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Hello Delegates,

My name is Montserrat Moreno, and I am excited to be your chair for the General Assembly in CancunMUN 2024. I am 17 years old and a senior at the International American School of Cancun. During my free time, I love to hang out with my friends and family although I also enjoy my time alone. After graduating from high school in 2025, I would like to study architecture.

I've been to several Model UN, this one being my 4th MUN Conference. The first time I participated in CancunMUN, I was a delegate at UNICEF in the 10th grade, and in GC MUN (New York City) as a delegate in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In the 11th grade, I was also a delegate at CancunMUN in ECOSOC, and now I am the Chair of the General Assembly. I've debated, met new people, and had a lot of fun during these conferences.

I expect delegates to be responsible, well prepared and more importantly, have a lot of fun during the conference. I am looking forward to working with you and making sure this MUN is unmemorable. Background guides are not the only source of information, so make sure you use valuable sources for your position papers.

If there are any questions, feel free to contact me through my email!
montserrat.moreno@ciac.edu.mx Good Luck!

Montserrat Moreno, Chair
General Assembly

Dear Delegates,

My name is Kristina Gallasch, and I'm especially excited to be your co-chair for the General Assembly in CancunMUN 2024. I'm 18 years old and I'm a senior at the International American School of Cancun. In my free time, I like to hang out with my friends and enjoy listening to music and dancing. After graduating from high school in 2025, I would like to study performing arts.

This will be my second year participating in MUN and my first time being a co-chair. Last year I was a delegate in the General Assembly. The debates were super interesting, and that's why I went for this committee. I'm excited about the topics this year, and I hope you find them just as fascinating.

I expect that this year I can work with responsible and professionally-behaved delegates. In discussions, I value someone who embraces the commitment to defend their country, even when its beliefs differ from their own. I seek individuals who actively engage in the conference, encouraging an atmosphere of open conversation and positive engagement. I am looking forward to working with you and to seeing you at this year's conference. Keep in mind that the background guide is there to guide and give delegates general context on the topics. I encourage and expect you to arrive at the conference well prepared, informed, and confident on your topic.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me through this email kristina.gallasch@ciac.edu.mx My best wishes to you, delegates!

Kristina Gallasch, Co-Chair
General Assembly



COMMITTEE MISSION

The General Assembly, as the main organ of the United Nations, has the function of discussing any global issue that concerns the members of each country. This committee discusses all those recommendations that can provide peace and security in the world. It chooses the Secretary-General and elects non-permanent members of the Security Council, as well approving the UN budget. The General Assembly was established in 1945 and consists of 193 members of the United Nations. Its chair, Dennis Francis, has been chair of the 78th session of the General Assembly since June 1st, 2023. Here, we will pass resolutions and seek new global strategies that benefit each country to make a more peaceful world.



Topic A: The Ethics of Genetic Modification in Living Organisms


Introduction

Genetically modified (GM) foods contain at least one ingredient coming from a plant with an altered genetic composition. Genetic modification, also known as genetic engineering (GE), involves altering the DNA of a living organism, typically through techniques like gene editing, to introduce new traits or characteristics. This process can result in organisms having improved qualities such as increased resistance to pests and diseases or an elevated nutritional value, and a more appealing size and appearance for humans to consume. Sometimes it can also be beneficial as an alternative to previous medicine. Over time researchers and scientists have discovered or developed several powerful tools to facilitate this complex process; examples are restriction enzymes, DNA ligase, plasmids, CRISPR-Cas9, and Gene Guns.

This topic is also surrounded by many ethical concerns, including the potential harm to human health, possible damage to the environment, negative impact on traditional farming practices, excessive corporate dominance, and the 'unnaturalness' of the technology. There are also questions about fairness and justice regarding who gets access to genetic modification technology and how the benefits and risks are shared among different groups and future generations. Moreover, discussions about genetic modification extend beyond practical uses to bigger questions about humanity's role in nature and how much we should interfere with the natural world. Finding the right balance between innovation and responsibility, freedom and caution, and progress and ethical reflection is a major challenge that requires careful thought and input from a wide range of perspectives.

History

In the past, people used methods like selective breeding to improve crops. While these weren't labeled as GMOs, they're the predecessors of modern genetic modification. In 1866, Gregor Mendel's pea plant experiments laid the groundwork for today's understanding of inheritance and hereditary laws. The next step was made when in 1922 the first hybrid corn was produced and sold commercially. A big breakthrough in GMO technology was in 1973 when Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen worked together to engineer the first successful genetically engineered (GE) organism. The two scientists



developed a method to very specifically cut out a gene from one organism and paste it into another. This new technology raised concerns about its impact, leading to a pause in GE projects. At the Asilomar Conference in 1975, experts agreed to allow the projects to continue with safety guidelines for each experiment. In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court said that General Electric scientists could own bacteria they changed to clean up oil spills. This encouraged big companies to make GMOs for profit. Two years later, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first medication made by genetically modified bacteria, which is insulin for diabetes called Humulin. The first field experiments of food crops that had been genetically modified using recombinant DNA technology, mixing genetic material from different sources to create new combinations, began in 1987. After five years of extensive health and environmental testing, Calgene's Flavr Savr tomato became the first food crop to be approved for commercial production by the FDA. Then in 1995, the first pesticide-producing crop was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency after several tests and a year later Bt corn was approved and now the majority of corn in the U.S. has the Bt toxin gene.

Nowadays it is very likely that we are eating foods that are made with ingredients that come from GMO crops. In the US soybeans, corn, sugar beets, canola, and cotton which are genetically modified make up about 90 percent of the crop grown and also most farm animals eat GMO crops. The leading producers of genetically modified crops include the USA, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada. Spain leads GM cultivation in Europe, joined by Portugal, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia. In Africa, South Africa, Burkina Faso, and Sudan focus on GM cotton. India and China are major producers in Asia, with Pakistan, the Philippines, and Myanmar also contributing. Several countries do not cultivate certain crops domestically but rely on imports to meet their needs, particularly for genetically modified (GMO) crops. For example, Japan imports soybeans, corn, and canola, while South Korea relies on imports of soybeans and corn. These countries have established regulations to govern the importation and use of GMO crops, ensuring they meet safety and quality standards before being allowed into the market. These regulations often involve much testing and labeling requirements to inform consumers about the presence of GMOs in imported products.

The United Nations has played a significant role in addressing genetically modified organisms through various agencies and initiatives. In 2000, the UN established the

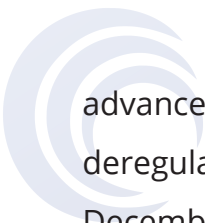


Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, aiming to ensure the safe handling and use of living-modified organisms, including GMOs, to safeguard biodiversity.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) provides technical assistance and guidance on agricultural biotechnology to member countries. Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) evaluates the safety of GMOs for human consumption and offers recommendations to member states. This UN involvement underscores global efforts to address concerns regarding food security, environmental sustainability, and biosafety regulations related to GMOs. Some countries have implemented labeling laws to inform consumers about GMO content. However, challenges persist due to inconsistent regulations globally, difficulties in enforcing labeling laws, and lack of transparency in the decision-making processes.

Current Situation

In recent times, there have been many debates and regulatory changes concerning the production, importation, and labeling of GMO products. In 2020 The FDA approved the use of genetically engineered pigs in both food and medical products in the US. These pigs (called 'GalSafe') can be used in the production of drugs, to provide organs and tissues for human transplant, and to produce meat that is safe for consumption for people with meat allergies. On January 1, 2022, the Federal Bioengineered Food Labeling Law stated that it is mandatory to label specific items that contain GMOs. Moreover, a U.S. district court deemed QR code disclosures alone as discriminatory, which followed a lawsuit by the Center for Food Safety. In August, the Inflation Reduction Act made the single largest investment in climate and energy in American history. However, it was also criticized due to its handling of problems in industrialized agriculture. Nevertheless, the act assisted farmers facing discrimination in USDA loan programs. Mexico faced pressure over its planned ban on GMO corn imports for human consumption, which highlighted the tension between food sovereignty and trade agreements. Argentina approved of genetically modified HB4 Wheat but may have been influenced by concerns about the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on grain harvests. Meanwhile, in 2020, Mexico's President Lopez Obrador decided to phase out glyphosate and GMO corn imports gradually. By March 2023, Mexico allowed GMO corn imports for animals and industry but not for human consumption, a move supported by the Non-GMO Project and other advocacy groups. Both Canada and the EU are adjusting regulations to accommodate newer GMOs made with



advanced techniques while ensuring clear distinction from older ones. Canada is deregulating gene-edited GMO seeds, with ongoing discussions in the EU Council as of December 2023. Additionally, in June, the U.S. approved the sale of lab-grown chicken, which meant a big breakthrough in food technology. Furthermore, the FDA authorized the limited sale of genetically modified purple tomatoes, indicating progress in agricultural biotechnology. Concurrently, the USDA updated its list of bioengineered foods to include GMO sugar cane, cultivated in Brazil since 2018 with enhanced pest resistance, and claimed it to be safe for consumption by the FDA.

The GMO situation today involves the change of many old rules, the discovery of new technologies, and ongoing discussions about food safety and the environment. It's crucial for everyone involved to talk openly and make decisions that ensure GMOs are used responsibly and sustainably in farming.

Points To Consider:

- What is your country's point of view on this topic?
- How much and in what sense does it affect the delegation's country?
- How would the delegation balance out the benefits and risks of this technology?
- How can the labeling problem regarding this topic be improved?

Useful links:

<https://geneticliteracyproject.org/gmo-faq/where-are-gmo-crops-and-animals-approved-and-banned/>

<https://www.fda.gov/>

<https://www.food-safety.com/articles/4826-international-regulations-on-genetically-modified-organisms-us-europe-china-and-japan>

<https://www.nongmoproject.org/blog/2023-the-year-in-review/>

<https://www.codingninjas.com/studio/library/tools-used-in-genetic-engineering>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3078015/>

<https://www.fda.gov/food/agricultural-biotechnology/gmo-crops-animal-food-and-beyond>



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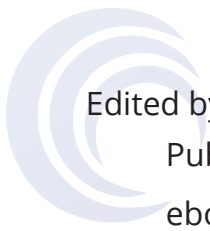
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Country box:

Afghanistan

Australia

Belgium

Brazil

Canada

China

Colombia

El Salvador

France

Germany

India

Iran

Israel

Italy

Japan

Kenya

Mexico

Netherlands

Norway

Pakistan

Russia

Saudi Arabia

South Africa

South Korea

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

Turkey

United Kingdom

United States



Topic B: Impact of Paramilitary Groups on Global Security

Introduction

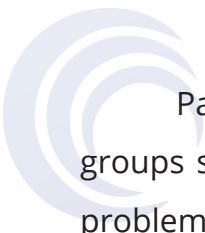
Paramilitary groups are unofficial organizations that work for private companies without getting involved with the government; however, they do offer military, paramilitary, and security services. These groups perform tasks that military or police forces cannot or do not want to perform within a country, but often these actions are not legal. The problem with these groups comes when they start to cause problems and fear, and the government is unable to manage the country. That is why it is important to understand these groups. Many paramilitary groups get involved in conflicts and cause problems in the way the government functions, affecting the security and well-being of the country and the people who live in it.

Paramilitary groups can make global security worse. As stated earlier, they do jobs that regular armies or police don't want to do. They sometimes are involved with illegal activities like selling drugs or weapons. It's important to understand them so we can stop them from causing harm and making the world less safe.

Paramilitary groups often begin due to a combination of political instability, economic inequality, and social injustice. In countries where the government is weak or corrupt, people may form paramilitary groups to protect themselves. Economic inequality can make those who are struggling feel like they have no choice but to use force to get what they need. This can lead to the creation of paramilitary groups, especially among communities that are often ignored or mistreated. Social injustice, such as discrimination or lack of access to basic services, can also lead to the creation of paramilitary groups. It's important to understand why these groups form so that problems can be fixed. This helps make sure everyone is treated fairly and can lead to a more peaceful and stable world.

History

Throughout history, there have been several paramilitary groups in different parts of the world, for example, Freikorps in Germany in the early 1900s or the Janjaweed from Sudan in more recent times. Even so, these groups are best known in Latin America which started using them after World War II. One example is Colombia.. In Colombia, different regions had the idea of creating paramilitary groups almost at the same time. Some groups joined together to create the United Self-Defense Forces. According to them, they were fighting in the conflict, but on the contrary, they began to sell drugs, kidnap people, and demand money from others between 1994 and 1997. We are not sure exactly when these groups began to be created, but people believe that it was around the beginning or end of the 20th century.




Paramilitary groups can cause major problems to global security, and different groups such as charities, countries, and other large organizations help to address these problems. Charities provide help to people affected by these groups and are careful about the bad things they do, and try to make amends. Countries must protect their people from these groups and follow the rules that keep everyone safe. They can do things like strengthen their security, address the reasons these groups exist, and work with other countries to solve the problem. Other large organizations can also help by talking to countries, supporting projects that improve things in places where these groups are a problem, and making sure their companies act responsibly. By working together, these groups can help stop the harm caused by paramilitary groups and make the world safer for everyone.

The United Nations helps stop paramilitary groups by sending peacekeepers to keep the peace and protect the people. They also monitor and report human rights abuses by these groups. The UN prevents weapons from reaching these groups and punishes those who participate with travel bans or freezing their assets. They also help ex-combatants leave paramilitary groups, find new jobs, and re-enter society. The UN wants to stop the use of paramilitary groups by addressing the reasons these groups exist, as well as protect human rights, and bring peace to places where these groups cause problems.

Some actions, such as military operations and efforts to disarm combatants, have helped reduce the damage caused by paramilitary groups. However, these groups still exist and often commit serious crimes. It is hard to stop these groups completely because they help with issues like poverty and inequality, which result in people leaving their homes. This creates a big problem because these people lose everything and often struggle to find food and a safe place to stay. The actions of paramilitary groups have a long-lasting and terrible impact on the lives of those affected.

In America, paramilitary groups often form to deal with problems like violence and drug trafficking. For example, in Colombia, these groups started as protectors but later they got involved in illegal acts. In Mexico, drug posters use paramilitary strategies to fight each other and the government, leading to violence.

In Africa, groups like the Janjaweed in Sudan have been accused of terrible acts against citizens, including murder and rape. In Nigeria, Boko Haram uses paramilitary strategies to fight the government, causing suffering.



In the Middle East, groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq are involved in conflicts, sometimes helping the government. However, their actions can also harm citizens and make the region unstable.

Each region has its reasons for having paramilitary groups. Countries are working together to deal with the problems caused by paramilitary groups. They share information and work together through organizations like the United Nations. Police are arresting people in these groups and seizing their weapons and drugs. Peacekeeping missions are sent to places where these groups cause trouble to keep peace and protect people. Programs help former fighters leave these groups and join society again. Groups provide help like food and shelter to communities affected by these groups. Countries are also talking to each other to solve the reasons why these groups exist, like poverty and instability. These efforts show that many different actions are being taken to deal with paramilitary groups and make the world safer.

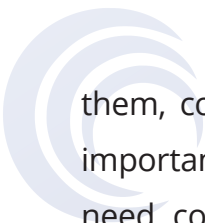
Current Situation

Paramilitary groups are still causing big problems for global security. They do illegal things like selling drugs and trafficking people, and they often operate in places where the government is weak. This makes those areas more violent and unstable. As stated earlier, countries are working together more to try to stop these groups. They are sharing information and sometimes using military force. But it's still a big challenge, and we need to keep working on it to make the world safer.

Paramilitary groups often start because of problems like when a country's government is not strong enough or fair enough. People might form these groups to protect themselves or get what they need. Sometimes, when some people are wealthier than others, this can cause trouble between them. Also, when people feel like they are treated unfairly and don't have the same chances as others, they might join these groups to try to change things. Understanding these reasons helps us figure out how to stop these groups from forming and making the world safer.

Paramilitary groups hurt people in many ways. They illegally kill people without a trial, make people disappear, and force others to leave their homes. This causes a lot of fear and suffering. People who speak out against these groups are often targeted, and many live in constant fear. This can lead to a breakdown of trust in authorities and a feeling of being unsafe.

In the future, dealing with paramilitary groups will be even harder. They can now operate across countries more easily and use advanced technology and weapons. To stop



them, countries will need to work together more and come up with new ideas. It's also important to solve the reasons why these groups exist, like poverty and instability. This will need cooperation between countries, organizations, and communities to make lasting changes and keep the world safer. es are difficult to solve, that is the reason why they exist. So while progress has been made, more work needs to be done to address the impact of paramilitary groups on global security.

Points to consider

- Is the delegation in favor or against the use of paramilitary groups? Why?
- Does your country have any paramilitary groups? If so, why do they exist and what is their effect on your country?
- What has the country done to solve this problem?
- How can nations collaborate to ensure equitable resolution of this issue for all stakeholders?
- What benefits and consequences do paramilitary groups bring to the world?

Useful Links:

- <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/the-influence-of-private-military-companies-on-global-security/>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/paramilitary-group>
- <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military>
- <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/summaries/s.colombia9611.html>



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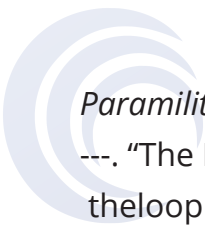
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*The **General Assembly**,
has the function of discussing
any global issue that concerns
the members of each country.*

