

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Positions for the General Assembly Plenary

I. Navigating Iconoclasm during Periods of Conflict and Resolution

Iconoclasm is a problem that Afghanistan knows all too well. It is in the interest of all countries around the world that we come together as an international community and learn to deal with Iconoclasms but also to prevent them. **Internationally**, there has been a growing number of cases of iconoclasm around the world, including the destruction of ancient sites around Timbuktu in Mali, Hindu sites around Pakistan, and the Palmyra in Syria by ISIS. Unfortunately, Afghanistan is also familiar with this type of destruction. **Domestically**, Afghanistan is home to a great many sites from many ancient religions and cultures. It has also been ground zero for many iconoclasts during the brutal wars it has faced, such as the destruction of the two massive Buddhas of Bamiyan by the Taliban during the U.S. invasion of our country in 2001. Since the modern Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was founded our 2004 constitution, article 9 adopts the “Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties” by the Ministry of Justice. **Historically**, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan supports the moves of UNESCO to deal with the attacks of iconoclasts, and has worked continuously under the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Culture and National Heritage*. From 2003 to 2012, Afghanistan worked with Italy to with emergency consolidation and restoration of monuments in Herat and Jam, Phases I and II, while also being a participating member of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee since 2002. We have done all this while also fighting a continuous war against the Taliban. After the August 2021 takeover of our country by the Taliban, Afghanistan needs the help of the international community now more than ever.

It is imperative that the international community work together to stop the destruction of culturally significant sites and items. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan asks this committee adopt **C.A.R.P – Consolidation, Action, Restoration, and Prevention** of world heritage sites. Goals would be the consolidation/protection of any at risk artifacts/sites in Afghanistan and around the world followed by the immediate removal of these items if they are susceptible to iconoclasm as the United Nations did in 2003 with the Afghan National Museum. **Action** would be any necessary intervention because of countries that lack the means to protect specific artifacts and religious sites on their own. **Restoration** of items and sites in countries would be done in the case of any damage in order to ensure its continued longevity and existence. Steps to **prevent** the risk of items and sites that conflict may cause. It is the belief of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that the use of **C.A.R.P.** will help navigate iconoclasm during periods of conflict and reconciliation in Afghanistan and around the world.

II. Improving Access to Quality Education for Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is currently plagued with various issues, with one of the current biggest issues being a near total lack of quality education as well as a large number of people within Afghanistan being at risk for extreme poverty or are already part of the growing poverty. The problem with literacy rates in Afghanistan however is on an upswing since 1980

when the rate was at 30% for males and less than 10% for females. As of 2020, the current rate for both men is around 50% and for women just under 20% respectively, significant improvements via direct assistance by the United Nation's UNESCO programs. According to the United Nation's own UNCIEF program, the number of children living in Afghanistan that are out of school is currently at an alarming 3.7 million of children, that is just over 10% of children total in our nation. Another tragic factor is that the problem of the lack of a proper or any kind of education is hitting the girls of Afghanistan even harder than the boys, with the percentage children lacking education being girls is at 60%. This percentage also comes directly from the UNCIEF program. The United Nations has addressed the lack of education in other nations many times before with an example being in 2019 when the UNESCO worked together with the program Education Cannot Wait (ECW). With these two programs coming together they were able to finance what was referred to as "education response activities", here they were able to provide for over 600,000 people living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Lack of education however is not the only problem that needs to be addressed here, Afghanistan is currently also experiencing massive poverty throughout the nation which sadly comes as no surprise given the history of the nation. According to the Asian Development Bank, roughly 47.3% of the population of Afghanistan is currently living below the poverty line and 34.3% of those employed in Afghanistan have less than a \$1.90 of purchasing power. The number of those without any type of employment is currently at 11.7% all of these figures also coming from ADB. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sent a dire warning last year in regards to the economic situation and poverty in Afghanistan, saying we are facing "catastrophic deterioration", they also warn that because of this the entire population of our nation which is 38 million is at risk of being plunged into near universal poverty. A worst case scenario was drawn up by this same study which warned that as many as 97% if Afghans could possibly be below the poverty line which is an extremely massive increase from what it currently is.

To combat these two major problems facing the country there is need for outside help, so today we ask the United Nations to do as they have in the past and aid us in rebuilding our education programs as well as helping to fight poverty throughout the nation. First, we will like to bring up what we are calling the, **Children Are the Future (C.A.D.)** program. This program help combat literacy rates and lack of proper education for the children of Afghanistan, by building schools, providing a popper education system, paying teachers be they other Afghans or those working with the United Nations, and helping to keep the schools funded. Our second proposition addresses the extreme poverty, under this proposition. Afghans of working education who are not receiving an education will receive aide in helping them find a job or they will be taught the proper skills need for whatever position they desire if applicable. Making sure the people of our nation are receiving an education as well as have stable and decent paying jobs will help bolster the economy and aid in the stabilization of Afghanistan.