



ENMUNC VI

**Social, Humanitarian, and
Cultural Committee**

(SOCHUM)

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Sensitivity Statement

Dear Delegates,

You are expected to retain decorum throughout the committee and treat these issues with the seriousness they call for. Any appeal to or use of discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated. Undiplomatic behavior towards fellow delegates, including bullying, personal insults, and harassment, will also not be tolerated.

ENMUNC seeks to maintain a fair and balanced environment that allows delegates to shine and showcase their talents. As such, using pre-writing or similarly deceptive tactics, such as using AI in writing working papers in our committee, will not be tolerated by the dais or ENMUNC as an organization. Plagiarism of any kind is unacceptable at ENMUNC.

If issues arise with the conduct of a delegation or individual, feel free to reach out to Nayan Mallubhotla at nayan.mallubhotla@emory.edu or to our Under-Secretary-General, Hugo Rosen, at hugo.rosen@emory.edu.

Technology Policy

Generative AI is strictly prohibited from being used to generate documents such as resolutions. These documents must be your work. Technology of any form is only allowed during unmoderated forms of debate or as otherwise specified. As this is a double del committee, outroom delegates only may use technology during a moderated caucus during a room split.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to ENMUNC VI! My name is Ananya Phatak and I'm a first-year student here at Emory, studying Neuroscience & Behavioral Biology and Philosophy. I'm so excited and honored to be your chair for SOCHUM!

I spent much of my high school Model UN career participating in General Assembly committees, with SOCHUM always being one of my favorites to debate in. I believe that the deep understanding of diverse cultures and global issues that delegates gain in this committee is one of the most valuable aspects of MUN, and I hope that through engaging with these two topics, you will find that to be true as well.

Young people in our society represent a significant and growing proportion of the global population, and the challenges they face have incredibly relevant implications on societal stability, economic development, and long-term global progress. Therefore, addressing these barriers is not only a matter of individual well-being, but also of progress, development, and investment in an increasingly interconnected world.

The first topic, **Addressing the Global Youth Mental Health Crisis**, will require you to explore the structural, cultural, and digital factors contributing to declining mental health outcomes among young people. These factors include stigma, limited access to mental health support, the disproportionate impact of conflict or poverty, and the influence of social media on this issue among many others.

The second topic, **Combating Global Education Inequality for Children and Adolescents**, will challenge delegates to examine the systemic barriers that prevent millions of young people from accessing quality education, including poverty, gender-based discrimination, armed conflict, and inadequate infrastructure. Delegates should consider both immediate and long-term strategies to improve educational access and outcomes, with an emphasis on inclusivity, affordability, and international cooperation.

Please feel free to reach out to me at ananya.phatak@emory.edu with any questions, comments, or concerns at any point. I look forward to meeting you all!

Sincerely,

Ananya Phatak

Position Papers

Each delegation must submit a position paper before the conference. A position paper summarizes your delegation's understanding of the issue, outlines your nation's stance, and proposes solutions for debate. Each paper should follow a clear three-paragraph format. The first paragraph should highlight the most pressing aspects of the issue and key facts relevant to your stance. The second paragraph should explain your country's position, why the issue is important to your nation, and any unique national perspectives. The final paragraph should propose solutions and actions you believe should be included in a resolution.

Each delegation must submit one position paper per topic area. Papers should be written in third person, using Times New Roman, 12-point font, single-spaced, and approximately one page in length, with citations in Chicago, MLA, or APA format. Position papers are crucial for demonstrating preparation and are required for awards consideration. Papers must be submitted by March 14 at 11:59 PM to be eligible for position paper awards and by March 17 for any other awards. No late submissions will be accepted. Advisors or head delegates must submit papers as CountryCommitteeName.pdf/.docx to the designated email.

Committee Structure

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee (SOCHUM) operates under standard General Assembly procedures, emphasizing multilateral cooperation, consensus-building, and the protection of human rights. All UN Member States are represented equally, with each delegation holding one vote. Decisions are made through a simple majority unless otherwise specified by the dais.

Debate in SOCHUM typically begins with a Speakers' List, allowing delegates to present their countries' positions on the topics at hand. This is followed by moderated and unmoderated caucuses, during which delegates collaborate to develop policy ideas, negotiate solutions, and draft working papers. These working papers may be merged and refined into draft resolutions, which outline actionable and internationally applicable solutions.

Resolutions introduced in SOCHUM are non-binding but carry significant normative and political influence, often shaping international discourse and guiding the actions of UN bodies, specialized agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Delegates are encouraged to focus on feasible, cooperative solutions that respect national sovereignty while promoting universal human rights and social development.

History and Structure of SOCHUM

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee, commonly known as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), is one of the six main committees of the General Assembly. It serves as the primary forum within the UN system for addressing issues related to human rights, humanitarian affairs, social development, and cultural cooperation. Through debate, negotiation, and resolution drafting, SOCHUM plays a critical role in shaping international norms and encouraging collective global action on some of the most pressing challenges facing individuals and communities worldwide.

SOCHUM traces its origins to the founding of the United Nations in 1945, following the devastation of World War II. The architects of the UN recognized that lasting peace was not achievable solely through political agreements or military interference, but required attention to the social conditions, human dignity, and fundamental rights of people across the globe. As a result, the General Assembly established specialized committees to address distinct areas of international cooperation, including social and humanitarian concerns.

From the beginning, one of SOCHUM's primary goals has been the development of an international framework for human rights. The committee played a central role in the discussions which resulted in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). This declaration remains a pillar of international law and ethical guidance, demonstrating the important role SOCHUM plays in shaping global discourse. Following the Declaration, the committee became instrumental in advancing treaties and conventions, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

As global challenges evolved, so too did the scope of SOCHUM's agenda. During the Cold War, committee debates were shaped primarily by ideological divisions, especially the rift between civil or political rights versus economic, social, and cultural rights. Post-Cold War, the committee expanded to focus on issues such as humanitarian intervention, post-conflict reunification, migration, global health, and globalization, while continuing to address the rights of women, children, and refugees. Today, the committee continues to adapt to newly emerging challenges, such as mental health, digital rights, education inequality, and the protection of civilians in humanitarian emergencies.

While SOCHUM has the ability to shape international discourse, guide the activities of other UN agencies, and encourage collaboration between nations, it does not possess enforcement power. Resolutions adopted by the committee are forwarded to the General Assembly Plenary for final consideration. Within the committee, all 193 UN Member States are invited to participate in discourse and are given one vote, reflecting the GA's principle of sovereign equality. This ensures that voices from all regions and development levels are represented equally.

The committee meets annually during the regular session of the General Assembly, typically from October to December. Its work is structured around agenda items proposed by member states, with delegates engaging in general debate, moderated caucuses, and informal debate. The goals of the committee are to discuss issues, exchange perspectives, and draft resolutions. SOCHUM also works closely with a range of UN entities, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, and other expert bodies. These organizations provide reports, data, and recommendations that inform committee discussions, though the decision-making authority remains with member states.

Resolutions in SOCHUM are typically adopted by a simple majority, though consensus can be sought to demonstrate broader international support. The resolutions passed by this committee may call upon member states to adopt new policies, encourage international cooperation, mandate studies or reports, or strengthen the work of existing UN programs. Although non-binding, SOCHUM resolutions carry political and moral weight that frequently influence national legislation and international standards.

At ENMUNC, this committee will challenge delegates to balance national interests with humanitarian values, using strong policy solutions to tie the two together. The UN General Assembly Third Committee serves as the intersection between global policy and human experiences. By addressing issues that directly affect people's lives, SOCHUM embodies the UN goal of promoting peace through social justice and human rights.

Topic A: Addressing the Global Youth Mental Health Crisis

Introduction

In recent years, the international community has come to recognize youth mental health as an ever growing, complex social and humanitarian challenge. Faced with economic uncertainty, climate concerns, armed conflict, social injustice, and an increasingly interconnected digital world, young people today are deeply impacted by the change around them. Across the globe, adolescents and young people are experiencing rising rates of depression, anxiety disorders, self-harm, and suicide, with 1 in 7 adolescents aged 10-19 living with a mental health condition. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges by creating social isolation, disrupting schooling, and placing strain on already weak mental health support systems. Despite growing awareness, the stigma surrounding mental illness prevents many from getting the support they need. This issue is worsened in low- and middle-income countries where many young people have limited services and access to care.

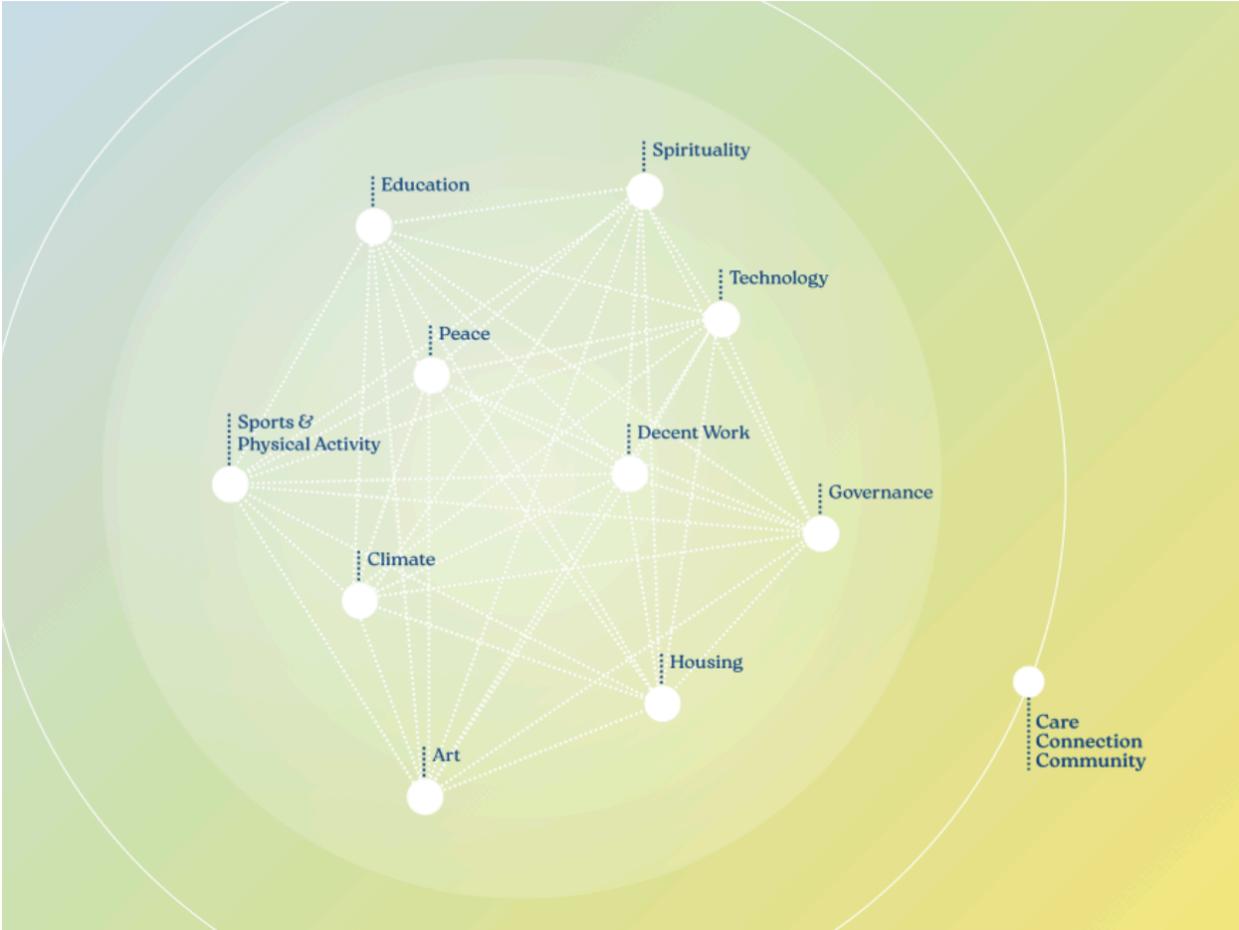
The UN defines mental well-being as not only the absence of illness, but as “the foundation for every person to learn, connect and contribute meaningfully to society”. The ability to participate fully in a community and gain value from your experiences is shaped not only by access to mental health care, but also by our environments and the people surrounding us. Therefore, bettering the mental health of all individuals, and especially youth, is imperative to improving our societies and promoting social development.

United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, have repeatedly emphasized that current global mental health systems are failing to meet the needs of the youth. In many countries, mental health services are underfunded, only located in urban areas, and are inaccessible to marginalized populations such as refugees, displaced youth, and children living in poverty. Services such as preventative care, early intervention, and school-based mental health programs remain limited, while youth voices are often excluded from policy making decisions that directly affect their well-being.

In order to address these gaps, the UN has called for increased investment, multinational cooperation, and solutions that integrate mental health into education, social protection, and public health initiatives. These solutions emphasize the need for a holistic approach to the issue, creating conditions where young people can feel connected and are able to thrive. As the General

Assembly Third Committee, SOCHUM provides a critical forum for member states to address the global youth mental health crisis by examining root causes, sharing best practices, and advancing international cooperation. The committee’s goal is to provide all young people access to the support necessary to live healthy, dignified, and productive lives.

Specifically, the UN promotes an “Ecosystem Model for Youth Mental Health and Well-being”, which emphasizes the role of multiple systems working together to support young people. Our mental health is impacted by the world around us, including our families, friendships, physical environments such as school or work, technology, communities, and more. This model aims to incorporate all these aspects into a “flexible framework” which can be tailored to different communities and cultural contexts. In it, ten key factors that influence youth mental health are emphasized, including education, spirituality, technology, peace, decent work, governance, housing, art, climate, and sports or physical activity.



The dimension of ‘education’ emphasizes supportive learning environments that help develop children’s sense of self-worth and social connection, while prioritizing their emotional

development and resilience. ‘Spirituality’ focuses on inner reflection, and aims to teach young people “compassion, purpose, connection, and emotional resilience”. Similarly, ‘peace’ focuses on the external, examining justice, safety, and social harmony in order to better the communities that young people live in. The ‘technology’ dimension is of particular importance as it aims to create digital spaces that are inclusive and free of hate, harassment, or misinformation. Particularly with the rise of social media, this dimension has had a much greater impact on youth mental well-being. Additionally, another factor proven to be a stressor for many young people today is the ability to find stable work. The dimension of ‘decent work’ focuses on employment that provides security and economic stability to youth. Likewise, safe and stable ‘housing’ is a foundation of both physical and emotional security. Climate change is also a major cause of anxiety and despair, particularly for young people living in areas most affected. In order to address this, the UN highlights the ‘climate’ dimension in terms of agency and “youth-centered climate action”, giving young people a voice in the issue. Both ‘arts’ and ‘sports and physical activity’ promote health, emotional regulation, creativity, and community connection. Finally, as young people are the future of our world, ‘governance’ is important in ensuring that youth voices are heard in policy making and government, and that they have the ability to create influential change in their communities.

While UN recognition of the importance of youth-mental health and the promotion of the Ecosystem Model have been major steps towards bettering youth mental-health support, there is still a long way to go, especially in developing nations. Close to 16 million adolescents aged 10-19 live with a mental illness or a mental disorder in Latin America and the Caribbean alone. Additionally, due to stigma and lack of resources, most developing countries only allocate a small percentage of their healthcare budgets to protecting mental health, opting instead to focus on physical health issues such as vaccinations and communicable disease. According to the Mental Health Atlas data, only approximately 56% of countries have child or youth mental health policies, with even fewer providing community based solutions. This issue only grows more pressing, with rising suicide rates and unique challenges posed by social media, emphasizing the need for immediate and global change.

Despite the increasing recognition of mental health in both the UN and in national legislations, youth mental health care remains missing from most policies and global commitments. There is a lack of resolutions, even within the UN, dedicated solely to child and

youth mental health, and even more resolutions which simply do not mention young people at all. Additionally, youth voices are often not included in shaping mental health policies and services, ultimately providing a disservice to the communities the legislation aims to help. There is a great need for change in both national and international policy in order to better protect young people, help them thrive in their environments, and allow them to contribute meaningfully to society.

Interest Groups

European Union

The European Union (EU) has long been involved in raising concerns about various youth-related issues, including mental health and well-being. Often at the forefront of positive change, the EU has launched multiple past initiatives such as a youth mental health network and a prevention toolkit in collaboration with the UN. It is likely that member states of the EU would continue advocating for more effective policies regarding youth mental health in both developed and developing nations. Generally, in SOCHUM, the EU speaks with a largely shared approach as member states tend to have similar experiences and views on social development and human rights.

North America

North American countries, particularly the US and Canada, have contributed to global youth mental health progress by driving awareness, often advocating for policy changes, and contributing to major sources of funding for mental health initiatives. North American countries are able to provide both developed and developing perspectives on the issue, allowing for these countries to collaborate effectively globally on this issue. In the Third Committee, these diverse perspectives are reflected through collaboration with primarily other Western countries, but also through developing nations' blocs where ideas can be shared and discussed.

Latin America & the Caribbean

Latin American and Caribbean countries have long been committed to improving mental health services in their nations. However, only recently have youth representatives begun advocating for the mental well-being of the young populations of these countries. This region is

composed of primarily developing nations, providing a unique set of perspectives and challenges. Consequently, these nations collaborate frequently in SOCHUM, working on culturally sensitive solutions and feasible initiatives.

Africa

African nations, similarly to Latin American or Caribbean countries, are largely developing. There has been significant recognition of the importance of mental health and well-being in these countries, particularly at the UN and in collaboration with UN initiatives. However, many African nations struggle with critical issues such as lack of infrastructure, infectious disease, armed conflicts, and lack of resources. Thus, in the Third Committee, African countries often bloc together to come up with solutions that are specific to their challenges, while also partnering with developed nations in order to share ideas and resources.

Asia & the Middle East

With the size and diversity of the Asian continent, there exists a large range of unique perspectives on the youth mental health crisis. Most countries in this region have made some sort of commitment to engaging on mental health issues nationally. However, due to stigma and poor infrastructure, there remains a large group of Asian nations that have not committed to a global mental health resolution. Some issues which these countries may have to address include solutions on a bigger scale for larger populations, combating stigma against mental health and mental illness, and creating infrastructure to reach rural populations. It would be likely that Asian nations would collaborate with other countries whose social and economic situation most closely resembles theirs, though regional blocs within Asia, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), are incredibly useful as well.

Questions to Consider

- What are the primary social, economic, and environmental factors contributing to the rise of mental health challenges among youth?
 - How do these factors differ in various regions of the world?
- How can member states reduce stigma surrounding mental health, while still respecting cultural norms and national contexts?

- What role should schools and educational institutions play in early identification, prevention, and support for youth mental health?
 - How might this role look different in developed and developing nations? In low- or middle-income countries?
- How can governments expand access to affordable, youth-friendly mental health services, particularly in low- and middle-income countries?
 - Does this look different in rural areas? In marginalized communities?
- In what ways can international cooperation, including partnerships with UN agencies, strengthen youth mental health systems?
- In what ways do digital networks shape the mental health crisis?
 - What are the negative impacts of digital media? Social media?
 - In what ways can digital tools be used to support young people facing mental health challenges?
 - How can you ensure data privacy, rights to free speech, safety, and equitable access when using these digital tools?
- What measures can be taken to support the mental health of youth affected by conflict, displacement, humanitarian crises, or climate-related disasters?
- How can youth themselves be meaningfully included in the design and implementation of mental health policies and programs?
- What are strategies to collect data and monitor progress on youth mental health outcomes?
 - How can you ensure accountability at both a national and an international level?

Topic B: Combating Global Education Inequality for Children and Adolescents

Introduction

Global education inequality remains one of the most persistent and far-reaching challenges affecting youth worldwide, not only creating loss of individual opportunities for children, but also a lack of long-term social stability and economic development. Despite many decades of international commitments to universal education, recent data from the UN and UNESCO indicates that 250 million children remain out-of-school. This number has risen by around 6 million since 2021, demonstrating a pressing need for change. These disparities are shaped by a complex set of structural barriers such as poverty, armed conflict, displacement, gender discrimination, disability, and limited access to resources such as digital technologies. The situation has been further exacerbated by humanitarian crises, climate related disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted schooling for almost every child across the globe.

Education inequality is not evenly distributed; children living in conflict-affected areas, refugee and displaced populations, rural communities, and marginalized social groups face significantly larger barriers to accessing education. In addition, girls, children with disabilities, and adolescents forced into labor or early marriage are exceptionally vulnerable to exclusion from formal schooling. For example, 122 million, or 48%, of the out-of-school population are girls and young women. Similarly, conflict ridden zones keep children out of school as well. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for almost 30% of all out-of-school kids globally.

The UN has been taking action to reduce education inequality across the globe and increase access to education in particularly affected areas. UNICEF warned of a global “learning crisis”, explaining that the majority of ten year olds in many parts of the world are unable to read and cannot understand simple texts. In response, UNICEF, along with other UN agencies including UNESCO and Education Cannot Wait, have emphasized the need for sustained investment, resilient and adaptable education systems, and interventions that prioritize the most at-risk populations. As the primary forum for addressing social development and humanitarian issues, SOCHUM plays a vital role in examining root causes of global education inequality and

promoting international cooperation to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all children and adolescents.

Interest Groups

European Union

The European Union has consistently emphasized the importance of equitable and inclusive education as a cornerstone of social development and human rights. Through cooperation with UNESCO, UNICEF, and other UN bodies, the EU has supported initiatives focused on improving access to quality education, reducing learning disparities, and strengthening education systems in vulnerable regions. Past EU efforts have included funding for education in emergencies, digital learning programs, and initiatives promoting gender equality in schooling. It is likely that EU member states will continue advocating for comprehensive, rights-based approaches to education inequality, both within their own borders and internationally. In SOCHUM, the EU typically speaks with a unified position, as member states often share similar perspectives on education, development, and the protection of children's rights.

North America

Countries in North America have played an influential role in shaping global education policy through financial contributions, technical assistance, and partnerships with international organizations. These states have supported initiatives addressing access to education, learning quality, and education in crisis-affected settings, often emphasizing data-driven policy, innovation, and accountability. North American countries are likely to advocate for solutions that strengthen education systems through targeted investment, digital learning tools, and public-private partnerships. Within SOCHUM, North American delegations generally support resolutions that frame education as a key driver of economic opportunity, social mobility, and long-term stability, while encouraging measurable outcomes and sustainable implementation.

Latin America & the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean face persistent education inequalities linked to socioeconomic disparities, rural-urban divides, and the impacts of migration and displacement.

Many countries in the region have prioritized education reform and regional cooperation to improve school access, reduce dropout rates, and enhance learning outcomes for marginalized populations. Governments in this bloc have also emphasized the importance of inclusive education policies that address poverty, gender inequality, and the needs of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. In SOCHUM, Latin American and Caribbean states are likely to advocate for increased international support, South–South cooperation, and policies that strengthen public education systems while promoting equity and social inclusion.

Africa

African states confront some of the most severe challenges related to global education inequality, including limited infrastructure, teacher shortages, conflict, displacement, and the impacts of climate change. Many countries have worked closely with UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and Education Cannot Wait to expand access to education, particularly for girls, refugees, and children in crisis-affected regions. African delegations often stress the need for sustained international funding, capacity-building, and long-term investment in resilient education systems. Within SOCHUM, the African Group is likely to emphasize the structural and historical factors contributing to education inequality and advocate for solutions that prioritize development assistance, equity, and national ownership.

Asia & the Middle East

The Asia and Middle East region encompasses a wide range of educational experiences, from highly developed education systems to contexts severely affected by conflict, displacement, and economic instability. Several states in this bloc have invested in expanding access to education and improving learning outcomes, while others continue to face significant barriers due to humanitarian crises and resource constraints. Common priorities include improving access for girls, refugees, and rural populations, as well as integrating education into broader development and reconstruction efforts. In SOCHUM, countries from Asia and the Middle East are likely to emphasize respect for national contexts, the need for flexible policy approaches, and increased international cooperation to address education inequality affecting children and adolescents.

Questions to Consider

- What are the primary structural, economic, and social factors driving education inequality for children and adolescents across different regions?
- How can member states ensure not only access to education, but also the quality of learning outcomes?
 - How can this be achieved in under-resources and crisis-affected settings?
- What strategies can be implemented to reduce education disparities faced by marginalized groups, including girls, children with disabilities, refugees, and rural populations?
- How should the international community address education disruptions caused by armed conflict, displacement, climate disasters, and public health emergencies?
- What role can international cooperation and development assistance play in strengthening national education systems while respecting state sovereignty?
- How can digital education tools and technology be leveraged to reduce inequality without widening the digital divide between and within countries?
- What responsibilities do governments, international organizations, and private-sector actors have in financing equitable education initiatives?
 - Does this role differ based on region or country?
- How can education systems better support adolescents at risk of dropping out due to poverty, child labor, or early marriage?
- What indicators and accountability mechanisms should be used to measure the progress being made on both national and international levels towards inclusive and equitable education?

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