Developing Guidelines for Sustainable Urban Development

Committee Guide

Third Committee of the General Assembly

OLMUN 2017
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Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates of the General Assembly's Third Committee,
My name is Marie Mokros and I am honoured to be one of your chairs at OLMUN 2017. I am 17 years old and currently attending the 11th grade of the Cäcilienschule in Oldenburg.
Not only am I a big fan of art, books and cooking, I am also a huge fan of the TV Series Supernatural. Being open-minded and spontaneous, I do not care what other people think of me and I am always ready to dance, no matter how silly that looks.
I started to be a part of the OLMUN in 2015 as an administrative staff. Since I immediately fell in love with the atmosphere, I became part of the inner circle afterwards. Additionally, I represented the delegation of Kyrgyzstan in the Special Conference last year and I am going to attend the SPIMUN this year which is why I should know what being a delegate is like.
I am really looking forward to meeting you all and to having one exciting week together.

Dear Delegates,
My name is Sören Wehrheim and I am pleased to welcome you to the GA Third Committee at OLMUN 2017.
I am 22 years old and study computer science at the University of Paderborn in Germany, but I grew up in Oldenburg. OLMUN was my first MUN conference back in school, and I still come back every year to contribute in one way or another. Additionally, I have participated in over 30 MUN conferences on a university level, mostly as a delegate. For me, MUN offers a thrilling combination of my main interests: International politics and relations, excessive travel, and getting to know new people all over the World.
Whether it is your first time as a delegate or you already have participated in another MUN before – my co-chairs and I will work hard to ensure that you will have the best possible experience. I am looking forward to meeting all of you!

Dear delegates of the GA 3rd,
I'm Bart van Donselaar, I'm 16 years old and I'm very honoured to be chairing the General Assembly 3rd at OLMUN 2017, together with Marie and Sören. Currently I'm in my 5th year of Dutch VWO at the Vechtdal College in Hardenberg and this is my eleventh MUN conference.
When I'm not occupied with my work for school, I'll be reading, watching videos online, listening to music, doing a little gaming and making my friends laugh at my stupidity and clumsiness. I also love to sing, even though I know my singing isn't good in any way.
I started being part of the annual sessions of OLMUN with the 2015 session, being the delegate of Montenegro in this very same committee. At the time, I did not have a lot of experience and when it came to public speaking, I would mostly chicken out of it. Last year, at OLMUN 2016, I spoke a lot, maybe even a bit too much, because I ended up getting the superlative for most annoying delegate (quite the honorary title in my book). Thus, I'm very honoured to be able to chair at the MUN where my MUN career really kicked off.
I'm very much looking forward to seeing all of you at OLMUN 2017!

1. General Introduction

Honourable delegates of the General Assembly's Third committee,
we are glad to welcome you to Oldenburg and we are looking forward to having some interesting debates. You all know that it is hard to debate when you do not have any information about the topic you are debating about. That is why we made this committee guide: To give you guidelines for your research and provide you with some general information.
In order to be fully prepared we are also advising you to read the rules of procedure which can be found on the OLMUN website even though we are going to help you to understand how the OLMUN works during our time together.
Another advice would be to not only do your research on your own country, but also concentrate on possible allies and supporters for the policy of your country. Furthermore, you will find links at the end of the guide that will help you to do your research.

1.1 How to use this guide

Even though this guide is supposed to help you to get started on your research, your research should not only consist of the information that are given in the guide. Try to find information about your country's past, present, cultural factors, political structure, you name it...
Another important thing to remember is that your opinion might not be similar to your country's opinion. For the sake of the debates it is necessary that you stick to your country's policy.
Furthermore, we ask you to write a policy statement for your country and a resolution that you are supposed to send to us by the ….
If you have problems formulating one of these, you will be able to find more detailed information to either one in the official hand book.

2. Introduction to the General Assembly Third Committee

The General Assembly's Third Committee is one of the largest committees at the OLMUN 2017. It is one of the six committees of the General Assembly and all 193 member countries are represented, since the GA 3rd deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues that affect people all around the world. There are also going to be Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) present since they will help to enrich the debates. The committees of the General Assembly have a long history and their functions have changed over the past. The first session of the third committee was in 1946. This date proves the committee's long history. The importance of this committee as a part of the OLMUN is therefore not hard to explain.
In the last years, the OLMUN has had the topics LGBT rights, Statelessness and similar human rights issues in the GA 3rd.
Our topic this year is "Developing guidelines for sustainable urban development" and we are looking forward to discussing and debating this interesting topic.

3. Developing Guidelines for Sustainable Urban Development

This part of the guide gives you a general overview of the topic and past action by the international community.

3.1 Importance of the issue

Global warming, deforestation and pollution of air, land and oceans are clear indicators that current human life and development depends on the destruction of the environment and exploitation of natural resources. As the resources of the planet are limited and vital ecosystem are threatened, this process cannot continue without slowly destroying the basis of existence for more and more people. Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned that "the danger posed by war to all of humanity – and to our planet – is at least matched by the climate crisis and global warming."

Simultaneously, over 1 billion people still live on less than $1.90 each day – considered extreme poverty by the World Bank – and suffer from hunger and a bad humanitarian situation. Millions of children never get to attend a school, 400 million people do not have access to essential health services, and human rights are still being violated in many parts of the World.

The improvement of living standards in developed countries over the past decades always went hand in hand with increased consumption. A growing world population further increases the amount of people that need to be provided for. The fundamental challenge that the international community faces is: How do we provide for more people, while using less resources?

Since more than half the world's population lives in cities and the number keeps rising, existing city infrastructure requires rethinking and expansion to keep up. Building sustainable cities can be a key step towards solving all of these issues.

3.2 Sustainable development

Social and economic development that is self-sustained is referred to as "sustainable development". Any resources that the development depends on are constantly renewed, so the system can remain productive indefinitely. This also extends to the social impact – development can only be sustainable if it ensures equality and human rights. That means that in a sustainable society and economy, natural resources are regrown at the same pace at which they are used, there are no emissions or other kinds of pollution, nature and bio diversity is preserved, there is no exploitation of low wage labour, there is good medical and educational infrastructure with universal access, and inclusion and rights for all members of society.

Many countries and international organizations accept that humanity must become more sustainable to survive in the long term. Additionally, sustainable development is generally seen as a solution for many of the World's problems. In 2015, the member states of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contains 17 goals, the so-called "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", covering all aspects of sustainable development. The aim of the agenda is that all member countries commit themselves to work

together and achieve these goals by the year 2030. Implementing the SDGs has become central to the work of many UN bodies and specialized agencies.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

3.3 Making cities sustainable

The term 'city' refers to large and permanent human settlements. A city contains facilities and infrastructure for all aspects of daily human life. This includes housing for the residents, places to work, supply of food, energy and items of daily use, schools, hospitals, public institutions and services, places for leisure and recreation, and transportation for people to get around.

To ensure availability of all these things, development of cities requires planning. As populations are growing and new technology is introduced, existing urban centres go through constant changes and improvements to the infrastructure. For local governments around the World, making their cities more sustainable has become an important objective in order to solve the problems of the present and prepare for the challenges of the future.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Developments also contains a commitment towards sustainable urban development. Goal 11 of the SDGs is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The goal is split into seven concrete targets:

1. Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing.
2. Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all.
3. Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization.
4. Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.
5. Significantly reduce the number of people affected by natural disasters.
6. Reduce the per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and waste management.
7. Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green public spaces.

In addition to these goals as guidelines for urban development, making cities more sustainable also requires implementation of the other SDGs on a city level. This includes providing universally accessible health care, building good schools for children, fighting inequality by creating inclusive city districts, reducing the impact of settlements on natural ecosystems, investing in renewable energy, and reducing use of natural resources and municipal waste through recycling. In order to include all these aspects, city development may require strict regulation or central planning, and sustainability has to be the driving idea behind all infrastructure projects.

3.4 History of sustainable urban development

Sustainable development is a relatively recent idea when looking at the whole history of humanity. Only in the last century did people start developing this idea. This mainly is because of the denial of climate change. Only in recent years has the international world acknowledged the influence of human kind on the environment, and still some, like the current president of the United States, still deny this.

Sustainable development was originally developed as a solution of some sort to accelerated climate change.

It was first seriously discussed in 1987 in the Brundtland report, which gave us the Brundtland definition of sustainable development by the United Nations Environmental Commission. This was the first time an international agency did serious and committed research to sustainable development.

However, the first attempted action that was taken towards sustainable development was at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The 152 world leaders attempted to put their goals in a plan of action called Agenda 21. In Rio, Brazil, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development went into further detail on the Brundtland definition, specifying that irreversible environmental actions should never be taken, designers should use the best scientific knowledge available, the duty of scientists is to develop environmental knowledge, and stating that ignorance is no excuse for environmental damage. Yet, little development after the Summit has been measured. Many countries did not take this summit seriously and did not enforce what had been discussed in this Summit. It is considered, however, as the first action taken towards sustainable development, even if it did not have any effect. It put sustainable development on the international agenda.

In 2000 the UN set the Millennium Development Goals. Although the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) don't mention sustainable development in those exact words, they do allude to it very clearly with the seventh goal: "Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability". This seventh goal was split up into four parts, which all have subparts, which we encourage you to look up for yourself. Target 7A mentions sustainable development directly: "Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country politics and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources". The other three parts, halve the population without safe drinking water and basic sanitation, reduce biodiversity loss and achieve significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers, have less to do with this topic.

However, when looking at the success of the MDGs, the stories mostly focus on parts 7B, C and D and not on 7A, the sustainable development games.

Therefor it can be hard to say if the Millennium Development Goals had any clear influence on the improvement of sustainable development.

After the Millennium Development Goals, the next significant event in the world of sustainable development is in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. It introduced the concepts of sustainable consumption and production, which linked productivity, resource use and levels of pollution. These concepts had previously of course been discussed, but not on such a "high" level. Further discussed was the ban on economic growth that causes global or regional pollution, improving efficiency, studies on the life cycles of products, providing more information and using taxes and regulations to stimulate innovation in clean technologies. The World Summit on Sustainable Development was a onetime summit organized by the United Nations and did not have an annual or biannual successor meeting.

Talking about successors, the Millennium Development Goals ended in 2015 and were followed up by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), continuing into 2030. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, it is more expansive with its seventeen different goals, all with their sub goals. In several of these seventeen goals, sustainable development and improvement of the environment, such as building sustainable cities and communities, climate action, and responsible consumption and production are mentioned.

But what is the role of the United Nations within this complex? The United Nations have always been an important motor for sustainable development. Not only are they the organization of the Sustainable Development Goals, they also fund many other organizations that have to do with sustainable (urban development). Essentially, the United Nations are the organization that supports sustainable and urban development the most.

What can we learn from these previous actions that were taken? It shows that, like with everything to do with the environment, any actions that are good for the environment take forever to implement. Nothing will ever be implemented immediately. It is very pessimistic to say, but very true. Delegates shouldn't expect quick, long term solutions whatsoever. What delegates should expect is working towards a solution in small increments, which will take years to achieve. It also shows that although sustainable development isn't an ongoing conflict: it has a short history with relatively little action taken. This leaves this field as a beginning issue: not quite a blank slate, but also not a field in which everything has been done.

3.5 Guiding questions

The following questions are meant to guide your research and help you prepare for the topic. All questions are focussed on your country's situation and the solutions supported by your government.
- Are overpopulation or lack of affordable housing a problem in your country?
- What is your country doing to increase recycling and environmental protection?
- Is your country expanding and subsidising public transportation?
- Does your country support social security systems to fight poverty?
- How much is your government involved in city and infrastructure planning, and how much is left to the private sector?

3.6 Useful links for further research

The General Assembly resolution that contains the SDGs
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1

The UN website for sustainable development
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/

The website of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
http://unhabitat.org/about-us/un-habitat-at-a-glance/

Statistics about development by the World Bank
http://data.worldbank.org/topic/urban-development