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SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS BACKGROUND GUIDE

TRITONMUN XXVII – APRIL 27-28TH, 2024

MODEL UNITED NATIONS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

BACKGROUND GUIDE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Head Chair Letter.....	2
Vice Chair Letter.....	3
Position Paper Guidelines.....	4
Background	5
Introduction.....	5
History of the Summits.....	6
Case Studies.....	7
Chinese Influence & One Belt and Road initiative	7
War on Drugs and Organized Crime.....	10
Attacks on democratic norms & processes.....	13
Venezuela vs. Guyana.....	18
Covid - 19 Emergency Response	19
Concluding Remarks	22
Questions to Consider	22
Invited Member States.....	24
Rules of Procedure.....	25
Technology Policy.....	25
Works Cited.....	26

HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to TritonMUN XXVII in this specialized committee on the Summit of the Americas. My name is Sid Pisharody and I will be serving as the head chair for this committee. I am currently a Senior at UC San Diego majoring in Mathematics and Economics with a dual minor in Business and Accounting and am going to an additional year at UCSD in the MPAC Masters program for Accounting. Throughout my time in high school and college, I have gathered together roughly eight years of experience in MUN as both a delegate and as a chair in various committees, like WHO, UNESCO, ECOSOC, and many more. With UCSD I have also been associated with TritonMUN XXII, XXI, serving as the Vice Chair of CELAC, and the rapporteur of DISEC, and as the Secretary General of TritonMUN last year! Outside Model UN and College, I like to play video games with friends, listen to podcasts, and watch short horror films. I am super excited to moderate a session on the Summit of the Americas, and I hope that you all are excited as well!

As we progress into the next decade, the shifting sands of political allegiances and international conflicts require every nation state to critically examine and question the standards with which they operate, especially so in the Americas as the world grapples with true globalization. I hope the conference provides you the capacity to debate, question, and analyze the various topics and forums as they arise in the committee. I cannot wait to meet all of you this April and hear all of your ideas! Should you have any questions, my email is spisharo@ucsd.edu.

Sincerely,

Sid Pisharody

VICE CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Summit of the Americas, localized entirely in TritonMUN XXVII! My name is Jesse Wu, and it is my absolute pleasure to be serving as your committee's vice chair this conference. I am a first-year student at UC San Diego's Eleanor Roosevelt College studying International Studies-Political Science with a minor in Japanese Studies. As may be the case with you, this is my first year ever doing MUN; let us all create and maintain a positive learning environment! Outside of this club and my activities I am also an avid musician, currently singing with Duly Noted—one of UCSD's student a cappella groups—as well as the La Jolla Symphony Chorus.

As we begin the weekend simulation, I would like to remind us all of what exactly we are aiming to recreate. With rising tensions and emerging conflicts all across the world, the role of diplomacy and dialogue in the pursuit and maintenance of international peace has only become more important. It is my hope that throughout the two-day conference we can all strive to uphold the true spirit of diplomacy and look past the purely competitive aspects of the Summit and of MUN, establishing a safe place for delegates to learn and supporting one of our greatest tools for foreign policy and international understanding.

If you would like to reach me for any reason, you can do so via email at jew033@ucsd.edu. Again, welcome to TritonMUN XXVII; I look forward to the productive and insightful conversations we will have!

Regards,

Jesse Wu

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

TRITONMUN POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

- Position Papers are due on **April 19, 2024 at 11:59pm.**
 - Requests for extensions must be sent by the advisor to TritonMUN by **April 12, 2024.**
- Position Papers must be submitted to the **Google Form** linked here:
 - <https://forms.gle/LowTC5UpH44Jweyf6>
- Format
 - For committees with one topic there should be two pages for the topic with an additional page for citations, for a total of 3 pages.
 - Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures.
 - At the top of each paper, include your country/person, name, committee, and topic.
 - Required* Sections: Each of these sections should be clearly labeled
 - Background
 - Past Actions by the Committee (if applicable)
 - Position of your Country/Person
 - Possible Solutions

*Some committees may ask for different formatting or an alternative to a position paper altogether, this will be clearly noted in the background guide for that committee

SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS-BACKGROUND

Introduction



Secretary of State Antony Blinken, back center, addresses ministers during the IX Summit of the Americas, Wednesday, Jun. 8, 2022, in Los Angeles. [Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP Photo]

Deriving from a series of ad hoc summits held by leaders of the Western Hemisphere, the Summit of the Americas (SOA) were institutionalized in the early 1990s as a regular gathering of heads of state within the regional Organization of American States (OAS), serving as venues for both bilateral and multilateral interactions. Conferences happen every three to four years and are hosted by a different country every time, with heads of state and government, foreign ministers, and other senior officials from the governments of the Americas in attendance.

The managing body of the SOA, the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), is the core management body of the Summits Process and is composed of government officials of the countries of the hemisphere. The OAS' Summit of the Americas Secretariat also serves in the important institutional role of supporting and ensuring the Summit of the Americas process as a function of the OAS.

In preparation for the topic of the upcoming committee: “National Sovereignty and Humanitarian Aid”, delegates are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the history of the summits as well as the case studies outlined in this guide to inform their decision making and focus of debate in their position papers and day-of-debating!

History of the Summits

Convened in Miami, Florida, the first Summit of the Americas was held in December 1994 to promote economic growth and prosperity throughout the Americas based on shared democratic values and the promise of increased trade and commerce to improve the quality of life for all peoples and preserve the hemisphere’s natural resources for future generations. From then onwards, the Summits of the Americas have become institutionalized gatherings of the heads of state and government of the Western Hemisphere where leaders discuss common policy issues, affirm shared values and commit to concerted actions at the national and regional level to address continuing and new challenges faced in the Americas. The subsequent regular summits have taken place in Santiago, Chile (1998), Quebec City, Canada (2001), Mar del Plata, Argentina (2005), Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (2009), Cartagena, Colombia (2012), Panama City, Panama (2015), Lima, Peru (2018), and Los Angeles, U.S.A. (2022). Special summits took place in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (1996), and Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico (2004).

Discussions at the Summits commonly revolve around topics of democratic governance and development, and also often address ongoing political, economic, and social developments in the Americas. Usually, one or two specific issues will be targeted as a “critical area of cooperation of interest” in order to present a theme and guide discussion. Recent summits have also concluded with a special declaration being adopted and published by the attending heads, with declarations often focusing on addressing those key issues. The latest summit, held in Los Angeles in 2022, saw words exchanged and commitments passed regarding issues like climate change and digital transformation, along with the adoption of the “Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection.”

Chinese influence & the Belt and Road Initiative

China's One Belt One Road - or BRI as it is commonly referred to in public discourse and as it will be referred to in this background guide - was announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, with the stated intention to achieve purely benign economic and diplomatic objectives. The BRI is comprised of two main parts; the belt: a trans-continental passage that links China with south east Asia, south Asia, Central Asia, Russia and Europe by land, and the maritime road: a sea route connecting China's coastal regions with south east and south Asia, the South Pacific, the Middle East and Eastern Africa and Europe. According to H.E. Li Keqiang, a Chinese spokesperson and representative for the BRI, the initiative will build infrastructure and production hubs that will benefit both China and the host nations and also "deepen international cooperation and promote world peace, cooperation and harmony." This development primarily takes form in infrastructure investments, with roughly \$1 Trillion to \$8 trillion dollars committed to the initiative. These investments take form in the development of highways or ports in key locations, and as of January 2021, 138 countries have signed onto the initiative globally, accounting for potentially 30% of global gross domestic product and roughly two thirds of the world's population.

In wake of growing popularity for the BRI initiative globally, in 2017, China declared Latin America and the Caribbean "as a natural extension of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road." CELAC, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a coalition formed to uphold the interest of the Latin American bloc while enriching the discourse between Latin American countries, naturally views this development in a positive light . On January 22nd, 2018, the China-CELAC Forum was held in Santiago, Chile where participants stated their goal of strengthening economic globalization and where CELAC members also unanimously reaffirmed their support for BRI. Contrary to many other nations scared by the debt issues that could be incurred from participating in the BRI, on the risk side, many consider Chinese lending alone to be insufficient enough to trigger systemic debt issues unlike what has been seen in Asian countries engaging with the BRI initiative. Environmental, labor, and transparency issues remain

critically important in the Americas, but the already existent push against sketchy business practices have created a stable safe guard to move against the opaque lending practices of Chinese lenders. With this sense of protection, many in the region tend to focus more on the potential economic upside of BRI.



Former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet meets former Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on the sidelines of the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing on May 14, 2017. [Aly Song/AFP/Getty Images]

As a result, for many in Latin America and the Caribbean, BRI appears a safe bet for greater economic growth and international cooperation, more noticeable so with the United States tending towards isolationist policies, leaving no true global alternative. As a response to the negative press associated with the murky nature of the Chinese loan lending financial policies, clearer guidelines establishing and guiding potential members on loaning rates and financial risk assessment was passed, leading to enthusiasm from many potential partners, the CELAC included. In the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) held in Beijing on April 25th-27th in 2019—a forum for BRI participants to have “a more open and efficient international cooperation platform” according to Wang Xiaotao, a Chinese representative—this enthusiasm in business was captured by the increased amount of participants

from the first BRF, with roughly 40 additional members attending and signing. In this forum, roughly 30 of the 40 new members were high-level Latin American and Caribbean government officials, including the President Sebastián Piñera of Chile. The BRF produced a series of multilateral agreements among participants, notably a Joint Communiqué signed by 37 heads of state in attendance from around the world. The forum also saw the signing of more than twenty agreements between China and at least one Latin American or Caribbean country, covering different cooperation areas including energy, science, finance, and regulatory coordination.

Since 2005, Chinese involvement in the CELAC nations has increased noticeably, becoming the second largest trade partner in the region second only to the United States with trade valuing at \$12 billion in 1999 increasing to \$306 billion in 2018. Additionally, since 2005, Chinese banks have provided \$100+ billion in loan commitments to Latin America—exceeding many of the traditional lenders. With this sense of partnership existing prior to the announcement of the BRI, many non committed members of the CELAC, like Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, still follow along with tendencies. Yet due to the tense trade wars rising between the United States and China, involvement of the BRI in CELAC has slowed down, with a shift in focus to the original Eurasian corridors. Regardless, the enthusiasm shown from many members in attendance of the SOA raises into question the implications this BRI initiative will have on trade deals between the United States and the Latin American countries, given that the United States is a large trade partner. Additionally, What would the likely conflict between Chinese interests in the Latin American region and American interest in the Latin American region entail for the economic stability and prosperity of the region? Does such a development even potentially invite an entire phase shift from exclusive and primary American aid and trade to one more globally accepting of Chinese influence?

War on Drugs and Organized Crime



Troops stand in an alley in the suburb of Soyapango, San Salvador, in Dec. 2022 during a nationwide campaign to crack down on gang warfare. [Jose Cabezas/Reuters]

Born in the 1970s under the sensationalist works of Morgan F. Murphy and Robert H. Steele, the Murphy-Steele report and other rhetoric led by the Nixon and Regan era in U.S. political history have defined the popularized “War on Drugs” that now shapes the economies and local industries of nations caught in the trade of illicit drugs with the United States and other nations. Traditionally employed as a paradoxical means for the US to strengthen its border security and isolationist policies along with its growing illegal drug market, the Americas have been profoundly impacted by the production, synthesization, and distribution of these drugs and the syndicated cartel and gang network that has risen out of it.

Traditionally, the philosophy guiding the political actions taken to respond to the emergence of the drug market has been outright eradication, with expectations of a squashed drug production and buying system resulting in complete safeguards against the damages brought on by this system. However, a new strain of thinking—divergent from the mainstream

philosophy led by the United States on total destruction of illicit drug buying—has emerged questioning the true course of action that the Western Hemisphere must take. Previous president of Guatemala Otto Perez Molina has echoed this newer sentiment among Latin Americans on the drug war stating, "Knowing that drugs are bad for human beings is not a compelling reason for advocating their prohibition. Actually, the prohibition paradigm that inspires mainstream global drug policy today is based on a false premise: that the global drug markets can be eradicated. We would not believe such a statement if it were applied to alcoholism or tobacco addiction, but somehow we assume it's right in the case of drugs. Why?"

Likewise, previous Mexican Presidents have signed off on the Global Commission on Drug Policy report that began with the line "The war on drugs is a failure," and have called for a national debate on the subject to occur. Likewise even the previous Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos - whose country has received millions from the U.S. to fight the drug war - has questioned the current approach stating, "this is a very sensitive political subject and there's a lot of hypocrisy there. Many leaders, in private, they will say something and they tell me something and in public they say, 'But I can't do this probably because my people will really crucify me'."

Additionally, in 2021, Gustavo Gorriti, journalist and founder of IDL-Reporteros, investigating corruption in Peru, wrote a scathing editorial in the Washington Post on the impact of 50 years of the war on drugs on Latin America. He described the flow of drugs to the US as an "unstoppable industry" that triggered an economic revolution throughout the region, where the illegal drug trade with its high profit margins far exceeded the potential of legitimate businesses. Corruption among politicians and anti-drug forces soared, even as those in charge were "cultivating close relationships with U.S. enforcement and intelligence agencies." An underclass of poor farmers became economic hostages, depending on drug crops for their survival.

At a meeting in Guatemala in 2012, three former presidents from Guatemala, Mexico and Colombia said that the war on drugs had failed and that they would propose a discussion on alternatives, including decriminalization, at the Summit of the Americas in April of that year. Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina said that the war on drugs was exacting too high a price on the lives of Central Americans and that it was time to "end the taboo on discussing decriminalization". At the summit, the government of Colombia pushed for the most far-reaching

change to drugs policy since the war on narcotics was declared by Nixon four decades prior, citing the catastrophic effects it had had in Colombia.

Leading the traditional stream of thinking on the War on Drugs, the U.S. government under both Republican and Democratic administrations has consistently remained among the biggest drug war advocates; current U.S. President Joseph R. Biden has maintained that the United States will not budge in its opposition to drug legalization. Although Biden said the idea of legalization "warrants discussion," he said the U.S. has a firm policy that legalized drugs would create more problems than they solve. Should things continue as is, the rest of the Western Hemisphere might be alienating itself from the United States.

Whatever the outcome, the Summit of the Americas may be the first and best opportunity for Latin American leaders to start an open and honest debate on a drug war that has morphed into a worsening plague for most of their citizens.

[A note from the Dais: Recognizing the tragedy and ramifications that the drug trade has had on the Western Hemisphere, this case study was addressed because a healthy conversation on the ramifications of the drug trade are crucial in the 21st century. If any delegate veers away from academic and sensitive discourse revolving around national policy with derogatory or hateful rhetoric that hinders debate, please inform the dais of this behavior and we will respond immediately.]

Attacks on democratic norms & processes (e.g. elections in Brazil, Argentina, and USA)

Brazil



Supporters of Brazilian former President Jair Bolsonaro invade the country's presidential palace in Brasilia on Jan. 8, 2023. [Sergio Lima / AFP/File]

General elections were held in Brazil on October 2nd, 2022, to elect the president, vice president, the National Congress, the governors, vice governors, and legislative assemblies of all federative units, and the district council of Fernando de Noronha. As no candidate for president—or for governor in some states—received more than half of the valid votes in the first round, a runoff election for these offices was held on October 30th. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva received the majority of the votes in the second round and became president-elect of Brazil.

Far-right incumbent president Jair Bolsonaro was seeking a second term. He had been elected in 2018 as the candidate of the Social Liberal Party but left that party in 2019, followed by the resignation or dismissal of many of his ministers during his term. After a failed attempt to

create the Alliance for Brazil, he joined the Liberal Party in 2021. For the 2022 election, he selected Walter Braga Netto of the same party as his vice presidential candidate rather than the incumbent vice president Hamilton Mourão.

Former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, of the left-wing Workers' Party, was a candidate for a third non-consecutive term after previously having been elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2006. His successor from the same party, former president Dilma Rousseff, was elected in 2010 and re-elected in 2014 but was impeached and removed from office in 2016 due to accusations of administrative misconduct. Lula's intended candidacy in 2018 was disallowed due to his conviction on corruption charges in 2017 and subsequent arrest; a series of court rulings led to his release from prison in 2019, followed by the annulment of his conviction and restoration of his political rights by 2021. For his vice presidential candidate in the 2022 election, Lula selected Geraldo Alckmin, who had been a presidential candidate of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party in 2006 (facing Lula in the second round) and 2018 but changed his affiliation to the Brazilian Socialist Party in 2022.

Lula received the most votes in the first round, with 48.43% to Bolsonaro's 43.20%, being the first presidential candidate to obtain more votes than the incumbent president in Brazil. While Lula came close to winning in the first round, the difference between the two leading candidates was closer than what opinion polls had suggested, and right-wing parties made gains in the National Congress. Nevertheless, Lula's vote share was the second-best performance for the Workers' Party in the first round of a presidential election, behind only his own record of 48.61% in 2006. In the second round, Lula received 50.90% of the votes to Bolsonaro's 49.10%, the closest presidential election result in Brazil to date. Lula became the first person to secure a third presidential term, receiving the highest number of votes in a Brazilian election. At the same time, Bolsonaro became the first incumbent president to lose a bid for a second term since a 1997 constitutional amendment allowing consecutive re-election.

In response to Lula's advantage in pre-election polls, Bolsonaro had made several premature allegations of electoral fraud. Many observers denounced these allegations as false and expressed concerns that they could be used to challenge the outcome of the election. On November 1st, during his first public remarks after the election, Bolsonaro refused to elaborate on the result, while authorizing his chief of staff, Ciro Nogueira Lima Filho, to begin the

transition process with representatives of president-elect Lula on 3 November. On 22 November, Bolsonaro and his party requested that the Superior Electoral Court invalidate the votes recorded by electronic voting machines that lacked identification numbers, which would result in him being elected with 51% of the remaining valid votes. On the next day the court rejected the request and fined the party R\$22.9 million (US\$4.3 million) for what it considered bad faith litigation. Lula was sworn in on January 1st, 2023; a week later, pro-Bolsonaro protestors unsuccessfully stormed the offices of the National Congress, the Presidential Palace, and the Supreme Federal Court. The elected members of the National Congress were sworn in on 1 February.

Argentina

Javier Milei, a volatile far-right libertarian who has vowed to “exterminate” inflation and take a chainsaw to the state, has been elected president of Argentina, catapulting South America’s second largest economy into an unpredictable and potentially turbulent future.

With more than 99% of votes counted, Mick Jagger impersonating TV celebrity-turned-politician, who is often compared to Donald Trump, had secured 55.69% of the vote compared with 44.3% for his rival, the center-left finance minister Sergio Massa. The right-wing economist rose to fame blasting the political class on television and has welcomed comparisons to Trump. His message that a corrupt elite has left the country behind resonates with Argentines coping with rising poverty and 142% annual inflation. He says he is disgusted that the governing party might steal the presidency. “I’ve been watching it on TikTok videos; all the fraud that was done seems wrong, it’s undemocratic,” said Paulero, a delivery app driver.

At least partly, Milei is stoking fraud claims himself. In an interview on November 7th, he said the first-round vote wasn’t clean stating, “There were irregularities of such proportion that they put the result in doubt,” and “Whoever counts the vote controls everything.”

Earlier, Milei had said that were it not for fraud during the August primaries, he would have snagged 35% of the vote instead of 30%.

United States of America

Trump supporters mass at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. [Kent Nishimura/Los Angeles Times]

No section about attacks on democracy would be complete without the American elephant in the room—the political shockwaves caused by former US president Donald J. Trump. His entry into American politics and subsequent victory in the 2016 presidential election cycle signaled the emergence of prominent populist elements in the public discourse, and his floating of conspiracies like those of “the swamp” (referring to the American political establishment) and QAnon fed into a declining trust in existing institutions by members of the political right. These developments accompanied a trend of worsening political polarization, as political rhetoric generally became more toxic and Congressional votes increasingly cemented along partisan lines.

In the months leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election, the Trump campaign increasingly questioned the integrity of the election as the Democratic candidate, Joseph R. Biden, began to pose more of a threat. Trump’s team continued to challenge the election results

after November 3rd through public statements and lawsuits, and the incumbent's apparent lack of willingness to accept an election loss also put into question the traditions of a peaceful transition of power. That norm was finally and dramatically shattered with the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, 2021, where a mob of Trump supporters attempted to halt the certification of Electoral College votes that would have formalized Biden's victory; many believe the attack was incited by Trump's claims that the election was "stolen," which he still maintains.

Delegates should pay special interest to Trump's various conflicts with the U.S. Department of Justice. The two parties have been at odds since his first administration, and much of the media coverage surrounding the former president is about the five court cases currently being pursued against him—two of which are *federal criminal cases* being investigated and prosecuted by the DOJ under President Biden, for which Trump has portrayed these legal battles as part of a larger political witch hunt against him and his supporters. Interestingly, and perhaps dangerously, Trump has made the argument for presidential immunity in several of these cases, the successful argument of which would make the actions of him, and other presidents, that are taken in office immune from prosecution.

As an influential political figure and front-runner in the current Republican presidential race, Trump continues to pose a threat to democratic norms and institutions in the U.S. with his parroting of conspiracy. These moves occur alongside the continued polarization of American politics and in the face of increasing dysfunction in Congress. Delegates thinking about this problem should aim to tackle issues surrounding election integrity, government transparency and accountability, democratic backsliding, and increasingly divisive political environments in all countries.

[A note from the Dais: In regards to the specific countries that were addressed in this portion of the case studies, the main take away for the delegates is to consider the instruments and tools with which democracy is being eroded in these countries, and what safeguards the SOA should try to document and enshrine in their resolutions should this be the topic of discussion. Likewise if delegates wish to address this topic through their solutions to another case study topic, they have the complete freedom to do so, ultimately boiling down to what the committee deems as most appropriate for this emergency summit.]

Venezuela vs. Guyana

The long-standing territorial dispute over the Essequibo region escalated into a crisis in 2023. The region is controlled by Guyana but is claimed by Venezuela. The dispute dates back many years and the current border was established by the Paris Arbitral Award in 1899. Venezuela renewed its claim in 1962 and the matter was referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2018.

Significant oil reserves were discovered offshore in the 2010s, which raised the stakes. In September 2023, Guyana granted drilling licenses in the disputed waters. In December 2023, Venezuela held a referendum of its people asking whether the region should become a state of Venezuela and its population become citizens, among other questions. Although the turnout was reported to be low, the Venezuelan government declared that the results showed overwhelming support for such action. Venezuela then took further steps to press its claim such as publishing maps showing the territory annexed to the country and announcing plans to develop the region.



A ship creates an artificial island by extracting offshore sand to create a coastal port for offshore oil production at the mouth of the Demerara River in Georgetown, Guyana, Tuesday, April 11, 2023. [Matias Delacroix/AP]

In response to Venezuela's actions, other countries supported Guyana's position including Brazil, the UK and US. Brazil sent troops to its border with the region and the US conducted military exercises with Guyana. The ICJ warned Venezuela not to take any direct action in the region as a trial is scheduled for early 2024 and the Mercosur regional group urged the parties to find a peaceful solution.

On December 14th, 2023, Ralph Gonsalves, the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, hosted a meeting of the leaders of Guyana and Venezuela, as an initiative of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which he currently heads. Officials from the Caribbean Community, Brazil, Colombia and the United Nations also attended. The leaders agreed to not use any force or escalate tension. A joint statement said that both countries will settle the dispute in accordance with international law, despite adding that Venezuela does not recognize the jurisdiction of the ICJ. Further talks in Brazil are expected by April 2024.

Covid - 19 Emergency Response



Take-home rations are given to parents of children in Colombia who are missing out on school meals due to COVID-19 school closures. [Miller Choles/WFP]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, but the disease had quickly spread worldwide, resulting in the COVID-19 pandemic. The symptoms of COVID-19 are variable but often include fever, cough, headache, fatigue, breathing difficulties,

loss of smell, and loss of taste that affects victims with preexisting health conditions or the elderly most fatally. While several COVID-19 vaccines have been approved and distributed in various countries, the damages of disproportionate bidding wars for personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccine roll outs favoring wealthier countries have torn through the Western Hemisphere. Globally, the number of new cases increased by 52% during the 28-day period of November 20th to December 17th 2023, and since then over 772 million confirmed cases and nearly seven million deaths have been reported.

Latin America was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2020, accounting for more than 40% of the world's COVID-19 deaths, with the total infection rate exceeding 6.5 million cases and a loss of over 350,000 lives to date. Despite measures to close public spaces and limit social gatherings with curfews and quarantines since March 2020, the number of confirmed deaths related to COVID-19 only started to drop by late August. However, as recurrent seasonal strains of COVID-19 point to the grim outcome of its permanence, even as South America was entering its final stages of easing lockdowns, Europe faced a second contagion wave and reintroduced - immediately or gradually - the initial measures of social distancing implemented back in March.

Besides the health risks, COVID-19 has had a significant socio-economic impact in a region that was already facing structural difficulties. Confinement measures strongly affected supply and demand in many sectors, particularly tourism, reducing household incomes and private consumption. Furthermore, as a result of the crisis, falling commodity prices have led to a sharp downturn in Latin American markets and currencies when the IMF had predicted 1.6% GDP growth for the region in 2020 prior to COVID-19. Since then, external and domestic conditions have worsened and, due to a combination of different factors, the region is expected to contract between 8.4% and 9.1%, provoking the worst recession it has experienced over the past century – far more acute than in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The magnitude of this effect, and the potential recovery in the coming years, will depend on governments' capacity to reactivate their economies while mitigating the health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adding to the complexity of this issue, lockdowns in Latin America halted the economy, yet it was not effective enough to reduce the spread of the virus and prevent the collapse of health systems. In addition to the formal/informal duality of the economy, the pandemic exacerbated

pre-existing high levels of inequality, which has placed additional pressure on governments already facing growing social discontent.

Similar to the rest of the Western Hemisphere, COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the United States and Canada, with 23 million jobs having been lost since the initial outbreak in 2020. Through profound tax restructuring and legal response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the United States and Canada have been able to weather the contagion much better than its Western Hemispheric counterparts, but socio-economic inequality threatens to exacerbate the impact that COVID-19 has had on poorer communities. As the world learns to exist with COVID-19, the Western Hemisphere has been disproportionately impacted by the damages of COVID-19 and delegates will need to consider what type of policy the SOA should adhere to for the upcoming decades.

[A note from the Dais: While the topic of this committee is “National Sovereignty and Humanitarian Aid” and responses to COVID-19 could be the entire focus of a committee in itself, delegates are encouraged to consider the cross-sectionality of other geo-political issues addressed in the other Case Studies and how COVID-19 response might be impacted, for better or for worse, as a consequence.]

SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS-SUMMARY

Concluding Remarks

As the world slowly recovers from the global freeze related to COVID-19 in 2020, the consequences of how the Western Hemisphere addresses issues of political erosion and humanitarian aid will be felt for generations to come. This committee is based on a hypothetical scenario in which an emergency special summit has been called for 2024 amidst a period of global turmoil with the topic of “National Sovereignty and Humanitarian Aid”. Delegates will need to navigate a number of contemporary issues affecting the Western Hemisphere - with a heavy emphasis on the case studies addressed in this background guide, ultimately passing resolutions that will focus on solving the problems at hand. Beyond this suggestion, delegates will have the liberty to dedicate as much or as little of their unique committee resolutions to whatever topics they see fit. The purpose of this background guide being topics that the Dais has provided to help steer debate.

Questions to Consider

1. Which of these contemporary issues would your country want to prioritize a response to, and what is the cross-sectionality of your country's philosophy with other issues in debate?
 2. What is the state of your country's relationship with the United States? With China? In face of increased economic and geopolitical competition in the region between the two superpowers, would your country be inclined to pick a side? If so, whose side?
 3. How big of a problem is organized crime and/or the drug trade in your country? What has been your policy in response to those problems? Have they changed throughout history? Could a change in policy yield different results?
 4. How strong is your country's democracy? Are your country's elections consistently deemed “free and fair?” Does your country have strong mechanisms in place to ensure smooth elections and/or government transparency? If so, how might you strengthen or
-

support them? If not, how might you establish such strong mechanisms? How might international aid play a role in democratic development?

5. How might your country react to an armed conflict between two Western Hemispheric states? Would you take a side? If so, whose side? How might you support your ally and/or help bring the conflict to a close, and how would you want to encode a stable and healthy means of conflict resolution that is unique to the Americas?
6. How did the COVID-19 Pandemic impact your country, its public health, and its economy? How are recovery efforts going at this moment? How might an international response help and/or hinder your recovery efforts?
7. How is instability affecting your country? The region as a whole? How might your country respond to crises that are born from instability, like immigration waves and armed conflicts? What might your country want to see in an international response to such problems?

[A note from the Dais: Whereas a normal General Assembly committee is relatively airtight on the specific topic at hand and the focus of debate, this specialized committee provides delegates the freedom to choose which topics from the case studies provided they believe are most important and that they want the committee to revolve around. As such, truly consider what your nation believes is vital to the functionality and health of the Americas, and consequently determine how all encompassing and broad your resolution paper should look like, or how in depth and comprehensive but narrow your resolution paper should be.]



INVITED MEMBER STATES

1. Argentina
 2. Belize
 3. Bolivia
 4. Brazil
 5. Canada
 6. Chile
 7. Colombia
 8. Costa Rica
 9. Dominican Republic
 10. Ecuador
 11. El Salvador
 12. Guatemala
 13. Guyana
 14. Haiti
 15. Honduras
 16. Jamaica
 17. Mexico
 18. Panama
 19. Paraguay
 20. Peru
 21. Suriname
 22. Trinidad and Tobago
 23. United States
 24. Uruguay
 25. Venezuela
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RULES OF PROCEDURE

Breaking the normal three year cycle, an emergency Summit has been convened in the year 2024 with the topic of “National Sovereignty and Humanitarian Aid.” As growing concerns of faltering democratic institutions and various other political developments threaten to shake the allegiances formed within the past century in the contiguous American continents, delegates will be representing a member state of the SOA working towards a resolution to these growing concerns.

Following tradition TritonMUN General Assembly Committee rules of procedure, delegates will be working towards passing overarching resolution papers, and they will have the collective freedom to determine what topic of focus they wish to address as the collective SOA (with a strong suggestion from the chairs to address some of the topics addressed in this background guide). While there will not be a portion of the debate specifically dedicated to setting an agenda [when other dual topic or multi topic committees would], delegates will be encouraged to make their stance known on what topics they believe are vital through their opening speeches and moderated caucus speeches. Following, there will be a **minimum** sponsor requirement of 3 sponsors per working resolution, and a **minimum** signatory requirement of 6 signatories per working resolution, with **no cap** on the quantity of resolutions that can be passed in committee. Additionally, the committee will have the traditional speakers list and opening speeches, but the dais is likely going to steer the committee towards moderated caucuses during the first committee session (DO NOT FRET! Delegates will have bountiful opportunities to have speaking opportunities even if the dais starts guiding committee towards moderated caucuses).

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

This committee will have a mixed technology policy, where delegates will be required to work on draft resolutions during unmoderated caucuses with their laptops/phones and they will be required to share these resolutions with the dais such that it can be displayed on the projector system for all voting and amending procedures. Besides working on resolutions during unmoderated caucuses, this committee will have a strict no technology policy for the rest of the committee.

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