

## GA FPSP 2011-12 Topics for Scenario Writers

All in a Day's Work

Coral Reefs

Human Rights

Trade Barriers

from IC 2011

Emergency Planning

*Scenarios due January 24, 2012*

*FPSP International Conference, Indiana University, June 7 – 10*

### **All in a Day's Work**

Mobile phones, laptop computers, and the Blackberry have changed where and when people can do work. Gender equality in the workplace has altered traditional notions of who should be at home and when. Globalization has led to increased competition and more business interactions across time zones - meaning longer hours at work for many. Is the forty-hour workweek a relic of the past? What impact will longer work hours and increased telecommuting have on families and on mental health of children and adults? Several countries have tried to mandate maximum work hours and minimum vacation time, but such policies can lead to higher rates of unemployment and other negative economic consequences. Will workers in the future, even well-educated ones, be able to succeed financially yet still manage to enjoy free time alone or with friends and family?

### **Coral Reefs**

Coral reefs are sometimes known as "the rainforests of the sea." Reefs are some of the world's great tropical and sub-tropical ecosystems. Coral reefs support the livelihoods of millions of people. Worldwide, already 25 percent of coral reefs have been destroyed or badly degraded and some scientist predict that by 2020 up to 70 percent might be permanently lost. These are areas rich in marine species that are found only in a small area. Therefore, they are highly vulnerable to extinction. They supply seafood, building materials, sources for medicinal products, and draw in much needed tourism revenue. Reefs also protect shorelines and communities from storms and erosion. Coral reefs are deeply threatened by human activities and global climate change. Coral reefs are an important source of food for hundreds of millions of people, many of whom have no other source of animal protein. However, especially reefs in developing countries are threatened and if human impact on reefs is not reduced there is a great danger that some of the world's poorest people will lose an important source of nutrition, and in many cases, their livelihoods.

### **Human Rights**

Since the end of World War II, many people have prioritized the protection of human rights around the world. But what exactly are human rights? Do they vary depending on religion and culture? Many western countries criticize the Islamic world for its treatment of women, while the United States is often condemned for its use of the death penalty. Can one nation fight to protect human rights in another nation, and if so, how? What challenges do globalization and the prevention of terrorism present to the preservation of human rights in the future?

### **Trade Barriers**

Historically, states have relied on trade barriers - such as subsidies for domestic producers, import quotas, and tariffs - to protect domestic economic interests. Many economists have long argued, however, that such barriers can limit potential economic growth, may only benefit certain politically powerful groups like labor unions, and have other harmful effects. To combat these concerns, policymakers around the world have created new treaties and institutions, such as the World Trade Organization, on the theory that reducing trade barriers will increase economic prosperity. But others argue that the benefits of tearing down trade barriers means fewer jobs and lower wages for farmers, factory workers, and relatively less-educated employees. Should policymakers strive for Free Trade or Fair Trade in the future - or some balance of the two?

### **Emergency Planning (from IC 2011)**

Major regional and national emergencies – severe weather events like the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and acts of terrorism like the attacks of September 11, 2001 – are an unavoidable reality. There are tremendous costs associated with rebuilding destroyed structures and cities, treating injured people, and rapidly relocating needed equipment and personnel. Often, governments' and nongovernmental organizations' ability to respond to disasters do not meet the needs and expectations of affected people. How can institutions – governments, businesses, charities, etc. – better prepare for unforeseeable disasters? Who should have primary responsibility for coordinating responses to major emergencies? What kind of planning is needed to respond to disasters such as cyber-attacks or poisoned water sources?