



SelaQui International School
Model United Nation Conference 2018

Inclusion et Egalite

A letter by the chairperson

Greetings, Delegates! My name is Kabir Kapur and it is my privilege to serve as the Chairperson of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee at QMUN'18. Before moving into the intricacies of committee, I'd like to tell you a bit about myself: I'm from Karnal and am pursuing the CBSE curriculum. My primary interests lie in Physics and Chemistry. Outside of academics, I frequently participate in MUNs and an array of sports. Most importantly, I am passionate about sports.

This time the committee will be heralded by me, the Deputy Chairperson, Aaditya Arora and the Rapporteur, Aman Agrawal. As for the committee; I discourage flashiness and showmanship and would advise delegates to focus on presentation, but not prioritize it over content.

Agendas:

- Our primary focus will be 'War on Narcotics', which will require decisive thinking; something I expect delegates to bring along with their research binders. Thus, delegates are encouraged to be thorough in their research on the topic as well as their portfolio. You will be required to act based on this and this alone, regardless of personal views.
- Our second agenda shall be the 'Rights of Indigenous People', which demands updated information on activities on the interstellar front.

All that is left is for me is to wish you luck with your preparations and remind you that participation in the committee's proceedings is key to enjoying the experience.

I look forward to working with each one of you this April!

Agenda 1: War on Narcotics

History

The Early Stages of Drug Prohibition

Many currently illegal drugs, such as marijuana, opium, coca, and psychedelics have been used for thousands of years for both medical and spiritual purposes. So why are some drugs legal and other drugs illegal today? It's not based on any scientific assessment of the relative risks of these drugs – but it has everything to do with who is associated with these drugs.

The first anti-opium laws in the 1870s were directed at Chinese immigrants. The first anti-cocaine laws in the early 1900s were directed at black men in the South. The first anti-marijuana laws, in the Midwest and the Southwest in the 1910s and 20s, were directed at Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans. Today, Latino and especially black communities are still subject to wildly disproportionate drug enforcement and sentencing practices.

Nixon and the Generation Gap

In the 1960s, as drugs became symbols of youthful rebellion, social upheaval, and political dissent, the government halted

scientific research to evaluate their medical safety and efficacy.

In June 1971, President Nixon declared a “war on drugs.” He dramatically increased the size and presence of federal drug control agencies and pushed through measures such as mandatory sentencing and no-knock warrants.

A top Nixon aide, John Ehrlichman, later admitted: “You want to know what this was really all about. The Nixon campaign in 1968 and the Nixon White House after that had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying. We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course, we did.” Nixon temporarily placed marijuana in Schedule One, the most restrictive category of drugs, pending review by a commission

he appointed led by Republican Pennsylvania Governor Raymond Shafer.

In 1972, the commission unanimously recommended decriminalizing the possession and distribution of marijuana for personal use. Nixon ignored the report and rejected its recommendations.

Between 1973 and 1977, however, eleven states decriminalized marijuana possession. In January 1977, President Jimmy Carter was inaugurated on a campaign platform that included marijuana decriminalization. In October 1977, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to decriminalize possession of up to an ounce of marijuana for personal use.

Within just a few years, though, the tide had shifted. Proposals to decriminalize marijuana were abandoned as parents became increasingly concerned about high rates of teen marijuana use. Marijuana was ultimately caught up in a broader cultural backlash against the perceived permissiveness of the 1970s.

The 1980s and 90s: Drug Hysteria and Skyrocketing Incarceration Rates

The presidency of Ronald Reagan marked the start of a long period of skyrocketing rates of incarceration, largely thanks to his unprecedented expansion of the drug war. The number of people behind bars for nonviolent drug law offenses increased from 50,000 in 1980 to over 400,000 by 1997.

Public concern about illicit drug use built throughout the 1980s, largely due to media portrayals of people addicted to the

smokeable form of cocaine dubbed “crack.” Soon after Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, his wife, Nancy Reagan, began a highly-publicized anti-drug campaign, coining the slogan "Just Say No."

This set the stage for the zero-tolerance policies implemented in the mid-to-late 1980s. Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates, who believed that “casual drug users should be taken out and shot,” founded the DARE drug education program, which was quickly adopted nationwide despite the lack of evidence of its effectiveness. The increasingly harsh drug policies also blocked the expansion of syringe access programs and other harm reduction policies to reduce the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

In the late 1980s, a political hysteria about drugs led to the passage of draconian penalties in Congress and state legislatures that rapidly increased the prison population. In 1985, the proportion of Americans polled who saw drug abuse as the nation's "number one problem" was just 2-6 percent. The figure grew through the remainder of the 1980s until, in September 1989, it reached a remarkable 64 percent – one of the most intense fixations by the American public on any issue in polling history. Within less than a year, however, the figure plummeted to less than 10 percent, as the media lost interest. The draconian policies enacted during the hysteria remained, however, and continued to result in escalating levels of arrests and incarceration.

Although Bill Clinton advocated for treatment instead of incarceration during his 1992 presidential campaign, after his first few months in the White House he reverted

to the drug war strategies of his Republican predecessors by continuing to escalate the drug war. Notoriously, Clinton rejected a U.S. Sentencing Commission recommendation to eliminate the disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences.

He also rejected, with the encouragement of drug czar General Barry McCaffrey, Health Secretary Donna Shalala's advice to end the federal ban on funding for syringe access programs. Yet, a month before leaving office, Clinton asserted in a Rolling Stone interview that "we really need a re-examination of our entire policy on imprisonment" of people who use drugs, and said that marijuana use "should be decriminalized."

At the height of the drug war hysteria in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a movement emerged seeking a new approach to drug policy. In 1987, Arnold Trebach and Kevin Zeese founded the Drug Policy Foundation – describing it as the “loyal opposition to the war on drugs.” Prominent conservatives such as William Buckley and Milton Friedman had long advocated for ending drug prohibition, as had civil libertarians such as longtime ACLU Executive Director Ira Glasser. In the late 1980s, they were joined by Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, Federal Judge Robert Sweet, Princeton professor Ethan Nadelmann, and other activists, scholars, and policymakers.

In 1994, Nadelmann founded The Lindesmith Center as the first U.S. project of George Soros' Open Society Institute. In 2000, the growing Center merged with the

Drug Policy Foundation to create the Drug Policy Alliance.

The New Millennium: The Pendulum Shifts – Slowly – Toward Sensible Drug Policy

George W. Bush arrived in the White House as the drug war was running out of steam – yet he allocated more money than ever to it. His drug czar, John Walters, zealously focused on marijuana and launched a major campaign to promote student drug testing. While rates of illicit drug use remained constant, overdose fatalities rose rapidly.

The era of George W. Bush also witnessed the rapid escalation of the militarization of domestic drug law enforcement. By the end of Bush's term, there were about 40,000 paramilitary-style SWAT raids on Americans every year – mostly for nonviolent drug law offenses, often misdemeanors. While federal reform mostly stalled under Bush, state-level reforms finally began to slow the growth of the drug war.

Politicians now routinely admit to having used marijuana, and even cocaine, when they were younger. When Michael Bloomberg was questioned during his 2001 mayoral campaign about whether he had ever used marijuana, he said, "You bet I did – and I enjoyed it." Barack Obama also candidly discussed his prior cocaine and marijuana use: "When I was a kid, I inhaled frequently – that was the point."

Public opinion has shifted dramatically in favor of sensible reforms that expand health-

based approaches while reducing the role of criminalization in drug policy.

Marijuana reform has gained unprecedented momentum throughout the Americas. Alaska, California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Maine, Massachusetts, Washington State, and Washington D.C. have legalized marijuana for adults. In December 2013, Uruguay became the first country in the world to legally regulate marijuana. In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau plans to legalize marijuana for adults by 2018.

In response to a worsening overdose epidemic, dozens of U.S. states passed laws to increase access to the overdose antidote, naloxone, as well as “911 Good Samaritan” laws to encourage people to seek medical help in the event of an overdose.

Yet the assault on American citizens and others continue, with 700,000 people still arrested for marijuana offenses each year and almost 500,000 people still behind bars for nothing more than a drug law violation.

President Obama, despite supporting several successful policy changes – such as reducing the crack/powder sentencing disparity,

ending the ban on federal funding for syringe access programs, and ending federal interference with state medical marijuana laws – did not shift the majority of drug policy funding to a health-based approach.

Now, the new administration is threatening to take us backward toward a 1980s style drug war. President Trump is calling for a wall to keep drugs out of the country, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions has made it clear that he does not support the sovereignty of states to legalize marijuana, and believes “good people don’t smoke marijuana.”

Progress is inevitably slow, and even with an administration hostile to reform, there is still unprecedented momentum behind drug policy reform in states and localities across the country. The Drug Policy Alliance and its allies will continue to advocate for health-based reforms such as marijuana legalization, drug decriminalization, safe consumption sites, naloxone access, bail reform, and more.

We look forward to a future where drug policies are shaped by science and compassion rather than political hysteria.

Previous Actions Taken on the Matter

The legacy of the US-funded war on drugs in Latin America is profound even as its impact has been temporary and geographically limited. Since the 1970s, the US has spent more than a trillion dollars attempting to dismantle drug cartels in Latin America. Yet, US-funded aerial fumigation programs and anti-narcotics policing in the southern Andes, for example, only succeeded in pushing the problem north, further destabilizing the armed conflict in Colombia.

During the 1980s, Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia were responsible for 65%, 25% and 10% of the world's cocoa production respectively. By 2000, however, the US "war on drugs" in neighboring Andean countries had turned Colombia into the world's largest cocaine producer by far, representing 90% of the total.

The 20-year war to dismantle the Colombian cartels has cost approximately 15,000 lives, many of them innocent victims of narco-terrorism. A few years after the demise of the big cartels, paramilitaries and the FARC guerrilla movement massacred or displaced millions of small farmers in their struggle to control land and drug-trafficking routes.

Between 2000 and 2010, the US spent \$7.3bn on a military and economic aid programme called Plan Colombia. Although it was successful at bringing many coca-growing areas under state control and substantially reducing drug-related violence,

Colombia remains a major cocoa and cocaine-producing country. Today, the FARC is on the retreat and the big cartels have long gone, but the lucrative trade has been taken over by a network of mini-cartels and demobilized paramilitaries. Plan Colombia also displaced the drug trade back into Peru and Bolivia, as well as north into Central America and Mexico.

Supported by the US-financed Mérida Initiative, in 2006 the Mexican government declared a war on the drug cartels that has killed or led to the disappearance of 100,000 Mexicans so far; 90% of the cocaine that enters the US passes through Mexico, a trade that is now valued at between \$19bn and \$29bn.

Meanwhile, the proportion of people consuming illicit drugs in the US has not changed significantly since the war on drugs began. Although the extent of drug abuse has remained stable overall, drug consumption has switched from harder, more socially destructive drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine (both have fallen approximately 40% in recent years), to softer drugs like marijuana. The US now spends \$8bn a year on fighting pot and half of all arrests are related to the drug, even though many experts believe it is less harmful than alcohol and may even offer benefits to people suffering from serious illnesses like cancer.

These new realities are putting drug policy reform on the agenda for the first time at the Organization of American States. Uruguay has become the first Latin American country

to legalize marijuana. It has also joined Bolivia in implementing national policies that emphasize the human rights of victims of the drug trade, who are mainly poor coca producers and drug users. Guatemala and Colombia have loudly backed change despite obstacles to implementing reform at home.

Even the US is showing signs of softening its stance on drugs. The states of Colorado and Washington recently legalized marijuana, a move now supported by 55% of Americans. Drug reformers nationwide continue to argue that legalization will free up resources needed to fight harder drugs, deny traffickers billions of dollars in profits, and generate tax revenues for prevention and treatment through state-controlled marijuana sales. There have been small but significant reforms to drug-related health and justice policies at the federal level.

Despite these changes, most Latin American countries remain firmly opposed to the

liberalization of drug laws. Only time will tell if the limited reforms in countries such as Uruguay and Bolivia will become the threat of a good example for the rest of the region. But the debate in Latin America is at least broadening at the same time as US influence over drug policies in the region is clearly on the wane.

What is becoming clear is that a new approach is needed as Latin American countries debate alternatives to the US war on drugs. Eric Olson, associate director of the Woodrow Wilson Center, commented: "A US policy that acknowledges its shared responsibility in the region's drug problems, and seeks collaborative solutions is an important first step. Declining US aid, a weakened drug certification process, and the willingness of some countries, especially Bolivia, to resist US pressure suggests that the US cannot continue to dictate the implementation of policy as it did in the 70s and 80s."

Key Events

1970 - The United States passes laws prohibiting narcotics use under the Controlled Substances Act.

1971 - U.S. President Richard Nixon declares a war on drugs and says drug abuse is the country's biggest threat.

1973 - Nixon sets up the Drug Enforcement Administration, or DEA.

1975 - Drug gangs kill 40 people in one weekend in the Colombian city of Medellin after police seize 1,320 pounds (600 kgs) of cocaine in one of the first ever big drug hauls.

1981 - Drug lord Pablo Escobar forms the Medellin Cartel with other powerful Colombian traffickers. The cartel begins to move tonnes of cocaine into Miami via the Caribbean.

1982 - Escobar briefly wins a seat in Colombia's Congress as he cuts a Robin Hood figure in Medellin, giving out money in slums and building houses for the poor.

1984 - Drug hitmen kill Colombia's justice minister. Escobar is indicted for the murder and flees to Panama. The DEA and Colombian police uncover a massive

cocaine production facility deep in the jungle.

1985 - Cocaine smuggling shifts into Mexico after U.S. law enforcement cracks down on maritime smuggling via the Caribbean into Miami. The godfather of Mexican narcotics trafficking, Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, pioneers overland smuggling routes to the United States for Colombian cartels.

1989 - Mexican police and the DEA arrest Felix Gallardo. His nephews Benjamin, Ramon and Javier Arellano Felix gradually take over his business, moving up to Tijuana on the U.S. border from their home state of Sinaloa to smuggle tonnes of cocaine into the lucrative Californian market.

1993 - Colombian police with U.S. help track down Escobar and kill him. With the Medellin cartel dismantled, a group of traffickers from the Colombian city of Cali rise in power.

1996 - Colombian police and the DEA dismantle the Cali cartel. In Mexico, smuggler Osiel Cardenas takes over the Gulf Cartel on the Texas border. He later recruits elite soldiers in Mexico's army to form the cartel's feared armed wing, the Zetas.

2000 - U.S. President Bill Clinton gives Colombia \$1.3 billion in aid under Plan Colombia.

2001 - Joaquin "Shorty" Guzman, escapes from a Mexican prison in a laundry van. Mexico's most-wanted drug lord, he heads a coalition of drug gangs from Sinaloa state

and vows after his escape to take control of Mexico's drugs trade.

2002 - Mexican police kill Ramon Arellano Felix in Sinaloa and weeks later arrest his brother Benjamin. Rival gangs try to muscle in on the weakened Tijuana cartel.

2004/5 - Guzman sends his henchmen to try to win control of the Gulf cartel's turf on Mexico's border with Texas, sparking gruesome drug violence in cities like Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey. Guzman is eventually repelled.

2006 - President Felipe Calderon sends tens of thousands of troops and federal police across Mexico to try to stem growing drug violence sparked by Guzman's territorial ambitions across Mexico.

2007 - Mexico extradites Gulf Cartel kingpin Cardenas to the United States and makes a historic 23-tonne cocaine seizure. U.S. President George W. Bush pledges a \$1.4 billion anti-drug package for Mexico and Central America. But the violence escalates.

2008 - Mexico captures hundreds of drug gang members, disrupting smuggling routes but unleashing yet more violence. Some 6,000 people are killed across Mexico as rival gangs fight each other and security forces in the worsening drug war.

2009 - Forbes magazine puts Guzman on its list of the world's billionaires. Mexican elite Navy squad tracks down and kills drug lord Arturo Beltran Leyva, head of the cartel of the same name and one of the countries' most wanted traffickers.

Bloc positions

Guatemala

The Mexican Army crackdown has driven some cartels to seek a safer location for their operations across the border in Guatemala, attracted by corruption, weak policing and its position on the overland smuggling route. The smugglers pick up drugs from small planes that land at private airstrips hidden in the Guatemalan jungle. The cargo is then moved up through Mexico to the U.S. border. Guatemala has also arrested dozens of drug suspects and torched huge cannabis and poppy fields. The U.S. government sent speedboats and night-vision goggles under a regional drug aid packages.

In February 2009, Los Zetas threatened to kill the President of Guatemala, Álvaro Colom. On March 1, 2010, Guatemala's chief of national police and the country's top anti-drugs official was arrested over alleged links to drug trafficking. A report from the Brookings Institution warns that, without proactive, timely efforts, the violence will spread throughout the Central American region.

West Africa

At least nine Mexican and Colombian drug cartels have established bases in 11 West African nations. They are reportedly working closely with local criminal gangs to carve out a staging area for access to the lucrative European market. The Colombian and Mexican cartels have discovered that it is much easier to smuggle large loads into West Africa and then break that up into smaller shipments to Europe – mostly Spain,

the United Kingdom and France. Higher demand for cocaine in Western Europe in addition to North American interdiction campaigns has led to dramatically increased trafficking in the region: nearly 50% of all non-U.S. bound cocaine or about 13% of all global flows, is now smuggled through West Africa.

Canada

The Mexican Army has severely curtailed the ability of the Mexican drug cartels to move cocaine inside the U.S. and Canada, prompting an upsurge in gang violence in Vancouver, where the cocaine price has increased from \$23,300 to almost \$39,000 per kilo as both the U.S. and Canadian drug markets are experiencing prolonged shortages of cocaine. As evidence of this pressure, the U.S. government says the amount of cocaine seized on U.S. soil dropped by 41 percent between early 2007 and mid-2008. Since 2009 Vancouver, British Columbia became the main Mexican drug cartels' center of operations in Canada.

United States

The U.S. Justice Department considers the Mexican drug cartels to be the "greatest organized crime threat to the United States." During the first 18 months of Calderón's presidency, the Mexican government has spent about \$7 billion USD in the war against drugs. In seeking partnership from the United States, Mexican officials point out that the illicit drug trade is a shared problem in need of a shared solution, and remark that most of the financing for the

Mexican traffickers comes from American drug consumers. On March 25, 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that "[America's] insatiable demand for illegal

drugs fuels the drug trade", and that "the United States bears shared responsibility for the drug-fueled violence sweeping Mexico."

QUESTIONS a RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

- Are the Single Convention and the 1988 UN Convention still appropriate or helpful in addressing the problem of drug trafficking and abuse in the modern context? What are their underlying principles? Do they permit different countries or regional groupings to address these problems in their own way, or do they bind member states to a one-size-fits-all universal approach?
- Do we need to draw up new international principles to address the drug problems, perhaps supplementing or replacing the Single Convention and the 1988 UN Convention?
- Decriminalization and legalization of drug possession and or use – do these represent the right way to go for the rest of the world?
- How have existing policies to tackle drug trafficking and abuse been hindered, and how might governments overcome these policies? Is there a role for transitional cooperation in this aspect, and if so, how might it be enhanced?
- On the spectrum of possible responses to drug offenders, ranging from rehabilitation to retributive punishment, what is the appropriate position for different governments?

Agenda 2: Rights of Indigenous Peoples

History

Who are indigenous people?

Indigenous peoples are descendants of the original people or occupants of lands before these lands were taken over or conquered by others. Many indigenous peoples have maintained their traditional cultures and identities (e.g., a way of dressing, language and the cultivation of land). Therefore they have a strong and deep connection with their ancestral territories, cultures, and identities.

The efforts to draft a specific instrument dealing with the protection of indigenous peoples worldwide date back over several decades. In 1982 the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the Working Group on Indigenous Populations with the mandate to develop a set of minimum standards that would protect indigenous peoples.

The Working Group was established as a result of a study by José R. Martínez Cobo on the problem of discrimination faced by indigenous peoples throughout the world. The study outlined the oppression, marginalization, and exploitation suffered by indigenous peoples.

Historical View

The Working Group submitted a first draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples to the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which was later approved in 1994. The Draft was sent for consideration to the then U.N. Commission on Human Rights for further discussion and if it was deemed to be appropriate, to approve the proposed declaration before its submission to ECOSOC and the U.N. General Assembly.

The process moved very slowly because of concerns expressed by States with regard to some of the core provisions of the draft declaration, namely the right to self-

determination of indigenous peoples and the control over natural resources existing on indigenous peoples' traditional lands.

The need to accommodate these issues led to the creation, in 1995, of the open-ended inter-sessional working group to consider and elaborate on the 1994 draft declaration. The open-ended working group hoped that the instrument would be adopted by the General Assembly within the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004). Since this did not take place, the mandate of the working group was extended by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights into the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2005-2015).

In 2006, revisions to the human rights machinery within the United Nations resulted in the replacement of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights with the U.N. Human Rights Council. On 29 June 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

On 28 December 2006, the Third Committee of the General Assembly (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) adopted a draft

resolution to defer consideration and action on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly, with the aim of concluding consideration of the Declaration before the end of its current sixty-first session.

Under a revised draft resolution, whose main sponsor was Peru, with a number of European and Latin American countries listed as co-sponsors, the full text would have been adopted by the Assembly in relatively short order.

But an initiative led by Namibia, co-sponsored by a number of African countries, resulted in the draft being amended. In its new form, the draft would have the Assembly decide “to defer consideration and action on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to allow time for further consultations thereon”. Furthermore, the Assembly would also decide “to conclude consideration of the Declaration before the end of its sixty-first session”.

Finally, on 13 September 2007, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples was adopted by a majority of 144 states in favor, 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States) and 11 abstentions (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine). [Click here to view the voting record.](#)

Since the adoption of the Declaration, Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada have all reversed their positions and expressed support for the Declaration. Colombia and Samoa have also endorsed the Declaration.

During the Durban Review Conference in April 2009, 182 States from all regions of the world reached consensus on an outcome document in which they “*Welcome[d]* the adoption of the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples which has a positive impact on the protection of victims and, in this context, *urge[d]* States to take all necessary measures to implement the rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with international human rights instruments without discrimination...”

Previous Actions Taken On the Matter

In contrast to the Declaration's initial rejection by Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States over legal concerns (all 4 countries later switched their positions to accepting the declaration as a non-legally-binding document), United Nations officials and other world leaders expressed pleasure at its adoption. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described it as a "historic moment when UN Member States and indigenous peoples have reconciled with their painful histories and

are resolved to move forward together on the path of human rights, justice and development for all." Louise Arbour, a former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada then serving as the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed satisfaction at the hard work and perseverance that had finally "borne fruit in the most comprehensive statement to date of indigenous peoples' rights." Similarly, news of the Declaration's adoption was greeted with jubilation in Africa and, present at the

General Assembly session in New York, Bolivian foreign minister David Choquehuanca said that he hoped the member states that had voted against or abstained would reconsider their refusal to support a document he described as being as important as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Bolivia has become the first country to approve the U.N. declaration of indigenous rights. Evo Morales, President of Bolivia, stated, "We are the first country to turn this declaration into a law and that is important, brothers and sisters. We recognize and salute the work of our representatives. But if we were to remember the indigenous fight clearly, many of us who

are sensitive would end up crying in remembering the discrimination, the scorn."

Stephen Corry, Director of the international indigenous rights organization Survival International, said, "The declaration has been debated for nearly a quarter century. Years which have seen many tribal peoples, such as the Akuntsu and Kanoê in Brazil, decimated and others, such as the Innu in Canada, brought to the edge. Governments that oppose it are shamefully fighting against the human rights of their most vulnerable peoples. Claims they make to support human rights in other areas will be seen as hypocritical

Bloc Positions

Australia

Australia's government opposed the Declaration in the General Assembly vote of 2007, but has since endorsed the Declaration. Australia's Mal Brough, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, referring to the provision regarding the upholding of indigenous peoples' customary legal systems, said that "There should only be one law for all Australians and we should not enshrine in law practices that are not acceptable in the modern world."

"fundamentally incompatible with Canada's constitutional framework", which includes both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Section 35, which enshrines aboriginal and treaty rights. In particular, the Canadian government had problems with Article 19 and Articles 26 and 28 (which could allow for the re-opening or repudiation of historically settled land claims).

Canada

The Canadian government said that while it supported the "spirit" of the declaration, it contained elements that were

New Zealand

In 2007 New Zealand's Minister of Māori Affairs Parekura Horomia described the Declaration as "toothless", and said, "There are four provisions we have problems with, which make the declaration fundamentally incompatible with New Zealand's constitutional and legal arrangements." Article 26 in particular, he said, "appears to

require recognition of rights to lands now lawfully owned by other citizens, both indigenous and non-indigenous. This ignores contemporary reality and would be impossible to implement."

United States

Speaking for the United States mission to the UN, spokesman Benjamin Chang said, "What was done today is not clear. The way it stands now is subject to multiple

also issued a floor document, "Observations of the United States with respect to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", setting out its objections to the Declaration. Most of these are based on the same points as the three other countries' rejections but, in addition, the United States drew attention to the Declaration's failure to provide a clear definition of exactly whom the term "indigenous peoples" is intended to cover.

Interpretations and doesn't establish a clear universal principle."^[50] The U.S. mission

Question a Resolution Must Answer

- *How can the international community sufficiently address the social, political and economic concerns of the indigenous community?*
- *What are the problems and dilemmas governments today face as they decide on how to protect the rights of the indigenous people?*
- *How far should governments award autonomy and the right of self-government to indigenous groups?*
- *As society progresses, indigenous culture and practices face the threat of extinction. How can the individuality of indigenous communities be protected without their culture being exploited or appropriated?*