

# SPECPOL



SAMUN

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*The Special Political and Decolonization Committee*

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## **Letters From The Presidents:**

### **President Estrada**

Welcome to SAMUN XI, it is a pleasure to have you here. My name is Paula Estrada and I will be your president of SPECPOL in this model. I am an 11th grader in the CBSM. I had the blessing of attending various international models since I was 13 years old; My first international experience was MOAS, a great model I attended twice and will repeat with any problem. My second experience was the YMUN model, and last but not least, HMUN, the model of Harvard University. In this model, I was a delegate of SPECPOL and that is part of the reason I decided to preside on this committee besides the passion I feel for it. Like any president, I have great expectations for this committee and I am looking forward to delegates with great debate skills, knowledge about both topics, and the approach to diplomatic solutions.

### **President Porto**

Welcome to SAMUN XI, it is a pleasure to have you here. My name is Francisco Porto and I will be your president of SPECPOL in this model. I am an 11th grader in the CBSM. Since I was 14 years old I attended and observed international models such as HMUN and participated in MITMUNC, a model from which I get a lot of ideas and I get interested to bring them among the model. I have a passion for this model, and this is one of the reasons I have decided to preside in this model as a SPECPOL president. I think is a committee in which we can discuss different concerns different from any model, and I will be looking to hear creative ideas and solutions to our committee, and at the end of it, achieve a great experience.



## **Introduction to SPECPOL:**

Welcome to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, or SPECPOL.

SPECPOL is one of six main committees of the UN General Assembly. Our committee was originally created to address sensitive political issues and decolonization-related matters in the second half of the twentieth century. However, times have changed, and so has SPECPOL.

“This community considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, the effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Israeli Practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. In addition to these annual items, the Committee also considers the items on Assistance in mine action, and University for peace biennially and triennially respectively, both of which will be before it at the 76th session of the General Assembly.”( UN, 2022)

As previously mentioned this committee has an essential role in the united nations; it is the one in charge of looking at every problem presented that involves: decolonization-related topics, the effects of atomic radiation, special political missions, refugees, settlement activities affecting citizens, assistance in mine action, and the international peaceful uses of outer space. This committee is looking forward to solving these problems diplomatically and respectfully between nations.



## **Topic A: Safe Atomic Energy Production**

### *Key Concepts*

#### **Atomic Energy Commission:**

The Atomic Energy Commission is a Federal agency that was created in 1946 to manage the development, use, and control of atomic (nuclear) energy for military and civilian applications.

#### **Atomic Energy:**

The energy is released through a nuclear reaction.

#### **International Atomic Energy Agency:**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the international center for nuclear cooperation, safeguards, and peaceful nuclear technology.

The IAEA's mission is to promote safe, secure, and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology around the world. It oversees the use of radioactive materials to make sure they're used in a safe, secure manner, and that they're not used to develop nuclear weapons or other dangerous devices.

#### **Reactor:**

The control of nuclear chain reactions in a power plant by producing heat through a process called Nuclear Fission. The heat is used to produce electricity.



## **Territory:**

A limited amount of space is that is owned, controlled, and governed by man.

## **Power Plant:**

A building or power station that produces power and electricity.

## **Greenhouse Gases:**

In the atmosphere, there are a bunch of gases that have an impact on how much energy the earth retains. We call these gases "greenhouse gases" because they cause something called the greenhouse effect, where the sun's energy gets trapped in the atmosphere instead of being reflected away from the earth. The most well-known greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, and nitrous oxide.

While all three of those gases occur naturally in low concentrations in our atmosphere, their proportions have increased a lot since around 1900 due to manmade sources like burning fossil fuels and deforestation.

## **Greenhouse Effect:**

Is warming coming from our earth, trapping the heat through the increase of carbon dioxide and different gases in our atmosphere.



## **Introduction**

We all remember the horror of the Second World War—particularly, the nuclear blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These devastating acts brought home to us the need to address the nuclear issue. In response, by its first resolution, the General Assembly established the UN Atomic Energy Commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy. And a landmark address by United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953, “Atoms for Peace”, led to the establishment in 1957 of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The UN has been working on issues relating to disarmament and non-proliferation for more than six decades. The Committee on Disarmament was established in 1962 by a resolution of the General Assembly, which also called for a conference on disarmament under UN auspices that would be held in Geneva in 1963. The Geneva Conference resulted in two arms control treaties: one banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater; and another prohibiting nuclear weapons from being placed on or near the seabed outside national territory.

In recent years, efforts have focused on multilateral negotiations for a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear testing worldwide and for a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.



## **Current Situation:**

When the world wants to generate electricity, renewable sources of energy are a popular choice. Solar and wind energy are particularly trendy, while nuclear power has fallen out of favor in recent years.

It's no wonder people want to move away from nuclear power generation—it's not exactly associated with the friendliest images. It's hard to shake off Chernobyl and Fukushima, two of the most devastating events in human history (so far).

But what if we could put those images behind us?

Nuclear energy is one of the most reliable sources of electricity generation ever discovered by humans. It doesn't require sunlight or wind, and it produces more energy than nearly any other option.

Nuclear energy can be used to produce heat for industrial processes and residential heating (France) as well as electricity. And unlike its fickle counterparts, nuclear energy is subjected to hostile attitudes adopted by several governments in the world that restrict the building or continual operation of power plants. Fear of Chernobyl and Fukushima-type catastrophes exacerbate the unpopularity of going nuclear. The US, currently the world's largest producer, relies on nuclear energy for 20% of its overall electricity generation.



## **Chernobyl:**

On April 26, 1986, reactor number four at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine exploded. The explosion was caused by a flawed design of the reactor, which was operated by inadequately trained personnel.

During the first four years after the Chernobyl accident, the Soviet authorities decided to largely deal with the consequences of the explosion at a national level. Without Soviet support, the United Nations and its partners sought ways to provide emergency support, which included assessing the nuclear safety and environmental conditions of the contaminated area, and diagnosing the various medical conditions that resulted from the accident.

After this international tragedy, international cooperation in nuclear safety was significantly intensified: four international safety conventions, two Codes of Conduct, fundamental safety principles, and a body of globally recognized IAEA Safety Standards were developed and adopted.



## **Fukushima:**

A major earthquake in Japan caused a nuclear accident. This was the worst accident in history. Radiation was released and lots of people were evacuated. The International Atomic Energy Agency responded immediately using a team of experts. They gathered and analyzed data, and kept the public informed.

The Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 was the worst natural disaster to strike Japan in hundreds of years. At the same time, it also triggered a man-made disaster—a major meltdown at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant.

The plant had been built to withstand earthquakes, but not one this powerful. The magnitude 9 quake and accompanying tsunami knocked out power and cooling systems, triggering a meltdown in three of the six reactors. A massive amount of radioactive material was released. For days the situation seemed to get worse and worse, with explosions and fires at the damaged reactors, and radiation leaking into the surrounding area. Tens of thousands of people had to evacuate their homes.

Fukushima has brought home just how dangerous nuclear power can be when things go wrong. As part of its response, the IAEA hosted a Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011, which paved the way for the unanimous endorsement of an Action Plan on Nuclear Safety by all IAEA member states in September 2011, calling for strengthening nuclear safety worldwide to prevent future accidents from happening or from causing serious consequences if they do occur.



The IAEA's Incident and Emergency Center were immediately activated in full response mode. Three months later, the IAEA hosted a conference on nuclear safety to make sure that similar accidents would never happen again.

Nuclear energy has been a controversial topic for decades.

It's no wonder: the energy released in a split second by a single atom can be equivalent to that released when a ton of coal is burned.

On the other hand, nuclear power plants don't produce greenhouse gases as fossil-fuel-burning plants do. This makes them preferable from an environmental standpoint.

However, nuclear energy isn't all good news. The Fukushima Nuclear Disaster is the latest testament to that. Without cooling, the components of the core of the reactors can literally melt from all the energy released by nuclear reactions. In this case, they did. Radioactive material was subsequently released along with several chemical explosions, which were initiated by the intense heat released by nuclear reactions.

Why is radioactive material dangerous? Electromagnetic radiation emitted as a result of nuclear fission, known as gamma rays, has 100,000 times more energy than visible light. Radioactive material can also emit highly energetic electrons (beta particles) and small clusters of protons and neutrons (alpha particles). This concentrated energy causes the molecules in our body to react in ways that can be extremely damaging, sometimes giving rise to cancer.



## **Guided Questions**

- How your country will try to solve the issue?
- How did the problem start?
- Which are the countries willing to change to this type of energy?
- What countries are acting toward the solution to this problem?
- What countries are affected by this problem?

## **QARMAs**

- Is your delegation affected by the issue?
- Is your delegation willing to solve the issue?
- Has your country already denounced their unconformity regardless of this topic?
- Is your delegation using this type of energy?
- What has your country done to solve or regulate the issue?
- What laws exist for the prevention of this situation?



## **Topic B: Appropriation of indigenous cultures**

### *Key Concepts*

#### **Appropriation:**

An act or instance of appropriating something

#### **Cultural Appropriation:**

Cultural appropriation takes place when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way. To fully understand its consequences, though, we need to make sure we have a working definition of culture itself. (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia)

#### **Colonization:**

the establishing of a colony subjugation of a people or area especially as an extension of state power. (Davis-Marks, 2013).

#### **Spirituality:**

sensitivity or attachment to religious values.

#### **Stereotypes:**

A standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.



**Mother Countries:**

The country from which the people of a colony or former colony derive their origin. or a country that is the origin of something.

**Restitution:**

an act of restoring or a condition of being restored: such as  
a: a restoration of something to its rightful owner.

**Identity:**

the distinguishing character or personality of an individual or group.

**Colonizers:**

an individual or entity that establishes a colony or colonies:  
such as  
a: a nation or state that takes control of a people or area as an extension of state power.

**Indigenous Communities:**

communities made up of indigenous people.



## **Introduction**

As descendants of Indigenous people, we have spent centuries being colonized by non-Indigenous people and we have felt the effects of that trauma in our communities. The most recent attempt at colonization is cultural appropriation through the cannabis industry. This is a violation of Indigenous rights and it's time for this to change. "Indigenous peoples are custodians of some of the most biologically diverse territories in the world. They are also responsible for a great deal of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity, and their traditional knowledge has been and continues to be an invaluable resource that benefits all of mankind.

Yet, indigenous peoples continue to suffer discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty, and conflict. Some are being dispossessed of their traditional lands as their livelihoods are being undermined. Meanwhile, their belief systems, cultures, languages, and ways of life continue to be threatened, sometimes even by extinction.

Increasingly, governments are recognizing these threats and matching such recognition with action. From land claims settlements and constitutional amendments to important symbolic actions such as apologies for past treatment of indigenous peoples, governments around the world are making important steps towards addressing indigenous peoples' concerns.

In responding to the challenges they continue to face, indigenous peoples have engaged the international community, calling for a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and a permanent forum at the United Nations that meets regularly to discuss indigenous peoples' issues and make recommendations to the UN system and beyond.



The United Nations has committed its unwavering support to a future where all indigenous peoples will enjoy peace, human rights, and well-being, and has responded to indigenous peoples' demands, welcoming them as partners. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted in September 2007, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues meets annually at UN Headquarters, bringing together indigenous peoples, Member States, NGOs, UN agencies, and other intergovernmental organizations.

Much work remains to be done in advancing the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. One condition for facilitating the implementation of the Declaration is information about the state of the world's indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum recognized this in its first session when it recommended that the United Nations system produce a publication "on the state of the world's indigenous peoples, containing data on indigenous peoples and discussing issues relating to indigenous peoples in the thematic areas within the Forum's mandate."<sup>1</sup> (United Nations New York, 2009)

Cultural appropriation is an asymmetric relationship between cultures and societies, where the dominant culture/society deals with and justifies its relations with minorities, in this case, the Indigenous People, to use their knowledge, ways of life, art, their relationships with plants and animals, spirituality, worldviews and other aspects of Indigenous identity for capitalist consumption. In the 21st century, Indigenous People are not free from being constantly "discovered" by some businesspeople. In this regard, various companies sell products whose packaging has images that portray stereotypes about Native peoples; some companies sell products made from materials such as feathers or bones from endangered species such as eagles or whales without consultation or permission from Indigenous peoples or the indigenous nation to which these animals belong.



Significant examples include brands such as: "Indian Spirit", "Indian Summer", "Native American", "Cowboy Kush", and "Savage Sour Kush" among many others.

“Macron’s pledge and Killmonger’s heist had context. The preceding decade had brought growing demands for the restitution of artifacts taken from Africa by European colonists during the 19th century. If the case for the restitution of human remains to indigenous communities had been, by and large, acceded, the new frontier was works of art. The UN kickstarted the conversation in 2007 with article 11 of its declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, which urged states to restore “cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property” taken from indigenous people without their “free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions, and customs”. With that aim in mind, the Benin Dialogue Group was established the same year as part of an effort to get European museum curators talking to key representatives in Nigeria.” (Hunt, T. 2019, 24 julio).

The exhibition of ancient art, artifacts, clothing, and sculptures. affects not only the original country but mostly the indigenous communities that still to this day or the memory of the indigenous communities that unfortunately aren't with us anymore. It is hard to accept that the colonizador countries, then of all the damage they made to these communities want to stay with their treasures being shown as a trophy.

The original countries such as Colombia which gifted a huge indigenous treasure to Spain have also no right to make that decision. The treasure is the property of those communities, not of the government.



## **Current Situation**

As most people think this problem is not over. It is not a problem of colonization only, it is a problem of the way people think and act towards this situation. a huge list of museums, clothing brands, hair brands, famous people, festivals, costumes, cuisine, etc. people either used inappropriately or try to take advantage of the “style” and try to make it personal.

some examples of cultural appropriation are: “The sale of ceremonial objects and craftwork, such as dream catchers, by non-Indigenous people; the use of traditional medicines and health practices by those outside the community; and the use of Indigenous designs or stereotypical images in fashion, advertising, literature, and film” The Canadian encyclopedia. (2018, 18 April)

In fashion houses and luxury brands, we can observe a lot of cultural appropriation. “In recent years, fashion houses and brands have been increasingly criticized for using symbols, prints, and garments from other cultures. Thus the recent examples of Isabel Marant and Louis Vuitton come to mind. Mexico accused fashion designer Isabel Marant in 2020 of commercially exploiting several traditional Mexican indigenous designs in a collection. The designer was already accused of the same in 2015. Not much later, Marant apologized for the cultural appropriation of the patterns. The designer admitted that the Purepecha patterns have indeed been used as inspiration and that in the future she will 'honor the sources of inspiration used'.



Louis Vuitton withdrew a scarf inspired by the Palestinian keffiyeh from the website in June 2021 after criticism on social media. The keffiyeh is seen as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism. The traditional black and white pattern of the Keffiyeh was changed to blue and the brand incorporated its monogram into the scarf. Price tag? \$705. Also, the timing of the item was very unfortunate, as several bombings had taken place in Palestine at the time.” Terra, C. (2021, 22 October)

Not only in fashion but in art we find the same problem. famous artists such as Pablo Picasso and Edward said between a bunch of other artists that make the same mistakes. “Picasso, African art and appropriation

Let’s return to Picasso and consider his masterpiece ‘Les Demoiselles D’Avignon’, which is famed for its incorporation of African masks. Picasso had seen African masks in several museums in Paris and was intrigued by their formal and spiritual qualities. What complicates this matter is that it was the context of colonial exploitation that brought African art into the domain of French culture, and made Picasso’s interaction with these masks possible. This fact raises the question: should we discuss this painting within the framework of cultural appropriation?

This painting is housed in New York’s MOMA, and describing the work on their website the museum writes that Picasso was “inspired by Iberian sculpture and African masks”. The Metropolitan Museum in New York, in their discussion of the picture, talks about how Picasso ‘blended’ African art into the image, and “recognized the spiritual aspect of the composition”. There is no mention of the negative term ‘cultural appropriation here.’

“Edward Said, ‘Orientalism’.

How do cultural appropriation and art history intersect? In this post-colonial classic, Edward Said discusses Orientalism, defined as the West’s patronizing representations of and attitudes towards “The East” (Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East) through specific artworks, literature, and history. It’s beautifully argued, persuasive and conclusive.” Millington, R. (2020, 9 January)



## **Guided Questions**

- What exhibition places are involved in this problem?
- Since when did this problem start?
- What countries are in favor of having ancient indigenous belongings in their exhibition places or their countries?
- What countries are acting toward the solution to this problem?
- What countries are affected by this problem?
- What indigenous communities were harmed by this problem?

## **QARMAs**

- Is your delegation affected by this problem?
- Is your delegation in favor or against the indigenous belongings being in the mother countries?
- Is your delegation willing to solve this problem?
- has your country already denounced their unconformity regardless of this topic?
- Is your delegation appropriating indigenous cultures?
- What has your country done to solve this problem?
- What laws exist for the prevention of this situation?



## **Useful Links**

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40331416>

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/jun/29/should-museums-return-their-colonial-artefacts>

<https://hyperallergic.com/217807/in-mainstream-museums-confronting-colonialism-while-curating-native-american-art/>

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000183092>

[https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf)



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