

UCLG

AGENDA ITEM :

Recognition of Cities Under Occupation and Status
of the Municipalities in Disputed Territories

UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL

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Prominent delegates of UCLG committee,

I am Yakup Gümüřoluk, I am honoured to be your Under Secretary General, especially in a committee where I have been strongly desiring it to take into place. I am expecting a great performance from you and I have a strong faith upon you. With the great excitement of mine, I would like to convey my feelings about this magnificent assembly that we are going to construct first time in Kayseri.

UCLG is a different sort of assembly, it is not the place that you only present your ideas about world-wide matters, but an area where you are going to present real projects about how you will overcome these affairs, and illustrate it with pictures, and other supportive materials. I hope this guide will support you for understanding the functioning of committee and your missions upon it. An insane kind of experience is waiting you soon.

I hope both MUNKFL'25 and the UCLG committee will be an unforgettable experience for you all. Waiting to see you in 19-20-21 December!

Warm regards,

Yakup Gümüřoluk

The Under Secretary General of UCLG

MUNKFL'25

1. Letters from the Secretary-General and Secretariat

Letter from the Secretary-General

Esteemed participants of MUNKFL'25,

As the Secretary General of MUNKFL'25, I warmly welcome you all to the fourth edition of Model United Nations Kayseri Fen Lisesi. First of all, I am pleased to say that we are continuing our work successfully, knowing that we are the pioneers in the MUN culture in Kayseri. We are truly honored to be able to present this precious conference that we have worked on for months. My organizing team has worked tirelessly for this conference, and of course, they did well. Also, special thanks go to my academic team, who also worked tirelessly to make your committees exceptional and engaging. It is with this spirit of dedication and pioneering achievement that we turn our focus to the crucial global challenges facing us today.

The 21st Century has brought about tensions between nations, unprecedented dangers, changes, and challenges that continue to plague the world. However, the United Nations offers a promising path forward. As members of the Model United Nations community, we recognize the imperative of active global engagement and the pivotal role we play in shaping a better future. Therefore, MUNKFL will simulate United Nations committees, providing a platform for delegates to engage in collaborative, competitive, conciliatory, and compromising decision-making processes. Through these simulations, we aim to foster dialogue, diplomacy, and a prioritization of societal needs in addressing pressing global issues.

May this experience leave you more prepared to lead, more committed to dialogue, and more confident in the role you can play in shaping the world around you.

**Sincerely,
Taylan Emir Tav**

Introduction to Committee

The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments would like to welcome you to the largest organization of local and regional governments in the world. You, we, stand on the shoulders of countless women and men who have worked tirelessly to empower each other for over a century, to lift up their communities and to collaborate with one another in order to achieve real change.

UCLG, as a global network of cities and local, regional, and metropolitan governments and their associations, is committed to representing, defending, and amplifying the voices of local and regional governments to leave no-one and no place behind. Together we are the sentinels of the hopes, dreams, and aspirations held by individuals in communities around the world — searching for a life in which the ideals of the SDGs are a lived reality.

Through collaboration, dialogue, cooperation, and knowledge-sharing, we as a World Organization walk the walk, working to advance global response and action through groundbreaking commitments and agreements that become common threads that transcend borders and tie communities together, to uplift and empower the local level.

UCLG is working as seven main separated groups including Africa, Eurasia, Asia-Pacific, North America, Latin America, Middle East and West Asia (MEWA) and Europe blocs. These groups are working as regional cooperations that mainly aims to concentrate on the common matters of regarding territories.

The body part of UCLG mainly consists of representative of municipalities and cities, unlike other cooperations. **Due to this reason the delegates of UCLG do not represent specific countries, but take part as mayors or governors of their municipalities or cities.**

Introduction to Agenda Item; Recognition of Cities Under Occupation and Status of the Municipalities in Disputed Territories

One of the consideration matter of UCLG includes recognition, inspection and representation of cities, and carrying contraversary issues on the table and analysing them from urban development view and presenting diffirent initiatives upon them. On this perspective the matter is closely related with these missions.

As it is stated in the Charter that reported by UCLG-MEWA, on the Article 2 , one of the missions of UCLG is “To develop the values, aims and interests of the local government through cooperation, between local governments and within the world community, and to become the united voice and spokesperson of democratic local government on a world scale.”.

Also in the Global Charter Agenda of UCLG, in Article 2 (RIGHT TO PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY), in subtitle 2; “The city promotes a quality participation of its inhabitants in local affairs, ensures them access to public information, and recognizes their ability to impact on local decisions. The city particularly encourages the participation of women in full respect of the exercise of their rights. It encourages as well the participation of minority groups. It promotes the participation of children in affairs directly relevant to them. The city promotes the exercise of all its inhabitants' collective and individual rights. To this end, it facilitates the participation of civil society, including human rights protection associations, in the formulation of policies and the implementation of measures aimed at realizing the rights of its inhabitants.”

On the 3. Article (RIGHT TO CIVIC PEACE AND SAFETY IN CITY) “ All city inhabitants have the right to personal and material safety against any type of violence, including that potentially committed by law enforcement agencies. 2. The city ensures the security and physical and mental safety of all its inhabitants, and takes measures to combat acts of violence, regardless of who the perpetrators may be. The city is equipped with democratic law enforcement agencies, prepared to protect all its inhabitants without discrimination. Law enforcement officers are expressly forbidden from resorting to any cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.”. Despite these, disputed territories have been facing plural kind of issues such as; cultural degenaration, democratic inrepresentation, security crisis and

economic and infrastructural issues caused by current conflicts on the area. Because of that, the issue will be examined and initiatives will be given considering these purposes that declared.

Actions that Taken in the Past

The roots of actions that taken against the topic goes back to 2004-2007 period when “Peace and Local Democracy” Framework implemented. *Local Governments and Conflict Prevention Taskforce* is spesifically established for refering the issues on disputed territories. The council argued upon the situation of Jerusalem in terms of representation of local municipalities. The conflict is adressed under the title of Local Governments Peace Declaration.

In 2008-2011 Fragile Territories Phase put on the table in order to cite the disputed territories including African, Caucasian, and Middle Eastean regions. An important action (*City-to-City Stabilization Program* for Somali municipalities (2009)) has taken to secure the representation of cities in Africa. Also a similar kind of programme is applied to comprhense the problems on Palestinian area.

On 2017-2019 Durban Political Declaration has been published. It includes important kind of initiatives for the history of the issue. Occupied territories is refered officially in first time. Gaza Reconstruction Consortium is supported. Also Ukraine Local Democracy Support Program launched.

Lastly, the last session is orginized on 2023-2024 under the title of “Towards Peace Agendas”. Ongoing problems on the regarding areas are reconsidered. Ukraine, Gaza, Sahel prompted further action. The most comprehensive considiration of disputed territories has taken into place on the last residency.

Despite the moderations that orginized and examinations that made, the problems on disputed areas are ongoing. Discussion agendas are certain, however a detailed planning should be made by council. UCLG, as an organization which works as seperated groups through geographies analizes those issues as seperated parts and refer them spesifically. The mission of the delegates will be inspecting these challenges in urbanization level and presenting diffirent initiatives upon this matter. The process of investigation upon disputed territories

involves 5 main controversial headings to discuss; Democratic inrepresentation of citizens that accomodates in regarding regions and lack of participation to local governency roles, Harm upon heritage of cultural preservation both in socio-economic and physical way in terms of reconstruction of the city, economic inadequacy and infrastructural issues caused by conflicts and security crisis both originated by current situations and lack of order.

Cultural Harm

Cities in disputed areas often face cultural inrepresentation as well. Discussions about reconstructions of the cities are ongoing. Miao Tian expresses their concerns about reconstruction of Kashgar city in a article they published on Deutsche Welle;

“Kashgar, an oasis city of the Silk Road, has been on the brink of extinction since the Chinese government introduced a plan to demolish much of the old town of Kashgar two years ago. Kashgar, an oasis city of the Silk Road, is on the brink of extinction. Since the Chinese government introduced a plan to demolish much of the old town of Kashgar two years ago, 60-70 per cent of the planned area has already been torn down. The president of the World Uyghur Congress, Rebiya Kadeer, came to the EU Parliament last week to ask for help.

The city of Kashgar is located in the western extreme of China. It has been the capital of many Uighur kingdoms in history. "Kashgar is Uighur, and Uighur is Kashgar", says Rebiya Kadeer, who is called by her people "Mother of the Uighurs." She says that Kashgar is a symbol for the cultural identity of the Uighur people.

Destruction of cultural identity

However, this identity is being destroyed. The razing of the old town in Kashgar is one example. The local government announced plans to demolish 85 per cent of the historical old town and so far 60-70 per cent of it has already disappeared. The process is accelerating.

Traditional mud-and-straw buildings along narrow lanes in Kashgar are thought by the government to be too fragile for earthquakes. As a result, only around 10 per cent of the old town will eventually be preserved for touristic purposes. Rebiya Kadeer asked for help from

the European Parliament. A conference was held on Thursday in Brussels by Frieda Brepoels, Member of the Greens and European Free Alliance parliamentary group. "It is the aim of this conference to identify Kashgar's relevance to the Uighur identity of the region, to draw attention to China's cultural diversity including the traditions of the ethnic Uighur community and to consider Beijing's reconstruction plans and its effect for the local people," says Brepoels.

Kashgar as a World Heritage Site

Six parliamentarians from different party groups attended the meeting. Frieda Brepoels said that was a "very good result." In 2009 the EP passed a resolution to call for protection of the cultural rights of Tibetans and Uighurs. "We have to go further than that and especially focus on the Kashgar situation. We'll definitely have discussions with members who are interested in this in the following days and weeks," promises Brepoels.

Rebiya Kadeer also called on the Chinese government to apply to UNESCO to recognize Kashgar as a World Heritage site. Two years ago, Beijing took the Chinese section of the Silk Road onto a tentative list, but Kashgar was not mentioned in it.

Representatives from rights groups pointed out at the conference that what is going on in Kashgar is not only a cultural issue, but also a human rights issue. Contrary to what the government claims, local people are not consulted before demolitions. Many Uighur families are losing their only source of living with their small shops and homes being torn down. The degree of dissatisfaction among Uighurs is high."

Another study examined instance is about Crimenia, which is a disputed territory in Russian-Ukrainian conflict and one of the consideration matter of UCLG in terms of highlighting the importance of preserving cultural heritage;

"UNESCO will continue monitoring the situation in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea due to a number of facts regarding the destruction by Russia of the cultural heritage of Ukraine, in particular the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora."

As reported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Ukraine press service, such a decision was adopted by the UNESCO Executive Board on October 9. "The decision is based on the report of the UNESCO Director General on the situation in Crimea temporarily occupied by Russia in the Organization's areas of competence, which confirms the significant deterioration of the situation on the Ukrainian peninsula, in particular, the destruction by Russia of Ukraine's cultural heritage, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site " Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora," numerous violations by Russia of the rights of Crimean Tatars, illegal persecution of journalists by the occupying authorities, violations in the field of education and the right to study in the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages, freedom of religion and other human rights violations," the MFA said in a statement on its website on Thursday.

The Czech delegation issued a statement on behalf of 44 UNESCO member states condemning Russia's actions in occupied Crimea – the persecution of Crimean Tatars, the destruction of Ukrainian-language education, religious and cultural monuments, as well as the damage caused by Russia to the environment as a result of irresponsible activities.”

As it is demonstrated on the passages that we quoted, the concern upon cultural harm is highly rated and observed in different areas. The mission of the UCLG members are detailing their plans upon cities considering cultural heritage of folks while reconstructing cities in modern and more available way and forcing municipalities go into regulations for their planning about urbanization. It is highly important to highlight that it is not the mission of UCLG members to talk upon the sovereignty situation of cities. But to ensure the welfare and preservation of individuals from the municipality perspective and talking upon initiatives can be taken independent of political situation of municipalities.

Democratic Inrepresentation

Disputed territories, often involves the existence of conflicts in the area, for political, social and practical reasons. Due to this reason the comprehension of the study goes into governance in conflict areas as well. The democratic representation of individuals is one of the most important consideration matter of members in place. As the following studies show the situation in disputed areas, the individuals may face discrimination, even they abstain from political attendance due to such of matters. International Journal for Multidisciplinary

Research examines this problem upon Jammu-Kashmir regions and analyzes the issues upon democratic inrepresentation in conflict areas in the article they published in 2025 November;

“LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Local governance in conflict-affected areas operates under ongoing structural and environmental pressures that weaken democratic institutions. Insecurity and fear of violence discourage elected representatives—especially women—from participating fully in governance processes, as documented in studies on conflict-governance interactions (World Bank, 2011; UNDP, 2016). Routine administrative work, public meetings, and development planning become difficult due to unpredictable conflict dynamics, resulting in fragmented service delivery and weak coordination between local institutions and higher administrative bodies (Bhatia, 2020). Mobility limitations—such as curfews, checkpoints, strikes, and policing operations—further restrict access to important governance spaces like Gram Sabhas and block-level offices. Earlier researches show that reduced mobility significantly lowers public participation and weakens deliberative democratic structures in conflict zones (Justino, 2012). Citizens' faith in government institutions also reduces due to prolonged instability and limited state responsiveness, creating perceptions of inefficiency or bias (Pettigrew, 2021). This trust deficit reduces engagement with decentralized systems, which depend heavily on community participation. Because decentralized systems rely mainly and largely on community participation, this lack of confidence lowers engagement. A persistent problem is the politicization of local institutions. Competing political actors, local elites, and security actors often influence decision-making at the grassroots level, constraining the autonomy of elected bodies (Gupta, 2019). These factors—violence, administrative weakness, mobility constraints, reduced trust, and politicization—together undermine the ability of decentralized institutions to plan, implement, and monitor development. Despite these limitations, research on governance in war zones emphasizes the necessity of context-specific frameworks that improve citizen engagement and bolster local resilience (Barakat & Ellis, 2008).”

Also in the same article they published the main reasons are listed in order;

“MAJOR CHALLENGES OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN CONFLICT ZONES OF J&K

- **Security Threats and Fear of Violence:** Elected representatives often face risks such as targeted attacks, threats, etc. Movement restrictions, curfews, and security advisories limit their ability and potential to attend important meetings or monitor development Works
- **Administrative Centralization and Limited Autonomy:** Despite decentralization laws, major decisions related to planning, funds, and project approvals remain with district-level officials. Conflict prioritization of security over decentralization reduces PRI authority.
- **Limited Community Participation:** Fear of surveillance, political backlash, and local tensions discourages public attendance in Gram Sabhas. Women actors face additional mobility challenges and social restrictions, weakening participatory governance.
- **Politicization of Local Institutions:** PRIs often become tools of broader political fights. Party interests, competing regional narratives, and administrative interventions distort local priorities and weaken institutional neutrality.
- **Developmental Delays and Administrative Disruptions:** Frequent shutdowns, communication blackouts, and security operations often delay important project implementations. Field investigators or staff often avoid high-risk areas, resulting in stalled development works.
- **Financial and Resource Constraints:** PRIs struggle with the delayed release of funds, the absence of independent revenue sources, and bureaucratic hurdles in utilizing grants. The weak local economy makes revenue generation almost impossible. It is a main challenge.
- **Social Fragmentation and Trust Deficit:** Conflict raises mistrust between communities and their elected leaders. Collective action becomes very difficult, reducing accountability and cooperation in local development.”

The mission of the delegates is considering these issues from different perspectives and tackling these issues in order to construct better cities both in physical and ethereal way.

Infrastructural Issues

Lack of infrastructure problem in disputed areas is a sharp topic of consideration when it is gone into detail. People in disputed areas face problems in access to basic needs in terms of lack of infrastructure. The harm caused by conflicts continues its effect since a long period of time. People has lack of access basically the sources such as access to water, electrical energy

and etc. . It is approximately the most significant matter of UCLG members to talk upon it. Because the mission of UCLG most oftenly contains the goal of constructing livable cities for citizens all around the world. Due to this excuse, infrastructural issues will be the most inclusive poignt of contention in order to execute the mission of the UCLG. The problems about the infrastructure issue has 3 main cornerstones to take into considiration. Lack of access to waterand energy resoruces, which are basic needs, causes induviduals in disputed areas to live in unavaliable standarts in cities. Also agricultural infrasturcutre is a cornerstone in terms of analizing food security, and basic access to nourishment resources. An article that published in 2019 by Duke University, which examines the lack of infrastructure in West Bank and Gaza and effects of targetting infrastructure take thus matters into considiration in a detailed way;

“The water sector

Upon occupying the West Bank in 1967, the military administration announced Military Order 92, which placed all powers concerning the management of West Bank water resources in a military appointee, resulting in increased centralization of water management and integration into the Israeli water system. Military Order 158 further prevented any person from establishing or operating a water installation without a license from the area commander. Israel also limited the number of new wells that could be dug.⁴⁶ Israel’s control over water infrastructure development and extraction in the West Bank during the first decades of the occupation favored agricultural policies for Israeli farmers over Palestinian farmers. Israel’s policies also provided unequal water allocations between Jewish settlements and Palestinian villages in the West Bank, with the latter experiencing water shortages. ⁴⁷ While the Oslo Accords formally recognized water rights for the Palestinian people, created a Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), and granted additional water resources in the northern part of the West Bank aquifer, the PWA never received full decision-making authority over water resource development. To coordinate water management and cooperation between Israel and the PA, a Joint Water Committee (JWC) was constituted to review proposed water projects in Areas B and C. Despite creating a veneer of cooperation between Israel and the PA via the JWC under Oslo, all water infrastructural decisions ultimately require a second approval from the Civil Administration. ⁴⁸ Our data confirms incidents in which Israeli authorities and settlers targeted water infrastructure in Area C. For example, early events in our database from 2008 find Israeli soldiers destroying water cisterns.⁴⁹ Humanitarian actors report a number of donor-funded water projects damaged by the Israeli authorities. In 2014, the UN

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the occupied Palestinian Territories (OCHA-oPt) documented a number of incidents in which latrines, water tanks, and water connections were seized.

Other events include destruction of water supply infrastructure in early 2017, including water cisterns in the Bethlehem District and in the South Hebron Hills, as well as a water pipe in the Jordan Valley, all of which supplied water for farming purposes.⁵¹ Our data contains a number of instances in which Israeli settlers targeted water infrastructure, as for example, when settlers damaged water tanks in the city of Nablus in 2010.⁵² Not all incidents involve the direct targeting of water infrastructure. We also track forms of slow violence that hamper community access to water by preventing investments in the water sector. We find that Israeli authorities have limited infrastructural development in the water sector, primarily in Area C, by refusing construction permits for building water infrastructure and connecting Palestinian villages to the water system; restricting access to local water sources, including fresh water springs, drilled wells, and rainwater cisterns; and preventing the repair of water infrastructure.⁵³ In reviewing the activities of the JWC, the World Bank found that as of 2009 the Civil Administration had ‘prevented all but one wastewater treatment plant from going ahead’ since the mid-1990s.⁵⁴ In 2009, OCHA-oPt documented an incident in Area C in which Israeli authorities stopped an international NGO from cleaning a water cistern due to lack of a permit.⁵⁵ Owing to the absence of a master plan for some villages located in Area C, such as the village of Al Aqaba (which is also located in a firing range in the Jordan Valley), villagers in 2014 needed to truck in water from other villages and remained unconnected to the water network.⁵⁶ Long-term restrictions on water resource development have meant that parts of the Palestinian population lack access to sufficient water, especially in the summer, and that irrigation for agriculture is adversely impacted. According to the human rights organization B’Tselem, Palestinians in the West Bank consumed on average 80 liters per person a day in 2014; the World Health Organization recommends a 100-liter minimum for human needs. In contrast, the average water consumption for household, commercial, and industrial needs in Israel was 287 liters per person a day.⁵⁷ In the Palestinian city of Nablus, residents were only able to access approximately 65 liters per day, and had to purchase water from private suppliers at a higher cost than that of municipal water.⁵⁸ Interviews further underscore the long-term slow violence impacts of hindering access to water. According to a representative from a human rights organization, policies to restrict access to water have advanced the demographic and economic ‘fragmentation’ of the West Bank, especially in Area C.⁵⁹

The energy sector

Similar to the water sector, we find evidence of targeting energy infrastructure in the West Bank through direct and indirect means. Whereas our data shows that the agricultural and water sectors are the most targeted sectors in the West Bank, we also find a small number of incidents in which energy (four per cent) was targeted over the last decade. Incidents have ranged from damages to electricity transformers to demolishing newly-installed electricity connections to the theft of electricity generators. For example, in 2008 the Israeli military damaged the electricity transformer in the village of Marda.⁶⁰ In 2012 in Bethlehem, OCHA-oPt reported that Israeli authorities had demolished a network of ten electric poles that supplied electricity to a school.⁶¹ Similarly, in 2013 Israeli authorities dismantled a network of 33 electric poles in the Nablus area in Area C.⁶² A number of incidents also involved settlers targeting Palestinian energy infrastructure. For example, in 2010 armed Israeli settlers stole several electricity generators from the Beitillu village in the Ramallah governorate.⁶³ For the Palestinian communities that lack adequate access to electricity, preventing investments in energy access negatively affects livelihoods. One notable example of targeting energy infrastructure is illustrated in the challenges faced by the NGO, COMET-ME, which has sought to provide energy to communities in the Hebron Hills. After the village of Jebbet AdhDhib unsuccessfully requested permission from Israel to connect to the central power grid since 1988, COMET-ME helped install a system of solar panels in the village with the support of Dutch development funding. In 2017, the Civil Administration confiscated 96 solar panels and electronic equipment, cutting power to 30 families.”

The agriculture sector

Agriculture is a vital source of livelihood and income, providing some degree of food security and employment, and is a powerful tie between Palestinian communities and land use in the West Bank. ⁶⁵ As in the water sector, the government of Israel has used a variety of legal and extra-legal means to change the agricultural landscape and expand control over resources in the West Bank.⁶⁶ With regard to ownership of agricultural lands, Israeli authorities adapted provisions from the Ottoman Land Law to expropriate private land and convert it to state property.⁶⁷ Successive Israeli governments under both Labor and Likud leaderships facilitated the construction of Jewish-only settlements and bypass roads, often under the guise of security, as a form of de facto annexation of Palestinian agricultural land.⁶⁸ The growth of settlements further separated satellite villages in Areas A and B from each

other and from agricultural lands in Area C.⁶⁹ Agriculture is the most targeted sector in the West Bank, according to our data. Of 685 incidents in the West Bank, 516 of the incidents (75 per cent) were in the agricultural sector and nearly all directed at Palestinian citizens' livelihoods. Unlike the water and energy sectors, in which the Israeli authorities or military were primarily responsible for the destruction of infrastructure, Israeli settlers carried out approximately 65 per cent of the incidents in the agricultural sector. Nearly 70 per cent of the events collected involved olive and fruit trees. Targeting olives trees encapsulates the slow violence of resource capture in the West Bank, as olive trees are central to Palestinian identity, struggle, and economic livelihoods.⁷⁰ The Israeli military has justified uprooting trees in order to construct roads in Area C, conduct military operations or because trees were deemed too close to the separation wall. As Israel has moved forward with the construction of the separation barrier, human rights organizations have observed that the wall cuts some Palestinian agricultural lands from water supplies. This lowers agricultural production and market access in the short term and undermines sustainable livelihoods over the long term."

The duty of UCLG members is to take those issues into consideration and making elaborate plans upon resolving the deficiencies that detected in different region and put them on the table.

Economic Issues

Disputed areas often face economic problems and these problems compelling regarding countries to build more livable cities and implement Sustainable Development Goals in cities.

"Colletta, Kostner and Wiederhofer (1996), cited in Abegunde (2011), writing on land conflicts and their implications to sustainable development, noted that all types of conflicts on land entail significant private and social costs in human environment. Conflicts over land and natural resources are obstructing the efforts of the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and other key development priorities in the areas of the environment, peace and security and democratic development (International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 2006). Social and economic development for most of the African population is relied on the access to land, since majority of the population depends on land and landbased resources for their livelihoods (Sekeris, 2010; Zwan, 2011). According to Azadi and Vanhaute (2019), land plays a central role in the economies of developing nations; and it is a significant asset for most people without which they cannot do much. Any conflict on land therefore, will affect adversely the socio-economic development



and progress of a people since land is the fundamental resource for the rural area residents to increase their agricultural productivity (Asgele, Kassa, Sisay & Gebremedhin, 2015). Jin Zhou and Luo (2018), emphasised that land is the basic carrier of all human production and living activities. According to them, economic activities do not occur without land. Therefore, if any land is in dispute, economic process and development on the land will be frustrated. No meaningful investment will ever take place on a land that is in dispute, until the dispute is reasonably resolved.

Majority of the respondents 321 (61.4%) in table 10 indicated that land is a foundation of a community's economic and developmental wellbeing, while 42 (8.0%) of the respondents held the opinion that land is an asset of great value to a community. The opinion of the majority is in agreement with the findings of the qualitative data of the study. In the FGDs, the participants indicated that land is an essential economic asset which serves as a foundation for economic progress and sustainable development. In the FGD at Nkwelle-Ezunaka, a participant noted that; Land is a great economic asset from which everybody wants to make a living. People perceive land as a valuable material possession and a great source of money and wealth which they cannot easily give up... No community or individual would want to lose such asset as land knowing that it is a great wealth in itself, a source of great wealth and the foundation of their existence as a people (Male, 59 years, lawyer, Urban dweller)."

Figure 1 shows that a majority of 60.4% of the respondents noted that backwardness of economic progress in the area is the likeliest effect of violent land dispute, while 1.7% of the respondents were of the view that retardation in farm produce is the likeliest effect. The finding is in agreement with the findings of the qualitative data. In the FGD in Umuleri, a participant established that; The volatility of the region has deprived it of much physical development. Many of the people who buy land in the region do not build anything solid and meaningful in terms of company or industry... People, who build residential homes that are tenantable, on the land they bought; and who are not indigenes of the region, build very low cost houses; all in the fear of what might happen anytime. The battles were fought over the ownership of some parcels of land within the region. Lives were lost on both sides of the divide. Yet over the years, population of the indigenes had almost doubled but economic progress is still moving with much difficulty. The region is obviously so backward economically when compared to other regions of the State, all because of violence consequent upon land dispute (Male, 63 years, building contractor, rural dweller).

Also another report that published by UNCTAD examines the economic problems about Gaza territory which is a disputed area;

Since the early 1990s, Israel, the occupying Power, has imposed restrictions on the movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza. The restrictions have been greatly intensified since the 2007 takeover by Hamas of the Gaza Strip. For 17 years, 2.3 million Palestinian people have been confined to a small, 365 km² enclave with one of the highest population densities in the world.

Entry of goods has been reduced to basic needs and humanitarian relief. In addition, Gaza has endured numerous extensive military operations in just over a decade and a half: in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, 2022 and May 2023 and since October 2023. The restrictions, closures and recurrent military operations have resulted in the utter destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and productive base. The hollowing out of the economy has cultivated a profound dependency on external aid. The war that followed the attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023 devastated the remnants of Gaza's economy and infrastructure. The intense military operations in Gaza resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian, environmental and social catastrophe and propelled Gaza from de-development to utter ruin. The far-reaching repercussions will linger for years to come, and it may take decades to return Gaza to the status quo ante.

The income loss in Gaza caused by 16 years of closures and severe economic and movement restrictions and repeated military operations is staggering. According to thorough estimations described in the present report, in the absence of those constraints, by the end of 2023 it is estimated that Gaza's gross domestic product (GDP) would have been, on average, 77.6 per cent higher than its actual level. This implies a conservatively estimated cumulative loss of \$35.8 billion (in constant 2015 dollars) of unrealized GDP potential during the period 2007–2023 – equivalent to 17 times the GDP of Gaza in 2023.

The damage caused by the war between 7 October 2023 and 20 May 2024 reduced GDP per capita in Gaza by over one half, while other factors redoubled the income loss. Furthermore, physical damage to Gaza's infrastructure caused during the period from 7 October 2023 until the end of January 2024 was estimated at \$18.5 billion – equivalent to seven times Gaza's GDP in 2022.

Conclusion

Disputed areas face plenty of problems due to socio-economic situations, conflicts in regarding areas and political frictions between sovereign groups. The mission of the delegates are facing multidimensional matters by dismantling these problems and analyzing in detailed way. The last description part of the study guide will contain the recommendation of Under Secretary General for planning the current of the debate.

It is important to highlight it second time that UCLG committee is oftenly not related with political situation of the local states, but related with working upon initiatives for providing better life standards for citizens and encourage other municipalities with those ideas that are going to shape the world. The form of the debate will be shaped in this way.

Democratic inrepresentation and cultural harm are related discussion topics as well as economic issues and infrastructural problems are related. Delegates should stress the significancy of democratic representation in local governance in order to build cities fulfilled with values of community within, and cultural conservation should be taken first into considiration in urban planning.

Another and most important issues are about the economic needs and lack of infrastructures in cities. The flow of the debate should go on with discussing the needs of cities and analyzing the situation of civilians accommodating in regarding areas. The needs should be considered and projects should be planned and implemented into territories. The role of international organizations should be argued and delegates must plan a well-organized smart cities that available for futures modern world characteristics.

Questions to be Addressed;

- 1) How should UCLG approach disputed territories without violating the principles of neutrality, municipal autonomy, and local representation?
- 2) How can UCLG support cultural heritage protection in disputed territories where political tensions threaten cultural sites, identity, language, or community practices?
- 3) What strategies can local governments adopt to address economic stagnation caused by the disputed status of a territory?
- 4) How can essential urban services (water, electricity, transport, waste management) be maintained or rebuilt in territories where governance is divided or contested?
- 5) How can municipalities in disputed territories ensure democratic representation for residents who lack formal political recognition, limited voting rights, or exclusion from official administrative structures due to the contested status of the region?
- 6) How can UCLG integrate comprehensive urban planning for disputed territories while considering cultural conservation and economic and infrastructural deficiencies?

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