



## **UNICEF: Access to Safe Drinking Water for Rural Children and Child Brides**

Hello, my name is Yasi Fahimi, and I am going to be your head-chair for Novice UNICEF at the 2018 MVHS MUN conference. I am currently a junior, and this will be my third year as a part of the Model United Nations program. I have run novice committees each year so far and this will be my second time head-chairing. I look forward to these committees as an opportunity to teach and build a foundation for those new to the program. Outside of MUN, I spend a lot of time playing soccer, but if I'm not on the field, chances are you can find me at Sno2Go. I cannot wait to chair for this committee and look forward to having a terrific debate!

Hello, I'm Claire Milinski and I'm going to be your vice-chair for this committee. Currently, I'm a junior here at Mission Viejo High School and this will be my third year in the MUN program. This will be my second year chairing for a novice committee and I am looking forward to it. Other than MUN, I'm also on the pep-squad team here at Mission. When I'm not discussing global topics in MUN or cheering on the football team you can most definitely find me at the beach. I'm super excited for this year's conference and I cannot wait for an exciting debate!

*UNICEF began in the aftermath of World War II, supplying dried milk, nutritional supplements, medicines, immunizations and other urgent assistance to help starving and ill children in Europe, the Middle East and China. Today UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to save and improve children's lives. In cooperation with governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UNICEF saves and protects the world's most vulnerable children, working to ensure child rights and providing health care, immunizations, nutrition, access to safe water and sanitation services, basic education, protection and emergency relief.*

### **Access to Safe Drinking Water for Rural Children**

#### **I. Background**

Water is the main element of life. But when water is unsafe to drink, water can kill. Throughout the world, waterborne illnesses are a leading cause of death for children under five, killing nearly 1,000 children every day. The number of people who lack the initial access to clean drinking water has decreased to below 700 million people - 663 million - for the first time. With the



situation continuing, sanitation in rural areas trails behind in most urban areas. In total, eight out of ten people without access to clean and improved drinking water sources live in rural areas.

In the world, about 946 million people still have to go to the toilet outside. Eritrea is the leading country with 77% of its population spreading disease due to lack of clean water. Ethiopia has also achieved one of the largest decrease in the proportion of the population practising open defecation, coming from 92% in 1990 to 29% in 2015.

Today, the water crisis is a health crisis and the access to safe water and sanitation has slowly but surely fallen below healthy water. Not only has the water crisis completely taken over the globe but it has slowly found its way into the economy and education of the world. Children are usually responsible for collecting water to help and secure their family. Because of this it takes time away from their education. It has been shown that the reduction in time spent collecting water increases school attendance. In addition to this, the time spent gathering the clean water accounts for billions in lost economic opportunities in the work industry. Overall, the clean water crisis has changed billions of lives and if the situation continues disease, education and economic issues will only be the beginning of what could happen in the future.

## **II. UN Involvement**

The United Nations has been addressing the global crisis that has been caused by insufficient water supply to satisfy the human need for clean water. The demand for sanitary water has increased and it needs to meet the world's water resources to meet human, commercial and agricultural needs. Because of the recent situation, to help raise awareness of the topic, the General Assembly declared 2003 International Year of Freshwater. In July of 2010, the recognition of the



human right to water and sanitation by the United Nations General Assembly. The Assembly then stated the right that every human has the right to access to sufficient water for domestic and personal uses. Recently, the UN has prioritized, access to clean water and sanitation, as Goal 6. Overall the contaminated water and a lack of the basic sanitation are undermining efforts to demolish the extreme poverty and disease in the world's most poor countries.

### **III. Possible Solutions**

Possible solutions to the water crisis have been developing over the time being. People living in the middle east who are mostly affected by this situation, need to be educated on the crisis. The most important task is making sure the problem is understood worldwide. This will then lead to new technological advancements to conserve water. Though in some areas the land is much drier than others so the innovations must happen primarily there. In addition, desalination has been an energy-intensive solution to water scarcity. The middle east has deemed it necessary to construct Water has also become a pricey issue. Pricing and water rights go hand in hand the question of consumer pricing.

### **IV. Questions to Consider**

1. How has your country benefited to the water crisis?
2. In the past, has your country been involved in the UN in finding solutions to the crisis
3. Could your country work with neighboring states and or countries to gain access to clean water?
4. How has your country been impacted by the water crisis?



5. In what ways has your country brought awareness to the citizens of your country in educating them on the crisis?

## **V. Works Cited**

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## **Child Brides**

### **I. Background**

A child bride is a girl under eighteen forced to participate in formal or informal marriage to a party who is either under or over eighteen years of age. Fifteen million of these girls are wed each year which translates to roughly one every two seconds. Today, over 700 million women alive were child brides. Child marriage is an issue all across the globe, however it occurs at its highest rates in nations such as Niger, at 76%, and the Central African Republic and Chad, at 68%.

This is because it is deeply rooted in patriarchal beliefs that men are superior to women, which are most prevalent in developing nations. In addition to inequality, many feel trapped by



more basic struggles and are driven to this practice by poverty, cultural tradition, and insecurity. In many countries, young girls are seen as a financial burden to their nuclear families. Therefore, being married into a different family is often used as a way to lift their economic stress during hard times. Additionally, many cultures view child marriage as a tradition that has been reoccurring for generations. However, these traditions are harmful and often accompanied by physical mutilation and deprive girls from opportunities. Insecurity is also a major motivator for child marriage. Many families marry away their daughters with hopes that they will have a better life and insure safety in high-risk environments. Whatever the reason may be for child marriage to take place, the bottom line is that it takes away from millions of young women's freedom and opportunity.

## **II. UN Involvement**

The United Nations recognizes child marriage as a human rights violation and has instilled laws and created branches to combat it. Some of these efforts include creating the United Nations Population Fund, or UNFPA, which aims to provide airtight solutions to child marriage that can be made applicable around the world. Additionally, the United Nations has recently passed a new initiative to protect millions of victims of child marriage. It hopes to end the issue by 2030 by making it a top priority and raising awareness globally. The initiative also emphasizes the strengthening and enforcing of laws that deem eighteen years old the legal age to marry, in order to discourage the crippling practice. The UN also focuses on educating young women, including those already married, so they have the skills needed to make their own choices for the rest of their lives, a right that is stripped from them through child marriage. The United Nations overall is



finding more effective and adaptable methods to fight the war against child brides and sees a hopeful future without them.

### **III. Possible Solutions**

Ending child marriage requires effort from every angle of the issue. One of the most important places to start is by empowering girls at a young age. Working with them directly gives girls the otherwise denied opportunity to obtain skills and knowledge needed to be independent. The grand effect of this is that women will redefine their roles in society and be able to forge their own lives. Another effective solution is to create safe space programmes around the world which offer sanctuaries to learn critical life skills. These programmes improve self confidence in young girls and provide a strong foundation for self sufficiency. Another angle that can be easily addressed, but is often neglected, is the enforcement of marriage laws. If people, especially in rural and developing communities, know they will be prosecuted for doing so, they will be significantly discouraged from breaking laws. The possibilities of how to stop this deeply rooted issue are extensive and ultimately must be made to cater to their specific regions.

### **IV. Questions to Consider**

- 1) What are possible solutions that would not impose on the sovereignty of nations where child marriage is embedded in the culture?
- 2) Is the issue prevalent in your nation? If so, what are the causes?
- 3) What NGOs are currently involved with the issue? What progress have they made?
- 4) Has your country signed any of the UN's past resolutions on child marriage?

### **V. Works Cited**



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