

ECOSOC

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Chair: Isabel Jaramillo and Elisa Bencardino

Official language: English

Topic: United States' elected Government's influence on the following social problems highlighted from the previous administration

- Commercial War with China
- Climate Change

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Letter from the Presidents

Delegates,

It is an honor for us, Elisa Bencardino and Isabel Jaramillo to serve as presidents of the Economic and Social Council of the Model United Nations of the Marymount School, 2021. The objective of this committee is to discuss several social problems and both their impact and change of route with the newly inaugurated government of President Biden, and as leaders of the international community, decide a path that benefits the common good. As your presidents, we hope to be able to serve as a help and guides to obtain the best development of the committee. It is vitally important for us to accompany them in this process and help them to contribute in every way possible during the model in a committee outside the UN standards. We are sure that our commission will be a success as we have excellent delegates. We hope that the debate will take place within the protocol and we count on the active participation of all of you. Academic and personal growth is something for which we choose in the model as well as an experience to express solutions that benefit all nations with respect to the issues presented. We wish you the best of luck and that you can make the most of this experience. In case you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at our email.

Most sincerely,

Isabel Jaramillo and Elisa Bencardino
ECOSOC Chair

2. Introduction to the Committee

2.1 History

ECOSOC is part of the six main organs of the UN and a part of the General Assembly. It is one of the few committees that was established with the creation of the United Nations in 1945. This decision was made as a result of one of the main objectives of the United Nations: "To achieve international cooperation to create solutions to problems of social or economic issues." (United Nations, nd.) It has 54 members elected by the General Assembly. At the beginning of the committee there were 18 member countries, whereas in 1965 another 11 were added, and finally in 1971 the committee was completed with 54 member countries. ECOSOC also has meetings for coordination, management and financing for development (United Nations, 2020)

2.2 Purpose

The main purposes of this committee are:

- Examining different economic and social problems and preparing proposals and solutions
- Promotion of sustainable development
- Managing the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs
- Promoting policy integration Cooperation for development Financing for development
- Coordination of humanitarian activities
- Orientation of operational activities for development
- Execution of coordination and supervision tasks
- Establishment of alliances

- Promotion of youth participation
- Awareness of conflicts between developing countries

2.3 Challenges and Previously Resolved Issues

The Economic and Social Council addresses, as the name of the committee says, all the economic and social affairs of the world. This committee has been more involved in the 21st century than in the last century. It was mainly present in the humanitarian crisis in Haiti in 2010. ECOSOC also largely helped resolve the respiratory syndrome crisis and the Ebola crisis in 2013. Recently, the committee helped improve the quality of life for women in Palestine (United Nations, 2020).

2.4 Relevant Figures and Important Information of the Committee

Each year, at the beginning of each annual session, the Council elects the Bureau. The main functions of the Bureau are to propose the program, prepare a work program and organize the session with the support of the United Nations General Secretariat. Since 2014, the Council decided to change the Board of Directors each year in July. Currently, the committee chair is Oh Joon from the Republic of Korea. A new President will be chosen shortly. The Committee has a total of 54 member countries, chosen by the General Assembly every three years (United Nations, 2020).

3. First Topic

3.1 Introduction to the Topic

Since the election of President Trump in 2016, the two dominant political parties of the United States have disagreed on the measures with regard to multiple topics. On one hand, the Democrats advocate for more liberal policies that are highly inclusive towards all the population, whereas the Republicans have more conservative political views. This has caused discordance both in Congress and the Senate with regard to many bills former President Trump signed and ratified because many consider them to be selective as to the population benefited. For example, President Trump passed a bill restricting the entrance of people coming from about seven Arab countries, arguing that they posed a threat to national security. However, Democrats argued that this was discriminatory to judge people based on their country of origin and to prohibit their entrance based on an identity marker. Likewise, throughout his presidency, many other controversial decisions were taken, and now, with a new era of governance with President Biden, who is a Democrat, in power, these policies could be overruled. The United States is an example of strong economic development and global politics, therefore, the international community looks upon this very country to make decisions that favor the common good. Keeping in mind COVID -19 has impacted the development and citizen well-being negatively in almost every country. The policies of the new administration of the United States will be fundamental for the near future.

3.2 Subtopic A: Commercial War with China

Protectionism is a term used in economics to describe economic policies that restrict the imports of goods from other countries and focus on local production instead. Many countries have employed this model in order to prevent national industries from going broke, however, it can also

lead to a commercial war: a situation in which countries retaliate against a country that imposes trade barriers, such as tariffs and import quotas (Horowitz, 2018). In other words, this occurs when two countries raise import tariffs, so that they are less attractive to their citizens and they reduce their purchases from the affected countries (BBC News, n.d).

Nowadays, a commercial war between China and the United States has started, relying on the fact that Trump's conservative policies led the US to tax products imported from China to make them less competitive in the market. China did the same with products from the US in response, and this started a cycle where the two countries created new tariffs reducing exports from both countries. Given the fact that the United States and China are leaders of the world economy, a commercial war between these two nations could result in the economies of several other countries being affected too. Because a commercial war implies a rise in prices in the major factors of the economy this could cause a price increase for the basic needs of citizens, and as a byproduct, risking citizen well-being (Smith, et al, 2020).

3.2.1 Historical Background

During the Cold War, the United States has invested billions of dollars in rebuilding allied countries in order to help shape a better public image with Eastern European countries that previously used to be part of the Soviet Union. The US has always been a country that gets involved in the conflict in many ways, but especially economically. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has been able to maintain certain stability, however, it still disagrees substantially in the economic model that should be established globally, specifically advocating for capitalism and rejecting socialism, a model China and other Asian countries still have. Since China has become a country that leads the world's economy it has set a goal called "The Chinese Dream", which is that by 2049, this country will lead the world economy (Report, 2020).

In 2017, when Donald J. Trump's term as President of the United States began, steps began to be taken to end the threat. He not only took precautions against China but also with all organizations that were not "beneficial" to the US; such as the Trans-Pacific Agreement for Economic Cooperation, the North American Free Trade Agreement, agreements between certain countries that either limited or remove the tariffs on certain export products. By doing so, a country can engage in economic activities of exportation and importation with a neighboring country at a lower cost. On March 22, 2018, President Donald J. Trump signed a memorandum under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, directing the United States Trade Representative to apply tariffs of \$50 billion to Chinese products (Wong, 2020). The Chinese Ministry of Commerce responded to this on April 2, 2018, imposing tariffs on 128 US products. The following day the USTR (United States Trade Representatives) published a list of more than 1,300 categories of Chinese imports, worth half a billion dollars (500 million USD). This continued for a time, both countries responding to each other's threats by putting tariffs on the other nation's most important products. In May 2018, China went to the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Wong, 2020). On June 15th 2018, Trump confirmed the imposition of a tariff greater than 50 billion dollars to Chinese exports on July 6th of the same year. China's Trade Minister accused the United States of starting a trade war and said China would respond with similar tariffs on American imports. Three days later, the President declared that the United States would impose additional 10% tariffs on another 200 billion Chinese imports if China responded to the US measures. China replied almost immediately, threatening tariffs on 50 billion US goods, and reaffirming the "start of a trade war" by the United States. On December 1, 2018, during the G-20 summit, US President Donald J. Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in order to reach a middle ground in the trade war. The two parties reached an agreement to postpone the imposition of new trade tariffs for a period of 90 days, in

order to find an agreement between the two countries, however, even years later, the trade war still remains (Wong, 2020).

3.2.2 Current Situation

When the United States imposed a 200 billion dollar tariff on Chinese imports, President Xi Jinping weakened the country's currency (Yuan) to obtain increased customer attraction despite many industries and companies having to close. Although setbacks to the US are not as radical as those to China, they have affected the economy in a way. On the first hand, US exports have declined, and if in the near future the country does not find a substitute for cheap products from China, inflation will increase. The agricultural economy is also suffering not only in this country but also around the world. The commercial war has driven up the prices of all kinds of products throughout the world (Hass & Denmark, 2020). This is mainly due to the rise in tariffs that the US and China sell these products at a higher price in their country and in others. It is also due to the increase in the value of the dollar, making US exports more expensive and having higher value in the country where the products are imported (UNCTAD, 2019). As well, it is affecting countries that depend on US or Chinese products. For example, Mexico exports auto parts to the US, however since the US no longer sells its cars to China, they don't buy as much as before. The same is happening to Taiwan with its technology products (Noticias ONU,n.d).

In Europe, the countries most affected by this are France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. The United States Office of Commerce has mentioned that it will impose tariffs of more than 10% on some agricultural and aircraft products. For Spain and France, raising tariffs on agricultural products would be very bad since part of their economy depends on exporting these to the US. This happens in the UK and Germany with aircraft products (Dominguez, 2019).

Since the arrival of President Biden to office, he and his party have continuously expressed the need for change in the policies that are of the nation's interest, with regard to exterior relations too. With regard to the commercial war, he has expressed that he will not lift the 25% tariffs on all exports from China. As well, he plans on consulting with US allies before changing any measures taken during the Trump Administration, and getting advice as to how to proceed with new trade policies. Having in mind the economic repercussions of the coronavirus not only for the US, but for the rest of the country's allies, president Biden's top priority is reviving the industries that have been greatly affected, therefore trade agreements could contribute to impulse infrastructural development (Lawder, 2020).

3.2.3 Measures Taken in the Past

On December 1, 2018, during the G-20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Donald J. Trump and Xi Jinping met in order to reach a middle ground in the trade war. They decided to postpone the imposition of the new tariffs for a period of 90 days and in this period of time reach a solution or agreement between both nations. However, in these 90 days they did not reach an agreement and the war continued. Therefore, In May 2019, both presidents met again in order to fix some aspects of the war and perhaps reach a final resolution. A resolution was not reached and both countries instead decided to continue raising tariffs. Since then, the Chinese and the US Ministry of Commerce have been resolving some important issues such as disagreements on certain policies such as tax exemptions on products from Hong Kong shipping firms (Wong, 2020). Finally, on October 11, 2019, Donald Trump and Xi Jinping faced each other again after five months. The President of China commented he was eager to reach an agreement that would resolve the trade war, however, both sides continue with very different ideas that prevent this. One of the

biggest reasons as to why this commercial war has continued is because of the US being against Chinese censorship of its citizens, such as freedom of expression and other restrictive policies.

3.2.4 Future Expectations

As President Biden starts to fulfill his job as President of the United States, the predictions indicate that several policies have to change, especially bilateral trade agreements, since reactivating the economy is a priority for the country since the population is being vaccinated against COVID 19. For this reason, many hope that at some point, the relations between both countries improve and tensions de-escalate, something that was quite evident between President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (Disis, 2021). On the other hand, addressing some of Trump's policies that are in review right now during Biden's administration include the idea of banning certain Chinese apps such as Tiktok and WeChat, it is not clear whether or not Biden will implement these measures or overturn them instead.

3.2.5 QARMAS

1. How is your delegation's economy compromised? Is it composed mostly of exports or imports?
2. How is your delegation affected by the commercial war between China and the US?
3. What trade agreements does your delegation have?
4. What is your delegation's point of view on the measures taken by the Trump Administration?
5. What is the economic model implemented by your delegation (socialism, capitalism, etc)?

3.3 Subtopic B: Climate Change

3.3.1 Theoretical Framework

Climate Change: The Australian Academy of Science (2015), defined climate change as variations in the patterns of weather, and stated it has been naturally occurring for centuries. However, due to human influences, the process has been accelerated reaching extreme temperatures, immense damage, and devastating ecosystems worldwide.

In the 19th century coal, oil and gas became popular, transforming the way things were done, yet it wasn't until the 21st century that the world began to understand how deeply they affected the ecosystem. Deforestation and the use of fossil fuels has exponentially increased in the past decades to meet the needs of the fast-growing population. All factors contribute to greenhouse gases which eventually lead to worsening climate change.

Paris Agreement: Adopted at the Paris Climate Conference in 2015, the Paris Agreement is the first universal and legally binding global agreement designed to work towards and prevent the worsening of climate change.

Clean Power Plan: Announced by former President Obama in 2015, this plan it's the first-ever to limit the largest source of pollution in the U.S, carbon generated by power plants, and incentivized the use of renewable energies.

Affordable Clean Energy Rule (ACE Rule): Rule issued in 2019 to establish guidelines and plans to limit carbon dioxide emissions at existing coal power plants, only considered reducing the emissions yet not production nor the use of renewable energies.

3.3.2 Historical Background

During Trump's administration, a lot of matters were modified, being climate change one of the most altered aspects of its governance. For starters, on June 1st, 2017, former President of the United States, Donald. J. Trump announced the U.S withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. A formal letter was sent to the United Nations on August 4th of that same year, informing them and solidifying the decision. Both criticism and doubt rapidly arose with regard to the cause of his decision, to which he responded by stating that he had an open mind about it mostly because "the Paris Accord is very unfair, at the highest level, to the United States." (Trump, 2017). Subsequently, Trump believed this agreement would have weakened the U.S sovereignty and compromised its competitive edge, affecting traditional energy industries therefore employment.

Furthermore, in June 2019, the Clean Power Plan was replaced by the ACE Rule, with less rigorous requirements, especially around renewable energies. Moreover, as Bromley and Homan expressed in their article (2020), "the Trump administration has indicated opposition to certain state efforts to address climate change; for example, the federal government is seeking to curtail California's ability to set stricter automobile emissions standards." His position towards climate change wasn't altered during his presidential years since 2012 he made it clear that "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." (Trump, 2012).

3.3.3 Current Situation

With regard to the worldwide situation, climate change has been worsening and will continue unless strict measurements are taken. However, the U.S position regarding this problem has evolved due to the change of administrations at the beginning of this year. On January 20th, 2021 president-elect of the United States, Joe Biden, officially began his presidential period. His

ideals differ on many levels from the previous administration, including almost everything in relation to climate change. Biden has made it clear that he's willing to make climate change the center of his administration, which has already led to some modifications.

For starters, on his first day in office, President Biden started all the file work to rejoin the Paris Agreement, officializing it on February 19th, 2021. He has also signed a series of executive orders to pause oil and gas drilling on federal lands and water sources to the maximum possible. Additionally, he explained at the White House "Climate Day" why these reforms won't add to unemployment rates, "When I think of climate change, I think of jobs [...] we can put millions of Americans to work modernizing our water systems, transportation, our energy infrastructure to withstand the impacts of extreme climate" (Biden, 2021). Furthermore, he stated it's the moment to deal with the threat of climate change as according to him, "we've already waited too long to deal with this climate crisis and we can't wait any longer." (Biden, 2021).

3.3.4 Future Expectations

Considering the recent change of administrations, there is a lot of uncertainty on what the future holds for the United States' influence on climate change. Firstly, Biden needs to re-enter the Paris Agreement with an even more ambitious target than Obama in order to reestablish the U.S as a climate leader. As a result, the White House Officials have until April 22 to complete the pledge for 2030 climate, mostly carbon, goal to attempt to re-introduce the U.S. as a climate change world leader. Lastly, on January 19th the D.C Circuit left the ACE Rule, meaning there's now an open road for Biden to propose new regulations on greenhouse gas emissions. It's suspected that this proposal will bring back aspects from the Clean Power Plan.

3.3.5 QARMAS

1. Is your delegation part of the Paris Agreement?
2. What is your delegation currently doing to prevent climate change?
3. Was your delegation in favor or against the decisions made between January 2017 and January 2021 in regards to climate change?
4. How is your delegation affected by the U.S rejoining the Paris Agreement?
5. What's your delegation's point of view regarding climate change?

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