

Kings Christian Collegiate

Model United Nations

Committee: Ensuring fair and safe elections.



United Nations Democracy Fund
(UNDEF)

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is our pleasure to greet you to the seventh annual King's MUN conference! Since the beginning of our journey in 2013, King's MUN has created the opportunity to debate and learn more about the world. With a range of committees branching from tutorial to advanced, delegates with all levels of experiences have an opportunity to grow their MUN abilities.

Model United Nations is an internationally recognized forum for debate that simulates the United Nations. Delegates from around the world are encouraged to debate and attempt to resolve pressing issues that affect the global community. Through MUN simulations, students are able to develop and refine their skills in research, public speaking, critical thinking, and writing, amongst other practical skills that can be extremely useful in future endeavours.

This year the world has completely changed, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected many ways of life. The new world of social distancing has led to significant changes in the world, including King'sMUN having its first ever online conference. At King's Christian Collegiate, we have come to recognize the significant impact that Model UN has had on our students and have dedicated ourselves to growing our own club as well as spreading our knowledge and passion to schools and communities. In light of the pandemic, our network has greatly expanded, increasingly becoming involved with conferences and summits around the world. Through developing our awareness regarding international and geo-political relations, we have been able to deepen our insight into some of the world's most compelling issues and encourage conducive and beneficial discussions around these topics.

Since the beginning of our Model UN journey, we as Secretary Generals have been able to strengthen our academics, improve our interpersonal skills, and develop a more complete worldview and appreciation for international cultures and populations. We are so proud of how inclusive, supportive and dedicated our group has become and cannot wait to see King'sMUN continue to grow exponentially in the upcoming years. Even with the extremely different circumstances we are currently in, we strongly believe this conference will be an amazing experience, and hope that you can walk away with a greater knowledge of the world and stronger skill sets.

We are once again extremely excited to welcome each and everyone one of you at the seventh annual King'sMUN conference. We look forward to seeing you on Friday February 26th and Saturday, February 27th, 2021.

Sincerely,
Ivana Gotovac and Zeeshan Pervaiz

Background Information

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) supports projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote the rule of law and human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. Created by the UN Secretary-General in 2005, it is the only UN entity that has the word “democracy” in its name; the only UN body with the primary purpose of supporting democracy through empowering civil society; and one of the youngest entities in the UN system.

Since 2007, UNDEF has funded some 600 projects in over 100 countries in Africa, the Arab region, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America, bringing total disbursement to over 160 million dollars. The large majority of funds go to local civil society groups. In this way, UNDEF plays a new and unique role, working through civil society to complement the UN's more traditional work with governments to strengthen democratic governance around the world. UNDEF targets the demand side of democracy, rather than the supply side. It depends entirely on voluntary contributions and has been supported by over 40 governments so far. Donors include a range of non-traditional donors in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Out of an average of 2000-3000 incoming project proposals per year, only about two per cent are selected for funding. UNDEF projects are in seven main areas, including a sizeable share in rule of law, from access to justice to civil society participation in constitution-making:

1. Rule of law and human rights
2. Community Activism
3. Women's Empowerment
4. Youth Engagement
5. Media and Freedom of Information
6. Strengthening Civil Society Capacity for Interaction with Government

7. Tools for Knowledge

Elections are a vital part of democratic process, including political transitions, implementation of peace agreements and consolidation of democracy. The most fundamental principle defining credible elections is that they must reflect the free expression of people. To achieve this election must be transparent, inclusive and accountable, and there must be fair opportunities in the elections. The UN provides electoral assistance to approximately 60 countries each year. The assistance includes advisory services, logistics, training, civic education, computer applications and short-term observation. There are still many countries throughout the world that are still not having fair and safe elections, and until they do, the population will never be able to grow and prosper.

What needs resolution?

1. Guaranteeing electoral integrity and trust
2. Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions
3. Ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory decision-making at all levels
4. Realizing the sustainable development goal 16 of “Peace, justice and strong institutions.”

The UNDEF works to promote and advance the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Currently, for example, UNDEF finances projects to mobilize the youth for elections in Côte d'Ivoire, to engage men in promoting gender equality in Palestine, and to build a platform for citizen advocacy in elections in Brazil. Most of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations in countries in both the transition and consolidation phases of democratization. The Fund depends entirely on voluntary contributions from Member States. So far, it has been supported by over 40 Governments. The biggest donors are the United States and India.

Fair and Safe elections are connected to SDG #16 and the following targets apply:
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance **16.9** By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration. **16.10** Ensure

public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. **16.a** Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime. **16.b** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Further questions for delegates to consider.

- How do we further develop inclusive political processes?
- How do we build responsive and accountable institutions to deliver equitable public services?
- How do we reduce inequality between women and men in positions of power and decision-making? Progress has been too slow in increasing numbers of women in representation. In 2018, just 24 per cent of national parliamentarians were women, a slow increase from 14 per cent in 2000.
- How do we give individuals a legal right to access information?
- How do we guarantee capacity development and electoral education?
- How did fair and safe elections in the United States erode so dramatically in the last 12 months?

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