

Middle East Summit

Topic 2: The Impending Water Crisis

The Middle East has an abundance of oil and gas that has led to much bloodshed throughout the years. However, one resource that is perhaps more important than either of the above is water. The Middle East requires water in order to grow its population and to make its agricultural land and products sustainable. However, when it comes to water supply and techniques, the region is ill prepared for the future and is on course for a major water crisis.

Conflict over water is not new to the region. Throughout the last century, the region has seen tensions flare up between Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, and Egypt and Sudan over control of the region's water supply. While agreements have been reached between individual countries regarding the bodies of water in the area, there is still no region-wide treaty that guarantees everyone an adequate amount of water, leaving many experts and analysts with the fear that next major conflict in the region will not be a war fought over politics, religion, or oil, but water.

The Middle East is one of the most water-scarce regions in the world while also having one of the highest population growth rates in the world. This along with poor irrigation techniques, increased desertification, pollution, and regional tensions and conflicts have created a crisis never before seen in the region. Furthermore, average temperatures are rising to a level that could lead to a decrease in rainfall of 20% over the next century. Simply put, at the current rate of population growth, rainfall, and desertification the region is destined for a crisis that will only cause more conflict in an already war-torn region. The Middle East Summit must come together to find a solution to this impending crisis before it is too late.

There are various approaches to take when it comes to this issue. Not every country in the region is dealing with this issue, so they can either decide to do nothing and keep to themselves or help their neighbors by providing water, technology, or other resources. Countries that are dealing with this issue must decide how they want to approach it. Political resolutions, trade deals, economic provisions, technological advancements, environmental regulations, and war are all viable, but not the only, options that are on the table.

Delegates should consider the following issues when researching and writing topic papers:

1. Should there be a region wide treaty/agreement that deals with the division of water resources in the region and if so what would it look like? How does one determine how much water each country gets? How would it be enforced? What would be the penalty for violating the treaty?
2. How can the region ensure that each country uses a reasonable amount of water?
3. How should the region deal with its population growth? Should it be dealt with at all?
4. How can technological advancements in irrigation, desertification, pollution, and desalination help improve the situation in the region?
5. What should the region do regarding the environmental aspect of this issue such as the decrease in rainfall and pollution of water resources?

6. If water will indeed be as important as the analysts say it will be, how can the region ensure that it does not fall into the hands of terrorist groups?
7. How does the water crisis tie into the other regional issues —wars in Syria and Yemen, terrorist threats, refugee crisis, global warming? Does the water crisis solution rely on finding a solution to any one of these issues? Do solutions to these issues rely on solving the water crisis? Are they related at all?

These topics are to be used as a starting point for our upcoming discussion and are by no means a comprehensive list of what can be covered in the committee. I urge you to research the water politics of the region as well as your countries in depth so you are prepared for the complex discussions we will be having. Useful resources can include articles that delve into the history of the region's water wars, relevant United Nations resolutions, articles that discuss environmental and technological developments, and public statements and memos released by the involved countries related to the issue. **Please remember that while sub-committees and sanctions can be helpful they will not solve the problem on their own.**

Please be sure to present your country's position and be familiar with the guidelines enumerated in the YUNMUN Student Handbook, particularly those concerning plagiarism. All position papers will be scanned for plagiarism through turnitin.com.

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