



General Assembly

Thirteenth Session

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Third Committee – Social, Humanitarian & Cultural

This committee wants to improve the world economy to help the poor. They discuss how national, regional and international economies affect the world. They also focus on countries that have special needs. Some examples are the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) or the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

This group believes people in poverty do not have to be poor forever. For this reason, they focus on how developing nations can improve their economies. They also find ways to directly help people in poverty. They might talk about how to help countries get access to money. Or, they might find ways that technology can help countries develop faster.

This committee works closely with the UN Economic and Social Council. Some of the resolutions they have passed deal with sustainable development, harmony with nature, and migration.

Agenda Item 70.A – Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Guiding Questions

Racism and intolerance are huge problems in our world. They stop people from enjoying their human rights. We need to do more to protect people and get rid of discrimination in our world. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making the following goals a reality.

- How can countries work together to encourage other states to treat all people fairly and equally?
- How can countries work together to bring closure and healing for many of the racist acts done by countries in the past?
- How can more people learn about their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

Background

In the 19th century, many “scientists” divided humans into different groups because of their skin color or other physical traits. They believed that some groups were better than other groups. This is not true. In fact, there is less than a 0.1% difference between humans around the world. Although different groups of humans might have different skin color, or hair, or other physical attributes, in the end our DNA is the same. We are all one people.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination states that “any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere”. Although we know that all people are the same there still continues to be discrimination in our world.

Background

Modern day ideas about race and racism began with the European exploration of the world in the 15th century. When Europeans met new groups they often colonized or conquered the areas. To justify their actions, they came up with the idea that the people they were hurting were less than human. Sometimes, they used religion to justify their actions. They said that they needed to teach people all over the world about Christianity. They made it seem like what they were doing was a good thing. It was not good. Colonization and the idea that one group was better than another caused impacts which are still being felt today.

The history of slavery is connected to modern racism. Slavery is when one group of people with power decides they are not going to treat other humans as people. They treat other people as objects. Slavery has existed for most of human history. Slavery is now banned in every country in the world. But, it stills exists today! Today, it is often called “human trafficking”. In December 2007 the UN passed a resolution making 25 March International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

From the 16th Century to the 19th Century large numbers of people were forced from many places in Africa and sent to other parts of the world to be slaves. 12 million people were taken from Africa to the Americas and 14% of them died on the boats. Most of the slaves ended up in Brazil and the Caribbean. Imagine how this would affect the people involved? Millions of people were taken away from their homes and families and told that they were less than human. In Africa, the population went down. The demand for slaves caused war because groups fought each other to capture people to sell.

When slavery ended in many countries, people thought everybody could now be equal. But, 400 years of treating one group differently does not change things overnight. There is still discrimination against black people around the world. A lot discrimination against black people comes out of stereotypes and prejudices created during slavery times. We know black people are not treated the same as other people because there are gaps in wealth, health and education. This means the average black person in the United States has less money, less education and is less healthy than the average white person. These gaps need to be fixed. In 2013, the UN declared 2015-2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Black people are not the only people whom racism affects. In the 1930s a group in Germany called the Nazis came to power. Over the next 15 years Nazi Germany murdered 6 million Jewish people. They did not think of them as human beings. The Nazis blamed every problem on Jewish people. This event is called the Holocaust. It was one of the worst things that has ever happened in our world.

Today, some people call themselves Neo-Nazis. They do not like people of other races. They organize groups to promote hate and attack minority groups. In the US there was a rally in Charlottesville called “Unite the Right” in August 2017. Many Neo-Nazis and hate groups came to the rally. They shouted Nazi slogans and waved Nazi flags. The event ended with fighting in the streets and one person died when a Nazi sympathizer drove his car into a group of people.

Europe is seeing a rise in Neo-Nazism as well. There are many refugees and migrants coming to Europe and Neo-Nazis target them. In 2012, Germany had 6000 Neo-Nazis. In 2016, there were 1835 hate crimes reported to police in France.

Recent Developments

Racism is the belief that one ethnic group of humans is better than another group. There can be **overt racism**. This means that humans kill or control the lives of others because they think that they are better. This type of racism does not happen much anymore because most people agree it is wrong. There is also **covert racism**. This is racism that is hidden or part of the culture of a society. People are treated badly because they belong to an ethnic group. People might not even know they are being racist! But, the end result is the same. People are abusing the rights of humans. Therefore, it is important to eliminate even covert racism.

Racism, xenophobia and intolerance is a very complicated issue. It is a topic many people do not like to discuss because they are afraid they are going to say something wrong. Some people think racism is over. We know this is not true because some people are still treated differently because of their skin color, religion, or some other part of them.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

This is the document that outlines the rights all people around the world should have. It was adopted by the UN in 1948. At the time, only 58 countries were part of the UN. At the vote, no country voted against the Declaration. Every year, on 10 December, is the Human Rights Day which celebrates the adoption of this document.

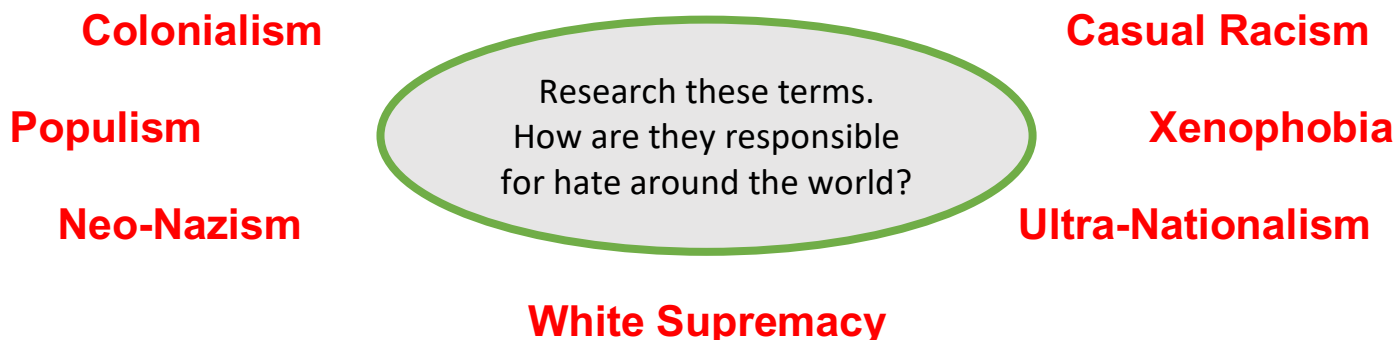
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

This convention came into force in January of 1969. It defines racial discrimination and asks countries to stop hate speech. It also asks countries to make it a crime to be part of a racist organization. The idea of tolerance between different groups is suggested in this document. There are now 179 members of this convention.

Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

In 2001 was the World Conference against Racism. At this conference one of the controversial issues was compensation for slavery and colonialism. There was a lot of disagreement during the conference because some countries wanted to accuse Israel of racism in the Declaration. The US and Israel walked out of this conference and nobody was really happy with the final Declaration. Every few years states meet again to discuss it but nothing really happens.

Discrimination: Where Does Hate Come From?



Research Questions

1. Research the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. How is this document important to stopping racism?
2. Why might some countries want to treat a group of people in their country as less than human?
3. How can human societies find closure for the horrible things that have been done in the past?
4. Does your country have a history of racism or discrimination? Does it treat people fairly today? In the past?
5. Why are migrants, refugees and immigrants becoming targets for hate groups? How can these groups be protected?
6. How can global culture be changed so that people do not treat others differently because of their ethnicity or race?
7. What are some groups around the world that are treated differently because they are not the people in power?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. Who is working on it? NGOs, not for profits, other groups or individuals?
10. Knowing about this problem, how does it impact your world view?
11. How could you make an impact on this issue through your life choices?

Resources

Source / Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
UNESCO	http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/	Information from the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization about the fight against racism.
History	https://www.history.com/tags/racism	A list of articles from History.com about racism throughout history.
Southern Poverty Law Center	https://www.splcenter.org/	An organization that lists and reports on hate groups in the USA.
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights	http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/	The full document that explains all the rights humans are entitled to.
The Telegraph	https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1416706/DNA-survey-finds-all-humans-are-99.9pc-the-same.html	News article that explains that all humans are basically the same and there are no measurable difference between 'races' of people.
Global Issues	http://www.globalissues.org/article/165/racism	A good overview of racism and what is happening around the world.
Remember Slavery	http://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/	A UN site that has information about the history of slavery around the world.
Human Rights Watch	https://www.hrw.org/	An NGO that looks at the human rights records of countries around the world.
Hate Crime Reporting	http://hatecrime.osce.org/	A database of hate crime around the world that countries voluntarily provide information to.