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31 July - 04 August 2016

Preparation Paper/Study Guide:

World Trade Organization (WTO)

“The Global Employment Crisis”

Welcome

Honorable Delegates of the World Trade Organization,

A very warm welcome to the beginning of your preparations for Vienna International Model United Nations 2016! It is truly admirable that you will be convening along with the rest of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for what promises to be...no, needs to be a constructive session this August.

Given that the contemporary global economic structure is directly linked to the worsening employment crisis, the topic you will be discussing is of utmost importance and considerable consequence.

The inherently complex issue of unemployment is the result of various intertwined factors such as the overall economic structure, the 2008 financial crises, regional turmoil around the world (Syria, South Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Ukraine), and unprecedented migration flows. Scrutinizing this conundrum requires a holistic macro-perspective and an interdisciplinary approach. While a bird-view is needed, the importance of specific expertise in one of the relevant fields adds to a well-rounded discussion. In saying so, we hope that you too will introduce the committee to the unique perspective and creative solutions you have to offer. The more diverse the academic background from each of you, the more we will learn from one another and draft a feasible and truly amazing resolution/s.

The quality and insightfulness of this debate will lie in your hands this August. Prepare well, and remember that the WTO operates slightly differently from the regular UN committees. We will see you in a month!

Your WTO-Board

1) Introduction to the World Trade Organization Committee

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization with tremendous powers over international trade, intellectual property, investment and production patterns. The WTO was officially established on 1 January 1995 under the Marrakesh Agreement, which was signed by 123 nations on 15 April 1994. With the commencement of the WTO, it effectively replaced the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which came into power on 30 October 1947, after a failed attempt to create the International Trade Organization (ITO). A vast majority of the basis that forms the WTO, however, was negotiated in the 8th round of the GATT negotiations, the so-called Uruguay Round Negotiations, between the years 1986 and 1994. In contrast to the GATT, the WTO has a significantly broader scope and a more powerful mandate. This means the WTO provides a framework for negotiating trade agreements that are legally binding on its member states and it provides a platform for trade dispute settlements.

The highest official meeting of the WTO take place on a two-year basis and is called the Ministerial Conference. Before these meetings convey however, members meet on a regular basis to find common grounds. This is especially necessary, due to the complexity of such agreements. Details need to be discussed beforehand already in order to give member states a higher chance at actually reaching a consensus at official meetings.

Next to the Ministerial Conferences, the General Council of the WTO convenes more than once a year in Geneva. Representatives of every member state take part in the Council that is divided into five main bodies: Council for Trade in Goods, Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, Council for Trade in Services, Trade Negotiations Committee and the Dispute Settlement System. Aside from these 5 bodies, there are also specialised committees that deal with other issues of relevance, such as membership, regional trade agreements, development and the environment.

The WTO is not a United Nations committee, but nevertheless cooperates with UN Committees, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), because many of their topical focuses and goals overlap. Especially the WB and IMF cooperate a lot with the WTO in order to better promote global trade policies.

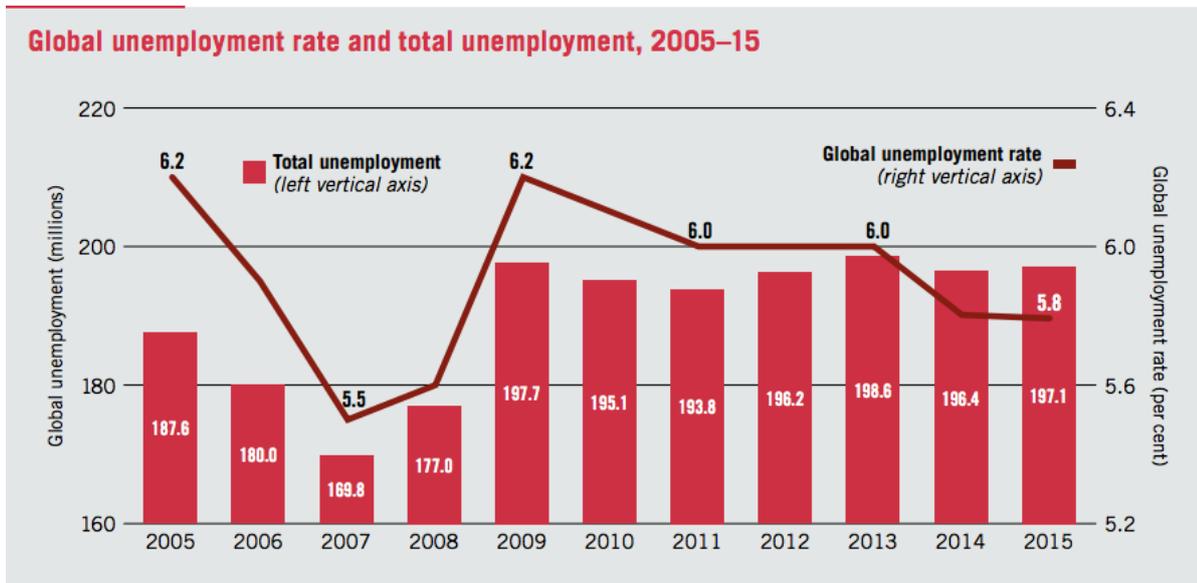
Since its establishment in 1995, the WTO has made an unprecedented progress in liberalising global trade. It has watered down and/or eliminated trade obstacles, settled disputes among its member states and imposed sanctions when countries failed to comply with the WTO's agreements. Furthermore, it has facilitated a higher degree of transparency amongst governments worldwide and upholds all of its members to a fair and consistent set of rules, thereby strengthening the multilateral trading system. Needless to say, the WTO is of incredible importance in our global economic, financial and monetary architecture.

2) Current Situation

Global Economic Outlook

The global economy and global business have still not properly recovered from the 2009 financial crisis. The 2009-2015 recession/sub-par growth period has been the longest and deepest since 1933. The current miserable financial start into 2016 further underlines this; markets feel insecure and express a panic at the slightest cause. Generally speaking, every one of the last 5 years started with elevated hopes and, after several corrections in the forecast, ended in disappointment and frustration. Some sectors and some markets have rallied but the recovery is stop-start and scattered and does not feel sustainable. The economic crisis transferred into a fiscal and debt crisis resulting into a recession. This recession has turned into a chronic one and it does not look like it will be changing for another 3-5 years.

Global unemployment rate and total unemployment, 2005–15



Source: ILO calculations based on ILO Research Department's Trends Econometric Models, November 2015

In the year 2015, global unemployment reach over 197 million people. The increase in number of jobseekers mainly originated from emerging and developing countries. Especially in recent months, the number of jobseekers increased in Latin American, Asian and Arab Nations. To a vast extent, this is the result of the demographic time bomb these regions are experiencing, most notably the Middle East, where the majority of the population is younger than 30 years. To accomodate all these jobseekers is no easy undertaking and must be tackled in a sophisticated manner.

As shown in the table below, the deteriorating employment conditions in emerging and developing economies is not being offset by the improvements in developed economies. Projections for the next 1-2 years show an increase in unemployment, mainly due to the rising unemployment levels in emerging markets.

Unemployment rate and total unemployment: Trends and projections 2007–17

	2007–14	Unemployment rate, 2007–17 (percentages)				Millions, 2015–17		
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Global estimates and major country groupings								
WORLD		5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	197.1	199.4	200.5
Developed economies		7.1	6.7	6.5	6.4	46.7	46.1	45.3
Emerging economies		5.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	135.3	137.7	139.1
Developing economies		5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	15.1	15.6	16.1
G20 Economies		5.5	5.4	5.4	5.3	123.9	124.3	123.8
G20 Advanced economies		7.3	6.8	6.6	6.5	42.2	41.2	40.2
G20 Emerging economies		4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	81.7	83.1	83.6
EU-28		10.2	9.4	9.2	9.1	23.2	22.7	22.2
EU-19		11.6	10.9	10.7	10.4	17.5	17.1	16.7
ILO subregions and country details								
Arab States		10.1	10.1	10.2	10.2	5.3	5.5	5.6
Saudi Arabia		5.9	5.8	5.7	5.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Central and Western Asia		9.1	9.2	9.4	9.4	6.8	7.0	7.1
Turkey		9.9	10.3	10.5	10.4	3.0	3.1	3.1
Eastern Asia		4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	42.1	42.4	42.7
China		4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	37.3	37.7	38.1
Japan		3.5	3.3	3.2	3.1	2.2	2.1	2.0
Korea, Republic of		3.5	3.7	3.5	3.4	1.0	0.9	0.9
Eastern Europe		6.8	6.9	7.0	6.9	10.2	10.3	10.1
Russian Federation		5.2	5.8	6.2	6.1	4.4	4.7	4.6
Latin America and the Caribbean		6.4	6.5	6.7	6.7	19.9	21.0	21.2
Argentina		7.3	6.7	6.9	6.7	1.3	1.4	1.4
Brazil		6.8	7.2	7.7	7.6	7.7	8.4	8.4
Mexico		4.9	4.3	4.1	4.0	2.5	2.4	2.4
Northern Africa		12.5	12.1	11.8	11.6	8.8	8.8	8.8
Northern America		6.3	5.5	5.1	4.9	10.0	9.3	9.0
Canada		6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	1.4	1.4	1.4
United States		6.3	5.3	4.9	4.7	8.7	7.9	7.7
Northern, Southern and Western Europe		10.7	10.1	9.9	9.7	21.8	21.4	21.0
France		10.3	10.6	10.4	10.0	3.1	3.0	2.9
Germany		5.0	4.6	4.6	4.7	2.0	2.0	2.0
Italy		12.7	12.1	12.0	11.5	3.0	3.0	2.9
United Kingdom		6.1	5.5	5.4	5.5	1.8	1.8	1.9
South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific		4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2	15.1	15.2	15.1
Australia		6.1	6.3	6.3	5.8	0.8	0.8	0.7
Indonesia		5.9	5.8	5.7	5.6	7.3	7.3	7.3
Southern Asia		4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	28.8	29.1	29.4
India		3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	17.5	17.5	17.6
Sub-Saharan Africa		7.3	7.4	7.5	7.5	28.2	29.4	30.4
South Africa		24.9	25.1	25.5	25.7	5.1	5.3	5.4

Source: ILO calculations based on ILO Research Department's Trends Econometric Models, November 2015

Despite two out of the three largest economic systems (USA and Eurozone) performing reasonably well, global business does not “feel” quite so good: it is still struggling and puffing along. For the time being, the USA stands out as a winner in relative terms. American cynics say sarcastically: “Yes we are better than Europe” and that achievement has required trillions of dollars to be printed. Subsequently more global and European executives are looking at the US again as a destination for foreign direct investment: re-offshoring is taking place. The Eurozone on the other hand is doing much better this year thanks to a low oil price, a weaker Euro, but the question is for how long. The European Central bank has lowered the interest rates to a historic ground which, on the other side, means that the measure of playing low with interest rates is exhausted right now just because going lower is not possible anymore. Quantitative Easing is still performed, but the delay of the execution could cost further economic casualties. This is worsening the situation further.

In 2014, China's GDP (on a ppp basis) at \$17.6 trillion surpassed that of the USA. The superficial news coming out of China that stocks are falling and a depreciating renminbi are not exceptional but the underlying

structure of the Chinese economy and the lack of transparency about its growth levels remain worrisome. One should also consider the situation that, due to the continuing low GDP-growth in many parts of Europe, China was forced to direct its economic policy in the direction of fostering domestic consumption as their main European trading counterpart, is still struggling and thus, execution of large-scale trade is not possible anymore.

Do we Have the Wrong Type of Capitalism?

Over 100 years ago Henry Ford understood that you needed to have happy, well-paid workers because they become happy and high-spending consumers who will buy products that you produce at affordable prices. It seems to be not that rocket science. But, well, too many bureaucrats and global CEOs have failed to understand and maintain this link. Downsizing, government and “ reforms”, without raking the overall economic framework of the respective country into consideration, corporate “ restructurings”, outsourcing and dubious M&As, targeted just on acquiring more market power have carved out fulltime jobs from many developed and developing economies.

Downsizing, government “reforms ”, corporate “restructurings ”, outsourcing and M&As have carved out fulltime jobs from many developed economies.

This means that sustained employment is becoming rarer and at the same time nominal wages and real wages have been crushed. Little wonder consumers did not rush into the stores around the world to spend their supposed \$400bn oil price bonanza.

We have long harped on about the economic and especially the jobs model not working well in developed economies in recent years. While top-line unemployment numbers are falling in both the US and UK, much of the good news does not stem from people walking into steady, well-paid, regular jobs.

More than 50% of all jobs created in the developed world (OECD) in the last 20 years have been so-called “non -standard jobs” i.e. part -time or self-employed. Some 70% of all jobs created in the UK in the last 10 years are non-standard and some report that all net job creation in the UK has been nonstandard. Especially embarrassing for the employees is the so-called “zero-hour contract” which also originated in the UK. With this contract type, the employee gets a guaranteed amount of working hours per week equal to zero (from here the name). Employers are claiming that such contracts are giving them some flexibility, as, due to the decreased overall demand, they cannot afford to employ many employees on a 40-hour week.

We cannot build a secure, sustainable economic recovery based on zero-hours contracts.

The employment numbers for young people in Europe are disturbing:

- 25% of 16-24 year olds in the Eurozone are unemployed with some countries recording 40-60%
- Of those in jobs 52% of them are in temporary ones
- The track record from temporary jobs is not good: In France, Italy and Spain fewer than 30% of those in temp. jobs had permanent ones three years later

Looked at in another way the numbers remain concerning:

Those in temporary employment as a % of total employment

	All workers	15-24 year olds
OECD	11	24
Europe	14	41
UK	7	15

Germany	13	53
France	16	57
Spain	24	69

So one quarter of all Spaniards who have a job have no job security and across Europe young people are being used as a surplus labour pool.

Additionally, in Spain, 80% of new jobs are temporary ones and in France the number is 86%. When we combine an insecure present existence with an insure future, we create the so-called Precariat (those who live a precarious existence in rich, developed countries, in a constant uncertainty about their future). And then this is combined with a back-drop of weak nominal and real wages. The numbers never cease to shock. US Median family income in 2007 was \$53,000 and had been stuck at that level for 10 years since 1997. But in the three years to 2010 it sank to \$49,000 and then fell further to \$46,700 in 2013. Real wages in the US infamously have barely budged upwards in the last 25 years and this is actually just starting to improve.

US average weekly earnings, adjusted for inflation, failed to reach their 1972 peak of \$342 for the next 39 years in a row; in 2011 the figure at \$295 was still 14% lower! Put another way US median household income has been stuck for 10 years at approximately \$53,000.

In comparison, UK median real wages in 2013 were the same as in 1979 (34 years). Real wages stayed flat in Germany for 15 years and only picked up into small positive territory in late 2014. The outlook though is for further stagnation in nearly all these markets as inflation climbs upwards slowly.

On the theme of rising inequality, one sentence can suffice:

The fastest growing category of consumer spending in the USA in 2013 was “personal pleasure aircraft”.

So what? All the above numbers and arguments help to explain why (in addition to other sobering macroeconomic news) the majority of companies globally are stressed and strained and find the consumer in developed markets (and globally) to be so difficult to adapt to and understand.

Youth Unemployment In Europe

Certainly the timing of an extra 1.5 Million migrants with low skills set and poor language skills is not good. In the 1960s unemployment was negligible in Germany and Europe when millions of Turks were employed in a booming manufacturing industry. Overall unemployment has been stuck at over 11% until recent months when it improved to 10,5%; you unemployment averages 20-25% across the continent with levels of 45-60% in some peripheral countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal. It seems logical and economically improbable that the Eurozone can absorb such numbers of migrants

Now one may ask, what was the reason for this horrendous downturn of employment? As many other aspects in the global economy, a single reason for that cannot be named. Instead, a sequence of events that triggered various reactions around the globe caused it. In this Study Guide, we will outline only the trigger that caused the global financial crisis.

Actually, many analysts are claiming the crash of the investment bank Lehman Brothers to be the trigger of the crisis. This could be right, however, as we know, no bank can just go bankrupt from today on tomorrow without real reasons. The reasons for the crash of Lehman Brothers and for the heavy monetary shots on other banks are called “subprime-mortgages” and “collateralized debt obligations”. These two financial instruments crashed Lehman and caused the US taxpayers to save other banks which were close to the collapse (according to Joseph E. Stiglitz, the total sum of the public funds, designed to save banks who are “too big to fail”, amounted to 3 bil. Dollars. Not all of it was utilized, however, but still, the dimensions of the problem seemed to be tremendous).

The years before the crisis saw a boom of mortgage lending in the USA. Loans were issued to “subprime” borrowers with poor credit histories who struggled to repay them. These risky mortgages were passed on to

financial engineers at the big banks, who turned them into low-risk securities by putting large numbers of them together in pools. Pooling works when the risks of each loan are uncorrelated, that is, no linear relationship exists. The big banks argued that the property markets in different American cities would rise and fall independently of one another. But this proved wrong. Starting in 2006, America suffered a nationwide house-price slump. This was actually foreseeable as house prices were steadily increasing since early 90s. Buying at price X and selling at price, say $X+1$ works only until there are people wanting to buy the property at price $X+1$. If only a moderately-sized group of buyers begins to express doubt that the prices of properties are too high, then everybody would start to sell like crazy. However, with an absence of demand for these prices, the market cannot get to equilibrium. Thus, a reduction of the prices and respectively, of expectations is needed.

The pooled mortgages were used to back securities known as collateralised debt obligations (CDOs), which were sliced into tranches by degree of exposure to default. Investors bought the safer tranches because they trusted the triple-A credit ratings assigned by agencies such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's. This was another mistake. The agencies were paid by, and so beholden to, the banks that created the CDOs. They were far too generous in their assessments of them.

Investors sought out these securitised products because they appeared to be relatively safe while providing higher returns in a world of low interest rates. Economists still disagree over whether these low rates were the result of central bankers' mistakes or broader shifts in the world economy. Low interest rates created an incentive for banks, hedge funds and other investors to hunt for riskier assets that offered higher returns. They also made it profitable for such outfits to borrow and use the extra cash to amplify their investments, on the assumption that the returns would exceed the cost of borrowing.

When America's housing bubble blasted, a chain reaction exposed fragilities in the financial system. Pooling and other clever financial engineering did not provide investors with the promised protection. Mortgage-backed securities slumped in value, if they could be valued at all. Supposedly safe CDOs turned out to be worthless, despite the ratings agencies' seal of approval. It became difficult to sell suspect assets at almost any price, or to use them as collateral for the short-term funding that so many banks relied on. Fire-sale prices, in turn, instantly dented banks' capital thanks to "mark-to-market" accounting rules, which required them to revalue their assets at current prices and thus acknowledge losses on paper that might never actually be incurred.

Trust, the ultimate factor of all financial systems, began to dissolve in 2007—a year before Lehman's bankruptcy—as banks started questioning the viability of their counterparties. They and other sources of wholesale funding began to withhold short-term credit, causing those most reliant on it to founder. The turning point that revealed what sub-prime mortgages and CDOs in the reality are, is called "credit-default swap"—an instrument which the seller agrees to compensate the buyer if a third party defaults on a loan that were meant to spread risk turned out to concentrate it. AIG, an American insurance giant was about to collapse within days of the Lehman bankruptcy under the weight of the expansive credit-risk protection it had sold. The whole system was revealed to have been built on volatile foundations: banks had allowed their balance-sheets to blast(see chart 1), but set aside too little capital to absorb losses. In effect they had bet on themselves with borrowed money, a gamble that had paid off in good times but proved catastrophic in bad.

After the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, nobody trusted anybody, so nobody would lend. Non-financial companies, unable to rely on being able to borrow to pay suppliers or workers, froze spending in order to hoard cash, causing a seizure in the real economy. Thus, unemployment started to increase.

3) Past Committee Action

The World Trade Organization is multilateral organization aimed at promoting international trade. Its main areas of competence are easing international trade regulations, minimizing tariffs, helping at negotiating trade agreements, and disputing settlements between states or investors. As one may expect, the organization sees fostering global trade as a key for diminishing the global unemployment.

A pivotal moment in fighting global unemployment, powered by the WTO, is the G-20 summit in Toronto, Canada, on the 26-27 June 2010. There, a broad consensus of the Group of twenty mandated the OECD, the ILO, the World Bank, and the WTO to work out a comprehensive approach, in the context of the G-20 framework for strong, sustainable, and balanced growth. The four organizations agreed that trade liberalization should bring benefits for employment. The research on that topic was submitted at the subsequent meeting of G-20 in November 2010. In this research, it was embraced that, although sometimes contradictory, openness of a country can be good for employment. The major empirical contribution to this claim is a study by Felbermayr et. al (2009) that confirms, an increase of 10% in the trade openness reduces the unemployment rate by 1% for a mix of developed and developing countries. Another study by Durr et.al (2009) yields a significance for initial increase of unemployment after trade liberalization, however, in the long run, there are empirical evidences for an average decrease of unemployment rate by 3,5%, 3 years after trade liberalization. Additionally, trade induces a reallocation of productive resources and market shares from the less to the more productive sectors and firms (Melitz 2003). Empirical studies show that most of the reallocation of labour actually takes place within industries rather than between industries.

Moreover, when international trade is boosted, firms involved in the export are going to get more revenues and thus it is probably that more employees would be hired or increase of the wages of the current employees will take place. With this wage increase, consumption or saving would be fostered, in dependence of the interest rates. Therefore, trade could help in sustaining employment. However, this is only the theory. Practice could look a bit different, especially when one considers the fact that these studies do not include the state as a player due to the complexity or the difficulty to assign certain numbers to certain actions by the state. Thus, in this report, the WTO explicitly underlines that trade liberalization should not be seen as the only cure for the problem. Adequate micro and macroeconomic policy framework should also be placed on the agenda, especially when we are talking about lower developed countries that cannot get immediately the same access to the global markets like their more developed counterparts due to political, fiscal, or credit history reasons.

4) Block Positions with Regard to Tackling Unemployment

Europe

As a response to the worsened unemployment rates in various parts of the continent, the new European Commission, assembled in the year 2014, came with an ambitious plan, oriented at the Keynes ideas for public investments in time of recession. The recession caused many companies to invest careful which, at the end, led in overall diminishing of investments in new production powers, for example. Additionally, the decreased demand caused many companies to lower their production.

Thus, the Commission devoted 315 billion Euro to investments in strategic projects in the “real economy” which are supposed to boost the economic growth and thus, to enable job creation. The time frame of this project is January 2015- December 2017. From this ambitious project one may conclude that Europe, in particular the member states of the European Union, are favoring the public investment approach, as proposed by Keynes.

USA

The United States managed to recover faster from the crisis than Europe. Experts are having different views on the issue why the US-recovery took place faster than the European one. The major consensus point was that the fiscal response was much faster than in Europe. In addition to broad-based guarantees for bank accounts, money market funds, and liquidity by the Federal Reserve, the responsible authorities under the Bush administration passed the Trouble Asset Relief Program(TARP). This program in its essence was comprised of purchase of toxic assets and equity from financial institutions to strengthen its financial sector. Toxic assets are assets whose value has fallen significantly and for which there is no longer a functioning market, so that such assets cannot be sold at a price satisfactory to the holder. Thanks to the programme credit got further flowing to consumers and businesses, struggling homeowners managed to avoid foreclosure, and collapse of the American automotive industry was prevented, which alone is estimated to

have saved one million jobs. In addition to this, regulations on financial markets and banks were tightened. Thus, it seems that the USA favoured rather the fiscal approach to the problem.

South-Eastern Asia

Although not so hard affected as Europe, being a main trading partner to both regions, South-eastern Asia acquired part of the damage as well. While European countries and the USA experienced a recession, growth in countries from South-eastern Asia was slowed. Being exposed to a regional financial crisis in 1997 however, this world region managed to learn from its past mistakes and to maintain a recovery at minimum social costs. Starting from the 1990s, the countries of the region developed a dense network of international trade, both within the region and outside of it. This trend continued even after the 2008 outbreak of the crisis. The outcome from it was a highly connected and robust regional trade network that has made the region more resilient to shocks and less vulnerable to economic risk over time. There has also been increased participation in international trade among more countries in the region. While some countries, like Myanmar and Laos, still continue to operate at the fringes of the regional trade network, the majority of Southeast Asian countries today actively participate in regional trade to a much greater extent than they ever did in the early 1990s.

After decades of export-oriented production, in the 2000s, the region entered into the next phase and proved an attractive place for offshoring, outsourcing, and establishing more globally dispersed value chains. The ASEAN Economic Community, similarly to the European Union established a free trade zone between its members, thus, fostering further trade spill overs. Summarized, we can say that in the context of South-eastern Asia, trade was the pillow that cushioned the negative impacts from the global financial crisis.

5) Points a Resolution Should Address

- What role do demographics play in the rise and fall of unemployment and what measures can be taken to control such variables?
- Which actors have to be considered when proposing a feasible solution to the current employment crisis?
 - To what extent should a country's economy be dependent on the global market?
 - How dependent should a country be on certain commodities?
 - Is a truly globalised economy really the best for maximizing welfare?
 - Should the production and distribution of certain products be kept local?
- To what extent does the reduction of trade barriers help small- to medium-sized companies to stay competitive in the global market? E.g.- Austria vs. Eastern European countries.
- How can the proposed solution effectively counter unemployment in both the developing and developed countries?
 - Hayek vs. Keynes: What role should governments play in regulating the economy and subsequently ensure employment for their citizens?
 - Is more government interference the better alternative in tackling unemployment and for whom?
 - Critical view of multilateral institutions and their activities: Do the multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO facilitate the job creation or counter it on a global scale?
 - Are austerity measures sustainable methods in combating debt crises and unemployment?
 - Is privatizing of public goods the ultimate cure?

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The movies 'Inside Job', "The Big Short", and "Money Monster"

How to Get Prepared

You probably cannot wait until it is the end of July and VIMUN 2016 is about to start – at least we cannot! However, before the conference starts, there is still some work to be done.

You are the ones that fill the conference with life, that lead interesting discussions and fruitful debates and make innovative resolutions reality. This requires some preparation on your side. **While conducting research, try to keep in mind that your primary goal is to represent your country as realistically as possible.**

In advance to the conference we expect all delegates to research your state's position and become experts for the given agenda topic, to familiarize yourself with the rules of procedure (which you can find on our VIMUN homepage) and to practice your debating and writing skills.

Here are some useful hints on how to get prepared for the VIMUN conference:

Do Some Research

The first step after you have been assigned your state and committee will be to do some research in order to prepare for the conference. These are areas you should look into:

- The structure and history of the UN
- Your assigned member state
- Research your committee
- Your member state's role in the committee
- Your agenda topics

Central Questions that Should Guide your Research

- What sort of government does your country have?
- What types of ideologies (political, religious or other) influence your country's government?
- Which domestic issues might influence your country's foreign policy?
- What are some major events in your country's history? Why are they important?
- Which ethnicities, religions and languages can be found in your country?
- Where is your country located and how does its geography affect its political relationships?
- Which countries share a border with your country?
- Which countries are considered allies of your country?
- Which countries are considered enemies of your country?
- What are the characteristics of your country's economy?
- What is your country's gross domestic product (GDP)? How does this compare to other countries in the world?
- When did your country become a member of the UN?
- Does your country belong to any intergovernmental organizations outside the UN system such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?
- Does your country belong to any regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) or the Organization of American States (OAS)?
- Does your country belong to any trade organizations or agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?
- What are the key issues of your agenda topics?
- Why are these issues important?
- What are possible solutions?
- What is hindering those solutions?
- What has the UN (or other international agencies) done so far, in order to solve these problems?
- What should be done from the perspective of your state to resolve the issues?
- Which other states share your view, which are opposed to your position?

For further research apart from reading the study guide we greatly recommend:

- The UN homepage
- NGO (particularly those accredited by the UN)
- Country reports and data published by international or regional organizations such as the World Bank, WHO, OECD, APEC, etc.
- General socio-economic data: e.g. CIA World Factbook has served delegates in previous years in gaining a first overview of a particular member state
- Your country's government website
- Search for speeches made by your country on the topic
- Search for important resolutions regarding your topic

How to Write a Position Paper

Writing a position paper might appear to be a daunting task, especially for new delegates. But with enough research, you will find that writing a position paper will be easy and useful.

Position papers are usually one to one-and-a-half pages in length. Your position paper should include a brief introduction followed by a comprehensive breakdown of your country's position on the topics that are being discussed by the committee. A good position paper will not only provide facts but also make proposals for resolutions.

Many conferences will ask for specific details in a position paper, so be sure to include all the required information. Most conferences will provide delegates a background guide to the issue. Usually, the background guide will contain questions to consider. Make sure that your position paper answers these questions.

A good position paper will include:

- A brief introduction to your country and its history concerning the topic and committee;
- How the issue affects your country;
- Your country's policies with respect to the issue and your country's justification for these policies;
- Quotes from your country's leaders about the issue;
- Statistics to back up your country's position on the issue;
- Actions taken by your government with regard to the issue;
- Conventions and resolutions that your country has signed or ratified;
- UN actions that your country supported or opposed;
- What your country believes should be done to address the issue;
- What your country would like to accomplish in the committee's resolution; and
- How the positions of other countries affect your country's position.

Position Paper Tips

- **Keep it simple.** To communicate strongly and effectively, avoid flowery wording and stick to uncomplicated language and sentence structure.
- **Make it official.** Try to use the seal of your country or create an "official" letterhead for your position paper. The more realistic it looks, the more others will want to read it.
- **Get organized.** Give each separate idea or proposal its own paragraph. Make sure each paragraph starts with a topic sentence.
- **Cite your sources.** Use footnotes or endnotes to show where you found your facts and statistics. If you are unfamiliar with bibliographic form, look up the Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines at your school's library.
- **Read and reread.** Leave time to edit your position paper. Ask yourself if the organization of the paper makes sense and double-check your spelling and grammar.

- **Speech! Speech!** Do you plan to make an opening statement at your conference? A good position paper makes a great introductory speech. During debate, a good position paper will also help you to stick to your country's policies.
- **Let the bullets fly.** Try not to let your proposals become lost in a sea of information. For speechmaking, create a bulleted list of your proposals along with your most important facts and statistics so that you will not lose time looking for them during debate.

Sample Position Paper

Delegation of the **Republic of India**

Represented by **XXX**

Topic: Primary Education

The Republic of India acknowledges and has responded to the call of the United Nations for a universalization of primary education with fierce engagement and enthusiasm over the past 10 years. India firmly believes that the challenge of guaranteeing every child the opportunity to primary education can and shall be overcome by raising greater awareness among the public and by public involvement through respectful regional cooperation, e.g. the cooperation with Village Education Committees and Local Government substatal Bodies. Furthermore it is crucial not only to focus on the quantity of students, but on the quality of the education they receive.

The Republic of India recognizes the need and urgency to address universal primary education. Primary Education is of crucial importance to India. Although India is still facing difficulties in its efforts to guarantee every child the education it deserves, the Indian country will not succumb, but face the challenge with effective policies which have shown immersive and lasting effects in the past.

In 2010 The Right of Free and Compulsory Education Act was ratified, making the fundamental Right To Education Act the first of its kind in the world, which puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion of primary education to the government. To enforce implementation of this act, India strongly supports its governmental organizations, which have brought positive long-term effects, e.g. "The Education for All"- Movement, which has as a main objective the universalization of elementary education, making education free and compulsory for children between 6-14 years. In addition to this program, India launched the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in 1995, revised and improved it over the last ten years. Mid-Day Meal Scheme, as the world's largest school feeding program, reaches 1.2 million children across the country.

Furthermore a stronger emphasis is put on unprivileged and disadvantaged sections of the Indian society. As a result to the 10th five year plan of India the joined forces to tackle illiteracy, the number of elementary schools has increased by 216.054, the number of enrolment in the lower and upper primary school classes has increased about 30 million students, only in the period between 2000 and 2006.

In the 11th five year plan of the Republic of India, the focus is set on achieving an 80%- literacy rate, on reducing the gender gap in literacy rate to 10%, to reduce dropout rates of children at the elementary level from 52, 2% in 2003-04 to 20% by 2011-12, and to support low literacy States, disadvantaged groups, minorities and to reduce regional, social and gender disparities and on granting the quality of the given education.

However, universal education cannot be established in isolation, therefore the Indian government has successfully joined hands with the UN on this matter, as extensive cooperation within the United Nations Development Program prove. Together we can bring the MDGs in achievable and reachable range. Therefore the issue of primary education should be discussed realistically and on a basis, where not only providing quantity, but quality plays an immense and even more important role. Due to India's ideals which are Socialism, Democracy, Justice, Equality, Fraternity the Indian Republic believes that the question on how to provide and ensure qualitative education with well-equipped and modern schools and on the basic training of teachers should be raised.

In conclusion, India is striving to guarantee its pupils the universal access to education, regardless of their gender. Moreover it is of the main concerns to support tribal States, rural areas, disadvantaged groups, religious/ethnic minorities and to extinguish any kind of disparities which influence the access to education.

These main concerns remain to be: access, equity, quality, relevance, resources, planning and management of educational programmes.

Therefore the Republic of India highly approves of all expenditures which were made to tackle the problem of primary education and warmly welcomes every effort made on capacity building, modern education programmes, teacher training programmes and progressive use of instructional materials.

Sources

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How to Make an Opening Speech

- First, you should thank the presiding official by saying "Thank you Mr./ Madame/ Honorable Chair/ President..."
- Then begin by providing a brief history on the issue as it relates to your country.
- Speak about how the issue is currently affecting your country.
- your country's position on the issue. Include an explanation for your country's stance, such as economic or security concerns or political or religious ideology.
- You may choose to give an explanation of how your country's position relates to the positions of other member states such as the major powers or countries in your regional bloc.
- You should discuss some of the past actions taken by the UN, member states and NGOs to address the issue.
- Present ideas for a resolution, stressing your country's objectives for the resolution.
- Talk about the role that NGOs or regional organizations have to play in addressing the issue.
- Indicate to the committee members whether your country is willing to negotiate.

Vocabulary: Sample Preambulatory Phrases

Accept	Notes Proclaims	Designates
Affirms	Reaffirms	Draws the attention
Approves	Recommends	Emphasizes
Authorizes	Regrets	Encourages
Calls	Reminds	Endorses
Calls upon	Requests Solemnly affirms	Expresses its appreciation
Condemns	Strongly condemns Supports	Expresses its hope
Confirms	Takes note of Transmits Trusts	Further invites
Congratulates	Encourages	Further proclaims
Considers	Endorses	Further reminds
Declares accordingly	Expresses its appreciation	Further resolves
Deplores	Expresses its hope	Has resolved
Designates	Further invites	Further recommends
Draws the attention	Deplores	Further requests
Emphasizes		