I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the participants in this year’s UNDP simulation. This year, I hope that we have put together a set of topics that is both interesting and will challenge you to think creatively and pragmatically about the problems facing today’s developing world.

Though this will be my first time chairing at CNMUN, I have over five years of experience with model UN, and a lot of that time has been spent on development-related commissions. I chose to take on this committee because of all of the model UN simulations, this one probably has the largest range of possible areas of discussion. Perhaps more importantly, the UNDP is much better at implementing its recommendations because it’s initiatives are less politically charged - though as you may know already, and will certainly see, politics definitely have a place in the Development Programme.

Feel free to contact me regarding any questions or concerns you might have, or for any reason at all. I look forward to meeting all of you in a few weeks.

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The Programme

The United Nations Development Program has been the UN’s primary agent of technological developmental assistance to the world since its creation in the 1970’s. The UNDP is a broad network linking resources of the United Nations to its many efforts to promote recovery, self-sufficiency, and good governance while adhering to basic principles of equality, sovereignty, and environmental responsibility.

Beyond its regular budgetary allowances, financing for the Programme’s continued work comes from the United Nations Capital Development Fund (CDF), which it administers, and from donations to its project specific Thematic Trust Funds.

In reality, most of the UNDP’s real activity is at the local level, at its 131 country offices. You will represent member nations on the Programme’s Executive Board. Besides dealing with the mundane day-to-day assessment and accounting, the Executive Board is entrusted with a far more interesting task:

- Promoting new methods for meeting its development objectives
- Recommending new initiatives to the Economic and Social Council
- Engaging in regional or global advocacy.
These areas will probably be the focus of your work in council, so keep this in mind when you go over the topics below. Please come ready to discuss these issues, but you may feel free to propose new ones if they fit within the UNDP’s range of jurisdiction.

**Topic A: Addressing HIV/AIDS as an Integral Part of Development**

The UNDP’s efforts to promote development necessitate its involvement in the many facets of society that prevent sustainable growth. Since its inception, the Programme has identified poverty reduction, crisis prevention and preparedness, information sharing, good governance, and other areas of interest as prerequisites for development. With its wide ranging impact on societies around the world, the transnational HIV/AIDS epidemic is now regarded as a great concern not just from a humanitarian standpoint, but for its detrimental impact on development in nations least capable of coping with it. The well-documented effects of HIV/AIDS include dramatic increases in poverty, unemployment, school dropouts, and public revenues. There is also an disproportionately larger impact on women in lesser developed nations, which runs counter the UNDP’s emphasis on gender equality in the reduction of poverty. New long-term effects of the epidemic on the sustainability of nations continue to be discovered as the prevalence of HIV/AIDS moves well beyond what experts initially believed would be possible.

The UNDP has joined with six other UN agencies to form UNAIDS, a venture designed to better coordinate the UN’s collective response to HIV/AIDS. For its part, the Development Programme has undertaken many local initiatives through its country offices to promote HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and knowledge dissemination. By the nature of how the UNDP is organized, these initiatives are tailor-made to fit each country’s specific situation. As the body who oversees the work of the country offices and recommends new strategies both to ECOSOC and to workers in the field, the Executive Board is charged with deciding just how the UNDP will continue to address HIV/AIDS.

This is not an easy task, however; responding to HIV/AIDS within the framework of development seems paradoxical at times. For example: effective treatment of infected patients requires a working health care infrastructure. This in turn is dependant on the quality of trained (educated) personel, the availability of medicines, and access to basic utilities such as clean water and electricity. However, the quality all of each of these factors is undermined by HIV/AIDS in the first place. Afflicted persons are far less likely to attend school or provide financially for their children’s health or education (The UNDP estimates that in Swaziland and the Central African Republic, school attendance has dropped as much as 30% as a result of the “AIDS orphan” phenomenon). Access to utilities or medicines is nearly impossible in regions where overwhelming poverty keeps such basic investments in development from taking place.

How then should the UNDP foster development in lesser developed regions where HIV/AIDS has taken hold? Should it put an emphasis on building infrastructure for treatment when it discusses regional development? Should it use it’s local presence to promote even more prevention-themed initiatives? Is HIV/AIDS the priority when the UNDP deals with the most effected nations, such as Botswana and Zimbabwe where prevalence rates are reaching 40%? Is the UNDP doing enough to combat HIV/AIDS in less effected areas of the world (such as Eastern Europe) where its occurrence is rapidly increasing? The UNDP has several good sources of information on this topic on it’s web site, including a country-by-country report on its activity, but there are other resources out there that I strongly encourage you to utilize.
Key Questions:
● In what way and to what degree should the UNDP focus on HIV/AIDS as part of its overarching plan for poverty reduction and capacity building?
● What has been learned from the various HIV/AIDS programs initiated at the regional level?
● What new measures can and should be implemented by the UNDP country offices?
● Is there a developmental concern due to HIV/AIDS in areas of the world that do not have epidemic-level occurrence rates? Is the UNDP doing enough to address these concerns if indeed they do exist, or are there other priorities?

Topic B: Energy for Sustainable Development

The Millennium summit of 2000 gave voice to the lofty but attainable goal of halving world poverty by the year 2015. Reaching this goal will necessitate the creation of new economic opportunities for persons living in impoverished or remote areas without access to the basic utilities necessary to stimulate growth. Modern and developing economies rely on energy, typically in the form of electricity, but also stream or combustion, to drive industry and make transportation possible. Access to potable water, medical treatment, and to some degree education is heavily dependant on the availability of power. The Commission for Sustainable Development has stated that affordable access to power sources is needed “to implement the goal accepted by the international community to halve the proportion of people living on less than US$ 1 per day”. As with HIV/AIDS and many other problems, energy access is both a humanitarian and a developmental concern.

The energy sources most often utilized in the developing world tend to be not only the least expensive, but also the most environmentally damaging. The burning of petroleum or coal, particularly without the use of filtrations processes that are common in developed nations, constitutes the majority of electricity production mechanisms. Burning wood or agricultural byproducts for non-electricity generating purposes such as cooking is common in regions of the world where electricity is unavailable. Environmentally-friendlier sources of energy are typically costlier and rely on advanced technical knowledge to implement. Solar, wind, geothermal or tidal power is not yet a cost-effective replacement for traditional sources. The expertise necessary for implementing these sources is largely absent in the developing world, so advancement in these methods would require technical cooperation including researchers, industry, and local contractors. Natural gas is cleaner that coal or oil, but requires pipeline infrastructures that are only now being developed in some regions of the world.

Some sources that were originally developed as an alternative to “dirty” generation bring entirely new environmental concerns to the table. Radioactive waste is the natural bi-product nuclear power plants, though improvements to plant design helps to mitigate the impact of waste disposal. Hydroelectric projects often demand the relocation of many thousands of inhabitants and the submersion of arable land, and impact other communities downstream. Nonetheless, there is tremendous growth potential in hydroelectric power, though funding for dam-building projects remains a large factor in its application as an alternative energy source.

Items seven and eight of the Millennium goals call for integration of environmental sustainability and of greater international cooperation respectively into development efforts. These articles are inextricably linked to the distribution and use of energy in society. Can newer, cleaner
Key Questions:
● What can the UNDP do to foster greater north-south cooperation in the sharing of energy technology?
● How could alternative energy sources be best introduced in the areas of the world that rely on inefficient or environmentally unfriendly methods for meeting their energy needs?
● Could an emphasis on alternative energy sources prevent areas most in need of power access from obtaining it? That is, is power access as a whole improved when investments in traditional but less sustainable means are not promoted as extensively?
● How can the UNDP promote local control and ownership in energy sectors that are dependant on foreign-owned facilities or resources?

Topic C: Long-term Recovery in Afghanistan

The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan held in Tokyo in 2002 followed with a commitment by the international community to provide 1.8 billion in aid for the people of Afghanistan and the working interim government. Those commitments so far have been honored, and even exceeded. The tremendous outpouring of support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan has allowed the UNDP to address each of it’s short term goals for recovery.

However, the long term recovery of the nation of Afghanistan will rely not only on the impact of immediate action but also on the ability of the nation to overcome looming obstacles to development that the first year of reconstruction have brought to light. The UNDP operates primarily by working directly with host countries to provide administrative, technical, and monetary assistance. The situation in Afghanistan complicates the Programmer’s mission because every aspect of local governance is in its infancy, and requires dedicated development of its own.

The Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme (REAP) is now underway, with the generous financial support of the Japanese government. REAP funds civil service projects to improve Afghanistan’s crumbled infrastructure while offering temporary employment for thousands of citizens. While this initiative is a creative solution to the issues plaguing Afghanistan today, it will be short lived; REAP is only slated to last six months, when funding is expected to dry up. Additional concerns have been raised in the early months of similar programs to pay essential civil servants. While funds are ready to be payed out, payroll information is slow in coming, particularly from outlying regions.

The decentralized nature of Afghanistan remains a major roadblock to aided recovery. These programs may have great impact in Kabul and the surrounding area, but much of Afghanistan will not benefit if they cannot be implemented away from the capital. The Afghanistan country office has vowed to make working with provincial leaders a new priority. Working with dozens of semi-autonomous regions to provide a coherent plan for development, though, is a complicated task. Given the necessary number of local contracts who help to guide their efforts,
fieldworkers are exercising extreme caution to minimize the occurrences of graft and mismanagement, which greatly slows the rebuilding process.

The greatest challenge faced when going into a region without an established civil authority is the lack of security that can be afforded to aid workers and affiliates. Afghanistan is perhaps the most extreme case one could encounter, with police and military forces still in the process of being created. On more than one occasion, aid caravans have been held and ransacked at gunpoint. While the international community has attempted to address the issues of security, the threat to workers on the ground will remains. Can the UNDP do more to support the growth of Afghanistan’s military and police force and ease the transition between a foreign dominated and strictly domestic security force?

While Afghanistan’s recovery moves forward, progress in some areas is moving slowly. Eventually, the Afghan people will develop and adopt their own government. To do this, however, voters from every area of the country must be registered to take part in necessary elections and referendums. Before voter registration can even begin, a preliminary census must be conducted. The United Nations Population Fund hopes to begin such a census by 2005, but this process might last many months, or even years, because of the many complications that are involved in the Afghan situation. The rough geography of Afghanistan is a concern, as is the remoteness of some settlements. Many refugees on both sides of the Pakistani border are still not resettled, and until the security situation in Afghanistan further improves, the eventual return of many of thousands of refugees currently outside of Afghanistan will be delayed.

There are innumerable issues that impact the recovery of Afghanistan. Be prepared to discuss specific aspects and possible solutions to those areas of concern.

**Key Questions:**

- Temporary relief programs such as REAP will run out of funding end in under a year. Will Afghanistan be sufficiently prepared to transition when these programs cease operations?
- Can and should the UNDP do more to promote security in Afghanistan, recognizing that the issue of security is entangled with other concerns, such as the refugee and political situation in the region?
- Will the UNDP’s role in dealing with the leadership of remote regions have the unintended consequence of hampering the centralization of authority in the country? By working with regional governors more closely, is there the possibility that the UN’s actions will be counterproductive in establishing a unified Afghanistan?
- Should the UNDP further amend its strategy to work within the decentralized political system in Afghanistan?
Selected Web Resources

More on the UNDP
● http://www.undp.org/

The Capital Development Fund
● http://www.uncdf.org/english/about_uncdf/index.html

International Conference on Financing for Development – Monterrey 2002
● http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/

World Summit on Sustainable Development – Johannesburg 2002
● http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/

Overview on Alternative Energy Sources
● http://www.soton.ac.uk/~engenvir/environment/alternative/hydropower/energy2.htm

The Economic Impact of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa
● http://www.brook.edu/comm/ConferenceReport/cr09.htm

Afghanistan Recovery and Reconstruction Assessment