

United Nations Peacebuilding Commission
Youth Peace and Security in South Sudan

CLARKMUN XIV
Clark University Model United



Lushia has just arrived with her husband at the UNHCR transit centre, near the Joda border point in Renk, South Sudan. UNHCR buses take the most vulnerable new arrivals from the border to the center. They fled the civil war in South Sudan for Khartoum and were living there for eight years. © UNHCR

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Chair Letter

Hello delegates,

Welcome to ClarkMUN's first Advanced General Assembly committee! My name is Zoe Ellingwood, and I am the President of Model United Nations at Clark University, the organization that oversees ClarkMUN. I am a senior majoring in Political Science, with a focus in Genocide Studies and Human Rights. I currently spend my time conducting research on the interconnections between technology and mass atrocity in Gaza and Xinjiang and hope to become an international human rights lawyer in my future. Aside from my academic commitments, I compete on the collegiate circuit, leading the Clark delegation team to 10 annual conferences around North America.

You may remember me from previous ClarkMUN conferences; I chaired the SOCHUM committee at ClarkMUN 2023, Warren G. Harding's Cabinet in 2022, and served on the Secretariat in previous years. As this is my final ClarkMUN, I am so excited to present one of my favorite committees within the UN system: the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission! As an avid General Assembly delegate myself, I hope that this committee causes you to think more broadly about the topics at hand, and consider the interconnectedness of the United Nations organs.

The topic of "Youth, Peace, and Security" highlights the essence of post-conflict societies. As younger generations live through periods of violence, displacement, and instability, they are disproportionately impacted as they are forced to bear witness to traumatic events at young ages. However, these generations of survivors are also the ones that ensure reconstruction and peacebuilding within their communities. I urge you to consider the perspective of the youth, both their trauma and transformative potential in ensuring sustainable peace and justice.

I am so excited to hear about the creative solutions you bring to the table. Since you are experienced delegates within your respective delegations, I expect that you will embark on this journey with curiosity, compassion, and confidence! Come prepared to discuss complex regional issues with international implications and expect to be faced with surprise elements during committee sessions. I look forward to meeting you all!

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns!

Best regards,

Zoe Ellingwood | zellingwood@clarku.edu

INTRODUCTION

The Peacebuilding Commission, established through resolutions A/RES/60/180 and S/RES/1645 (2005), was tasked by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council to coordinate efforts in post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. Its mandates include convening relevant stakeholders to develop integrated strategies for reconstruction and institution-building, with a focus on sustainable development. Furthermore, it aims to enhance coordination among various actors, both within and outside the UN, to facilitate predictable financing for early recovery activities and extend international attention to post-conflict recovery. Subsequent resolutions, A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016), emphasized the Commission's role in sustaining peace, advocating for countries affected by conflict, promoting integrated approaches to peacebuilding, bridging communication among UN organs, and convening diverse stakeholders to improve coordination, share best practices, and ensure predictable financing for peacebuilding efforts.¹

¹ "Mandate: About the Commission," United Nations Peacebuilding, <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/about-the-commission>

The Peacebuilding Commission operates through various configurations, including the Organizational Committee and country-specific meetings, with the Chair and Vice-Chairs selected by the Committee for a term of one year, ensuring representation from all regional groups. The Organizational Committee is currently chaired by Brazil, and Croatia and Kenya represent the Vice-Chair positions.² The Organizational Committee convenes as required to set agendas, arrange country-specific meetings, and review reports, with meetings held either publicly or privately as determined by the Chair. Meetings are conducted in six official languages, and agendas are established by the Organizational Committee in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Participation is inclusive, with opportunities for both Commission members and other participants to engage in discussions flexibly. Regular consultations with civil society, NGOs, women's groups, and the private sector are facilitated by the Chair, and conclusions and recommendations are presented based on consensus among Member States. These procedural rules are subject to further development and review based on the Commission's practical work.³

Delegates will represent their country's interests as members of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Centering the theme of Youth, Peace, and Security, you will delve into the complex history of the conflict in South Sudan. Delegates will work toward drafting solutions to the topics at hand that are both regionally specific and internationally appropriate. Given the advisory nature of the UNPBC, delegates are encouraged to draft recommendations that foster cross-organ partnerships, develop public-private-partnerships (PPPs), and implement creative solutions involving other relevant partners.

² "Membership," United Nations Peacebuilding, <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/commission/membership>

³ "Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Peacebuilding Commission," General Assembly and Security Council PBC/1/OC/3/Rev.2, United Nations, 22 January, 2024, https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbc_1_oc_3_rev.2.pdf

Committee Expectations

This committee will function like a standard General Assembly committee with a few modifications. Although the actual UNPBC is an advisory body consisting of only 31 Member States, elected by the General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council, for the purposes of this simulation, all present Member States, including countries without current membership of the UNPBC, will have the same powers. No State shall have veto power.

However, all delegates are encouraged to consider their country's current and past involvement with the PBC when drafting policies. Delegates are allowed to reference their own position within the Commission, but only for the purposes of suggesting improvements to the Body's structure, function, or membership. Further, you are encouraged to evaluate the current structure of the Peacebuilding Commission and consider drafting recommended amendments to the Body's internal governing documents. In this way, all delegates, whether they are member of the Commission or not, may consider the existing membership structure as it relates to the problems at hand.

It is standard procedure in General Assemblies to allow delegates the freedom to choose the structure of their Working Papers and Draft Resolutions. However, to encourage thorough research and thoughtful debate, this committee will require all working blocs to include at least three distinct categories within their Working Papers and Draft Resolutions. The first category should be labeled "Strengthening Political Institutions," the second "Improving Gender Disparities," and the third "Youth Involvement in Peacebuilding." These categories must not be all-encompassing. Solutions may be applicable to more than one topic. In fact, there should be evident transferability! However, by distinguishing these distinct categories, delegates show nuance in their proposed solutions and a deeper understanding of the various unique challenges that each of the three categories poses. This

separation of policy should be fairly straightforward as the background guide covers each of the three topics in detail.

The general flow of the committee should begin with an Opening Speakers list. Moderated and unmoderated caucuses shall follow, as delegates form working groups or “blocs” of like-minded delegates. Blocs will draft Working Papers and present them in a shortened Authors Panel presentation approximately halfway through the day. There will be a minimum of 4 Working Papers accepted. Sponsor requirements will be communicated during the first committee session. Upon presentation of Working Papers, blocs will merge into Draft Resolutions. As more moderated and unmoderated caucuses continue, the final Draft Resolutions will be submitted to the dais and presented in a longer Authors Panel format. This committee will not entertain Amendments and thus follow directly into Voting Procedure before debate is ended. Should you have any questions about the flow of the committee, please do not hesitate to reach out to me via email at zellingwood@clarku.edu.

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

Sudan, including the territory that now constitutes the state of South Sudan, became independent in 1956 after an agreement between the United Kingdom and Egypt that provided for self-governance and self-determination. However, since 1956, Sudan has experienced more than 15 military coups, leading to long periods of military rule intertwined with only short periods of democratic parliamentary rule. This is, in large part, due to the colonial influence of British administration policies, which combined Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, two initially separate colonies, into a singular unit. It is important to note that northern Sudan was primarily Arab-Muslim and culturally similar to neighboring Arabic-speaking Egypt. The southern territories were predominantly non-Muslim and culturally similar to other east-African territories of Kenya and Uganda. British governance failed to properly incorporate local leaders from the Southern territory, often favoring the northern elite. This

trend continued through the process of decolonization, granting them substantially more political power during the transition to independence.⁴

The first Sudanese Civil War broke out almost immediately after the declaration of Sudan's independence. The Arab-led Khartoum government promised the southern province a federal governance structure. However, this plan was never actualized and resulted in mutiny by southern army officers which continued for the following decade. From 1955 - 1972, tensions between the newly formed central government and rebels from the South erupted into a war that killed and displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians. Issues of political marginalization, economic disparities, and cultural differences were exacerbated by colonial policies that favored the north.

The southern rebels, which were largely comprised of marginalized ethnic groups and supported by the local population, fought for autonomy, control over their resources, and equitable political representation. The government in Khartoum, which upheld the interests of northern elite classes, responded with military force to quell the rebellion. Between 1955 - 1972, several unsuccessful coup d'états destabilized Sudan's political structure as leaders failed to cope with the problems of religious divides, factionalism, ethnic conflict, and economic instability. In 1972, the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed which temporarily paused the civil war and restored partial self-rule for the South. Although this brought a decade of relative peace, a number of mutinies by former Anyana took place through 1976 which resulted in the deaths of more than 300 militants and non-combatants.

In 1983, the Second Civil War broke out. As Islamic fundamentalists grew in power, President Gaafar Nimeiry attempted to implement an Islamification policy that declared Sudan an Islamic State. This violated the stipulations in the Addis Ababa Agreement which established religious autonomy within the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region. Additionally, Nimeiry also infringed upon the territorial sovereignty of the north-south

⁴ Sofie Dreef, and Wolfgang Wagner, "South Sudan." *Designing Elections in Conflict-Prone Divided Societies: The Case of South Sudan*, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep14472.5>

border through increasing control of the recently-discovered oil fields that were found in Bentiu.

The Second Civil War was fought between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) based in the south. The war, according to the SPLM, resulted in 2 million deaths in the south alone, destroying many sectors of economic activity, gutting the industrial sector, threatening the already weakened infrastructure systems, and weakening the barely functioning social services in both the north and south. Since 1983, more than 4 million people have been displaced as a result of the war.⁵

Regional and international actors attempted to provide solutions to the conflict through mediation efforts. In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed by regional actors. The CPA provided a six-year interim period of autonomy, to be followed by a referendum on independence in 2011. Upon completion of this interim period, the population overwhelmingly voted to democratically declare independence, and thus South Sudan became Africa's newest state on July 9, 2011.⁶

Since 2003, new coalitions of rebel groups began to call attention to another region of interest: Darfur. Located on the Western side of Sudan and comprised of almost 12,000,000 people, Darfur hosts a myriad of religious and ethnic conflicts which escalated in 2003. The Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM, not to be mistaken for SPLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched attacks against the government of Sudan, citing mistreatment of Darfur's non-Arab population. As a result, the government, headed by President Omar al-Bashir, began a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Darfur's non-Arabs. He mobilized military and allied militias known as the Janjaweed to suppress the rebellion.

⁵“Sudan: The Quick and the Terrible,” Frontline World, January 2005,
<https://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/sudan/facts.html>

⁶ “The South Sudan Crisis, Explained,” Concern Worldwide US, December 13, 2021,
<https://concernusa.org/news/south-sudan-crisis-explained/#:~:text=South%20Sudan%27s%20crisis%20by%20the,1.7%20million%20people%20internally%20displaced>

The government and janjaweed militias engaged in widespread human rights abuses, including targeted killings, rape, and forced displacement, leading to a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. The United Nations and several other INGOs and human rights organizations have labeled the humanitarian disaster a genocide.

CURRENT SITUATION

Only two years after gaining independence in 2011, conflict broke out again in the new country. Fighting broke out as a result of tensions between rebel groups and the central government. In 2015, an internationally-mediated peace agreement was signed, which offered only temporary relief as cycles of violence have continued to persist. It is estimated that by April of 2018, 400,000 people had died in the war. Tensions among ethnic lines have continued to cause deep divides within society, making peacebuilding efforts difficult to sustain unless social cohesion improves. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) attempts to coordinate peacebuilding efforts through waves of violence. Its mandate includes supporting peace consolidation and strengthening state-building as well as economic development. Its mandate was extended until March 15, 2024, although the Security Council is expected to vote for a further extension as many of its projects are unfinished and the overall stability of South Sudan has not reached the necessary threshold.⁷

In South Sudan, over 8.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Of them, there are over 1.4 million children suffering malnutrition. According to the World Food Programme, more than 7.7 million people (two-thirds of the total population) are facing crisis-level or worse hunger.⁸ An additional 2.22 million people are internally displaced

⁷ “Mandate,” United Nations Mission in South Sudan, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/mandate>

⁸ Kathryn Reid, “South Sudan Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help,” World Vision, October 19, 2023, <https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/south-sudan-conflict-facts>

persons (IDPs)⁹ and South Sudan, as of 2021, has produced 2.3 million refugees in neighboring countries.¹⁰ The vast majority of those fleeing South Sudan are women and children, with children constituting 65% of the total South Sudanese refugee population. Much of the South Sudanese population faces imminent risk to its health, safety, and wellbeing. The World Health Organization has reported cases of measles, Hepatitis E Virus (HEV), viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF), yellow fever, and meningitis present in various communities, mostly among IDPs. Poor medical infrastructure and lack of adequate access to basic sanitary resources contribute to the spread of viruses and diseases.¹¹ Continued and increased support is necessary to allow the WHO and other relevant partners to continue providing essential humanitarian support.

Recognizing the deteriorating infrastructure and lack of adequate stable institutions, the first meeting of the UN Peacebuilding Commission on South Sudan was held on October 26, 2022. This meeting was held under the theme of “Building Peace through institutions and Governance,” and signified an important partnership between the UNPBC and the Government of South Sudan. Continued engagement between the PBC and government authorities has varied since, as many of the key concrete recommendations made from the initial meeting have yet to be implemented. These requirements include drafting a permanent constitution, holding elections, achieving a 35% quota for women’s involvement in political institutions, and including the voices of youth populations, which constitute over 70% of the South Sudanese population.¹² Through this report and others, this committee’s

⁹ “South Sudan Refugee Crisis Explained,” United Nations Refugee Agency, July 24, 2023, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/south-sudan-refugee-crisis-explained/>.

¹⁰ “The South Sudan Crisis, Explained,” Concern Worldwide US, December 13, 2021, <https://concernusa.org/news/south-sudan-crisis-explained/#:~:text=South%20Sudan%27s%20crisis%20by%20the,1.7%20million%20people%20internally%20displaced>

¹¹ “Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report: South Sudan,” World Health Organization Report, Issue 20, January 2022, https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2022-03/South%20Sudan%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report_%2320%20-%20January%202022%20.pdf 4.

¹² “Building Peace in Communities through Local Governance and Community Reconciliation in South Sudan,” United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 31 January 2023,

theme of “Youth, Peace, and Security” highlights three main subtopics that delegates should seek to address within their Resolutions: strengthening political institutions, improving gender disparities, and strengthening youth involvement in peacebuilding.

Strengthening Political Institutions

Elections are planned for December 2024. However, as the security situation deteriorates, and violent crime proliferates, the region is at risk of entering the worst humanitarian crisis since its short independence. The existing political structure and associated institutions must be re-evaluated in order to ensure the proper implementation of sustainable change.

In 2011, the South Sudanese Constitution replaced a pre-existing 2005 Interim Constitution and established a presidential system of government headed by a President. He/she/they is/are elected by direct popular vote and serve terms of 5 years. The legislative branch is also elected through a popular vote and is responsible for guiding other governmental branches.¹³ However, South Sudan is ruled by a small class of wealthy elites which undermine robust political institutions. In 2021, The OHCHR published a report finding that millions of dollars of aid are diverted away from benefitting public services and instead serving the interests of a small class of elites. Between 2018 and 2020, this number totaled over USD \$73 million.¹⁴ Humanitarian organizations including the United Nations Human Rights Council thus face uncertainty when distributing funding that is meant to be used for humanitarian purposes.

https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/230131_pbc_meeting_on_south_sudan_chairs_summary_final.pdf 1

¹³ “South Sudan: Government,” globalEDGE, <https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/south-sudan/government>.

¹⁴ “South Sudanese political elites illicitly diverting millions of US dollars, undermining core human rights and stability – UN experts note,” United Nations Human Rights Council, 23 September 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/09/south-sudanese-political-elites-illicitly-diverting-millions-us-dollars>.

Aside from logistical challenges, humanitarian aid organizations also face the risk of collapse due to the unsafe work environments for their employees. In 2023 alone, 34 humanitarian workers were killed by rebel groups, disincentivizing new organizations from willful involvement in South Sudan.¹⁵

The South Sudanese government further limits the necessary flow of information through restrictions on free expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly. Arbitrary detentions are common, such as was seen in the recent trial of Abraham Chol Maketh, a clergy member who was arrested for predicting the overthrow of the South Sudanese government in July 2021, according to Human Rights Watch. Patterns of unlawful detentions indicate the pitfalls of a corrupt judicial system which is susceptible to interference from other branches of government.¹⁶ President Kiir issued a provisional order in December 2021 which seeks to investigate and prosecute cybercrime. However, human rights organizations have voiced criticisms surrounding this move, indicating that the vague definitions of “terrorism,” “indecent content,” and “cybercrime,” could make way for targeting of political opponents and the restrictions of individual rights to privacy and access to information.¹⁷

The country also struggles to build sustainable, independent media infrastructure. It has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world and only 7% of its population has consistent access to internet. Information is thus communicated through radio, which is administered by bomas, or groups of several villages, and significantly restricted by higher-ranking political officers. Due to censorship and threats to journalist safety, the flow of information is significantly restricted and the right to free speech is not universally protected.¹⁸ Organizations such as USAID contribute trainings for journalists and radio broadcasters, fund the expansion of radio access, and provide new technologies such as solar-powered

¹⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/south-sudan_en

¹⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/south-sudan>

¹⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/south-sudan>

¹⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/south-sudan/democracy-human-rights-and-governance>

radios. Continuing to establish robust funding and support mechanisms for these organizations ensures the flow of accurate and reliable information.

Improving Gender Disparities

Gender relations in South Sudan are influenced by ethnic, language, religious, and social factors as the country is home to more than 60 ethnic groups and 80 local languages. Being one of the world's Least Developed Countries, South Sudan grapples with a history of conflict that is inseparable from its structure of gender relations. Due to decades of conflict, gender roles have undergone brief periods of reform as women "managed to keep a semblance of community life as they went about taking care of their children and doing most of the work done by men, most of whom had gone off to war."¹⁹ This is a trend found in other post-conflict societies such as Rwanda, where men are forced to join combatant forces, leaving women to fill the gaps in household and economic responsibilities.

Cultural norms marginalize women from participating in any level of civil society. Women are primarily confined to the private sphere, tasked with homemaking and childbearing. However, the Transitional Constitution and Bill of Rights set an Affirmative Action quota of 25% for all legislative and executive bodies in South Sudan. Currently, women constitute 26.5% of the National Legislative Assembly. The World Economic Forum found that societies gain advantages when more women are included in decision-making and peacebuilding processes. When legal inequalities between men and women are removed, research shows that it boosts female workplace participation and increases a country's GDP.²⁰ It is thus of the utmost importance that the UNPBC develop

¹⁹ [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gender20in20Brief20South20Sudan20.pdf](https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gender20in20Brief20South20Sudan20.pdf)

²⁰ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/11/women-government-representation/#:~:text=It%20turns%20out%20that%20societies,and%20the%20Oliver%20Wyman%20Forum.>

recommendations for increasing women's participation in governance structures to improve gender disparities.

In addition to women's involvement in post-conflict peacebuilding, it is important to note that social stigmas and cultural practices continue to place women at risk. Women and girls face risk of sexual and gender-based violence. According to Concern Worldwide, 82% of women and 81% of men agree that "women should tolerate domestic violence in order to keep their families together." A 2009 UNIFEM survey found that 41% of female respondents had experienced gender-based-violence in the previous year. 45% of girls are married before they turn 18 years old and 7% of all girls are married prior to reaching age 15. Child brides are common; as are polygamous relationships, which constitute approximately 41% of all marriage unions in South Sudan.²¹

Gender disparities also constitute a public health crisis in South Sudan. The country faces one of the highest maternal mortality rate in the world at 14%, indicating a lack of healthcare infrastructure that puts women and girls at increased risk. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has also been reported in both Christian and Muslim communities, particularly in the northern part of South Sudan. Although the country has comparatively low rates of FGM according to official figures, a culture of silence prevents many women and girls from speaking up about their experiences publicly. Official figures do confirm that the prevalence of FGM is much higher in neighboring Sudan, where 86.6% of women in some regions have undergone the procedure.²²

²¹ <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gender20in20Brief20South20Sudan20.pdf>

²² <https://www.fgmcri.org/country/south-sudan/#:~:text=Distribution%20of%20FGM%2FC%20across%20South%20Sudan&text=FGM%2FC%20has%20been%20reported.FGM%2FC%20is%2086.6%25>.

Youth Involvement in Peacebuilding

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, passed in 2015, is the first international document to recognize the role of young people on matters of peace and security. This groundbreaking document highlights the role that the youth can play in conflict prevention, reconstruction, and peacebuilding. Given South Sudan's large youth population and the previous "lost generation" that was killed during the First and Second Civil Wars, this could not be more relevant. Youth voices should be empowered to foster public discussion about underlying political, social and economic issues, as these are not only the root of violent extremism, but shape the everyday life of the population and trajectory of the future.²³

The primary barrier to youth involvement in peacebuilding is the lack of educational pathways available for young people. The country has the world's third-lowest literacy rate and highest rate of out-of-school children globally, according to USAID. This is due to a myriad of issues including poverty, lack of political leadership and investment, absence of qualified teachers, child marriage, lack of formal teacher training, unclear career tracks, and inconsistent salary payments.²⁴ 70% of children aged 6-17 years have never set foot in school. Additionally, youth as young as 13 face further risks of involvement in armed conflict. In March of 2022, documented reports by ceasefire monitors found that rebel groups in Unity, Lakes, and Western Equatoria states routinely recruit children into security services. An additional UN report on children and armed conflict confirm the recruitment and use of child combatants, 30% of which are under the age of 15.²⁵ Recognizing the need to

²³ <https://southsudan.unfpa.org/en/news/perspectives-young-people-youth-peace-and-security-agenda-working-together-south-sudan-we-want>

²⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/south-sudan/education#:~:text=EDUCATION%20AND%20SOUTH%20SUDANESE%20YOUTH&text=Girls%20face%20disproportionate%20hardships%2C%20such,currently%20enrolled%20in%20secondary%20school.>

²⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/south-sudan>

address this widespread violation of international law, the Security Council condemned the use of child soldiers in Resolution 2625.²⁶

During the 2013 civil war alone, 19,000 children were recruited into militias, ending educational opportunities and entrenching deeper cycles of violence. Organizations such as USAID specifically target these age groups in hopes of reconciling the lost time and providing them with alternate pathways to avoid continued violence. Young people in South Sudan primarily rely on informal sector trade, agriculture, and food service work for income. However, these occupations are unreliable and increase the vulnerability of low-income workers. International efforts have attempted to support livelihoods through entrepreneurship and small business support, but young Sudanese feel that these interventions have failed to make a sustainable and significant impact. Existing research emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of sustainable livelihood interventions and calls for international support that challenges abusive economic relationships and the exclusive and restrictive nature of current assistance programs.²⁷ Nonprofits such as Project Education South Sudan seek to fill these gaps in information through developing education pathways for all.²⁸



An UNMISS-led training on conflict management took place in Rumbek where 60 students learnt new skills to solve disagreements. Photo by James Mawien Manyuol/UNMISS.

²⁶ https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/res_2625_2022_e.pdf

²⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-youth-violence-and-livelihoods>

²⁸ <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/03/20/465439724/in-south-sudan-a-struggle-to-get-and-keep-kids-in-schools>

Several existing programs seek to make a change in the status quo. UNICEF’s Young Reporter Programme was founded in 2020 to provide a vital platform for school-going children to advocate for critical issues such as climate change, mental health, menstrual hygiene, and gender equality. The program has mentored over 150 young students through programming which includes peer-to-peer discussions, art exchanges, networking, and debates.²⁹ This program, like many others, unfortunately lacks the resources to expand beyond its near reach. Children in rural areas often do not have access to the same opportunities that children in urban centers do. The Young Reporters Programme can serve as a framework for additional policy that creates advocacy and career pathways to young South Sudanese students.³⁰

Another non-profit organization that provides support to youth in South Sudan is the Grassroots Empowerment and Development Organization (GREDO). It is responsible for the establishment of a system of youth centers in Juba, which have the aim of “influencing and changing community attitudes and social norms.”³¹ These centers provide a range of activities including vocational training, sports, creative arts, and awareness programs for social and environmental issues. Although these youth centers are in the process of expanding, similar models can be implemented to provide grassroots and community-centered solutions to the issues at hand.³² Utilizing community centers as a forum for discussion can allow policymakers to engage with youth populations to develop sustainable and relevant peacebuilding initiatives.

²⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/stories/amplifying-childrens-voices-south-sudan-through-unicef-young-reporter-programme>

³⁰ <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/stories/empowering-change-unleashing-power-advocacy>

³¹ <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/stories/youth-centers-serving-catalyst-transformation-south-sudan>

³² <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/stories/youth-centers-serving-catalyst-transformation-south-sudan>

Bloc Positions

Burden Sharing

The issue of burden sharing regarding the funding of reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan may lead to the formation of various blocs, each advocating for different approaches. These blocs may diverge in their perspectives on which states should bear the primary responsibility for financial and logistical support and how this burden should be distributed among nations. They may propose different criteria for determining contributions, such as GDP, historical involvement in the conflict, or regional proximity to South Sudan. Delegates may consider the lasting implications of colonialism in this debate.

Protections of Humanitarian Workers

The issue of protecting humanitarian workers while maintaining the presence of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) poses a complex challenge that may give rise to diverse blocs with differing perspectives. Some blocs may prioritize the safety and security of humanitarian workers, advocating for robust measures to ensure their protection in conflict zones and volatile environments. They may emphasize the importance of upholding international humanitarian law and holding perpetrators of violence against aid workers accountable. Conversely, other blocs may stress the vital role of INGOs in providing essential services and assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly in crisis-affected areas. They may argue that overly stringent security measures could hinder the delivery of aid and impede access to populations in need. Delegates should consider finding a balanced approach that is in line with their country's policy.

Role of Youth and Womens' Inclusion

The Role of Youth and Women's Inclusion in decision-making processes, particularly regarding the appropriate ages for youth involvement and the implementation of affirmative action quotas in legislative bodies, may give rise to divergent blocs with contrasting viewpoints. Some countries may advocate for the inclusion of youth across a broad spectrum of ages, arguing that diverse perspectives and experiences contribute to more comprehensive and effective decision-making. They may support initiatives that empower young people, regardless of age, to participate in governance structures and decision-making processes due to the violent history of conflict that these populations have faced. Conversely, other blocs may advocate for age-specific criteria for youth inclusion, emphasizing the importance of maturity, experience, education, and capacity to contribute effectively to decision-making processes. They may propose age thresholds or criteria to ensure that youth participation is meaningful and constructive. Regarding affirmative action quotas for women in legislative bodies, some countries may endorse the implementation of quotas as a necessary mechanism to address gender disparities and promote women's representation in politics. They may argue that quotas can help overcome structural barriers and biases that limit women's participation in decision-making roles and prevent gender-based violence and other issues that women face in South Sudan. Conversely, other countries may oppose quotas, citing concerns about tokenism, meritocracy, and the potential for backlash against women legislators. They may advocate for alternative strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in politics, such as capacity-building initiatives, electoral reforms, and cultural change efforts. Delegates should ensure that their approach falls in line with their country policy.

Religious and Cultural Practices

The debate surrounding Religious and Cultural Practices, particularly regarding the permissibility of child marriages and polygamy in South Sudan, may foster the emergence of contrasting blocs. Some countries may advocate for prohibiting child marriages and polygamy, citing human rights concerns and the need to protect vulnerable groups, such as young girls and women. They may argue that these practices perpetuate gender inequality, violate the rights of children, and contribute to harmful outcomes, including early pregnancy, limited educational opportunities, and increased health risks. Conversely, other blocs may defend the cultural and religious autonomy of the South Sudanese government, arguing that decisions regarding marriage practices should be determined by local customs and traditions. They may emphasize the importance of respecting cultural sovereignty and autonomy in addressing sensitive issues such as marriage and family structures. Regarding the protection of at-risk groups, such as young mothers and child brides, while respecting cultural sovereignty, some blocs may advocate for a balanced approach that combines human rights principles with cultural sensitivity. They may support initiatives that engage with local communities and religious leaders to promote alternative practices that uphold human rights while respecting cultural traditions. Conversely, other blocs may prioritize cultural preservation and autonomy, cautioning against external interference in domestic affairs and advocating for solutions that are grounded in local contexts and values.

Questions to Consider

- How can ethnic and religious differences be mitigated to ensure sustainable development?
- How should the UNPBC balance short-term humanitarian relief with long-term development efforts?
- What are the key drivers of youth radicalization and violent extremism, and how can they be addressed through peacebuilding initiatives?
- How do education and vocational training programs impact the resilience of youth?
- Where do remnants of colonial policies shape current conflicts?
- How do economic activities and livelihood strategies employed by young people impact their vulnerability to recruitment into armed groups?
- What role do traditional and cultural practices play in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of youth toward peace and conflict?
- Which international actors or partnerships are most effective in establishing grassroots initiatives?

Awards!

This advanced committee is structured in a way that allows the dais to evaluate delegates on a holistic basis. This means that delegates will be evaluated based on all aspects of their committee performance, including giving speeches, proposing motions, participating in unmoderated caucuses, writing policy in their Working Papers and Draft Resolutions, and speaking on Authors Panels. Recognizing that all conferences and daises evaluate these aspects of the committee differently, this advanced committee will weigh some aspects higher than others.

Delegates wishing to be considered for awards should strive to be leaders in their blocs. This can be shown through active participation in unmoderated caucuses, contributing significant amounts of policy toward their Working Papers or Draft Resolutions, and collaborating with other delegates to actualize new ideas. The most important aspect of demonstrated leadership is representing their blocs on the Authors' Panel. Each panel will consist of a presentation period and a Q&A period. Delegates should note that for this committee, it is more favorable to represent the bloc on the Q&A panel than to present the Working Paper or Draft Resolution. This is due to the higher importance that is placed on policy writing in comparison to other General Assembly committees. The dais views these panels as representations of the contributions made to the Draft Resolutions.

Most importantly, the dais looks favorably upon delegates who are inclusive, compassionate, and collaborative. No instances of bullying, discrimination, or intentional ostracization of others will be acceptable. An anonymous feedback form will be distributed to all delegates to report such behavior, and information shared with the dais in this regard will be taken into consideration for awards.

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