3rd Main Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural)
3.1 Forced Displacement of Religious Minorities

Among the many crises facing religious minorities today is the ongoing displacement of Rohingya Muslims from the Rakhine state in Myanmar. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has reported that approximately 600,000 refugees have fled to Bangladesh since August, with an estimated 1,200-1,800 leaving the state per day. The refugees, many of whom are women and children, are either forcibly removed from the state borders or leave voluntarily to escape ethnic cleansing efforts including torture and sexual violence. They arrive in fragile condition and are susceptible to disease outbreaks in overcrowded refugee camps. UNICEF expects that $76 million will be needed to sustain support for the next six months alone.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for an end to government military action regarding the Rohingya population. The International Organization for Migration has provided water, shelter, and vaccinations to refugees. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is collecting funding for refugee camp construction to provide shelter for 1.2 million refugees in Bangladesh. Together these three organizations have issued a joint statement on the crisis requesting $434 million from donors and calling upon the international community to seek a peaceful end to the violent conflict.

International actors have issued statements condemning the violence in Myanmar. In 2016 Malaysian leadership led a protest rally in response to the alleged genocide occurring in the region. In September, India’s foreign minister urged Myanmar to provide a supportive cultural environment in the Rakhine state to expedite reintegration of refugees. Indonesia, the country with the highest concentration of Muslims in the world, also claimed that stability in Myanmar is important for the region. The body could also acknowledge the displacement of Sunni Muslims from Syria and the flow of refugees this has caused into states around the world.

Topics for Consideration:

How should members of the international community who are not directly affected by the forced displacement of the Rohingya population contribute to aid efforts?

How should members who are directly affected aid refugees and respond to immigration?

What message can the international community send regarding the crisis facing the Rohingya population in the Rakhine state in Myanmar?

How can the Rohingya population be safely reintegrated into society after the conflict has ended?

What actions can the body take to prevent future crises involving religious minorities?

Bibliography:


3rd Main Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural)
3.2 Climate Change’s Threat to Island States

“Climate change” refers to the gradual warming of the earth’s temperature. Scientists around the world link this warming to the natural and anthropogenic emission of greenhouse gases. When emitted into the atmosphere, greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide trap the sun’s heat, increasing the earth’s temperature. Observable effects of climate change on island states in 2017 include but are not limited to: drought (affecting both agriculture and drinking water supply), irregular precipitation, increased risk of natural disasters, migration inland (and overcrowding) to avoid shore erosion, and saltwater intrusion (introduction of saltwater into freshwater aquifers).

In previous United Nations general assembly sessions, world leaders have expressed concerns regarding the impacts of climate change. For example, The Federated States of Micronesia urged members to implement the 2016 Paris Agreement policies in order to mitigate climate change and promote sustainable development. The Paris Agreement aims to prevent a global temperature increase of more than 2 degrees Celsius in this century, and states that a global temperature increase of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels would be necessary in order to negate the impacts of climate change. Additionally, the UN Bonn Climate Change Conference (COP 23), which will take place in November, issued a preliminary statement urging multilateral collaboration and international support to strengthen the ability of island states to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change.

Island states are most affected by climate change. This September, representatives from Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, have expressed concerns about the impact of climate change on their respective states. The president of Palau has suggested the use of the United Nations as a forum to foster collaboration between public, private, and nonprofit sectors. States who benefit from interaction with island states through tourism, trade, or outsourced manufacturing might also have an interest in the effects of climate change on these states. Conversely, states with developing industrial economies such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) may not have an interest in regulating greenhouse gas emissions, but may have other solutions to address the effects of climate change.

**Topics for Consideration:**

How can the international community prepare for the flow of refugees from states affected by climate change?

Can developing states achieve economic growth without increasing greenhouse gas emissions?

How should aid be provided to states affected by climate change? Who should provide this aid?

How should the need for immediate relief and the need for long-term solutions be prioritized?

What steps should the body take to foster international collaboration regarding climate change?
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3rd Main Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural)
3.3 Maternal Mortality in Rural Areas

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 303,000 women died in 2015 during and following pregnancy and childbirth. Many of these deaths could have been prevented. The majority occurred in low-resource settings in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. A woman in a developing country is 97 times more likely to die as a result of pregnancy than a woman in a developed country. Large percentages of these deaths can be attributed to indirect causes, such as HIV and malaria which can be severely aggravated during pregnancy. While the number of deaths is still too high, maternal mortality has dropped by nearly 44% between 1990 and 2015.

WHO has found that the technologies needed to prevent death from both direct and indirect causes currently exist, but that there is a gap in distributing this technology to regions that need it most. For instance, in rural China, which includes over 600 million people, mortality rates are four to six times higher than in urban areas. Some common reasons of maternal mortality are decreased access to health services and professionals who can aid high-risk pregnancies. Burkina Faso found that women who had access to skilled attendants, such as formally trained doctors, had significantly lower mortality rates. In general, proximity to health services has been shown to reduce maternal mortality rates, but is often unavailable to rural communities in developing states.

Another way to decrease the high rate of maternal mortality would be to reduce the high levels of pregnancy in developing states. The total fertility rate (TFR) in developing states is often over four children per woman, whereas in developed states, the TFR is less than two children. This can be attributed to factors such as greater economic opportunities for women, greater access to affordable birth control, and the availability of family planning centers. However, some women face governmental, religious, or familial constraints that restrict their access to these services.

Topics for Consideration:

How have states succeeded in lowering their maternal mortality rates? How can these practices be applied to others?

How can the body make maternal and prenatal health care more available in the rural areas of developing countries?

How can the body make gynecological services more available to women before, during, and following pregnancy?

How can the body address other factors contributing to maternal mortality in developing countries?

How can developed regions best aid developing regions?
Bibliography:


3rd Main Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural)
3.4 Forced Labor

In 2016, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), over 40 million people were estimated to be involved in modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labor and 15.4 million in forced marriage. One out of four of these victims are children. “Forced labor” is defined by the ILO as “situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities.” Forced labor can also exist in the forms of debt bondage and human trafficking. Forced labor has generated billions of US dollars in the private economy.

Developed states such as the US have prohibited imports from states known to utilize forced labor. Actors in the private sector have audited their supply chains as well looking for forced labor. But the international community has done too little to address the forced labor and forced marriage affecting children throughout the world. Delay is caused by a lack of international consensus regarding solutions, as member states have conflicting views on the legality of practices associated with human trafficking. In 2014, the ILO created a legally binding resolution as an addition to the 1930 Forced Labour Convention and advocates for states to ratify and comply.

International regulatory bodies such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization can advocate to condemn and eradicate forced labor.

Topics for Consideration:

What diplomatic approach would best address the forced labor crisis?

How can the body and its member states facilitate reintegration of those affected by forced labor into society?

How can the body and its member states improve the safety of forced laborers?

How should the body and its member states collaborate with NGOs to address the forced labor crisis?

What can the body do to help create livable wages?

Bibliography:


