Forum: Sustainable Development Goal 9 Committee

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TOPIC (1): The Global Sharing of Technology

Be sure to consult the UNIS MUN LibGuide for additional resources.

I. Introduction to the Topic

In an age of globalization, the free and pervasive exchange of ideas and culture has entrenched itself into our daily life. However, there is one area of development and globalization which remains a difficult topic for governments, people, and corporations: Technology. This aspect of globalization impacts every sector and facet of life. By the sword of technology, forged both at home and aboard, nations rise and fall, militaries expand and contract, and tensions inflame or extinguish.

Technology and its development is a complicated aspect of geopolitical relations. It begs questions of legal ownership and morality, and it is a potent aspect of many nations foreign policy. The question of how technology is shared among nations will become one of the defining queries of the 21st century as globalization has become inevitable and the world's economy is more intertwined than ever before. The sharing of technology can take myriad forms. With the sharing of medical technology, lives can be saved; with the sharing of military technology, conflicts can compound; with the sharing of civil technology, economies can soar. By withholding or sharing unique technology, nations can pull these strings to manipulate others.

Technology and its globalized sharing has become such a standard component of everyday life it is easy to ignore its effects on local, national, and global economies and politics. Every day, many use this technology without a second thought to how it came to be. It is important to remember who owns the technology, which country it originates from, and how it traveled to where it is. These questions are often unnoticed, but crucial, aspects of geopolitics which with a swipe of a pen can reorder the global status quo at a moment's notice.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

Globalization: The process in which companies and governments build international markets or influence. This process is what allows for technology to be developed or shared all over the world.

Intellectual Ownership and Property Rights: These terms define the right of a person or company to own the very concept of their inventions, with a focus on technology in this context. These rights can decide whether an organization allows others to use or reproduce their technology and begs the question of how governments may interact with technology developed by corporations and how this technology is implemented (i.e. Starlink in Ukraine)

Trade War: A set of actions in which nations attempt to damage each other's trade. This is typically done through quotas and tariffs, but sometimes through bans on companies or products themselves. Such actions can have drastic impacts on what goods are imported or exported through a nation (goods such as technology.)

Technology: The application of conceptual knowledge for achieving practical goals, especially in a reproducible way. Technology is an extremely broad term, as even the most simple and mundane objects and ideas now were once considered to be cutting edge technology. As this issue centers around technology, it is crucial there is a clear understanding as to what "technology" is.

III. Key Stakeholders

Private Developers of Technology

These are the individuals and companies which develop, invent, or improve technology. These individuals and companies may outright own the concept and production of their technology and have full control over who uses it. This private ownership pulls in the question of ownership and intellectual property rights as defined above.

National and Local Governments

These governments may decide what technology leaves or enters their borders. In some instances, nations may decide which technology leaves or enters the borders of other nations through embargoes and political maneuvering. Ultimately, it is likely to be these governments which decide how technology is developed and shared throughout the world.

Militaries

For all of history militaries have used new technology to gain an edge on potential aggressors or as aggressors. Militaries globally are massive stakeholders in the technology sector. Militaries are massively interested in where and how technology is produced in the name of ensuring the reliability of their access. It is important to understand no matter what technology is being debated, there is likely a military component involved. Keep this in mind when deciding how technology is shared as you keep both your own nations,

but as well as the world's, best interests in mind.

General Population

The general population of the entire world is the base stakeholder of this whole debate. The civilian has the most to lose, but as well as gain, from this debate. They are unfortunately the collateral damage of many global debates. They are who will suffer when their nation's economy is damaged, their trade shutdown, or their access to technology blocked. Remember, all nations hold a responsibility to minimize impact on civilians, and failed draconian measures may miss their mark and hurt innocent civilians more than any government or military. Keep your, and other nations, intentions and values in mind when considering the general population.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

Unequal Development

Modern technology is much more likely to be created or advanced in developed and/or wealthy nations. This technology can propel these economies forward and increase the standard of living further. However, this can often leave developing and less economically developed countries (LEDCs) in the dust, widening the already vast global development gap.

Intellectual Property Rights

When a company or individual develops new technology, especially life saving technology, they often have full rights or domain over the technology. They have full say over who uses and produces the technology. When this technology is essential to an issue (i.e. MRNA vaccines during COVID-19, Starlink in Ukraine, microchips), how can the world balance respecting these rights, while also not being held hostage by a single manufacturer?

Regulating Dual-Use Technology

Some technology can be used for myriad purposes. When exporting, especially to a rival nation or a nation which houses a rival company, a country or company may have a specific idea in mind as to how their export will be used within that nation. However, technology can be used for roles which an exporter deems undesirable (i.e.military development, reverse engineering), but may be essential or desired for the civilian population (i.e. microchips, nuclear technology). How can a balance be struck? To what extent can an exporter control their product once it leaves their hands?

Maintain Incentive to Develop

It is important to maintain an incentive for companies to develop and export technology. No private enterprise will spend their money to create a product over which they have no control and receive no profit. It is important to maintain these incentives while also addressing the other issues mentioned above. There is a fine balance which must be struck, one in which sacrifices must be made.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of Event
1949	The Soviet Union and The Democratic People's Republic of Korea formed an agreement, precious minerals for nuclear education and equipment. This agreement is a prime example of dual-use technology, unequal development, and how technology can be used as a tool for trade and politics between nations.
1961	The OECD, founded in 1961, is an organization which promotes trade and economic problem solving. It is an excellent example as to how forums for discussion and problem solving can be used and created.
1962	The USSR placed nuclear missile technology in Cuba in what is known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. Cuba's proximity to the US inflated tensions between the USSR and the US for a brief period before the missiles' removal. This removal came following the promise of the US to not invade Cuba. This event is often seen as the closest the world has ever been to a nuclear war. Example of how the movement of technology can affect geopolitical relations and force concessions.
1993	The internet, its creation, and its sharing is one of the greatest examples of how a dual-use technology can change the world. Originally designed for military use, now it is an everyday tool for billions.
1995	The WTO is an example of how organizations and forums for discussion can be created and utilized to increase discussion and co-operation.

2015 The Netherlands banning chip producing machinery to the People's Republic of China (PRC) is an example of how a country with a near monopoly on a certain product or technology can drastically impact global politics. Situations like this have both their global benefits and disadvantages. This scenario shows how monopolies on technology can be both politically advantageous for some, and extremely detrimental for others.

2018 The PRC-US trade war is an example of how rivaling nations can use technology as an economic weapon against one another. They harshly regulate both their own and foreign technology in an attempt to damage their rival's economy and growth, eventually forcing some form of concession or long-term victory.

2022 In the midst of the war in Ukraine, Starlink, an American company run by Elon Musk, began providing the Ukrainian military crucial internet service. This was done partially unasked of Starlink. This one company run by one man has helped to change the tide of an international war. This scenario prompts the questions of how, or if, such situations and technologies should be regulated.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Unequal Development

Ensuring LEDCs are not totally left behind as technology develops will be a difficult process. Many LEDCs are still playing catch-up to what the developed world considers everyday technology. This topic will span multiple facets of development but due to this topic focus on technology, so should this solution. Improving digital infrastructure, teaching digital education, and providing access and incentive to general use are all ways in which LEDCs can work with international and domestic partners to bridge the gap in technological development. This scenario also allows for the advancement of national interests on the global stage, however. National governments will likely want a return for their aid in bridging a developmental gap, and may benefit politically or strategically by taking the lead on such an issue. It is important to consider ulterior motives and history when constructing, or deconstructing, a solution.

Intellectual Property Rights

Ensuring Intellectual Property rights are duly respected, but technology is still accessed by the general public is a delicate balance, especially in an international market. Solving this issue will require incentive or

some other mean for private companies to share their technology with the general public (MRNA vaccines during COVID-19) Furthermore, this issue will require international cooperation between all parties to ensure patents and other rights are respected globally. Solutions to this issue must weigh individual rights v.s. common good and the respect of rights despite any hostility between nations. However, there are some nations which may benefit from the violation of Intellectual Property Rights due to the boost to their economy, antagonizing a rival, or simply for their own advancement. It is important to understand each nation's relationship with Intellectual Property Rights, and how some benefit from their violations.

Regulating Dual-Use Technology

Technologies which serve both a civil/medical purpose, but as well as military are currently a topic of global tensions and importance. While this technology is crucial for essential sectors (civilian technology, medical devices), nations can also use this technology to build sectors such as their military. Stopping a nation from accessing this technology can harm innocent civilians, but allowing them access can build a rival military's strength. Appropriately regulating and balancing this spectrum of issues will require nations to work together to form agreements which benefit their populations and work in good faith with one another.

Maintain Incentive to Develop

Every issue mentioned above derives from the immensely difficult balancing of technology, its development, and its sharing. If any of the spectrum of solutions above do not balance their myriad perspectives successfully, it can be detrimental to the future of technology and how it is used. The resolution, more than usual, requires good faith and transparent negotiation. Anything else is destructive to every nation.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

This debate should be filled with good faith amendments. Attempts to kill a well written resolution constructed in good faith for the sake of doing so would harm each nation involved. It is important all resolutions and clauses are written with the hope of advancing international cooperation and technology access. This does not mean allowing your country's values or foreign policy to be trampled on, it means to be open to all nations' ideas and working to construct a solution which satisfies all nations as much as possible. Prepare to write and debate resolutions which call for (or dissuade) guaranteed access to essential technology for civilians, defending the right of private enterprises to control their technology, and ensuring the technological development of the undeveloped world. Find fellow nations whose companies often have their rights violated, whose access to technology is often cut off, or are sometimes left behind in technology development. There are myriad debates on this topic exploring every facet of diplomacy. Explore opinions, analysises, and your nation's own foreign policy regarding this topic (if possible) and attitude towards other

nations or organizations. Remember, there is no black and white in this topic and all solutions exist on a spectrum, especially this one.

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