ARAB LEAGUE
(جامعة الدول العربية)
Background Guide
Introduction to the committee
Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is with immense pleasure and honor that I welcome you to the Arab League in the AUDMUN 6.0, the sixth installment of the Model United Nations Conference held by the American University in Dubai. I am Jayathma Gamage, third year student at the University of Wollongong in Dubai, pursuing my degree in Cyber Security. Being in the MUN world for 6 Years, I have participated in quite a lot of MUN’s as a chair or as a delegate and understand the importance of learning and the growth opportunities that it allows as well as the passion that comes with it.

Established in 1945, and there by pre-dating the founding of the United nations itself, Arab League is known to be the world’s oldest regional political organization with the aim to maintain peace within the 22 countries involved as well as with them and the world. The Arab league finds it its mission to protect the cultures amongst the Arab world and encourage socio economic growth within the countries while safeguarding their individual rights and rules.

The topics under the discussion for the Arab League are: 1. The Impacts of Longstanding Foreign Influences in the Arab World and 2. The involvement of women in politics and the Government. Here in the Arab League, these topics will be discussed and debated in depth with the aim forming multilateral purposeful negotiations and to formulate practical as well as useful and realistic solutions to successfully fulfil the agenda and create resolutions.

Finally, as a chair I would like to tell you from experience that it is only a MUN simulation, speak up when you have to, as often as needed and do not be afraid to share your fresh new ideas with the room. The more you speak; you have more chances of learning and moreover even enjoy yourself. It is true that resolutions will fail, and some ideas may even not make it but at the end of the day, the experience and the enjoyment that comes with it is the most important. Here’s wishing all the delegates a wonderful and a knowledgeable experience at the AUDMUN 6.0. Looking forward for a lot of fruitful debates at the Arab League.
History of the Committee

The Arab League, also known as the League of the Arab States, is an organization of Arab-speaking, African and Asian countries which was formed in Cairo on the 22nd of March 1945, to reinforce the ties amongst the member states, manage their policies, and encourage their common interests. Starting off with only 6 member states: Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan (renamed Jordan), Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria, the Arab League now consists of 22 member states. The member countries meet bi-annually at the headquarters in Cairo, where all cultural, social and economic matters related are discussed and a consensus is reached. If certain member states do not agree to a given policy or resolution they are not legally required to abide by the decision.

The main goals of this committee consist of solving political disputes, developing and improving local economies, protecting cultures encouraging collaboration amongst the member states, while safeguarding independence and the sovereignty of each country. Also the Arab league plays a vital role in mediating peace within the Arab world as well as amongst the world and the Arab world.

Institutions such as the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Economic and Social Council (CAEU) play an important role in promoting various interests; including political, economic, cultural, scientific, and social aspects of the Arab World.

Purpose and Functions

Ever since its formation, one of the main aims of the organization has been to safeguard independence and sovereignty, co-ordinate political activities, and strengthen relations between its member states, which are primarily comprised of Arabic speaking nations from the regions of Africa and the Middle East. The member nations of the Arab League mainly co-operate in the fields of finance and economics, travel and communication, cultural matters, social welfare, public health, and matters relating to the execution of judgements. This is done through the different committees pertaining to these matters established under the Arab League. The member states meet twice a year to discuss the various issues member states are facing, but in the case of any form of aggression in the region by any of the member states or a non-state member in the region, there can be a meeting called upon immediately.

Mandate and powers

The Arab League functions with a Secretary-General and a permanent secretariat who ensures the smooth functioning of the organization. The countries in which the Arab League has jurisdiction is only the territory of the member states. The organization also recognizes each of its members as an independent and sovereign state. Any decision taken by the organization will be deemed to be binding and shall be implemented by all member states. The member states are allowed to further develop their relations with other member nations independently as long as it
does not violate the pact of the Arab League Charter, but any treaty or agreement concluded between member states shall not be binding over the other member states. In the case of any internal disputes amongst two or more member nations, alternative methods to a war will be used in order for settlement. The alternative would be the interference of the responsible authorities of the Arab league elected parliament to mediate peace keeping. The participating parties which are at war would generally have no say in the decisions which are made by the superiors with regards to the ongoing situations.
Topic 1: The Impacts of Longstanding Foreign Influences in the Arab World

Introduction

Ever since the rise of the British empire after the first world war, the Arab-Muslim world, specifically the MENA region has drawn the interest of foreign powers from across the world. These nations have not only helped quite a few nations develop and flourish in the region but have also been actively involved in the ongoing wars in the region. The war zones of the Middle East have become a playground for these world powers, the weight on whom is put onto the civilians and the unstable government of the nation, threatening the security of the region to political instability. The United States of America has majorly influenced the region in many ways. The region is rich in natural resources, specifically oil. Saudi Arabia is one nation which is heavily involved in the trade of oil, specifically with the United States of America. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has a very close alliance with the United States of America. This US – KSA alliance dates back 1933 exactly a year after Saudi Arabia was formed and the exploration of oil began. Since then Saudi Arabia supported USA with oil and in return USA provided Saudi Arabia with military power and security, majorly benefiting and influencing KSA. Even to date, even when both countries are evolving in modernized socioeconomic times, United States still remain as Saudi Arabia’s largest partner in trading and Saudi Arabia remains USA’s largest consumer of foreign military sales. With the Arab region being geo politically rich comes other drawbacks, such as USA and Russia being at war with the power and concurrence over countries such as Syria and Iran making them pawns in the conflicts of the West and rather creating more conflicts amongst the nation such as manipulation against each other in the Arab region, an example being the strained relationships between Iran and KSA due to the Saudi Arabian proxy war Syria back in 2015. United States also left no stone unturned when it came to harming Iraq. The Iraq War dating back to 2003, began after the USA invasion of Iraq wanting to governments and harness nuclear power, killing approximately 600,00 Iraqis minimum withing just the first 2-3 years. Despite officially withdrawing from the country in 2011, united states passed on the to security contractors to take its place in war. Australia, UK, Netherlands and Poland were among few of the countries that helped USA in this battle making it the Second Gulf War.

History

The Arabian desert was the birthland to the Arabian Empire. Before the bloom of the Rashidun Caliphate (From 632 to 661), the word “Arab” was used to categorize largely nomadic or Semitic people from the parts of the peninsula, Syrian Desert and also Mesopotamia now known to be Iraq, Kuwait, southern turkey etc. In 661, Umayyad Caliphate then took over from the Rashidun Caliphate and the dynasty ran till 1031 which then, was taken over Abbasid Caliphate
running successfully till 1617. Last of the caliphates were the Fatimid Caliphate which was taken over by the Ottoman empire in 1299 just yet to be overthrown later after the world war.

It was then that the British Empire claimed their rights over the Arab-Muslim world, Specifically the Middle Eastern Region, making it even more known amongst the rest of the world. It is very appropriate to say that the world war one was the leading turning point in the Arab world with the Great Arab Revolt. The region started to experience the influence of foreign powers with European colonialism back in the 20th century when the peninsula was divided into regions of French and British control. The British were known to rule Palestine from 1923 to 1948 along with Iraq from 1920 to 1932 (Joumaa). On the other hand, the French rules Lebanon and Syria from the 1923 till 1946 and Algeria and from 1830 until 1962. Along with the Spanish, French also ruled morocco from 1912 until 1952. The main reasons for foreign nations to have an interest in the region has been mainly due to its geopolitical location such as the access to the Mediterranean and natural resources such as oil, mainly crude oil. Some of the nations who have majorly influenced some of the nations in the region include the United States of America, France and the Russian Federation. The repercussions of this colonizing could be felt even to date either through the sovereignty or the ongoing military interventions.

Analysis

From all the countries with ties to the Arab Region, United States of America has the second-highest Foreign direct investment standing at 20.3% of all FDI in the nation, which is mainly done in the chemical industry, Real estate, and the coal, oil and gas extraction. The USA and Saudi Arabia have trade worth up to 7.41 billion USD. Due to the strong trade relations between the two nations, their economies are interlinked and highly dependent on each other and have the ability to influence the economies of both nations. The USA has used Saudi Arabia as a tool to influence the geopolitical scenario of the region. The USA and Saudi Arabia have been working together against the Iranian government on many grounds especially during the recent tensions between the USA and Iran and in the war in Yemen against Iran backed Houthi. The ongoing conflict in Yemen is a prime example of how foreign powers have influenced the region and exacerbated the situation to the extent that it has become a political playground for global powers mainly the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The wars in Iraq and Syria cannot be forgotten admis all. Caught in between the crossfire of cold war between Russia and the West, Russia lost even more geographical and economic power with the US invasion of Iran. Since then Russia and the States have been at negotiations with regards to the bilateral connections between the Russia- Iran and the nuclear power agreement with Russia actively helping the nuclear program in Iran providing reactors and weapon trade deals making Iran another notch to the one – upmanship game. Apart from the above mentioned some of the members of the Arab League, specifically Somalia which does not have a proper legislative system in a place, heavily relies on UN Programs and peacekeeping missions for the functioning of their nation which is once again funded by foreign powers allowing them to influence and control the region.
Additionally, nations such as the Peoples Republic of China, Russian Federation, and the United States of America have invested heavily and provided economic aid to many of the member nations and hence influencing their economies and also their legislatures, as these FDI contribute towards a major percentage of their GDP. Thus, they need to ensure these investments made a sustainable and at times favoring them.

**Questions a resolution must answer:**
1. What are the ongoing impacts of foreign countries on the Arab world? Are they positive or negative?
2. What are the possible benefits of the Arab world if they decide to forge more foreign alliances?

**Starter Sources:**
https://www.hoover.org/research/foreign-influence-middle-east
https://www.thepolicycircle.org/brief/foreign-policy-brief-the-middle-east/
Topic 2: The Involvement of Women in Politics and Government.

Introduction

Women inferiority, or in other words, the consideration of women or the female gender as an inferior gender is an issue that has been going on for decades, starting from the domestic to the global level. Even though women empowerment is one of the most prevalent topics of today, the lack of women in politics and in positions of power remain an issue of concern. Women’s involvement in politics is often limited in most countries. Women are chronically presented with less opportunities especially in leadership roles and their political participation is often restricted. Women in parliaments around the globe have risen on average from 11.3% to 24.3% between 1995 and 2019, yet these figures are still alarmingly low. In the Arab world, despite the notable progress in the reduction of gender inequality, women in politics have still not gained the required participation rights and recognition. Despite battling gender equality at a large scale, factors such as patriarchy, religion, culture and lack of political exposure to and towards the women remain prominent issues. Jordon, Tunisia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and UAE have taken the driving seat in this cause while Qatar and Yemen are still staggering at a solid 0%.

Efforts of countries such as Tunisia and the other nations that recognize women in leadership positions have managed to unlock the potential that comes with including women in the political and decision making arenas. Therefore, these countries have managed to successfully battle the misconceptions around women being inadequate for positions of power. As of 2019, the regional average of female representation in Arab states have 18.7% female representation in the Single house, 12.6% in the Senate and 17.8% on average. Whereas outside the Arab region, Rwanda has the highest number of women in any parliament with 61.3% female representatives in the lower house. The proportion of seats held by women in the parliament in the Arab region countries have however increased during the last two decades with having 3.7 percent in 2000 to an 18 percent by 2019, yet resulting lower than the world average of 24.5 percent. Also, women in ministerial positions have also seen a rise of 3.4 percent (from 7 percent in 2005 to 10.7 percent in 2016), yet being lower that 18.4 percent the world average ("Gender") Shedding light on one of the most recent events, Covid-19, women in leadership positions have shown their true colours. Countries such as New Zealand under female authority has managed to overcome this issue in a much better way in comparison to Yemen which has no female leadership at all. As of 2018, when human development indexes are compared between countries with female leadership such as UAE rank at 0.866 percent in comparison to Yemen which is at a 0.463 being the lowest in the region. The exact same pattern is followed even in the fields of health systems and overall global connectivity proving countries with female leadership provides better advantages.

History
Women in power has always been a debatable issue all over the world. No country in the world has achieved full gender equality but it comes as no shock that the 22 Arab countries rank the lowest as only one in four men believe in female representation in politics. Sharia Law also plays a large role in these limitations especially in countries such as Sudan where since 1983, women were limited from their participation and communication amongst the public as well as they were snatched of legal right of ownership and decision making, confining them to their houses burdening with the responsibilities of taking care of the house, children, the husband, themselves and their reputation. The law also states that women must always defer to their husbands or male guardians at all times, especially in administering assets or their decision making. Women in the Arab world face major economic disempowerment with only 24% being allowed to work outside of homes. This figure is one of the lowest in comparison to countries outside of the region.. When it comes to politics, the Arab world has only managed to bridge the gap in female representation by 9%. The five countries holding the lowest ranks in the world include Oman, Lebanon, Kuwait and Qatar with less than 3% of the gender gap being bridged. Arab states tend to have a very high preference towards restrictive family laws (Abirafeh). These laws restricts women’s’ contribution to the greater society and restricts self-determination as well as economic productivity.

Up until 2012, women in Saudi Arabia, were not eligible to vote in the general elections due to a lack of female poll workers among other restrictions. 2015 was a turning point for KSA when women were granted electoral rights and as of now one-fifth of the seats in the Shura Council are filled by women. United Arab Emirates on the other hand have played a major role to break this stereotype and grant equal rights to women in the political field. Moreover, the UN has taken initiative to tackle this issue within the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agendas targeting 5.5 of the SDG’s which aims to ensure equal opportunities to women in all fields including politics and decision making.

**Analysis**

The issue starts with the lack of education provided to girls. Educational inequality cannot be overlooked especially in the developing world where women are often less educated and deemed less worthy of education than men despite many emerging feminist movements in these states. While poverty rates, geography and many other factors contribute to this issue, patriarchy is the common denominator. Often, the trauma centered ideology also plays a pivotal role. Women are educated to think of themselves as vulnerable, fragile and more susceptible to danger in comparison to men. Women are often taught to use men as a shield of protection rather than thinking of them as equals which stops from women opting for roles superior to men. A major reason that women are held back from achieving equality is the ongoing conflicts in the countries. Many countries such as Syria, Iraq and Palestine, provide bare minimal protection to women making them targets for gender based violence, thus proving that escaping war does not mean safety. One in every three women, which approximates to about 30% of the women in the region have been victims of gender based violence, trafficking and sex work (Abirafeh). The starting of women empowering movements and eradicating the myths and misogyny around women could be
the stepping stone to the female importance and dominance in politics. It is highly important to have female representation in politics as it allows for discussions of female issues to be given importance and be resolved by women rather than men. Current issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM) are prevalent in countries such as Somalia with 98% of females having faced it, followed by Egypt with a rate of 87%. Such issues can only be tackled with increasing female representation as women are better situated to understand the significance of the issue and work towards resolving it. Moreover, women in politics are also hindered by negative media attention. Often dehumanizing language is used with regards to women in politics, harming them psychologically further proving and enhancing this stigma. More attention is given towards their looks and fashion sense over their ideas and policies.
Questions a resolution must answer:

1. What are the barriers to women in the field of politics and what measures should a country take in order to break said barriers?
2. What elements have affected the advancement of women in politics and their political rights?
3. To what extent can social issues be better addressed with women in the parliament?
4. How can states get past and break the norms of the prevailing political systems and the under-representation of women in the political fields?
5. What role does Sharia Law play in the field of gender equality and does it have an impact on female political participation?

Starter Sources:


Bibliography


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