

UNASUR (Union of South American Nations)

Introduction to the Committee

Formed by a 2008 treaty, UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) is an organization with potentially immense power that is still in its infancy. The body consists of twelve South American member-states, as well as six participating and non-participating territories. The members of UNASUR have already decided to locate its headquarters in Quito, Ecuador, its bank (Bank of the South) in Caracas, Venezuela, and its legislative body (The South American Parliament) in Cochabamba, Bolivia. They have also selected former Argentine President Néstor Kirchner as the Secretary-General of the body. UNASUR was created to replace CAN (Andean Community of Nations) and Mercosur (Southern Common Market), two former South American bloc organizations. UNASUR's member states hope that the organization will serve to unite the nations of South America around common economic and political goals, eventually making the nations of South America major players in the international economy and political community.

Introduction to Topic 1: Economic Cooperation

Much like the European Union, UNASUR will try to create a unified South American economy. Free trade among UNASUR nations will be promoted. The Bank of the South will finance projects for economic development. Joint infrastructure projects such as the Interoceanic Highway will be enacted. These initiatives are already underway, and delegates should think of ways to successfully accomplish them and other projects to undertake to promote joint economic development. Beyond this, however, delegates should also weigh the potential benefits of South American economic cooperation against the risks of increased economic interdependence.

Introduction to Topic 2: Immigration Policy and Travel within UNASUR

With the creation of regional bodies such as UNASUR and the increased economic and trade cooperation they implement, the movement of people among member nations becomes an issue. A tedious border-crossing process would surely impede economic growth and be counterproductive to the goals of free trade. Once people within South America could freely cross borders to trade, travel for personal reasons became increasingly popular. In 2006, visa requirements were lifted for travel among several South American nations. With this freer transnational movement of people, immigration, once a solely domestic issue, becomes an international issue as the domestic immigration policies in one state control entry into UNASUR as a whole. Delegates will consider if there should be a UNASUR-wide immigration policy and what it should consist of.

Focus Questions

- In what ways will increased economic interdependence be beneficial or harmful for South American nations?

- How will free trade help South American nations? How could it harm them?
- Will the aforementioned measures be enough to make the nations of UNASUR a strong force in the world economy? If not, what more would need to be done?
- Should travel safeguards within UNASUR be lifted, tightened, or remain constant?
- Under the current system, should immigration policy still be decided domestically within each UNASUR country or should there be a UNASUR-wide immigration policy?
- What should this policy consist of?

Resources to Use

<http://www.comunidadandina.org/endex.htm>

<http://en.mercopress.com/2010/05/13/unasur-closer-to-its-formal-existence-peru-ratifies-founding-charter>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8660598.stm>

<http://www.as-coa.org/article.php?id=2321>

<http://www.uniondenacionessuramericanas.com/>