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Perri Sterman
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization: Welcome Paper
YUNMUN XXXVII

Dear Delegates of UNESCO,

Welcome to YUNMUN XXXVII! My name is Perri Sterman and I am so excited to be the chair of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization this year.

Here's a quick autobiography: I'm currently in my third (and final🙁) year at Stern College majoring in biology with a plan to become a physician's assistant. I grew up in New Rochelle, NY, and I went to Central (YUHSG) for high school before spending the most incredible year in Jerusalem at MMY. This will be my 6th year participating in YUNMUN (and also the 6th committee I've been a part of!). I love music; whether it's a good kumzitz or a jam sesh, and I hope that we can squeeze at least one into the conference!

Now to give you some background: UNESCO was founded on November 16, 1945, and began working on November 4, 1946. It was created in the aftermath of World War II with the goal of securing durable global peace. The founders of UNESCO believed that treaties alone could not sustain peace; they claimed "[peace] must be established on the basis of humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity" (UNESCO). Today, UNESCO works as the intellectual agency of the UN, focusing on international cooperation in education, science, culture, and communication to foster global peace and collaboration.

In UNESCO this year we will be focusing on two pressing issues. The first issue we will be tackling is the issue of Repatriation of Global Artifacts. Throughout history, cultural artifacts such as sculptures, religious artifacts, manuscripts, and countless others have been removed from their countries of origin and are now in museums and collections around the world, often nowhere near where they came from. Some objects were obtained through trade or excavations, while others were taken during periods of colonial rule, occupation, or armed conflict. There have been an increasing number of calls for the governments in possession of these artifacts to return, or repatriate, them to their countries of origin.

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UNESCO must work together to consider how the international community can protect cultural heritage while still accounting for competing claims of ownership, circumstances in which artifacts were obtained, national sovereignty, and overall access to these objects of significance for humanity at large.

The second issue we will be focusing on is Education in Emergencies, continuity for refugees and displaced populations. Around the world, millions of children have had to halt their education due to armed conflict, natural disasters, and other humanitarian crises. Their families are forced to flee their homes, leaving them without access to their schools and teachers. Displaced children often face language barriers, financial difficulties, and difficulties enrolling in schools in their host countries. This can ultimately lead to these children missing years of their education, which is very difficult for them to make up. For host countries, ensuring continuity for refugees and displaced populations can be difficult, and many different issues arise regarding funding, curriculum, and the extent of responsibility of the host country. UNESCO must work decisively to make a plan to ensure continuity of education for refugees and displaced populations while still considering the resources, priorities, and sovereignty of individual nations.

Your task is to research and understand your country's position on these key issues and work collaboratively with your fellow delegates to engage in meaningful discussions and resolutions. Please make sure to stick to your country's views and to think creatively, but realistically. Please, please, please do not plagiarize!!! All papers will be checked for proper citations, originality, and AI usage through Turnitin, so let's avoid that awkward conversation. You and AI do not have the same voice, so don't think you can slip it in and I won't notice. I will. YUNMUN follows the YU Level 1 AI policy: "Polish, with disclosure. You may use AI to check and correct the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and mechanics of text you have already written. AI may not generate, rewrite, or restructure your content." Please find the full AI policy guidelines in the Delegate Handbook.

Whether you are a new or returning delegate, please be sure to either read or brush up on your procedure. If you have any questions or just want to chat, my email is psterman@mail.yu.edu. I can't wait to have the most meaningful, fun, and just overall fantastic time with you all!!

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P.S. If you have made it this far, please send me an email with two truths and a lie about you for the conference. If you stump me you get extra points.

Sincerely,

Perri Sterman

Chair, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

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