



HIGH SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

TEST GUIDE

LIVE THE DREAM
OF THE **UNITED NATIONS**

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INTRODUCTION

Each delegate attending the High School Model United Nations (HSMUN) program promoted by Consules will take an active role in a challenging training course. During this course, each participant will acquire the necessary knowledge and communication skills allowing her/him to act as a delegate in the simulation.

The delegates need to possess both intellectual curiosity and diligence, characteristics that will allow them to perform properly in the negotiations.

In order to receive a scholarship sponsored by Consules, besides the economic requirements, applicants have to take a written examination also.

The following guide contains all the instructions and materials required for the HSMUN test. The test gives no advantage to older or more experienced students: it is based only on the materials collected by Consules and it is tailored in order to reward the students who will carefully follow the instructions and fully understand all the suggested readings, not those who possess a greater educational background.

The test is composed of 30 multiple choice questions concerning selected chapters of the UN Charter (15 questions) and selected from the press articles and reports included in this guide (15 questions). The language of the test is English and the length is of 30 minutes. Each question has four possible choices and only one correct answer. The evaluation criteria is the following: +1,0 point for each correct answer; -0,5 point for wrong and/or multiple answers; 0 point for unanswered questions.

Two sample questions, one for each part of the guide, are included below in order to acquaint the student with the test. All the questions will be based on the chapter of the UN charter and on the articles from selected international press contained in this guide. Students have to read carefully all the documents included. No additional material is required for the preparation of the exam.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Q1. According to Article 10 of UN Charter, the General Assembly may discuss:

- 1) Only questions related to the admission of new Member States
- 2) Any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter
- 3) Only questions related to maintenance of peace and security
- 4) Any questions or any matters which is under consideration of Un Security Council

Q2. The Northern Limit Line (NLL) between North and South Korea:

- 1) Is a border set down by the US-led UN force at the end of the 1980's that only recently has been accepted by Pyongyang.
- 2) Is a border set down by the US-led UN force at the end of the Korean war which has never been accepted by Pyongyang.
- 3) Is an arbitrary border set down by the North Korean regime
- 4) Is an arbitrary border set down by the South Korean government

PART I

CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Selection of Articles from Chapter I, III, IV, V, VI, VII

CHAPTER I - PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

Article 1

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Article 2

The Organisation and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following Principles.

1. The Organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.
2. All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.
3. All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

5. All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.

6. The Organisation shall ensure that states which are not Members of the United Nations act in accordance with these Principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.

7. Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.

CHAPTER III - ORGANS

Article 7

1. There are established as the principal organs of the United Nations: a General Assembly, a Security Council, an Economic and Social Council, a Trusteeship Council, an International Court of Justice, and a Secretariat.

2. Such subsidiary organs as may be found necessary may be established in accordance with the present Charter.

CHAPTER IV - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COMPOSITION

Article 9

1. The General Assembly shall consist of all the Members of the United Nations.

2. Each Member shall have not more than five representatives in the General Assembly.

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

Article 11

1. The General Assembly may consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both.

2. The General Assembly may discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it by any Member of the United Nations, or by the Security Council, or by a state which is not a Member of the United Nations in accordance with Article 35, paragraph 2, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations with regard to any such questions to the state or states concerned or to the Security Council or to both. Any such question on which action is necessary shall be referred to the Security Council by the General Assembly either before or after discussion.

3. The General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security.

4. The powers of the General Assembly set forth in this Article shall not limit the general scope of Article 10.

Article 12

1. While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests.

2. The Secretary-General, with the consent of the Security Council, shall notify the General Assembly at each session of any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security which are being dealt with by the Security Council and shall similarly notify the General Assembly, or the Members of the United Nations if the General Assembly is not in session, immediately the Security Council ceases to deal with such matters.

Article 14

Subject to the provisions of Article 12, the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the present Charter setting forth the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.

VOTING

Article 18

1. Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.

2. Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of Article 86, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.

3. Decisions on other questions, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

CHAPTER V - THE SECURITY COUNCIL

COMPOSITION

Article 23

1. The Security Council shall consist of fifteen Members of the United Nations. The Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America shall be permanent members of the Security Council. The General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council, due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organisation, and also to equitable geographical distribution.

2. The non-permanent members of the Security Council shall be elected for a term of two years. In the first election of the non-permanent members after the increase of the membership of the Security Council from eleven to fifteen, two of the four additional members shall be chosen for a term of one year. A retiring member shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.

3. Each member of the Security Council shall have one representative.

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

Article 24

1. In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.

2. In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. The specific powers granted to the Security Council for the discharge of these duties are laid down in Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII.

3. The Security Council shall submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration.

VOTING

Article 27

1. Each member of the Security Council shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members.
3. Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.

CHAPTER VI - PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Article 33.

1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.
2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

Article 34

The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 35

1. Any Member of the United Nations may bring any dispute, or any situation of the nature referred to in Article 34, to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly.
2. A state which is not a Member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly any dispute to which it is a party if it accepts in advance, for the purposes of the dispute, the obligations of pacific settlement provided in the present Charter.
3. The proceedings of the General Assembly in respect of matters brought to its attention under this Article will be subject to the provisions of Articles 11 and 12.

Article 36

1. The Security Council may, at any stage of a dispute of the nature referred to in Article 33 or of a situation of like nature, recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment.
2. The Security Council should take into consideration any procedures for the settlement of the dispute which have already been adopted by the parties.
3. In making recommendations under this Article the Security Council should also take into consideration that legal disputes should as a general rule be referred by the parties to the International Court of Justice in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of the Court.

Article 37

1. Should the parties to a dispute of the nature referred to in Article 33 fail to settle it by the means indicated in that Article, they shall refer it to the Security Council.
2. If the Security Council deems that the continuance of the dispute is in fact likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, it shall decide whether to take action under Article 36 or to recommend such terms of settlement as it may consider appropriate.

CHAPTER VII - ACTION WITH RESPECT TO THREATS TO THE PEACE, BREACHES OF THE PEACE, AND ACTS OF AGGRESSION

Article 39

The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Article 41

The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Article 42

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.

Article 43

1. All Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security.
2. Such agreement or agreements shall govern the numbers and types of forces, their degree of readiness and general location, and the nature of the facilities and assistance to be provided.
3. The agreement or agreements shall be negotiated as soon as possible on the initiative of the Security Council. They shall be concluded between the Security Council and Members or between the Security Council and groups of Members and shall be subject to ratification by the signatory states in accordance with their respective constitutional processes.

Article 45

In order to enable the United Nations to take urgent military measures, Members shall hold immediately available national air-force contingents for combined international enforcement action. The strength and degree of readiness of these contingents and plans for their combined action shall be determined within the limits laid down in the special agreement or agreements referred to in Article 43, by the Security Council with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee.

Article 46

Plans for the application of armed force shall be made by the Security Council with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee.

Article 47

1. There shall be established a Military Staff Committee to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council's military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, the employment and command of forces placed at its disposal, the regulation of armaments, and possible disarmament.
2. The Military Staff Committee shall consist of the Chiefs of Staff of the permanent members of the Security Council or their representatives. Any Member of the United Nations not permanently represented on the Committee shall be invited by the Committee to be associated with it when the efficient discharge of the Committee's responsibilities requires the participation of that Member in its work.
3. The Military Staff Committee shall be responsible under the Security Council for the strategic direction of any armed forces placed at the disposal of the Security Council. Questions relating to the command of such forces shall be worked out subsequently.
4. The Military Staff Committee, with the authorization of the Security Council and after consultation with appropriate regional agencies, may establish regional sub-committees.

Article 48

1. The action required to carry out the decisions of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security shall be taken by all the Members of the United Nations or by some of them, as the Security Council may determine.
2. Such decisions shall be carried out by the Members of the United Nations directly and through their action in the appropriate international agencies of which they remembers.

Article 51

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

PART II

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Selection of articles from CNN News, World Bank, Bloomberg, BBC News, Aljazeera

CNN - SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH DARK MATTER

Nearly a mile under the Black Hills of South Dakota sits a canister of the atomic element xenon, chilled cold enough to turn it to liquid. The canister is the Large Underground Xenon, or LUX, detector -- the most sensitive dark matter detector in the world. But the results of a new analysis by the LUX Collaboration has left scientists perplexed about a substance that has guided the formation of the stars and galaxies since the cosmos began: dark matter.

Since the 1930s, scientists have known that there was something unexplained about the heavens. Swiss astronomer Fritz Zwicky studied the Coma Cluster, a group of about a thousand galaxies, held together by their mutual gravitational interactions. There was only one problem: The galaxies were moving so fast that gravity shouldn't have been able to hold them together. The cluster should have been ripped apart. In the 1970s, astronomers Vera Rubin and her collaborator Kenneth Ford studied the rotation rates of individual galaxies and came to the same conclusion. There appeared to be no way the observed matter contained in galaxies would generate enough gravity to keep the stars locked in their stately orbits.

These observations, combined with many other independent lines of evidence, led scientists to consider several possible explanations. These explanations included the possibility that Newton's familiar laws of motion might be wrong, or that our understanding of gravity needed to be modified. Both these proposals, though, have been largely ruled out.

Another idea was that there was somehow invisible matter that was generating more gravity. Initial ideas centered on the possibility of black holes, brown dwarf stars or rogue planets roaming the cosmos, but those explanations have also been dismissed. Using a ruthless process of elimination worthy of Sherlock Holmes, astronomers have come to believe the explanation for all of the gravitational anomalies is that there must be some sort of new and undiscovered type of matter in the universe, which Zwicky in 1933 named "dunkle materie," or dark matter.

For decades, scientists have tried to work out the properties of dark matter and, while we don't know everything, we know a lot. From astronomical observations, we know there is five times more dark matter in the universe than all the "billions and billions" of stars and galaxies mentioned in Carl Sagan's oft-quoted phrase. We also know that dark matter cannot have electrical charge, otherwise it would interact with light and we would have seen it. In fact, by a process of elimination, we know that dark matter is not any known form of matter. It is something new. Of this, scientists are sure.

However, scientists are less sure about the details.

For decades now, the most popular theoretical idea was that dark matter was a WIMP, short for weakly interacting massive particle. A WIMP would have a mass in the range of 10 to perhaps 100 times heavier than the familiar proton. It was a particle like a heavy neutron (but definitely not a neutron), massive, electrically neutral, and stable on time scales long compared to the lifetime of the universe.

The WIMP was popular for two main reasons.

First, when cosmologists modeled the Big Bang and included WIMPs in the calculation, the WIMPs actively participated in the earliest phases of the birth of the universe but, as the universe expanded and cooled, the space between them grew large enough that they stopped interacting with one another. When scientists calculated how much mass should be tied up in the relic WIMPs, they found it was five times as much mass as ordinary matter, exactly the amount of dark matter seen by astronomers.

The second reason for the popularity of the WIMP idea is that it explained a mystery in particle physics. The recently discovered Higgs boson has a mass of about 130 times that of the proton. Theoretical considerations predicted a much larger mass, but if a WIMP exists, it is easy to reconcile the prediction and measurement. These two reasons account for the popularity of the WIMP idea and are called "the WIMP miracle."

The LUX measurement is simply the most recent and most powerful of a long line of searches for dark matter. They found no evidence for the existence of dark matter and were able to rule out a significant range of possible WIMP properties and masses.

Now this doesn't mean the WIMP idea is dead or that dark matter has been disproven. There remain WIMP masses that haven't been ruled out, and there exist other possible dark matter candidates, including objects called sterile neutrinos, which are possible cousins of the well-known neutrinos generated in nuclear reactors and in the sun. Another recurring proposed dark matter particle is the axion, suggested in the 1970s to explain mysteries in the asymmetry of subatomic processes. (Although neither sterile neutrinos, nor axions, have been observed).

Nobody knows what the final answer will be. That's why we do research. But there is no question that there is a mystery in the cosmos. Galaxies don't act as we expect. The LUX measurement is a powerful new bit of information for astronomers to consider and has added to the general confusion, forcing scientists to take another look at ideas other than WIMPs.

All this reminds me of the old Buffalo Springfield song: "There's something happening here. What it is ain't exactly clear ..."

WORLD BANK - URBAN VIOLENCE: A CHALLENGE OF EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS

In the early 1990s, fear of crime and violence was a defining feature of life in Medellin, Colombia's second-largest city. In 1991, the homicide rate peaked at a staggering 381 per 100,000 inhabitants, making Medellin the most violent place on earth.

Fast-forward 25 years: homicides have plummeted to about 20 per 100,000 inhabitants, and Medellin now ranks as one of the most livable and innovative cities in Latin America. Several other cities in the region have achieved similar progress, such as Cali in Colombia, or Diadema in the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo.

This was no coincidence. Each of these three cities managed to reduce crime and violence significantly by implementing programs that were tailored to their specific situation and sought to eradicate the root causes of violence.

In Medellin, improvements in the security situation resulted both from the dismantling of violent drug cartels and a series of innovative urban and social development projects that

helped integrate impoverished hillside neighborhoods with the rest of the city. In Diadema, studies revealed that a large proportion of crimes occurred at night, in specific streets, and were directly related to alcohol consumption.

Based on these findings, the city targeted its interventions on hot spots, prohibited the sale of alcohol in bars after 11 p.m., and combined social interventions to strengthen social and human capital. Three years later, assaults against women were down 56%, while the homicide rate fell by 45%—saving more than 100 lives a year.

Unfortunately, these promising results are in stark contrast with the experience of many other cities. Despite impressive GDP growth and a sharp decline in extreme poverty, Latin America and the Caribbean still sees an annual average of 24 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers a rate of 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants or higher to be characteristic of endemic violence. This means that, in many countries, violence has effectively reached epidemic proportions.

Youth at risk

If violence is an epidemic, youth are—by far—the largest risk group. In Latin America, the homicide rate for males aged 15-24 reaches 92 per 100,000, almost four times the regional average. Young people aged 25-29 years, predominately males, are also the main perpetrators of crime and violence, according to a report due to be released this fall by the Office of the Chief Economist in the World Bank's Latin American and Caribbean region.

The forthcoming study—“Stop the Violence in Latin America: A Look at Prevention from Cradle to Adulthood”—takes an evidence-based look at innovative violence prevention policies that have been shown to reduce antisocial behavior early in life and patterns of crime in youth and adulthood. The study also sheds light on the complex landscape of violence in the region.

“As bleak as global and regional statistics might be, success stories like Medellín, Cali, and Diadema send one clear message: with the right policies and a long-term commitment to crime reduction, urban youth violence can be prevented,” said Markus Kostner, World Bank Practice Manager for Social Development in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. “We have time-tested precedents proving that well-designed strategies focused on prevention produce tangible and lasting results.”

Treating violence as a public health issue

The most effective interventions address the violence epidemic as a public health crisis. Largely inspired by epidemiology, successful policies look at violence as a phenomenon nurtured by a combination of risk factors derived from individual and societal circumstances, including exposure to domestic violence during childhood, high inequality, poor school systems, and lack of employment opportunities, among many others.

Violence usually festers when several of these factors interact in combinations that may differ from country to country, and even city to city.

“That’s why successful violence prevention strategies are almost always multi-sectoral and context-specific,” said Chloë Fèvre, Senior Social Development Specialist at the World Bank. “They also need to be gender-sensitive and put young people front and center: the earlier in life those risk factors can be neutralized, the higher the chances of success.”

Making violence prevention a development priority

Taking action against violence is a development imperative. Endemic violence translates into less productivity, poorer health outcomes and high security costs. The cumulative cost of violence is staggering—up to 10 percent of GDP in some countries—with negative long-term consequences on human, social, economic, and sustainable development.

The World Bank Group is engaging partners around the world to increase the research and data on violence, as well as incorporating prevention strategies in development projects. Examples include:

- Analytical work on the value of prevention, laying the foundation for solid, evidence-based policymaking. Building on research from the University of Chicago's "Becoming a Man" (BAM) initiative, which targets high-school aged youth—the World Bank is testing and evaluating BAM's principles in Mexico.
- Urban and community development programs with violence prevention components, such as the Integrated Community Development Project in Jamaica and the Teresina Enhancing Municipal Governance and Quality of Life Project in Brazil, which includes the development and implementation of a municipal violence prevention plan.
- The Honduras Safer Municipalities Project is the first World Bank operation to focus exclusively on violence prevention. A component of the project, the youth employment program, is currently undergoing a rigorous evaluation. The study will look at how vocational training, temporary jobs, and cognitive behavioral therapy shape the life of youth in Honduras.
- Facilitating knowledge sharing between cities and countries, and uniting efforts with other partners, including the MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities Initiative, USAID, and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

BBC - THE GREEK CRISIS IS SHAKING THE IMF TO ITS CORE

The Greek crisis, having shaken the eurozone to its core, is likely to have a similar seismic effect on another massive institution, the IMF.

The International Monetary Fund's exposure is small compared with the Eurozone.

In the 2010 bailout it paid out over €20.7bn and in the following 2012 rescue it contributed €11.6bn

The real threat is to its credibility as the world's biggest multinational lender.

It is a story of conflict with Europe - and with itself.

On July 7 IMF managing director Christine Lagarde said that the situation in Greece demanded a restructuring of debt.

Chief economist Olivier Blanchard told the BBC a few days later that the IMF had been privately urging the European creditors for several months that sizeable debt relief was the only credible option.

By going public the IMF hoped it could swing the argument against the European creditors, in particular Germany who believed debt forgiveness was unacceptable.

In what was obviously a co-ordinated move US Treasury secretary Jack Lew came out with a near identical statement.

In short, they argued Greece's debt position was unsustainable. There had to be restructuring.

Fraction

As the world knows, the agreement was proposed with Greece - without any debt restructuring at all, as the IMF stood by.

Now the IMF has made a dramatic attack on the deal, saying it will have nothing to do with it.

It's a picture of fraction and impotence that could do lasting damage to an organisation that has been the world's lender of last resort for 70 years.

The problem started when the IMF entered the euro crisis in 2010 with the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Commission (EC) as part of the Troika.

Many believe that as an international economic institution it was on thin ice dallying with a political construct such as the euro, not to mention the European powers represented through the EC and the ECB.

Susan Schadler, Senior Fellow, CIGI and former deputy director, European Department IMF says: "It unleashed unusually severe political influence on the IMF, and in turn the IMF could not bring the full force of its vast experience in managing financial crises and ensure that all options for dealing with the crisis were put on the table and carefully considered."

Perhaps more important, it broke its own rules.

Its Exceptional Access Policy, which allows nations in dire straits access to its funds, has four strict criteria.

Criterion number two requires that a "rigorous and systematic analysis indicates that there is a high probability that the member's public debt is sustainable in the medium term".

IMF officials in all honesty could not agree even back in 2010 that, with the kind of reforms and austerity measures needed, Greece's economy could sustainably support the billions of euros of debt on offer.

However the criteria were tweaked, allowing the sustainability issue to be pushed to one side on the grounds that there was a real risk that the Greek crisis was a systemic risk to the international financial system.

Reputation

But the sustainability issue has come back to haunt the IMF, with Greece defaulting on its IMF debt, the first developed nation to do so.

Now, by demanding that Greece's debts are "sustainable" it is quoting the very criterion it laid aside five years ago.

Ms Schadler says: "Better late than never, but it is very very late, and the five years has been damaging not just to its credibility but to its effectiveness in how it gets countries out of debt crises."

By weakening the criteria by which it operates the IMF jeopardised its reputation as the world's lender of last resort.

That reputation is crucial.

It has allowed the IMF to claim "preferred status" as a lender, i.e. it can generally demand to be first in line when a country pays off its debts. That standing as the leader of the world's international lenders allows it to lend at low rates and impose strict conditions on its borrowers.

Certainly, those conditions have been the target of criticism over the decades.

Many believe it has been a slave to free market economics, imposed inappropriate privatisation programmes, tough spending cuts and high interest rates which can turn modest problems into full blown crises.

Critical position

There is truth in all of this. But it is also worth remembering the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative has approved debt reduction packages for 36 countries, 30 of them in Africa, which over time is providing \$76 billion in debt-service relief.

Philippa Malmgren, a former Special Assistant for Economic Policy to President Bush, believes the IMF is at a critical position in its history - because there are others only too ready to step into its shoes.

"China and other developing countries have been asking for changes in the way the IMF is run - and they have not got those changes. So they have gone off and set up an alternative, the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

"Make no mistake, this is designed as a replacement for the IMF - a whole new architecture designed to funnel investment into China's own markets and its own companies."

"The IMF's level of misjudgement here in Greece is of epic proportions. If you can't save Greece how can you save bigger problems when they come along? Like France. Because the real problem isn't Greece, it's the bigger ones further down the track."

BLOOMBERG - AMERICA'S NEW NUCLEAR-ARMED MISSILE COULD COST \$85 BILLION

The U.S. Air Force's program to develop and field a new intercontinental ballistic missile to replace the aging Minuteman III in the nuclear arsenal is now projected to cost at least \$85 billion, about 36 percent more than a preliminary estimate by the service.

Even the \$85 billion calculated by the Pentagon's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation office is a placeholder number that's at the low end of potential costs, according to an Aug. 23 memo from Pentagon weapons buyer Frank Kendall to Air Force Secretary Deborah James. It includes \$22.6 billion for research and development, \$61.5 billion for procurement and \$718 million for related military construction.

Lockheed Martin Corp., Boeing Co. and Northrop Grumman Corp. are all competing to build the new ICBMs. But the latest estimate may add to debate about the cost and need for the planned modernization of all three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad of land, air and sea weapons. The nuclear modernization plan contributes to what defense analysts call a gathering "bow wave" of spending in the coming decade on major weapons that the next presidents will face. At this stage of the ICBM program "there is significant uncertainty about program costs" because "the historical data is limited and there has been a long gap since the last" such development program, Kendall wrote.

The \$85 billion estimate must be revised no later than March 2018 once missile designs are more advanced, technical risks are reduced and the service has a better understanding of overall costs, Kendall said in the memo.

Earlier Story: Pentagon Poised to Approve Work on Missile

Nonetheless, Kendall approved proceeding with early development and efforts to reduce technology risks of the new ICBM. He directed the service to move toward buying 642 missiles at an average cost of \$66.4 million each to support a deployed force of 400 weapons and to budget at least \$1.25 billion annually from 2036 to 2040 for operations and support costs.

The Pentagon's ability to estimate the cost of the new Ground Based Strategic Deterrent was limited by the "incompleteness and significant age of" the "data for comparable ICBM and submarine launched ballistic missiles dating back to the 1960s through the early 1990s," Kendall wrote.

'Greater Risk'

The Pentagon and Air Force are "accepting greater risk by going with" the \$85 billion estimate that's at the lower end of its calculations, Kingston Reif, an analyst with the Arms Control Association in Washington who follows the program, said in an e-mail. "From a good-government perspective" it is "better to build in contingency and plan for and prioritize around a bigger bill now, lest a sudden big cost increase threaten to wreck the budget and the program five to 10 years from now."

Kendall wrote that inflation assumptions and the defense industry's capability to produce the missiles are major sources of cost uncertainty. Still, he said the \$85 billion placeholder is "the most reasonable estimate of program cost at this point."

In addition to the new nuclear systems, the bow wave of coming costs includes nine Air Force conventional systems and plans for increased construction of naval vessels such as a second Ford-class aircraft carrier.

For the air component of the nuclear triad, Northrop defeated a Lockheed-Boeing team in October for the right to build a new dual-use bomber that can carry both nuclear and conventional weapons, a project valued at as much as \$80 billion.

At sea, the Navy is planning to replace its Ohio-class nuclear-armed submarines through a production program now estimated at \$122 billion, which doesn't include development.

That estimate will be updated by year's end as the Pentagon reviews moving the program into full development.

Official Beginning

Kendall's decision to let the ICBM program move forward marks the official beginning of the technology development stage, with spending increasing from about \$75 million this year to \$1.6 billion in 2021 and \$2.6 billion in 2022, according to the Pentagon estimate.

The "program plans to buy enough missiles to maintain a 400-missile deployed force through 2075," Air Force spokeswoman Leah Bryant said in an e-mail. "The overall number of missiles acquired in the inventory may vary depending on testing, evaluation, maintenance," she said.

The Air Force made its early estimate last year that the new ICBM program would cost \$62.3 billion for research, development and production as well as command and control systems and infrastructure. That number, as well as the new \$85 billion estimate, is calculated in so-called "then-year," or current-year, dollars.

Bryant said "it is important to keep in mind that at this stage," as "in any acquisition program, there can still be some uncertainty about projected" ICBM costs because "the historical data used for estimates, whether ours or another organization's estimate, are limited and very dated." The last ICBM development occurred in the 1980s, she said.

Kendall's memo was provided to the staff of the Senate and House defense committees last week.

ALJAZEERA - NIGERIA'S FIGHT AGAINST ILL-HEALTH AND MALNUTRITION

As world leaders prepare to converge in New York for the 71st United Nations General Assembly, the delegates face an even more diverse set of challenges than usual.

The peace and development paradigm through which the annual meeting is held has a further dynamic to deal with this year, which is the proliferation of multiple humanitarian crises. While some are solvable, the crises in Syria and South Sudan seem intractable.

The situation in northeast Nigeria where the UN has estimated that nearly 4.5 million Nigerians, already threatened by Boko Haram, are now at risk of food insecurity and famine is also a cause for concern.

That such a situation can arise in Africa's largest economy is a sad indictment of Nigeria's continuing inability to fully protect and provide for some of its most vulnerable citizens. We can and must act now.

Failing healthcare

The food crisis is a result of three factors: conflict with Boko Haram; the need for more aid financing; and, most critically, the lack of state structures and coordination to help those at risk.

The conflict with Boko Haram is showing tentative signs of success. The terrorist group has been pushed out of successive towns and villages it once occupied in northeast Nigeria. The army is, slowly but surely, reasserting control and security over the region.

But this is only one part of puzzle. The conflict has left widespread devastation in its wake, and women and children have borne the brunt. Of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno, Yobe and Gombe, children account for up to 50 percent of those in need of humanitarian assistance.

The appalling health conditions of camps for the displaced and host cities alike were brought sharply to the public eye last month, when it was reported that only weeks after declaring Nigeria polio-free, this life-threatening illness left two toddlers paralysed in Borno.

The precarious situation in the north has prevented up to half a million children from getting polio vaccinations in the past year, as the weakness of the healthcare system has been compounded by regional instability, which has rendered remote areas increasingly inaccessible to health workers and aid.

Failure to vaccinate can wreak havoc across communities for years to come, making it absolutely vital that everything is done to ensure that all children receive the necessary immunisations, regardless of the challenges that this may pose, and that every immunisation is recorded.

It is hard to quantify in numbers but it is clear that a whole generation of mothers and children have been affected by violence and now by hunger and disease in northeast Nigeria.

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of morbidity and mortality of a large proportion of children under five in the country - in the northeast it is considerably higher.

Equally, in Nigeria mothers have a one in 13 chance of dying in pregnancy and childbirth - that figure jumps massively in the northeast.

Nationwide, Nigeria is actually seeing progress on maternal care even though less than 20 percent of health facilities offer emergency obstetric care and only 35 percent of deliveries are attended by skilled birth attendants.

Those figures are still encouraging when compared with the lack of provision in the war-torn northeast. Many women and children also find their plight compounded by dislocation.

Nigeria has to do better

Nigeria and the international community are starting to act. The Nigerian Senate is pushing to enact a motion to secure an additional \$290m in aid for the region, while the international community has begun to ratchet up commitments marked by a four-day visit to northeast Nigeria in late August by the UN Special Rapporteur on human right for IDPs, Chaloka Beyani. Nigeria has proved that through a concerted and coordinated effort, disasters can be averted. The horrendous Ebola outbreak that caused such devastation throughout Nigeria's west African neighbours was successfully contained in Nigeria.

This is in no small part due to government planning and structures. Equally, there is a precedent for state and non-state collaboration.

For example, on infant and maternal health, the Wellbeing Africa Foundation, has managed to scale its pioneering MamaKits - a birth package containing essential sterile items, facilitating improved birth hygiene and mitigating the risk of infection - across large parts of Nigeria.

If we can replicate such coordination we can stop the risk of famine in Nigeria, it is not simply an issue of money.

It is time to have a frank conversation about how to put the necessary structures and standards in place to ensure ill-health and malnutrition are addressed, before they become endemic as they have in the northeast.

This is not a country-specific problem. Many countries in Africa have adequate foreign aid, and adequate policy initiatives but the process falls apart once implementation begins.

This is at least understandable for some states but for Nigeria - considering the stage it is at and its development journey - the country should be doing better. It has to do better.

Toyin Saraki is founder president of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa (WBF Africa), a pan-African maternal health and wellbeing charity.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial policy.