infrastructure for implementation must be considered, along with campaigns to promote awareness. Access to family planning programs is an issue which cannot be ignored, and decisions must be made on how to provide such programs equitably and without discrimination. Consideration should be given to locating, training, and possibly providing incentives for educated and qualified personnel to operate such programs in typically remote and/or impoverished areas. Furthermore, material resources are needed and often absent. Quite notably, the preference for different forms of contraception, which may vary in duration from temporary to permanent, and may have different social and physical consequences, may be a relevant issue to address in order to provide families with a sufficient range of options to support their decisions.

Incentive and disincentive schemes have been discouraged by the ICPD Programme of Action, but not refused. Certain countries may consider such initiatives to be necessary to help slow their fertility growth. Such programs, however, must be carefully monitored and should not overstep the bounds of international human rights.

Monitoring by the government and NGOs has also been encouraged to ensure that family planning programs and other initiatives follow such human rights guidelines and are fairly and appropriately run.[19] Some form of regu-

lation should be instituted to protect programs from being abused.

Conclusions

The persistence of a population strain presents a significant burden on the social and economic development of least developed countries. Although there has been moderate success in reducing growth rates, the population of LDCs continues to expand at a disturbing pace. Whereas previous meetings have established a general framework on how to proceed, more detailed guidelines are necessary to provide sufficient direction for action. Family planning programs, in which education is a central tenant, have and should continue to be emphasized. Accessibility, infrastructure, and capital funding are primary concerns as well. Incentive and disincentive schemes are possible, but discouraged, because human rights laws must be respected. Only with proper and effective initiatives can population and development be appropriately managed for LDCs.

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[3] David M. Heer, *Society and Population,* (Englewood, Prentice-Hall: 1968), 89.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 90.

[5] Quentin H. Stanford, *The World's Population: Problems of Growth*, (New York, Oxford University Press: 1972), 6-8.

[6] *Op cit.*, 83-84.

[7] *Op cit.*, 14-15.

[8] *Ibid.*, 16.

[9] Document A/CONF.171/13; 1994, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development,* p.6.1.

[10] Document E/CN.9/2002/2, Commission on Population and Development, *Concise report on world population monitoring, 2002: reproductive rights and reproductive health with special reference to human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS),* p.32.

[11] *Op cit.*, p.1.4.

[12] *Ibid.* p.6.2.

[13] *Ibid.* p.1.4.

[14] Heer, *Society*, 88-89.

[15] *Conference*, p.3.13.

[16] *Population Monitoring*, p.44.

[17] *Op cit.*, p.6.42.

[18] Heer, *Society*, 54-58.

[19] *Conference*, p.3.6.

Topic Two

Good Governance

Introduction

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) represent the most economically and developmentally challenged members of the international community. Formed to combat the perils of these nations, the Commission on Least Developed Countries has developed an agenda that, by 2015, strives to significantly alleviate extreme poverty; to aid in the development of infrastructure where it is most needed; to attain food security; and to promote good governance. After reconvening for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2001, the Commission recognized that many of the goals set fourth in the Paris Programme of Action (1990) had not been attained. As a result, the new Programme of Action articulated a new approach – drawing on aid from more developed partners – to achieve the same ends: sustained economic growth and development, and good governance. The latter is of specific interest as it has, more recently, been a topic of heightened public interest as well as international concern.

Statement of Issue

"Good Governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development." – Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

At the very crux of the UN's ability to successfully promote economic and social development in LDCs lies a certain prerequisite: the existence of good governance. Governance, although a rather loose term, refers to (1) the form of the political regime, (2) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources, and (3) the capacity of the governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions. Good governance, along the same lines, must be characterized by (1) the existence of legitimacy through democratization, (2) the existence of accountability through free press and a transparency of decision making processes as well as other political accountability mechanisms, (3) competence to formulate policies and deliver services, and (4) respect for human rights and rule of law.[1]

The inability and ineffectiveness in implementing change in LDCs is a result of the lack of good governance. Non-authoritarian governmental regimes are either highly corrupt or choked by a inadequate economic or infrastructural support. In order to affect change and reform in LDCs, the governments must represent and have concern for the interests of its people. After all, good governance ensures that political, social and economic policies are based on broad consensus in society that includes all

areas of the socio-economic ladder. Hence, it is the responsibility of the United Nations to promote good governance, especially in nations in which political and economic stability is nonexistent, in order to then begin programs of economic growth and human development.

This paper will first elucidate the history behind the problems of governance in LDCs. It will then examine relevant international action that has been taken to remedy the situation, and finally, it will provide an in-depth analysis of the problem and offer possible solutions to the situation.

History

Many of the perils of governance in LDCs can be traced back to the dying days of colonialism in Africa, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world. Africa was peppered with international influence throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The subcontinent had representation from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Belgium. Oftentimes, this representation was rather random in orientation. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, European nations saw Africa as an unharnessed land, one with much opportunity and resources yet to be discovered. As a result, in the course of 45 years, there was a mad rush to acquire land on the continent. The rush resulted in a rather arbitrary distribution of land between the colonial powers. At the time, the European nations built up individual military presence in their territories as a result of conflicts (as was evident in the Boer War 1899-1902) and the risk of loss of newfound territory. The Europeans saw that their role in Africa was to civilize and rule. They often argued that the natives were incapable of ruling themselves. Africa was used as a source for raw materials, and the African peoples were subordinated by the European settlers.

Similar problems were observed in the colonization of South and Southeast Asia. At the turn of the 20th century, Afghanistan was part of the British "Sphere of Influence" as were nations like Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. Lao PDR and Cambodia were under French rule at the time. It is no coincidence that these nations are now LDCs. During colonial rule, these nations were not granted ability for autonomy – economically or politically. They were ruled by a small group of the western aristocracy, and were used primarily as sources of raw materials. The governing officials were distant from the people and were not concerned, to a great degree, with the wellbeing of the people of the nation. Economically, the nations exported large quantities of raw materials to the colonial world only to be unfairly compensated for their labor if compensated at all. As a result, the colonies as well as much of the "sphere of influence" were both politically and economically dependent on the colonizing country.

When the Europeans left both portions of the world – Africa and SE Asia – they left behind an economic and social disaster. The economies, having been built around

a colonial power, became very weak. In both areas, the rapid exit resulted in an arbitrary drawing of borders. In Africa, tribes were split in halves or thirds by this arbitration. In Asia, various religious groups – Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims – were split into factions and divided by the drawing of the borders. The result: governments put in place by the departing colonizers had to either (1) resort to corrupt and abusive measures to maintain order in their countries or (2) permit themselves to be toppled by the unrest within their borders. Most nations chose the former, and the result is the current situation.

The second major event leading to corruption of governance in LDCs occurred in the periods following the Cold War. Afghanistan is a prime example of this corruption. In 1979, the USSR had sent Soviet troops to Afghanistan. The United States provided weapons and economic assistance to the guerrilla resistance force, the Taliban. Following Soviet pullout in 1987, the United States withdrew all support for the guerrillas, leaving them cash-strapped and without guidance. As a result, the regime usurped power and dealt with their hardships by creating an oppressive, quasi-totalitarian regime. The USSR as well as the United States propped up similar totalitarian regimes in Africa and Haiti during the time as well. In order to prevent nations from falling to Soviet rule, the United States poured money into corrupt and even oppressive regimes simply to ensure their support against the Soviets.

As a result, good governance is extremely hard to find in most developing nations, let alone LDCs. The global community has been rudely awakened to the consequences of its actions most recently. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, we have witnessed not only the crimes committed by these formerly supported regimes but also their corruption. We have witnessed a devastating famine in Ethiopia and Somalia, ethnic fighting in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, crimes against humanity in Afghanistan, and the list continues. In most of these cases, good governance could have thwarted the disaster or brought resolve to the situation in less time. Most recently, the world has noticed that the lack of good governance leads to the emergence and sheltering of terrorist groups within these nations. Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Cambodia, and many other LDCs have had connections with the global terrorist ring, Al Qaeda, and have been providing them with refuge as well as resources to continue their global terrorism. Al Qaeda, in Afghanistan and Somalia, provided resources – military, economic, political – to the regimes in power. For many resource-starved governments, such organizations provide the only assistance. The events of September 11, 2001 have led to the heightened awareness of the lack of good governance and its consequences in LDCs. Hence, the global community has now recognized the problem and must start to combat its immediate as well as far-reaching effects.

Relevant International Action

It is very possible to examine the reports from the past 3 United Nations Conferences on Least Developed Countries. The truth is that the goals set in prior years are yet to be matched. However, the current situation is different, though. It is different because the necessity for international action has become much more pressing in recent years and months. Together with the UNDP, the Commission on LDCs has devised a course of action for development and implementation over the next 15 years. This paper will examine two recent international actions – the Brussels Declaration and the Thematic Trust Fund for Democratic Governance – and how they plan to deal with the current problems.

The Brussels Declaration, of May 2001, developed a Programme of Action to take place between 2001 and 2010. For this program, the second commitment was promoting "Good Governance at national and international levels." The conference on LDCs recognized that success in "meeting the objectives of development and poverty eradication depends...on good governance within each country.[2]" Successful implementation of these goals hinged on transparent, accountable and efficient institutions and practices within the Government, private sector and civil society. Following this introduction, the committee devised a set of guidelines for the LDCs as well as the development partners. The committee established that the LDCs, in order to achieve a level of good governance, must continue "efforts to establish an effective, fair and stable institutional, legal and regulatory framework in order to strengthen the rule of law." Furthermore, LDCs must also respect and promote all internationally recognized human rights, foster transparency in government, pursue strategies to promote confidence building and conflict prevention, encourage broad-based popular participation in development, promote and protect equality, strengthen efforts to fight corruption and other illicit activities, as well as many other guidelines. Development partners were urged to support the LDCs in partaking in this program, providing appropriate assistance, and ensuring that the above-mentioned guidelines were being met satisfactorily.

The committee on LDCs has also worked with the UNDP to create a rubric for promoting democratic or participatory government systems. Together, they developed a six-part program to deal with current demand and country needs:

1. Strengthening of legislatures and legislative bodies.

2. Instating or reforming electoral systems and processes.

3. Ensuring access to justice and guaranteeing human rights.

4. Promoting abilities of citizens to access public information freely.

5. Urging the decentralization of government in favor of a shift to more local governance.

6. Recognizing the importance of responsive, accessible and accountable public administration as well as civil-service reform.

The actions and suggestions of the Brussels Convention as well as the UNDP Thematic Trust Fund are the most relevant and most recent actions from the UN regarding the promotion and implementation of good governance.

While action of the UN is extremely important to the fostering of conditions conducive to good governance, so is money-flow. The IMF has, over the past 5 years especially, been concerned with governance. The IMF argues that "good governance is important for countries at all stages of development. [Their] approach is to concentrate on those aspects of good governance that are most closely related to [their] surveillance over macroeconomic policies – namely the transparency of government accounts, the effectiveness of public resource management, and the stability and transparency of the economic and regulatory environment for private sector activity.[3]"

As a result, the IMF has been actively trying to improve the management of public resources through certain reforms that cover public sector institutions (such as the Treasury, Central Bank, civil service, etc.). It has also supported the development and maintenance of a transparent, economic regulatory environment conducive to efficient private sector activities. The IMF recognizes that weak or even corrupt governance and poverty go hand in hand, and as a result, recognize their role in this situation as integral.

Analysis

The LDCs are comprised of 49 states that house 10.7% of the world population, yet transact a mere 0.5% of the world GNP. It is apparent that, in concurrence with the findings of the IMF, weak and corrupt governance and extreme poverty are highly interrelated. A recent study put out by Transparency International (TI Quarterly report, Spring 2002) studied corruption levels nationwide and compared them with the development status of the nation. Each nation was given a corruption index out of 10, with 10 being the highest level of corruption. On average, under-developed nations (per-capita GNP < $1,500) scored 1.93 points higher than moderately developed nations (per-capita GNP $1,500 < x < $10,000) and a full 3.13 points higher than developed nations (per-capita GNP > $10,000). This index measures estimates of corruption within public and private installations. The conclusion of the study was that economic strife within a nation corresponds directly with corruption in the public as well as private sectors. Without a doubt, LDCs are currently plagued with corrupt regimes and governments, and in order to improve the status of these nations, the corruption must be immediately combated.

India, a former LDC nation, is a prime example of a nation in which corruption has been detected and in which measures have been taken to combat it. From 1992, when the previous data on corruption was released by TI, India has fallen by 1.70 vantage points on the scale. Similar trends have been witnessed in poorer countries in the South Pacific as well as impoverished Latin American nations. All but three nations that were upgraded from the status of "under-developed" to "moderately-developed" witnessed sharp declines in corruption data. Most nations of Sub-Saharan Africa as well as Southeast Asia did not, however, see any positive change in their data.

Corruption does not change when the economic status of the nation remains stagnant. Lack of regard for the people as well as a lack of representation within the government allows corrupt leaders to be bought and sold by corporations or wealthy individuals with various agendas. Similarly, from a state of unchallenged authority, individuals may crush their opposition in order to maintain an iron-fisted hold over their country. Zambia, although an LDC, has taken significant steps towards combating this problem, setting an example for other nations to follow in its footsteps. A year ago, after an extremely corrupt decade of rule, President Frederick Chiluba hand-picked a replacement that he felt would protect his corrupt past and secrets in a manner he found acceptable. What Zambia found in Levy Mwanawasa who is now President, was very different. Mwanawasa, although at first greeted by challenges over the legitimacy of his own election, has since lifted the veil and made transparent the corruption of Chiluba's reign. Mwanawasa's efforts have led to massive amounts of incriminating evidence against Chiluba, many Justices, the Zambian ambassador to the US, and other high-ranking government officials as well as high-profile citizens. Mwanawasa's actions demonstrate that if even Zambia, considered by TI to be one of the world's most corrupt countries, can begin efforts to fight corruption, then so can other LDCs. With fighting corruption comes the scope for good governance.

Another rampant problem worldwide, but especially in LDCs is the widespread oppression of minorities, women, and opposition groups. These groups, oftentimes, lack representation in government, and as a result, the system perpetuates itself. In only 16 countries worldwide, do women have more than 25% in national parliaments or 20% of the ministerial posts. Globally, more than 2/3 of all political parties lack women in their governing bodies. Statistics on minorities and opposition groups in LDCs are equally alarming. Good governance cannot be achieved as long as a country oppresses certain groups based on belief, religion, race, sex, creed, etc. One of the defining characteristics of good governance is its representation of all individuals who the government is to govern. As a result, reforms are desperately needed in nations like Afghanistan, Somalia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and Sierra Leone. In all of these nations, groups in society, be they women, minorities, or people of different political belief, have been oppressed by either purely totalitarian regimes or governments that closely resemble such regimes.

Representation is not integral merely for allowing every citizen's voice to be heard, but for many other reasons. Amartya Sen, a long standing intellectual mentor for the UN, has argued that "no substantial famine has ever occurred in a democratic country because a government that has to deal with opposition parties, to answer unfriendly questions in parliament, to face condemnation from the public media, to go to the polls on a regular basis, simply cannot afford not to take prompt action to avert threatening famine.[4]" A good example of democracy building is Afghanistan. Granted that it took a war with international activity, Afghanistan has gone from a country in which 15% of citizens (Economist, March 2002 estimate) were sympathetic to the governing regime with the remaining 85% of citizens too fragmented to challenge the military authority of the regime to a reforming nation. Women are now being integrated into society and education systems as well as other ethnic groups and tribes. The media has a heightened the sense of freedom, and forces the government to be relatively transparent. Furthermore, Afghanistan is once again recognized in the international community as a trade partner, and can begin to build up its wealth and capital with which it can revive the national economy. While there is still much work that needs to be done in Afghanistan, the more representative regime is definitely a change for the better as it promotes good governance.

In nations such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Yemen, the United States, as well as other European nations, are working to combat corruption and terrorism within the borders. Such aid from developed countries is extremely important to fostering conditions in which good governance can flourish. With international aid, nations like Yemen and the Philippines can combat terrorist groups without fear of becoming even more cash-strapped. And with heightened international security, such nations need not fear the repercussions of pursuing terrorist groups within their own borders.

At this point, it seems as though LDCs are all moving in the right direction to combat the forces of corruption and promote democratic ideals. The truth is, however, that this is not the case. Most LDCs are still plagued by extreme corruption in which most of the national wealth is controlled by a select few and the remainder of the population is in destitution. Haiti is the perfect example of such a nation. Nearly eight-years after a U.S. military-led invasion to restore a president over a military junta, the country is in shambles. Jean-Bertrand Aristide has failed to effect change, and in fact, has made the situation worse. Haiti has a horrid record of official corruption and mismanagement. A recent study, by the World Bank, concluded that 15 years of aid (ending 2001) had no discernible effect in reducing or combating poverty. Government projects were carried out haphazardly, distribution of contracts was plagued with corruption, and government officials did nothing to sustain improvements. Democratic ideals have also been challenged in the nation as well. "Political opponents said that the government has money to provide cars for legislators or pay off neighborhood groups that are its foot soldiers that, the opposition charges, have been used to intimidate government opponents.[5]" Such descriptions are far more common in LDCs than the images of reform and repair conjured by the more encouraging examples of Afghanistan and Zambia.

Possible Solutions

A model nation that has demonstrated to the world that reform is possible is Botswana. The country is no longer an LDC, yet was among the most impoverished of nations merely a decade prior. In 1997, Botswana recused itself from the so-called "blood-diamond" trade, and made the industry government-regulated. Undoubtedly, as a result, there were a few people who amassed fortunes in the process, yet the government has put this newfound income to good use. Unlike Congo and Sierra Leone where these diamonds are sought-after with such violence that they are the root of much bloodshed, Botswana's government has used the income to purchase and distribute AIDS drugs for free to combat its own epidemic. Furthermore, through its partnerships with Europe and America, Botswana has witnessed faster growth in income per person over 35 than China, the US, or any other nation. This example provides sound proof that reform and promise exists.

With other, less-fortunate nations, much work must still be done. Internal organization must be strengthened and members of parliament as well as staff must be trained to serve their country well. Elections must be held or monitored by independent bodies, and elections must be low-cost and fair. There must be free exchange of information on candidates/parties, and voters must be educated on their systems. Respect for law must be instilled in the emerging governments as well. For, with such respect comes justice as well as respect for human rights. The governments must also run with relative transparency as to safeguard against the appearance of impropriety, or corruption. Furthermore, government must be scaled-down to a local level as well, as to ensure that no group – ethnic or socioeconomic – is left behind.

On this rubric, most individuals will find it hard to disagree. The problem results in implementation. First implementation must occur with complete deference and respect for the nation's autonomy and sovereignty. All of the countries, however impoverished and corrupt, are sovereign nations and must not be compromised. Furthermore, there must exist some international support network that monitors the reforms and changes administered by the governments. This network must also be able to monitor changes and appearances of impropriety. Nations must submit reports on a regular basis to the network which are verified by independent agents. These reports will monitor the progress and development of the nation. There must, of course, also exist certain international support networks that aid, with contributions from developed nations, the

LDCs support and reform their governments. This is a rather loose framework on which to begin reform, but it is a basis on which more specific reforms must be built in order to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

Conclusion

The process of democracy building has emerged as a popular and effective tool of good governance in the global community. In the late 1970's, there existed only 40 countries whose governments had democratic systems of government in effect. At the present, over 130 nations, consisting of two-thirds of the world's population, are "democratic" nations and societies. There, though, is still much to do. LDCs are still plagued by weak governance, and it is the role of the UN and the international community to provide assistance. Good governance lies at the very crux of the issues of economic progress and human development and must be implemented in order to ensure the improvement of life in LDCs.

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TOPIC THREE

Environmental Impacts of a Developing Economy

Introduction

The global environment is of concern to all of us. We rely on our environment to support us, and if the deterioration of our environment continues at the present rate, this may not remain possible. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was established to promote open trade and economic cooperation among Asian countries. Because much of our economic growth relies heavily on a sustainable ecosystem, and the state of the environment affects countries worldwide, discussing the impact developing nations have on the environment is a major issue that should be treated with the gravity and respect it deserves. Any less effort on our part will lead to the implementation of an unsuccessful and worthless "solution" to this problem.

Statement of Issue

Assessing the environmental impact of developing nations is a complex and important topic. Not only do the actions of these nations affect their own environment, but the global environment is also affected as a result of their development. Certainly we cannot prevent any impact due to economic growth, but there are measures that we can take to ensure that adverse impact is kept in check. The role of our lesser-developed members is crucial in this respect. Member states that have a significant amount of development left in their future need to realize that while development and technological advancement is important, it cannot be made at the expense of the environment. There is a balance that can be found, and it is our duty, as a Pan-Asian body, to ensure that it is brought into effect. Using international controls, national standards, or mere advising, we can implement sustainable programs that allow for development without extreme environmental damage, an option ideal to all nations.

Within the topic of Environmental Impact, there are a number of focal points that must be examined. First, we must identify what it is that can cause adverse impacts on the environment in developing countries. Often the most common cause is rapid population growth and the inability of the nation to adapt to such growth. Another reason may be the lack of technological innovation. Technology drives development, and without adequate technology, cruder methods of development may cause harsher affects on the environment. Finally, adverse impact can be simply due to a lack of caring or education by the government/population. This last reason is one that we can immediately start to correct in simple but effective steps. This

list is by no means comprehensive; it must be expanded through careful thought and discussion.

Another subtopic to keep in mind is the role of developed members in helping developing members. Such an issue is always a delicate one, and care must be taken to define these roles explicitly, or at least reach an understanding that will not be reneged upon. Such help can range from technological assistance to skilled personnel, and will depend on the resources available. What is important is that we cannot lay down rules for developing nations and ask them to follow these regulations with no help. It will take outside funding, cooperation, and resource-sharing to reach the goal of sustainable development.

Finally, the problem of environmental degradation contains within it the problem of regulation. The economies and governments of the nations that we are focusing on have a history of inefficiencies in implementation of government-led or international environment protection programs. This lack of ability to impact changes is cause for concern since without effective implementation, any conclusions brought out by this summit will be for naught.

History of the Issue

Environmental impact of development has been of concern to a minority population for a very long time, but it is only now that it has regained center stage in the world's eyes. A brief look at the history of this issue will allow us to get a better feel for what has been done and what needs to be done in the future.

Many of the current developed nations disregarded the environmental impact of their development for years. Fossil fuels, industrial pollution, and even inadequate city utilities led to the famous "London fog" and rendered many rivers in Europe and America almost poisonous. Overpopulated slums suffered from lack of waste disposal, running water, and clean air. Only with the introduction of legislation fighting for city clean up did Western countries gradually realize that life could not go on with so much pollution. Efforts to reverse these detrimental effects are still underway—land is being designated as protected areas, higher regulations for company and personal pollution (from industrial smog to personal car use) have been implemented, and independent environmental groups continue to push for more environmentally-friendly development. For example, Mexico City, known for housing the dirtiest air in the world, has recently implemented reforms that have significantly increased air quality all over the city. However, environmental legislation has only been implemented recently when people have already developed industries, established wealth, and more pressing concerns—such as wars, stable government, and safety—are not present. It is proven that lobbyist groups such as the Sierra Club and National Parks Association have much better luck getting regulations passed in times of peace and prosperity. It is often too difficult, to

expensive, and highly unrealistic to expect countries to worry about the environment when their political and economic systems are underdeveloped.

The role of APEC regarding environmental issues has changed significantly over time[1]. While there has never been a specific working group focusing on the environment in APEC, during the past few years the topic has come up at ministerial meetings with greater frequency, and environment or sustainable development ministers from member states have started meeting more regularly. Through these meetings, three objectives for APEC have been established: creating sustainable cities, clean production, and protection of the marine environment. Introducing developing countries to newer technologies that allow for environmentally-friendly development is essential to achieve these purposes. It is with these goals in mind that we must analyze this issue and come to a successful decision about the future.

Analysis of Issue

Blindly implementing more laws and regulations will not stop the environmental damage being done in developing countries. Instead, it is necessary to first trace the root of the problem and then identify the underlying factors that compel developing countries into stripping their land of their natural resources. While the following is not a comprehensive list of every reason countries choose to damage their land, this section does identify the most prominent four causes: rampant population growth, the lack of an environmentally-conscious populace, failures on part of regulatory bodies, and struggling economies.

Rampant Population Growth

Most developing countries are plagued with populations growing at exorbitant rates, which only further contribute to their environmental problems through both land development and excessive pollution. Statistically, developing countries with slower population growth have, seen higher productivity[2] which translates into better environmental protection of natural resources and use of the land.

In contrast, a quickly growing population that exceeds city infrastructure creates overcrowding, forcing people to migrate to marginal areas in hopes of finding agricultural land. These lands are often characterized by "steep slopes, low rainfall, [and] poor soils"[3]; while the land is not ideal for agricultural use, indigent persons often have no other choice but to settle there. The farming of these lands, though, often results in both accelerated slope failure and soil erosions, which can often be so extensive that it the land is incapable of being repaired[4]. In Southeast Asia, estimates of land degradation ranges from 1% - 15%; it is, however, impossible to pinpoint the exact number due to imprecision in the data gathering methods, as noted later[5]. This destruction of the land only perpetuates a vicious cycle, for eventually the land becomes so uninhabitable that residents are forced to migrate to even more destitute areas.

On a broader level, governments are faced with similar dilemmas on providing basic necessities while balancing ecological concerns. What is particularly problematic is that they need to respond to large increases in populations, which they aren't necessarily adept to handle in short periods of time. Consequently, as Avijit Gupta, a leading professor of ecology at the National University of Singapore, explains,

"The Third World countries are trying to improve the living conditions of their citizens. However, the steps taken to achieve this, the logging of timber, the extraction of mineral resources, the expansion and intensification of agriculture, the establishment of industries, may all occur simultaneously with a progressive deterioration of the environment."[6]

Environmentally Aware Populace

While governments in developed nations have made great strides in ensuring that their populations are informed of the environmental impacts of their actions, developing nations do not yet have that luxury. As explained by former UNEP head Mostafa Tolba, "a radical change in living habits is needed to save the world from a climatic catastrophe…. Nothing short of action which affects every individual can forestall global catastrophe"[7].

Yet even an environmentally educated populace doesn't necessarily translate into an environmentally conscious populace. For example, although the United States only contains one-twentieth of the total world's population, its citizens, apparently apathetic to the impact of their actions, consume 20% of its resources[8]. Americans leave lights on, take long showers, leave water running, and water lawns excessively. However, Europeans, whether it is because of higher prices or because they are more environmentally conscious, take short showers, conserve power and often do not air condition their houses. Conversely, while citizens may be aware of the consequences of their action, they may not have any other feasible alternatives; one resident of South Africa explains that though she knows coal smoke is dangerous and harmful to the environment, electricity costs are too high, leaving her with no alternative[9]. The challenge, then, is for the government to first educate its citizenry, creating a national environmentally-conscious mentality, and then make environmentally-sound practices feasible for the general population.

Regulatory Bodies

Although nearly all governments have a regulatory branch dealing with environmental concerns, unfortunately in some developing countries, enforcement is all but a farce. Plagued with corruption and inefficiency, most corporations easily find their ways around any laws implemented. Thus, while industry policies were implemented in the former Soviet bloc nations, they were regularly excused in order to meet production goals.[10] Also problematic is the fact that developing countries often lack trained professionals capable of dealing with environmental regulation. The few – and best – that do exist tend to prefer

dwelling in the capitals, leaving the field posts unoccupied. Further, monitoring equipment tends to be outdated, thereby resulting in unreliable data.[11]

Regulatory bodies have also failed in enforcing laws because they are too ambitious. For example, Sri Lanka has often struggled with maintaining its coastal resources; with over 17 million people, most of its population depends on the shoreline for their source of income.[12] Fishing, tourism, small industry, coral mining and other occupations that require coastlines make up approximately 40% of the country's GNP.[13] Misuse of the land, however, has quickly stripped the area of its resources. In response to the growing problems, Sri Lanka implemented Coastal Zone Management to protect its marine resources in the early 1990s. The program failed to be a success, however, because it was too ambitious. To illustrate: One of its regulations was the complete banning of coral mining in the area. However, they were never able to enforce the law, for had they, there would have undoubtedly been an upheaval amongst the local population who have no other source of income[14].

Struggling Economies

Many cite the struggling economies of developing nations as the root of their ecological problems. Developing countries continue to argue that they are in desperate need of more aid in order to maintain their natural resources. They have asked wealthy nations to commit 7% of their GNP in foreign aid, as well as reducing tariffs on agricultural goods. Cripian Olver, director general of South Africa's department of environmental affairs, explains, "You can't expect the developing countries to address the environment in the absence of economic growth and development."[15] More developed nations, such as the United States, have refused to grant these requests, though, and counter that it is necessary for developing nations to eliminate the rampant corruption first[16].

On a more theoretical level, the problem boils down to a fundamental trade inequality between developed and developing nations. To their advantage, developed countries have four primary resources upon which they can depend: natural resources, human resources, technology and learned skills. Developing countries, on the other hand, can only rely on the first two resources, leaving them at a disadvantage. They are consequently forced to compensate by relying more heavily on their natural resources.

Relevant International Action

Countries within APEC have had varying successes in ratifying different environmental documents. For example:

China has some 2 900 environmental protection bureaus, more than 2 000 environmental monitoring stations and about 1 850 stations for monitoring and enforcing compliance. Nearly 100 000 people are directly employed in environmental protection.

Economic instruments in Thailand have saved 295 MW of peak demand, 1 564 GWs of energy a year, reduced CO_2 emissions by more than 1 million tons and resulted in consumer savings of US$100 million a year.

The Republic of Korea has sponsored potable water supply systems and wastewater system improvement in several countries and intends to expand environmental assistance in the future. Several Japanese companies have now taken voluntary actions on pollution control that include stricter standards than the national ones. [17]

These steps have been important ones, yet it is time to continue pressing forward. It is now important to share information and technology, and in addition it is important to involve the public and receive their support. Many APEC nations have signed a number of environmental treaties, and yet they have not always conformed to the stipulations ingrained within these treaties. It is now imperative these countries review their environmental policies in order to take the next step of protecting the environment.

APEC has considered these issues to be of the utmost importance in recent years. They have developed specific committees whose purpose is solely to protect the environment, and its natural resources. There is currently an Exhibition on New & Renewable Energy Technology, the purpose of which is to bring leading experts from many nations together to discuss the problems of renewable energy. APEC also strongly believes in the conservation of natural resources as exemplified by their subcommittee on Marine Resource Conservation. This conservation was established in 1990, with the purpose of ensuring the safety of the future marine environment. In June of 1997, The *APEC Action Plan for Sustainability of the Marine Environment* endorsed by APEC, which detailed not only the environmental benefits, but also the socio-economic benefits of protecting the oceanic environment. The three tools to be used to achieve these objectives are:

-Research (including exchange of information, technology and expertise);

-Capacity building (including training and education); and

-Public/ private sector participation and partnership.[18]

Member economies have benefited from the recommendations in the products of MRC project, and from information exchange, and experience sharing. Successful MRC projects include:

-Publication of *Management of Red Tides and Harmful Algal Blooms in the APEC Region*;

-A Workshop on the Development of APEC Mechanisms for Integrated Coastal Management;

-Publication of *Development and Validation of Analytical Methods, Standards and Reference Materials for Seafood Product Safety and Certification*; and

-A Workshop on Assessing and Maintaining the Integrity of Existing Offshore Oil and Gas Infrastructure.

-The Workshop on Ocean Model (WOM 6) [19]

These first steps have been very valuable, and are expected to have ongoing success, but most importantly is the shared information needed between nations.

Possible Solutions

The imbalance in trade between developed and developing nations has obviously had a negative impact on the environment in developing countries. While direct financial aid may not be the route the committee may choose to take, it ought to definitely consider the possibility of an exchange of resources to help balance the situation. Similarly, more technologically advanced countries may consider lending their counterparts resources, whether it is more precise monitoring equipment or advisors with expertise in environmental regulation.

The key for the implementation of effective environmental regulations, however, is convincing the citizens themselves to forego harmful practices. One possible avenue of action is to consider involving farmers directly with preservation efforts. For example, to compensate farmers for giving up the practice of stripping timber from rainforests, a government may choose to employ those farmers in the maintenance of the land or the creation of an ecologically-friendly tourist reserve.

Whatever actions are taken, however, should be designed explicitly with the region in mind; as the previous example of Sri Lanka's CZM program illustrated, failure to keep the local population's interests at the forefront only results in inefficient regulation.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the problem posed by the degradation of the environment by developing countries is complex and pressing. APEC is in a prime position to create a unified stance on the issue and design plans that combine environmentally-friendly processes with economic feasibility. Perhaps the investment of Western countries into these developing nations could help the process by providing the technology and money needed to have sustainable development. The problem of environmental destruction is worldwide, and so a unified effort to halt this problem before it is too late is certainly in order. Whatever the solution the committee agrees upon, it needs to be a feasible solution for developing nations.

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