

Organization of
Islamic Cooperation

OIC



MUNUC 35

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

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CHAIR LETTERS

Hi Delegates!

Welcome to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation! I'm Natalie Larsen, and I will be your Co-Chair for this committee at MUNUC 35. I am a second-year undergraduate at the University of Chicago, majoring in Global Studies with a minor in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. My interest in international relations and public policy extends beyond MUNUC, as I am involved with the Chicago Project on Security and Threats' political science research, the UChicago Society for International Relations, and OI programming. Otherwise, I love running along the lake, dancing with UBallet, drinking matcha lattes, and adventuring downtown with friends. While currently residing in Chicago, I have lived in London, New York, and Houston (with my chow-chow Fudge and ginger-cat Peachy), and I spent last summer in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina for an internship researching the implications of the Bosnian War.

In addition to speaking Spanish, I am studying Arabic, which is how I grew interested in investigating issues impacting the Arab world. As your Co-Chair, I am looking forward to facilitating discussion with you all about the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and resource allocation. Given rising questions surrounding food, water, and energy security, resource allocation is a particularly potent and relevant topic to understanding OIC member states' policies and regional relationships. Through investigating your respective country's resource needs, policies, and relationships, I hope you all will strengthen and develop your knowledge of these issues to form powerful and impactful resolutions to strengthen the OIC members socially, politically, and economically.

I am looking forward to MUNUC 35, and encourage you to reach out to me with any questions or comments about MUNUC, the committee, topic, or anything else!

Best,

Nat Larsen (she/her)

nclarsen@uchicago.edu

Dear Delegates,

Hello, and welcome to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation! My name is Kait Albarran, and I will be your Co-Chair for this committee at MUNUC 35. Like Nat, I am also from Texas (San Antonio). I am a second-year in the College at the University of Chicago, and I intend to major in Biological Chemistry on the pre-medical track with a minor in either Linguistics or Russian and Eastern European Studies. Outside of classes, I am involved not only in MUNUC, but also in the college equivalent of MUNUC, ChoMUN. This year I will be a Crisis Director for a committee exploring the use of land in Antarctica. Very exciting! Additionally, I am involved in the Organization of Latin American Students. When I'm not in class, working on homework, or at a club meeting, I enjoy listening to music (I have a soft spot for Welsh, Latin American, and Eastern European folk music), admiring photos of my three precious cats (Georgia, Peanut, and Grisela), and studying languages.

I do not have much previous experience studying the Arab world, so I am very appreciative to have this opportunity to learn more. The topic that we will be discussing in connection to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, resource allocation, is one that is of increasing importance in today's world, so I will be looking forward to hearing all of your ideas and considerations. As a Co-Chair, I will be looking for knowledgeable delegates who are aware of their nation's unique circumstances that can both advocate for those they represent, while also efficiently collaborating in the interest of the greater good with other delegates. I hope that we emerge from this conference having learned a great amount about both resource allocation as a whole and resource allocation specifically among the members of the OIC.

I am very much looking forward to meeting all of you and watching your development over the course of the conference. If you have any questions at all, whether about committee content or anything conference-related (or even if you just want to say hello!), please do not hesitate to send me an email. See you all soon, and may your research and preparation be fruitful!

Best,

Kait Albarran (she/her)

kalbarran@uchicago.edu

SENSITIVITY NOTE

Dear Delegates,

While we plan to have fun and energy in this committee, we want to acknowledge the sensitivity of the topics being discussed. There are religious, political, social, and economic disputes to consider, and these issues must be approached with caution. Our committee on resource allocation will **not** include the Iranian nuclear program or any energy topics related to terrorism. Diverting discussion to these topics will **not** be permitted.

You are more than encouraged to speak out against and criticize governments, but please keep any such criticisms separate from the people, as that can perpetrate nationality-based discrimination. Moreover, while we encourage that you embrace the character of the nation which you are representing, you must still maintain a standard of conduct characterized by equality and tolerance.

Your chairs are committed to ensuring this committee is a safe space where all delegates can engage in comfortable and respectful conversations to express their ideas and create meaningful dialogue. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, or are unsure whether something would or would not be acceptable, please feel free to speak with us!

Thank you,

Nat and Kait

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

Overview

Formed on September 25, 1969 following the criminal arson of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem,¹ the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is a regional body of 57 Arab countries (Azerbaijan, Jordan, Afghanistan, Albania, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Uganda, Iran, Pakistan, Bahrain, Brunei-Darussalam, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Algeria, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Suriname, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Iraq, Oman, Gabon, The Gambia, Guyana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Palestine, Comoros, Kyrgyz, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Malaysia, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Yemen)² and 5 observer-states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Kingdom of Thailand, The Russian Federation, Turkish Cypriot State).³ **Please note that all states represented, including the observer-states, will have voting power in this simulation.**

Dedicated to protecting the values and interests of Muslims, the OIC espouses issues affecting Muslims, settles conflicts and disputes involving its Member States, removes misperceptions, and eliminates discrimination against Muslims.⁴ For example, the OIC addresses issues of peace and security, Palestine and Al-Quds (Jerusalem), poverty, terrorism, investment and finance, food security, science and technology, climate change and sustainability, interfaith harmony, human rights, and effective governance.⁵ Cooperating with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, and maintaining its own regional bodies and committees, the OIC is a large and influential body significant in shaping economic, political, and social policy.

This committee is a regional body that will run with traditional Model UN elements.

¹ "History," Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, 2022, https://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p_id=52&p_ref=26&lan=en.

² "Member States," Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, 2022, <https://www.oic-oci.org/states/?lan=en>.

³ "Observers," Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, 2022, https://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p_id=179&p_ref=60&lan=en.

⁴ Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, "History."

⁵ Ibid.

Expectations of a Traditional Model UN Committee

As a traditional committee, we expect delegates to follow traditional Model UN procedures and processes, such as setting an agenda, opening debate, and ultimately drafting resolutions. This committee will allow both moderated and unmoderated caucuses, which will be decided by a majority vote.

For clarification, moderated caucuses are a form of debate where a speaker's list is established and speakers are called upon by the chair to debate specific issues under a time restriction, allowing for the controlled exchange of ideas between all delegates.⁶ On the other hand, unmoderated caucuses do not include a speaker's list or structured speaker's time; rather, delegates can freely converse with each other about the topic, or work on papers, for a specified time.⁷

We thank delegates for respecting these traditional Model UN procedures and upholding them to ensure a successful Organization of Islamic Cooperation Committee and interesting discussion of our Resource Allocation topic.

⁶ "What is a Moderated Caucus?" MUNUC, 2022, <https://munuc.org/speaking-part-1/>.

⁷ "What is an Unmoderated Caucus?" MUNUC, 2022, <https://munuc.org/speaking-part-4/>.

TOPIC: RESOURCE ALLOCATION (2013-PRESENT)

Statement of the Problem

Introduction to the Statement of the Problem

Natural resources are greatly important to the development and success of a nation. Our topic of resource allocation refers to the prominence and distribution of these resources within the OIC member countries, examining the disparity between resource assets and needs, and their consequential issues.

Millions of years of natural development has created geological and physical differences between countries. As a result, these countries contain different—and unequal—resources. In other words, countries have different abundances of water, food, and energy.

The disparities between resource assets and needs are exacerbated by differing borders, governments' attitude toward facilitating interaction or isolation, climate, unequally distributed resource assets across the region, and population sizes. The condition varies across the region. These inequalities between resource assets and needs create social, political, and economic problems affecting countries' populations, state governance, and international relationships.

Differences in Natural Resource Assets

Differing in water, food, and energy assets, the OIC member states face unique challenges in maintaining sufficient amounts of each to support their populations and economies.

Water

Especially as climate change exacerbates issues of water availability, the Middle East is expected to be the first region of the world to run out of water.⁸ Naturally, the Middle East contains only 1% of

⁸ "Middle East Climate Fact Sheet," International Committee of the Red Cross Climate Centre, 2021: 2, https://www.climatecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/RCCC-ICRC-Country-profiles-Region_Middle_East.pdf.

global freshwater resources.⁹ Additionally, water access has decreased 75% in the past 70 years, and is expected to drop 40% more in the next 10 years.¹⁰

OIC member countries have differing levels of water access, influenced by their borders or reliance on surface freshwater versus groundwater. 50% of Middle Eastern countries' water sources are located outside political boundaries, causing their access to water to be determined by their geopolitical relations.¹¹ For example, Turkey's location on the Euphrates River Basin allows it to control the amount of water accessible to Syria and Iraq.¹² While Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, and Iran access surface freshwater, Jordan, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria depend more on groundwater.¹³ Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, and Qatar are the most water-stressed nations within the OIC.¹⁴

Given these disparities of water access, Middle Eastern countries will also be affected differently by **climate change**. As climate change decreases precipitation levels, Syria and Iraq will be particularly affected with an expected 10% precipitation decrease.¹⁵ While precipitation decreases, sea levels are expected to rise by a meter before the end of the century.¹⁶ Resultant flooding and challenges to water management will most greatly impact countries with urban sprawl and less developed water infrastructure.¹⁷

These differences between resource access and infrastructure development greatly impact nations' abilities to respond to water crises. For example, Jordan curbed its losses from the 2007-2010 drought compared to other countries through enacting policies lessening agricultural water use, banning summer water irrigation, and reducing agricultural water usage.¹⁸

⁹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹¹ Ibid, 4.

¹² Ibid, 4.

¹³ Ibid, 5.

¹⁴ Ibid, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid, 2.

¹⁶ Ibid, 2.

¹⁷ Ibid, 3.

¹⁸ Ibid, 5.

Food

In addition to water scarcity, the OIC Member States face **food insecurity**, as more than 51 million people in the region suffer from hunger.¹⁹ With insufficient or unaffordable amounts of nutritious food, issues of undernutrition, obesity, and micronutrient deficiency arise. The impact on the population's health is evident as 22.5% of children were stunted, 9.2% wasted, and 9.9% were overweight, as well as 27% of adults are obese.²⁰ Yemen, Egypt, and Iraq have some of the highest rates of childhood stunting, wasting, and overweight, while Kuwait, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have the lowest.²¹

PREVALENCE OF CHILDHOOD STUNTING, WASTING AND OVERWEIGHT: LATEST YEAR, WHA TARGET AND TREND

COUNTRY	CHILDHOOD STUNTING (0-5) (%)			CHILDHOOD WASTING (0-5) (%)			CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT (0-5) (%)		
	LATEST YEAR	2025 TARGET	TREND ON TARGET?	LATEST YEAR	2025 TARGET	TREND ON TARGET?	LATEST YEAR	2025 TARGET	TREND ON TARGET?
Algeria	11.7	6.6	n.d.	4.1	<5%	√	12.4	no rise	n.d.
Bahrain			n.d.		<5%	n.d.		no rise	n.d.
Comoros	31.1	16.1	n.d.	11.2	<5%	X	10.6	no rise	n.d.
Djibouti	33.5	19.3	n.d.	21.5	<5%	X	8.1	no rise	n.d.
Egypt	30.7	11.5	X	7.9	<5%	X	20.4	no rise	√
Iraq	22.1	10.3	√	6.5	<5%	√	11.4	no rise	√
Jordan	7.8	5.1	X	2.4	<5%	√	4.7	no rise	n.d.
Kuwait	4.3	3.1	n.d.	2.4	<5%	√	9.5	no rise	√
Lebanon			n.d.		<5%	n.d.		no rise	n.d.
Libya	21	10.6	n.d.	6.5	<5%	X	22.4	no rise	X
Mauritania	23	10.8	X	11.7	<5%	X	1.2	no rise	X
Morocco	14.9	8.6	X	2.3	<5%	√	10.8	no rise	X
Oman	9.8	3.4	X	7.1	<5%	X	1.7	no rise	X
Palestine	10.9	5.2	√	3.3	<5%	√	5.3	no rise	X
Qatar			n.d.		<5%	X		no rise	n.d.
Saudi Arabia	9.3	4.1	n.d.	11.8	<5%	X	6.1	no rise	n.d.
Somalia	25.3	9.3	n.d.	14.3	<5%	X	3	no rise	n.d.
Sudan	34.1	15.4	X	15.4	<5%	X	1.5	no rise	X
Syrian Arab Republic	27.9	18.7	n.d.	11.5	<5%	X	17.9	no rise	n.d.
Tunisia	10.1	6.1	√	2.8	<5%	√	14.3	no rise	X
United Arab Emirates			n.d.		<5%	n.d.		no rise	n.d.
Yemen	46.6	23.6	X	13.3	<5%	X	1.5	no rise	X

Figure 1: Prevalence of Childhood Stunting, Wasting and Overweight²²

¹⁹ "Hunger and Malnutrition in the Arab Region Stand in the Way of Achieving Zero Hunger by 2030, UN Report Warns," UNICEF, 24 June 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/hunger-and-malnutrition-arab-region-stand-way-achieving-zero-hunger-2030-un-report>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and ESCWA, 2021, Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in the Near East and North Africa 2020 - Enhancing resilience of food systems in the Arab States, Cairo, FAO, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4902en>.

²² UNICEF, "Hunger and Malnutrition in the Arab Region Stand in the Way of Achieving Zero Hunger."

Composed of the food supply chain, food environment, and consumer behavior, **food systems** include the processes of food growth, production, and distribution.²³ As food systems are affected by the environment, infrastructure, institutions, culture, economy, and demographics, the Middle Eastern food system is influenced by climate change and limited water, political conflict, and population growth.²⁴

Given the prominence of food insecurity, it is important to consider reinforcing the food system to increase and ensure OIC member countries' access to food and nutrients.

Energy

While the Middle Eastern region possesses 55.2% of global oil reserves and 27.5% of global natural gas reserves, the majority of energy resources are located in the Gulf, not North Africa.²⁵ The map from *The Economist* compares the oil production within the region (pre-pandemic), revealing the domination of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq with the highest barrels per day production, while Oman, Egypt, and Yemen have the lowest barrels per day production.²⁶

Driving the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economy, oil and natural gas exports comprise 97% of total export for Iraq, 94% for Algeria, 87% for Qatar, 85% for Kuwait, and 76% for Saudi Arabia.²⁷ Given this significance of oil exports, an abundance of oil is important for certain OIC members to sustain their economies and have sufficient financial resources for their populations. However, while creating wealth, a high level of oil dependence can also result in economic downfall when oil prices plummet. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic caused oil prices to fall below \$20 per barrel, so far as to go negative in the United States.²⁸

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UNICEF, "Hunger and Malnutrition in the Arab Region Stand in the Way of Achieving Zero Hunger."

²⁵ Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle East Conflicts."

²⁶ "The end of the Arab world's oil age is nigh," *The Economist*, 18 Jul. 2020, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2020/07/18/the-end-of-the-arab-worlds-oil-age-is-nigh>.

²⁷ "Middle East and North Africa Economics," *World 101*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2017-2022, <https://world101.cfr.org/rotw/middle-east/economics#middle-east-s-economy-rises-and-falls-with-price-of-energy>.

²⁸ Ibid.



The Economist

Figure 2: Comparison of Oil Production²⁹

Additional Factors Contributing to the Resource Assets-Needs Disparity

In addition to naturally unequal resource assets, the factors of differing borders, climate, and population sizes exacerbate the disparity between OIC members’ resource assets and needs. These factors influence countries’ abilities to possess sufficient resources through impacting regional interactions, resource access and production, and resource demands.

Borders

Borders are political lines determining the territory that defines one polity from another. Representing political boundaries, borders and location have implications for countries’ abilities to interact with or isolate from another.

For example, Turkey’s central location has the strategic advantage of serving as a land bridge between Europe and Asia and a land barrier across the only outlet of the Black Sea.³⁰ Similarly,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Rashed, “Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle East Conflicts.”

Egypt's geostrategic power emanates from its central location connecting Africa, Asia, and Mediterranean Europe.³¹ While able to facilitate interaction between countries, geographic resources can also isolate states. Morocco's location on the coastal, outer part of the region provides maritime assets, but isolates it from other countries.³² Iran also experiences distance and security from other regions due to its mountainous terrain.³³

Especially given that certain resource assets fall outside of countries' political borders, states' ability to form connections is significant to access important resources from other nations.

Climate

Given their spread across Africa, Europe, and Asia, the OIC member countries vary in climate from coastal to desert to mountainous. Desert regions have hot and dry climates; coastal regions experience humid heat and seasons; mountainous regions such as Iran and Iraq experience low precipitation and dust storms.³⁴

Because of this diversity of climates, OIC member countries experience unique environmental challenges. By 2100, climate change is expected to increase Middle Eastern temperatures up to 122°F (50°C).³⁵ This impact will most greatly be felt within the Northeastern-Mediterranean countries, Balkan Peninsula, and Turkey.³⁶ The consequences of climate change, including rising temperatures and instances of extreme weather, influence nations' abundances of natural resources and national security.

The differing climates and climate change influences OIC member states' ability to produce resources and may change their populations' resource needs. For instance, a need for water may increase with rising temperatures.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ International Committee of the Red Cross Climate Centre, "Middle East Climate Fact Sheet," 8.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

Population Growth

MENA experienced the highest rate of population growth of any region in the world over the past century.³⁷ Egypt and Turkey have the largest populations of 69.8 million and 66.3 million, respectively, while Qatar and Bahrain have the lowest populations of 0.6 million and 0.7 million, respectively.³⁸ By 2050, Bahrain, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia are anticipated to have the greatest population changes of 300%, 295%, and 185% respectively.³⁹

As a greater population imposes greater strain on resources, population growth across the region presents a new set of challenges for countries to maintain sufficient resources.

Economic Implications

Due to the disparities of resource distribution, OIC member states face economic inequalities and wealth imbalances. The 2019 Global Competitiveness Report reveals the economic disparities between different Arab countries. The oil-rich United Arab Emirates and Qatar are ranked 25th and 29th, respectively.⁴⁰ Contrarily, the non-oil-rich Egypt and Yemen are ranked 93rd and 140th, respectively.⁴¹ The differences in ranking between these countries reveal the trend that **resource-abundant** countries have more productive and competitive economies whereas **resource-poor** countries have less productive and competitive economies.

While the sheer amount of resources have a great impact on a country's economic success, institutional and policy factors are also important. Despite producing the most oil in the Middle East (11.8 barrels per day),⁴² Saudi Arabia was ranked 70th by the Global Competitiveness Report, while Israel, a non-oil producer, was ranked 20th—highest of all the MENA countries.⁴³ Despite having

³⁷ Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, "Population Trends and Challenges in the Middle East and North Africa," *Population Reference Bureau*, 1 Dec. 2001, <https://www.prb.org/resources/population-trends-and-challenges-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Klaus Schwab, "The Global Competitiveness Report," *World Economic Forum*, 2019: xiii, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² *The Economist*, "The end of the Arab world's oil age is nigh."

⁴³ Schwab, "The Global Competitiveness Report," xiii.

resources, Saudi Arabia lacks the legislative infrastructure to strengthen their economy from it; whereas, while lacking resources, Israel possesses more successful institutions and policies to achieve economic success. Thus, having abundant resources does not necessarily result in more productive or competitive economies—robust institutions and policies are needed to build strong economies.

Social Implications

Given the economic disparities due to unequal resource distribution, OIC member states additionally face social inequalities, limiting social mobility and opportunity, and consequently, other issues such as the rise of **extremism**.

Income Inequalities Limit Social Mobility and Opportunity

MENA countries experience high rates of income inequality, as income accruing to the richest top 10% reaches 61% of total income, and the share of the top 1% exceeds 25%, compared to 20% in the United States, 11% in Western Europe, and 17% in South Africa.⁴⁴ These inequalities limit individuals' opportunities for social mobility and improvement of quality of life, as a significant portion of the wealth remains distributed within the wealthiest portion of the population.

OIC member states tend to have large populations of youth. According to the 2016 Arab Human Development Report, people between the ages of 15 and 29 comprise a third of Arab countries' populations.⁴⁵ While they are the future of the nation, youth are limited from developing and making societal contributions due to various social factors. Within the MENA region, 20% of children are not in school, and those in school may face disruptions to their education from regional violence, gender discrimination, and curriculum of poor quality.⁴⁶ Those educated are limited in job opportunities as the MENA region has youth unemployment rates as high as 30%.⁴⁷ The circumstances of youth

⁴⁴ Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle East Conflicts."

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "Education." UNICEF Middle East and North Africa, 2022. <https://www.unicef.org/mena/education>.

⁴⁷ Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle East Conflicts."

reveal untapped potential for regional growth and development—rather than benefiting society, youth face barriers and inequalities that limit them in their education and careers.

Rise of Extremist Groups and Violence

Extremist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and al-Shabaab in Somalia rely heavily on youths as recruiters, propagandists, and fighters.⁴⁸ Some youths are forcibly incorporated into these terrorist organizations through kidnapping and violence—al-Shabaab recruited 1,770 young people in 2017 through detention, violence, and intimidation.⁴⁹ On the other hand, some youth join terrorist groups voluntarily, seeking the promise of economic stability, respect, and personal connections.⁵⁰ With a lack of educational and employment opportunities, youth are more likely to get involved with extremist terrorist groups, and further isolate from society and obtaining higher quality of life.

Political Implications

State Corruption

As a result of unequal resource distribution, economic inequalities, and limited social opportunities, OIC member states face state corruption.⁵¹ According to the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is uncorrupt), the UAE and Qatar have the least corruption in the region, scoring 69/100 and 63/100, respectively, while Libya, Yemen, and Syria have the most corruption, scoring 17/100, 16/100, and 13/100, respectively.⁵²

State corruption in the MENA region is evident as the interests of the powerful few dominate the political and private spheres, and the limitations placed on civil and political freedoms block any

⁴⁸ Jessica Trisko Darden, "Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth," *American Enterprise Institute*, May 2019: 5, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/report/tackling-terrorists-exploitation-of-youth/Tackling-Terrorists-Exploitation-of-Youth.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 4.

⁵¹ Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle East Conflicts."

⁵² "CPI 2022 for Middle East and North Africa: Systematic Corruption Endangers Democracy and Human Rights." *Transparency International*, 25 Jan. 2022. <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-middle-east-north-africa-systemic-corruption-endangers-democracy-human-rights>.

progress.⁵³ With corrupt leaders using their power to advance their own interests, some OIC member states are limited in their ability to enact policy addressing resource allocation issues and benefiting their populations.

Policy Limitations

In addition to facing state corruption, some OIC member states hold policies limited in addressing issues of resource allocation. Following the colonial intervention and exploitation within the region, some MENA countries continue to hold a spatially-biased development policy that favors urban and coastal centers over the remote rural areas where most resources happen to be located—directing revenues away from the lands that were generating them, just as during colonial times.⁵⁴

Additionally, since colonial institutions began and focused on energy production, nations continue investing in this sector rather than enacting policies to develop other industries to expand economic diversity and security. These policy limitations arising from historical times restrict governments' ability to improve resource allocation infrastructure.

⁵³ "Corruption Perceptions Index." *Transparency International*, 2021. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>.

⁵⁴ Robin Mills and Fatema Alhashemi, "Resource Regionalism in the Middle East and North Africa," 1.

History of the Problem

Early History to 20th Century

Discovery of Natural Resources

We will begin our discussion on the resources in the Arab World by exploring the influence of water. Initially, much of the region was composed of nomadic tribes that spent their days traveling as often as they needed more resources to sustain themselves. The most important resource that they pursued was water.

Historically, natural sources of water included rivers, wells, and oases. Notable rivers include the Tigris and the Euphrates, which run through Turkey, Syria, and Iraq (please note that for this section, the names and borders referenced are of modern states to simplify explanation). The Nile, another notable river, runs through or borders Egypt, Republic of Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania.⁵⁵ There is also the Jordan River, which runs through or borders Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Jordan. Lastly, the Amu Darya River, which flows through or borders Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, is the major river system in Central Asia.

Most of the oases and wells mentioned above are either supplied by aquifers or underground rivers. For example, in the case of the oases in the Sahara, the water comes from underground rivers rather than rainfall.⁵⁶ A different case, however, is that of nations which have aquifers as their main water sources, which allows for wells to be dug, such as the Zamzam Well (the well which supplies Mecca with water). Nations with ample groundwater from various sources include Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, and Chad.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ghosh, Diptarka. "Major Rivers of the Middle East." *WorldAtlas*, WorldAtlas, 18 May 2021, <https://www.worldatlas.com/rivers/major-rivers-of-the-middle-east.html>.

⁵⁶ Moen, John. "Geography of Africa." *WorldAtlas*, WorldAtlas, 25 Apr. 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/afland.htm>.

⁵⁷ "Groundwater of the MENA Region." *Fanack Water*, 8 June 2022, <https://water.fanack.com/publications/groundwater-of-the-mena-region/>.



Figure 3: Tigris and Euphrates River Systems⁵⁸

Water was important for living, farming, and engineering feats that allowed for technological innovation; the presence of water went hand in hand with the fertility of land and thus contributed to the amount of agricultural products available as resources.

Aside from water, there are many minerals that have been mined since the early history of the region. The most prominent of these minerals is gold.⁵⁹ Historically, gold has been found in North

⁵⁸ "Tigris and Euphrates river basin." Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tigris-Euphrates-river-system#/media/1/595616/546>.

⁵⁹ Cartwright, Mark. "The Gold Trade of Ancient & Medieval West Africa." *World History Encyclopedia*, World History Publishing, 13 May 2019, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1383/the-gold-trade-of-ancient--medieval-west-africa/>.

and West Africa, particularly in Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Ghana, and Nigeria. Gold was instrumental in the succession of African empires, including the Ghana Empire, Mali Empire, Songhai Empire, and Kingdom of Benin. The control over gold led to widespread competition over said resources and greatly contributed to the rise and fall of many empires. It also contributed to attracting other world powers to seek to take control over the area.

Early to Middle 20th Century

Colonialism

The nations of the Arab World were impacted by colonialism to varying degrees. Thus, the control over their resources by colonizing nations and the exploitation of said resources were also experienced in varying degrees of intensity.

In the case of the area known in the modern day as Turkey, although there was ample influence from Western powers (especially in the way of cultural influence), there was no formal colonization. For the first quarter of the twentieth century, the area was part of the Ottoman Empire, which had been in steady decline for over two centuries at that time.⁶⁰ Once the empire had fractured in the aftermath of World War I, the modern republic of Turkey managed to spring from the ashes as an independent nation with control over its resources yet notable Western business presence.

Another nation that serves as an example of Western influence would be Iran. The British and the Russians competed over the control of the region and both exerted influence until the British signed a treaty in 1857 that then allowed them to increase their influence in multiple industries. Britain took over as Iran's main trading partner well into the early twentieth century, meaning that control over the nation's agricultural and industrial products was not entirely in the hands of the Iranian government.⁶¹ Additionally, the first contract pertaining to oil extraction in Iran was made with British businessman William Knox D'Arcy in 1901, which cemented oil as an important resource in

⁶⁰ "Turkey Profile - Timeline." *BBC News*, BBC, 24 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>.

⁶¹ Foundation, Encyclopaedia Iranica. n.d. "Welcome to Encyclopaedia Iranica." *Iranicaonline.org*. <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/great-britain-iii>

the region from then on.⁶² Other nations were either direct colonies or were treated as “spheres of influence” by European powers, mainly including Britain and France (although Italy and Spain did play less expansive roles in Libya and Morocco as well).

British colonies included Egypt, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Nigeria, and Ghana.⁶³ In these nations, Britain tended to “manage” the governments rather than directly control them.⁶⁴ This distinction, however, would not lead to a less exploitative or damaging relationship.⁶⁵ French colonies included Algeria, Senegal, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mauritania, Mali, and Burkina Faso.⁶⁶ The indirect control they employed was similar to that of the British. In the case of Algeria more than the others, the control was more direct and aimed at serving French interests completely.⁶⁷ In these colonies, most of the resources of the land were exported and directly exploited by British or French businesses. Much of the most productive land was also owned by the rich living in Britain or France. A type of sphere of influence was set up with the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, which would establish Lebanon and Syria as French protectorates and Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Jordan as British protectorates. Again, these nation-states did not have complete control over their own resources.⁶⁸ Although borders and allocations were always changing during this time period, one thing remained constant—the influence of Western powers and their exploitation of the resources of the Arab World.

⁶² Independence and Decolonization, Middle East | Encyclopedia.com.” n.d. www.encyclopedia.com.
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/independence-and-decolonization-middle-east>

⁶³ “British West Africa.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.,
<https://www.britannica.com/place/British-West-Africa>.

⁶⁴ “The Story of Africa | BBC World Service.” *BBC News*, BBC,
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/14chapter2.shtml>.

⁶⁵ Lee, Alexander, and Kenneth A. Schultz. “Comparing British and French Colonial Legacies: A Discontinuity Analysis of Cameroon.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, Stanford University, Oct. 2012.
https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/wgape/papers/17_Lee.pdf

⁶⁶ Ali-Dinar, Ali B. “French in West Africa.” *Penn Arts & Sciences*, University of Pennsylvania,
https://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html.

⁶⁷ “Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism Since 1450.” *Encyclopedia.com*, Encyclopedia.com,
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/law-coonial-systems-french-empire>.

⁶⁸ “Europe, Middle East Map Redrawn by World War I.” *France 24*, France 24, 27 Oct. 2018,
<https://www.france24.com/en/20181027-europe-middle-east-map-redrawn-world-war-i>.

Middle to Late 20th Century

Post-Colonial Resource Development

The beginning of decolonization is marked by the end of World War II. Overall, various types of governments were established with varying degrees of success, stability, and interaction with the West. Although this process largely happened in the few decades following the war, the presence of the British and the French was still notable in the region. Additionally, the end of the war corresponded with the increasing presence of the United States. Much of the involvement of these powers manifested (at least, in nations where specific oil was present) in the controlling of oil resources by taking advantage of the previous agreements oil companies had signed with leaders in the Arab nations.⁶⁹ When oil prices were decreased by the companies to benefit their nations of origin, the oil-producing nations were no longer getting much money from the sales, meaning that there was less and less money to allocate towards building a stable nation. To remedy this problem, four nations in the Arab World—Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia—and Venezuela formed the collaborative body, **the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**.⁷⁰ This body allowed these nations to have more control over their own resources, particularly oil prices. Going further, these nations pushed foreign oil companies out of their borders, taking back full control over the oil and its sale. A downside that came from this focus on oil is the lack of diversification of the economies, which could leave them vulnerable, but this issue had not escaped the attention of the nations.⁷¹

Nationalism

In many cases, it is important to note that the mismanagement of resources after decolonization led to economic issues and social tensions that exposed weaknesses in the governing system of some

⁶⁹ "Oil Discovered in the Middle East." *Encyclopedia.com*, Encyclopedia.com, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/science/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/oil-discovered-middle-east>.

⁷⁰ "Independence and Decolonization in the Middle East." *Encyclopedia.com*, Encyclopedia.com, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/independence-and-decolonization-middle-east>.

⁷¹ Barber, Charles T. "British and French Impacts on the Middle East: Three Phases of Influence, 1905 to 2005." University of Southern Indiana. <https://www.usi.edu/media/2431739/ram-barber.pdf>. Accessed 7 Aug. 2022.

nations. The role of nationalism in the development of these decolonized nations is not to be understated.

Arab countries regained control of their resources through instating nationalistic policies, transforming the relationships between resource, countries, and the region. Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser implemented nationalism into Egypt's resource policies, evident in the nationalization of the Suez Canal. In 1956, Nasser displaced British troops to reassert Egyptian control over the strategic geographic resource, shifting the resource to benefit Egyptians instead of colonial powers.⁷²

Following 1956, nationalistic policy spread across the Middle East and expanded to another significant resource usurped by colonizers: oil. By the 1970s, many Arab countries established national extractive companies, granting the producer governments, instead of foreign governments, full control over their oil operations.⁷³ Oil nationalization culminated with the creation of OPEC.

These nationalistic policies placed the control and profits of geographic and natural resources into the governments of the possessing countries. Thus, Arab states collected increased resource revenues, allowing their governments to fund and support human and economic development.⁷⁴

Despite these positive developments, these resource policies also created issues, such as unequal distribution of revenue and benefits, lack of economic diversity as countries relied entirely on **extractive industry**, and the excess of government power and control.⁷⁵

⁷² Michael C. Shupe, William M. Wright, Keith W. Hipel, and Niall M. Fraser, "Nationalization of the Suez Canal: A Hypergame Analysis," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24, no.3 (1980): 1, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/173642?seq=1>.

⁷³ Robin Mills and Fatema Alhashemi, "Resource Regionalism in the Middle East and North Africa: Rich Lands, Neglected People," Brookings Institution, *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper* no. 20 (April 2018): 11, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/resource-regionalism-in-the-mena_english_web.pdf.

⁷⁴ Mills and Alhashemi, "Resource Regionalism in the Middle East and North Africa: Rich Lands, Neglected People," 11.

⁷⁵ Mills and Alhashemi, "Resource Regionalism in the Middle East and North Africa: Rich Lands, Neglected People," 11 - 13.

2011 to 2013

Arab Spring

Following this era of increasing government and state leader power, the Arab World experienced a series of political protests and transformations known as the Arab Spring. Starting in 2011 in Tunisia, the movement spread across the Middle East as people opposed authoritarianism, poverty, and corruption.⁷⁶

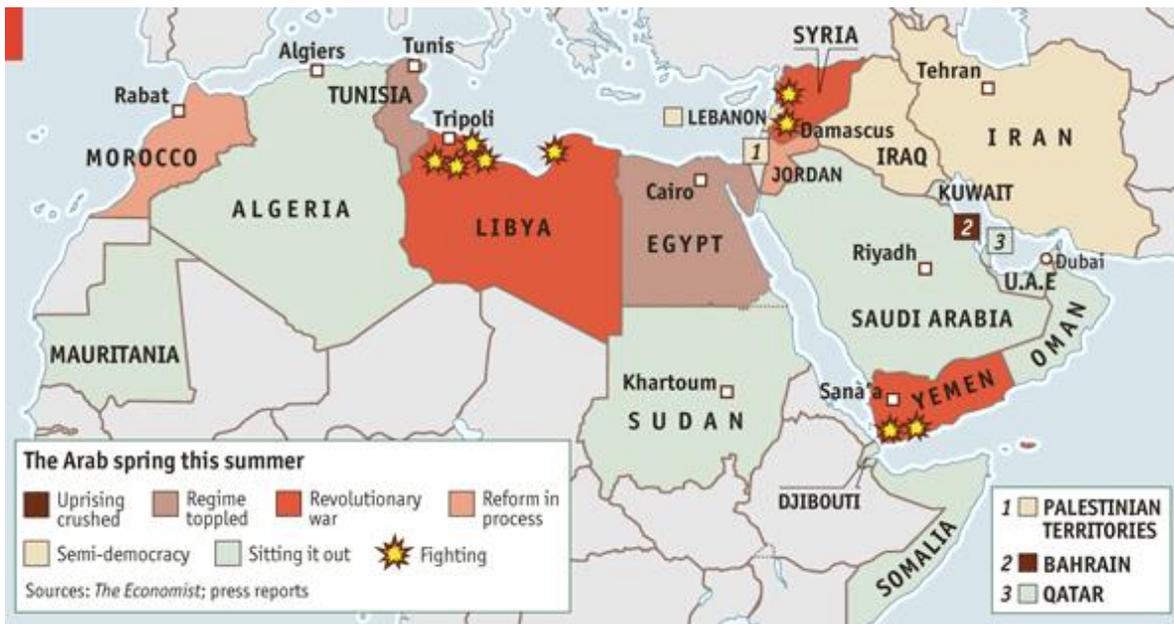


Figure 4: The Spread of the Arab Spring⁷⁷

Both natural and geographic resources within the region influenced the Arab Spring. Given their oil resources and influence, the Gulf states intervened in revolutions such as the Yemeni Revolution, which Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E. sustained using their oil resource.⁷⁸ Additionally, a country's geographic features and resources played a role in the outcome of its revolution, evident as Tunisia,

⁷⁶ Dina Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle Eastern Conflicts," *E-International Relations*, 24 May 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/17/what-is-the-arab-spring-and-how-did-it-start>.

⁷⁷ "The Arab Spring this Summer." *The Economist*. 2011. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-the-Arab-Spring-Source-https-orientalrevieworg_fig1_327219589.

⁷⁸ Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle Eastern Conflicts."

located on the coast of Northern Africa, experienced less regional interference in its domestic politics since it has less accessible borders.⁷⁹

As a result of the Arab Spring, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen overthrew their autocratic regimes, experiencing new consequences and challenges. Facing political instability, export cuts, and new tax policies, these Arab countries endured severe economic decline as GDPs dropped as low as 10% and unemployment rates rose to as high as 35%.⁸⁰ The Arab Spring revealed the role of resources in both regional relationships and domestic politics.

2013 to Present

Modern Resource Management

With the background of naturally unequal resource distribution as well as the onset of political transitions and challenges, Arab countries confront inequalities in resource allocation with social, economic, and political repercussions. Certain countries are advantaged with natural resources, such as the oil-rich Gulf states, or geographic advantage, such as countries located centrally with coastal or access to other borders.⁸¹ While gifted these resources by chance, these countries experience advantage over others, allowing them to exert more influence. In addition to regional resource disparities, domestic distribution inequalities favor certain members of the population over others, favoring urban and coastal centers over remote, rural areas.⁸² These disparities result in the modern issues of resource management on social, economic, and political levels as states face corruption, income inequality, and a lack of social opportunity.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Mohsin Khan, "The Economic Consequences of the Arab Spring," Atlantic Council, February 2014. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/177370/The_Economic_Consequences_of_the_Arab_Spring.pdf.

⁸¹ Rashed, "Geography, Resources, and the Geopolitics of Middle Eastern Conflicts."

⁸² Mills and Alhashemi, "Resource Regionalism in the Middle East and North Africa: Rich Lands, Neglected People," 4.

Past Actions

Receiving a lot of global attention recently, an agreement relating to both water and energy was reached among Israel, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates in November of 2021.⁸³ As the first part of the agreement, an Emirati government-owned firm, Masdar, will provide the funding and technological resources and information necessary to build a facility to generate solar power in Jordan. Said facility will ideally be done by 2026 and will then begin to sell electricity (600 megawatts) to Israel at an annual rate of \$180 million (this is the second part of the agreement).⁸⁴ Jordan and the United Arab Emirates will each receive half of the proceeds from the sale of the electricity that will contribute to their budgets. For Israel, the agreement is beneficial because the electricity generated by the solar-powered technology will help diversify the nation's energy sources and increase its use of renewable energy. The increase in Israel's use of renewable energy will hopefully contribute to goals set by the state and internationally. As the third part of the agreement, Israel will provide 200 million cubic meters of desalinated water to Jordan. This large amount of water would help remedy Jordan's greatly strained water supply and facilitate its climate adaptation.

The use of desalination plants has its pros and cons. A notable con is the hefty energetic expense, while an emphasized pro is the ability to make previously undrinkable water available for consumption, thus contributing at least partially to remedying water shortages.⁸⁵

One thing to note is that although Jordan borders the Red Sea, it is actually less convenient for Jordan to use the water from the Red Sea than importing water from Israel because the location of the border along the Red Sea is far from city centers and water from Israel would require less transportation. Therefore, this deal demonstrates the delicate balance and unique considerations that make it so appealing for the participating nations.⁸⁶

⁸³ Riedel, Bruce, and Natan Sachs. "Israel, Jordan, and the UAE's Energy Deal Is Good News ." *Brookings*, Brookings, 9 Mar. 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/11/23/israel-jordan-and-the-uaes-energy-deal-is-good-news/>.

⁸⁴ Vohra, Anchal. "Water-for-Energy Is Better than Land-for-Peace." *Foreign Policy*, 16 Dec. 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/16/water-for-energy-is-better-than-land-for-peace/>.

⁸⁵ Riedel, Bruce, and Sachs, "Energy Deal"

⁸⁶ Riedel, Bruce, and Sachs, "Energy Deal"

In the discussion of this plan, it is important to reference and acknowledge the important work that went into the making of the agreement.

First, the reason why this agreement was able to be made was the 2020 Abraham Accords; part of the agreement normalized relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel. Even with the normalized relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, however, there was still opposition to the deal by Jordan, which is a nation in which seventy percent of the population is of Palestinian origin.⁸⁷

Second, the idea of this symbiotic relationship was initially proposed by a nongovernmental organization called EcoPeace Middle East, which intends to act in accordance with what would be best for Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians. The project in focus was just one of the many projects proposed under the Green Blue Deal for the Middle East—its plan to use the ocean and the sun to ensure the production of both energy and water. Additionally, in hopes of involving the Palestinians in the deal, EcoPeace’s goal is to have Israel allocate more water to Palestine while Jordan also sells them energy.⁸⁸

Third, this agreement is not the first between Israel and Jordan. In the past, Jordan has bought both Israeli gas and Israeli water. There was also an unsuccessful agreement relating to a hydroelectric project that would run water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea (so the water would flow from sea level to far below sea level) to generate shared electricity. This plan did not materialize, however, due to Israeli pushback regarding the project’s practicality and the possible negative effects on the Dead Sea.⁸⁹ Therefore, it is important to consider the history of relations between the two nations in question and its weight on future actions.

Another recent deal that has been reached involves Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. It was agreed that 650 million cubic meters of natural gas would be shipped annually to Lebanon from Egypt through

⁸⁷ Riedel, Bruce, and Sachs, “Energy Deal”

⁸⁸ (Riedel, Bruce, and Sachs, “Energy Deal”)

⁸⁹ (Riedel, Bruce, and Sachs, “Energy Deal”)

Syria for a price that is lower than the international average. The quantity of gas in question would equal 450 megawatts of electricity, which is enough to provide four hours of extra power per day.⁹⁰

The deal benefits Lebanon because it would greatly contribute to improving its citizens' access to electricity, as currently the state-run power company does not produce nearly enough electricity for the whole nation. The deal also benefits Egypt because the nation receives the payment for the gas and Syria because the agreement would help establish a precedent for future United States sanction waivers, which is, nevertheless, still contingent on the United States' decision (this will be decided after contracts are signed among the three nations). All parties are once again benefited due to the fact that the World Bank has pledged financing for the project once it is approved.⁹¹

A similar plan that was proposed in 2021 would have had Jordan sell electricity to Lebanon while Egypt would sell its natural gas (this combined energy would total to 700 MW). As outlined in the plan above, these resources would also be transported through Syria. In this case, the parties would be eligible for World Bank funding, but only if adequate action was taken to implement reforms to reduce waste and increase tariff collection in Lebanon. While these reforms have been planned out by Lebanon, very little action has been taken towards the major proposals.⁹²

⁹⁰ Azhari, Timour. "Lebanon, Syria, Egypt Sign Gas Import Agreement." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 21 June 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/lebanon-syria-egypt-sign-gas-import-agreement-2022-06-21/>.

⁹¹ Azhari and Timour, "Gas Import Agreement"

⁹² Azhari and Timour, "Gas Import Agreement"

Possible Solutions

The word “solutions” in this context is slightly out of place, as it almost makes the problems being addressed in this committee seem more easily solvable than they actually are. Perhaps we should think of these actions being taken in this committee as steps being taken towards ameliorating the state of a group of nations rather than as solutions themselves, which would imply a sense of finality.

From when you commence your research up until the very last committee session, it is important to consider and fully embrace the feelings of collaboration and mutual respect between these nations that make up the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Resource sharing, the construction of mutually beneficial agreements, and openness to innovation or new suggestions are always encouraged and should be embraced.

As one can see by reading this background guide, the main resource categories that will most likely receive the most attention in this committee are water and energy. Of course, there are many other resources that delegates may wish to focus on and those which are closely tied to the previously mentioned resources, but for now, energy and water are the two that we as your chairs would encourage you to start your considerations with.

To illustrate the centrality of water resources, consider food. As mentioned above, food, and therefore agriculture, relies heavily on water supply which is mainly moved to agricultural centers using irrigation. It is safe to say, therefore, that the two issues are closely connected and should be viewed as such. Thus, extra weight should generally be given to water issues. Arguably, there are many other factors contributing to the availability of food. According to the World Bank, sources of food insecurity include conflict, fluctuating oil prices, and hyperinflation.⁹³ Additionally, broader challenges include climate change, population growth, and nutrition.

⁹³ Belhaj, Ferid, and Ayat Soliman. “Mena Has a Food Security Problem, but There Are Ways to Address It.” World Bank, World Bank Group, 29 Sept. 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2021/09/24/mena-has-a-food-security-problem-but-there-are-ways-to-address-it>.

Going back to water and energy, deals that take advantage of the natural resources and technological capabilities of the nations in question while providing the resources needed, such as the deal between Jordan, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates, could be an interesting starting point.

For nations without access to desalination plants, it is necessary for their survival to diversify their sources of water to avoid relying completely upon a single inland body of water, ground water, or rain. One way to achieve this is by working with and making deals with other nations. Another one is putting more emphasis on treating wastewater. Furthermore, to avoid even more energy issues due to the immense energetic cost of desalination, incorporating the use of alternative energy sources and investing in research around how to make better use of said resources is another topic to ponder for this committee. Environmental concerns due to the processing of water at desalination plants should also be considered, as climate change is already vastly altering the state of oceans and seas.⁹⁴

Another idea that could serve as an inspiration for this committee is that of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS) Water Programme. This program was created with the intention of helping nations to monitor the quality of water by collecting and sharing data. While some of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are a part of GEMS, not all of them are. Therefore, a regional version of this program could be established to include more nations and expand the functions of the previously mentioned program. If a regional monitoring program was established, not only could water quality be tracked, but avenues of water use could be tracked as closely as possible, research could be conducted, technology and methodology could be shared, and public education programs could be developed.⁹⁵

A similar focus on tracking energy use, maximizing a nation's own resources, sharing technology, conducting research on renewable energy, and collaborating with the purpose of diversifying sources of energy would be helpful. The deal between Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt could give some inspiration, as well as the deal between Jordan, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates. Once again,

⁹⁴ Abumoghli, Iyad. "Water Security in the Arab World." *EcoMENA*, EcoMENA, 29 Jan. 2022, <https://www.ecomena.org/water-arab/>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

taking advantage of a nation's unique situation and resources in conjunction with that of other nations will be imperative.

Lastly, investment from other nations or looking into funding from the World Bank could be another aspect to consider in these steps towards a solution.

Bloc Positions

OIC Members

Azerbaijan, Jordan, Afghanistan, Albania, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Uganda, Iran, Pakistan, Bahrain, Brunei-Darussalam, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Algeria, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Suriname, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Iraq, Oman, Gabon, The Gambia, Guyana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Palestine, Comoros, Kyrgyz, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Malaysia, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Yemen

Observers

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Kingdom of Thailand, The Russian Federation, Turkish Cypriot State, Moro National Liberation Front (1977), Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States - PUOICM (2000), United Nations (UN) (1976), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (1977), League of Arab States (LAS) (1975), African Union (AU) (1977), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) (1995)

Introduction to Bloc Positions

On the issue of resource allocation, OIC member states align based on factors including participation level, regionalism, religion, politics, existing relations, and OPEC involvement. While these factors influence countries' relationships and positions, we encourage delegates to creatively form their own alignments and stances based on debate during conference.

Factors Influencing Bloc Alignment

Participation Level

Level of participation may influence the OIC member states' relationships and stances, as more active states may work together more. Of the OIC member states, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan,

Turkey, and Malaysia are most actively involved.⁹⁶ Although not necessarily the most powerful of this group, this group of countries have more opportunity to work together due to their high participation level.

Regionalism

Regionalism is additionally significant to shaping bloc alignment given the spread of OIC countries across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia—member states tend to align more with countries of their geographic region.⁹⁷

Religion, Politics, And Relations

Within the OIC countries, there is much diversity of attitude towards religion, politics, and relations. OIC member states are divided between **Shia Islam** and **Sunni Islam**, further distinguished by followers of **Sufism** (Pakistan) and **Wahhabism** (Saudi Arabia).⁹⁸ Additionally, members differ in political systems, representing democracies (Pakistan) to kingdoms (Saudi Arabia), secular states (Iran) to **theocracies** (Turkey).⁹⁹ Finally, member states maintain different relations with other international powers. While Saudi Arabia allies with the United States and Turkey is a member of NATO, Iran is an adversary.¹⁰⁰ As potential sources of division or union, religion, politics, and relations are important factors towards forming alignments within OIC member countries, especially those that share or contrast in attitude.

OPEC Involvement

Within the OIC member states, 11 countries are also part of the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), including Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Nigeria, Gabon, and Guinea (non-OIC OPEC members are Venezuela, Indonesia,

⁹⁶ Jacopo Scipione, "The Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation and the Balance of Power," *Geopolitica*, 10 Sept. 2018, <https://www.geopolitica.info/organisation-islamic-cooperation/>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Ecuador, Angola, and Congo).¹⁰¹ Especially on the issue of energy distribution, OPEC countries may align given their shared views and power with regard to producing oil and maintaining the economy.

¹⁰¹ "Member Countries." *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2022.
https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/25.htm.

Glossary

Borders: Political lines determining the territory that defines one polity from another

Climate Change: Long term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns attributed directly or indirectly to human activities that alter the composition of the global atmosphere

Extractive Industry: Activities leading to the extraction of raw materials (including oil, metal, and minerals) from the earth to be processed and used by humans

Extremism: The holding of extreme political or religious views

Food Insecurity: Economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food

Food Systems: Processes of food growth, production, and distribution

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): Intergovernmental organization of 13 countries (across four continents) possessing majority of the world's oil reserves, thus yielding significant economic influence

Resource-Abundant: Countries with plentiful and large quantities of natural resources

Resource-Poor: Countries with little or limited natural resources

Shia Islam: The branch of Islam comprising sects believing in Ali and the Imams as the only rightful successors of Muhammad and in the concealment and messianic return of the last recognized Imam

Sufism: Form of Islamic mysticism or asceticism in which followers, varying in practices and structures, attain nearness to Allah through direct personal experience

Sunni Islam: The branch of Islam that adheres to the orthodox tradition and acknowledges the first four caliphs as rightful successors of Muhammed

Theocracies: Systems of government in which religious leaders rule

Wahhabism: Advocates of a purification of Islam, rejecting Islamic theology or philosophy developed after the death of the Prophet Muhammad

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content/uploads/2019/05/report/tackling-terrorists-exploitation-of-youth/Tackling-Terrorists-Exploitation-of-Youth.pdf.

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