



United Nations

Sample Standard Pre-Selection Test for POLNET

Textual Reasoning



Instructions for the Textual Reasoning Test

Overview

This test section measures textual reasoning, or how well you can draw sound conclusions, identify precise summaries, and make reasonable recommendations based on authentic United Nations texts and scenarios.

Each multiple-choice question in this section includes an extract of text for you to analyse and is followed by four choices, **only one of which is correct**. There are three categories of questions in the textual reasoning section:

1) Summary

- A summary is a brief outline of the main points of the text provided.
- Example: *The key points of the passage are that peace conferences need to become more effective and need to achieve more sustainable outcomes.*

2) Recommendation

- A recommendation is a suggestion or proposal as to the best course of action based on the text provided.
- Example: *Based on this study, it is recommended that legal advice be made available to asylum seekers prior to completion of any written questionnaires.*

3) Conclusion

- A conclusion is an inference or supposition reached through logical reasoning from the text provided.
- Example: *Based on the passage, it can be concluded that capacity-building for civilian authorities is a key element of all disarmament initiatives in the region.*

When selecting the appropriate answer, it is recommended that you pay close attention to whether the question asks you to select the best summary, conclusion, or recommendation.

It is important to note that the questions presented in this test section are not a measure of United Nations knowledge, expertise or subject matter knowledge. They instead represent an assessment of your textual reasoning abilities. When answering textual reasoning questions, it is therefore important to ask yourself: "Is the response found in the text, without applying predictive statements which go beyond the context provided?"

1. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Gina is preparing a report on pre-deployment communications with troop-contributing countries. She would like to include a recommendation based on the following extract.

Triangular consultations

Sustained triangular consultation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries (TCCs) is essential in order to arrive at a shared understanding of appropriate responses, as well as their implications for the mandate and conduct of a peace operation. In the past, the Secretariat would only brief potential TCCs once the operation had been approved, but this prevented them from properly estimating what capabilities would be required. It also failed to give the Council adequate opportunity to explore the challenges and opportunities of a mandate and the capabilities required under specific timeframes.

Based on the extract, which of the following would be the **most reasonable recommendation** for Gina to make on improving triangular consultation?

Triangular consultations should _____.

Select one:

- A)** restrict topics of discussion to security matters
- B)** be held before an operation is authorised
- C)** focus on ensuring rapid deployment
- D)** require earlier commitments from TCCs

2. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Reginald is preparing a presentation on military units and would like to include a recommendation based on the following passage.

Military Unit Standards

Based on a report of the Secretary-General

Peace operations call for a broad range of capabilities, including specialist functions, and a high degree of operational readiness. In order to support troop contributors in meeting capability and performance requirements, the Security Council, Secretariat, and Member States have collaborated to establish clear standards for most types of military units. In addition, increasingly customised and precise military unit requirements are being outlined for each peace operation. Such steps have facilitated triangular capacity-building initiatives between the Secretariat, troop contributors, and Member States with specific specialist capabilities. Member States with the requisite skills and capacity should support these initiatives by providing additional specialist units, such as medical and signals units.

Based on the extract, which of the following would be the **most reasonable recommendation** for Reginald to make with respect to military units?

Select one:

- A)** Demands for military units from Member States should be made in an increasingly consistent manner.
- B)** Consultations on military standards should be broadened to be more inclusive.
- C)** Where possible, Member States should contribute troops that meet the specialised needs of peace operations.
- D)** The deployment of military units should depend upon Member States' willingness to fulfil a peace operation's mandate.

3. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Zdenka is working on a report concerning the global security environment from the perspective of United Nations peace operations. She would like to include a summary from this report.

The Global Security Environment

Based on a report of the Secretary-General

The deterioration of the global security environment has increased the complexity and scale of security challenges for United Nations peace operations. In many cases, the United Nations has become a direct target of parties who do not view the Organization as an impartial entity or who consider its presence as an impediment to their objectives. The threat is aggravated, in certain contexts, by blurred lines between criminal and extremist groups and competition between these groups. Intense conflict has also increased the risk of attacks against peace operations personnel. It is not expected that this threat environment will improve significantly in the short term.

Based on this extract, which option represents the **best summary** for Zdenka to include in her report?

Select one:

- A)** The erosion of the global security environment is primarily driven by criminal and extremist groups.
- B)** The evolution of hostile groups and their networks will continue to destabilise the global security environment.
- C)** Attacks against peace operations personnel have become unpredictable, and it is expected that they will continue.
- D)** Concerns about the Organization's impartiality and objectives must be addressed in order to improve the global security environment.

4. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Ahmed is working on a conflict prevention report and would like to include a summary of the following paragraph.

Conflict Prevention

Member States offer strong public support for early warning and conflict prevention. However, they are often reluctant to turn attention towards disputes in their own countries. The Security Council has been hesitant to consider crises at an early stage, even though the good offices of the Secretary-General have proven to be a powerful preventive tool. Even discreet engagement, through dialogue and facilitation, human rights monitoring, expert teams and capacity-building, requires firm political support. When the United Nations engages too late or with insufficient support, its available tools may no longer be sufficient to prevent violence, and these tools are then wrongly blamed for failing.

Which of the following is the **best summary** for Ahmed to include in his report?

Conflict prevention has _____.

Select one:

- A)** been a low priority item on the agenda of the Security Council
- B)** largely been ineffective, even when receiving international support
- C)** become a less contentious political issue than it was in the past
- D)** the potential to be effective but often lacks adequate support

5. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Transitions of Peace Operations

United Nations peace operations must, from the outset, work towards establishing peace in a way that would render the Organization's support unnecessary over time. The range of transitional peacekeeping measures agreed upon with the host government should be regularly reviewed and adapted in light of specific conditions and situations in peace operations. This can include a limited set of carefully selected benchmarks, focusing on efforts that would most successfully deepen, broaden and sustain peace. Ongoing analysis and impact measurement must be undertaken with national and United Nations partners so that they may take on and advance work initially carried out by peace operations.

What **conclusion** can be drawn from the passage? Choose the best answer below.

Select one:

Transitions for United Nations peace operations should _____.

- A)** take contextual factors into account
- B)** be led by United Nations peace partners
- C)** establish clear lines of reporting and accountability
- D)** strictly adhere to benchmarks defined at the outset of the process

6. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Protection of Civilians in Peace Operations

Based on a report of the Secretary-General

United Nations peacekeeping missions have the obligation to advocate for the protection of civilians. Many non-military tools are available to missions, including strong political advocacy, credible reporting and liaison with communities. Most critically, missions must support national authorities in carrying out their central protection responsibilities, including through support for police, rule of law and security institutions, as well as national action plans to better protect children and address sexual violence. The Secretary-General has asked that mission-wide strategies and coherent monitoring and reporting arrangements be put in place to reinforce the collective impact of critical protection activities.

What **conclusion** can be drawn from the passage? Choose the best answer below.

Select one:

- A)** There is a critical gap between civilian protection strategies and their implementation.
- B)** National authorities hold primary responsibility for enacting civilian protection policies.
- C)** The increase in specialised protection personnel has had little impact on civilian protection.
- D)** Civilian protection strategies must be more realistic and linked to a wider political approach.

7. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Successful Mediation

The main objective of mediators and their teams is to provide a buffer for conflict parties. In doing so, they instil confidence in the process by promoting the belief that a peaceful resolution is achievable. A good mediator promotes exchange through listening and dialogue, engenders a spirit of collaboration through problem solving, ensures that negotiating parties have sufficient knowledge, information and skills to negotiate with confidence and broadens the process to include relevant stakeholders from different segments of a society. Mediators are most successful in assisting negotiating parties to forge agreements when they are well-informed, patient, balanced in their approach, and discreet.

What **conclusion** can be drawn from this passage? Choose the best answer below.

Mediation is a _____.

Select one:

- A)** voluntary endeavour in which the consent of the parties is critical
- B)** specialised activity requiring a particular set of professional skills
- C)** process that must respond to the emerging needs of the conflict
- D)** structured undertaking that discourages ad hoc engagements

8. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Temba wants to make a recommendation, based on the following report of the Secretary-General, to include in a departmental memo.

Impact Assessments

Based on a report of the Secretary-General

Impact assessments of mission progress enable operations to adapt their responses to a fast-evolving environment. While significant steps have been taken to establish integrated field assessments, the tools required to do so remain incomplete. Progress is often as complex to measure as it is to obtain. Better impact assessments facilitate realistic benchmarks for missions, and a more results-focused formulation of budgets better informs resource management. Periodic independent evaluations also complement a more impact-focused approach. The numerous, ad hoc impact assessments that are undertaken by Headquarters need to be streamlined to permit more systematic independent evaluations.

Which of the following would be the **most reasonable recommendation** for Temba to include in the memo?

Impact assessments should be _____.

Select one:

- A)** monitored centrally by Headquarters
- B)** more practical and results-oriented
- C)** conducted more regularly
- D)** managed by civil society groups

9. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Siaw was asked to make a recommendation based on the following extract regarding pre-deployment communications to troop-contributing countries.

National Restrictions

Based on a report by the Secretary-General

During negotiations over possible deployment, every troop-contributing country must communicate national restrictions regarding the use of military or police contingents. The decision process in selecting forces for peace operations takes these “open” restrictions into account, including whether or not to proceed with deployment. Additional restrictions cannot be accepted after deployment. The Secretary-General has instructed all missions to communicate to Headquarters any incidents of refusal to follow orders given by the Force Commander or the Police Commissioner on the grounds of new national restrictions. The Secretariat will immediately inform the concerned Member State and will inform the Security Council, as needed. Where no remedial action is forthcoming, the Secretariat will repatriate the unit concerned.

Which of the following would be the **most reasonable recommendation** for Siaw to make?

Potential troop-contributing countries need to ensure that their units are _____.

Select one:

- A)** aware of their responsibilities before deployment
- B)** ready to uphold United Nations values when required
- C)** adequately trained for potential eventualities
- D)** ready to fulfil all aspects of the mission mandate

10. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Isra is drafting mediation guidelines and would like to include a summary from the following extract.

Mediation Challenges

Many of today's conflicts transcend borders, spreading instability, exacerbating humanitarian challenges and increasing the number of potential parties in a conflict. Violence is often perpetuated by authorities who do not respect the rights of their people, as well as by fragmented armed groups. Many of these armed groups combine political and criminal agendas which are not easily separated. Contemporary conflicts require mediators to balance a political mandate with urgent humanitarian considerations, establish a coherent but inclusive mediation process, and build incentives for engagement in the process, all while upholding international legal frameworks and norms.

Based on the extract, which of the following is the **best summary** for Isra to include in the guidelines?

To address the challenges of contemporary conflicts, mediators need to _____.

Select one:

- A)** be aware of the local and regional dimensions of conflicts
- B)** establish a mediation process that respects international law
- C)** deal with a complex network of objectives and actors
- D)** explore ways to encourage parties to engage in negotiations

11. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Diana is working on a report on the response of the United Nations to mass atrocities. She would like to include a recommendation based on the following extract.

Human Rights Up Front Initiative

The Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front initiative speaks to the essence of the United Nations. It is a lens through which the Organization re-examines how it responds to threats of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and thereby identifies the actions needed to prevent the kinds of avoidable mass atrocities that have occurred in the recent past. Its success depends on leadership at every level: to display the courage required to speak up for the values in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to support staff demonstrating such courage, to encourage teamwork and collaboration, and to harness the diverse mandates of the United Nations system with the objective of achieving its core purposes.

Based on this extract, which of the following would be the **most reasonable recommendation** for Diana to make in her report?

The United Nations must improve _____.

Select one:

- A)** how it responds to impending atrocities
- B)** how it manages the aftermath of mass atrocities
- C)** its capacity to report human rights violations
- D)** its support to staff operating in fragile States

12. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Your manager, Sonia, is giving a presentation based on a Senior Advisory Group report. She would like to have your opinion on how to best summarise the following extract.

National Ownership

Effective support for national programmes requires the international community listen to fragile and conflict-affected states and to align international assistance with nationally identified needs and priorities. As emphasised by the Peacebuilding Commission, unless conflict-affected communities can develop their own abilities to cope with crisis and change, international assistance will not succeed. This includes ensuring a stronger role for women, whose active participation is essential for lasting peace. International actors also need to limit economic distortions that are often an unintended consequence of international interventions. In particular, international actors should be aware of the possible negative impact of large-scale deployments of international civilians on local capacity.

Which of the following would be the **best summary** of the key points for Sonia to include in her presentation?

International conflict intervention efforts must take possible negative consequences on local communities into account and _____.

Select one:

- A)** become more streamlined
- B)** maximise local employment
- C)** limit large-scale deployments
- D)** focus on capacity-building

Answer Key

1) B

2) C

3) B

4) D

5) A

6) B

7) B

8) B

9) A

10) C

11) A

12) D





United Nations

Sample Standard Pre-Selection Test for POLNET

Analytical Reasoning



Instructions for the Analytical Reasoning Test

Overview

This test section measures analytical reasoning, or your ability to solve problems using logic, data, and/or common sense.

Each multiple-choice question in this section includes items such as charts, graphs, tables or passages of text that require logical reasoning. Each question is followed by four answer possibilities, **only one of which is correct**. There are four categories of questions in the analytical reasoning section:

1) Validity of Argument

- This type of question asks you to identify a valid argument in a passage. This means recognising if the argument provided is logically true, given the information provided.

2) Data Conclusion

- This type of question asks you to draw conclusions based on information that is presented in texts, graphs, charts or tables.

3) Reasonable Recommendation

- A reasonable recommendation is a suggestion or proposal as to the best course of action based on the data or figures provided.

4) Inductive or Deductive Reasoning

- **Deductive** reasoning questions require you to logically derive a specific conclusion from generalised data. This is also known as a "top-down" approach.
- **Inductive** reasoning questions require you to logically derive a generalised conclusion from specific instances. This is also known as a "bottom-up" approach.

Important: You will not need a calculator in order to answer questions in this test section.

1. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Yao works for the Large International Organization where he reviews research published on elections in post-conflict countries and makes policy recommendations. Yao's manager recently read a study that claimed that a person's handedness (left-hand or right-hand dominance) can influence how that person votes. He has asked Yao to consider this study and make a recommendation to ensure that this phenomenon does not have a negative impact on elections.

Extract from the study

Just 12 per cent of the world's population are left handed (twice as many men as women). In a large simulated election, Dr. Casasanto and his team found that right-handed people, on average, choose the person on the right side of a ballot; whereas left-handed people, on average, choose the person on the left side. In fact, candidates who appeared on the right side of the ballot were chosen roughly 15 per cent more by right-handed voters than by left-handed voters.

Assuming that the results of the study have been thoroughly replicated and are in fact true, which **recommendation** should Yao make?

To reduce this effect, _____.

Select one:

- A)** elections should be organised so that an equal number of left-handed and right-handed people vote
- B)** ballots should be laid out so that candidates' names appear in one central, vertical column
- C)** left-handed voters should be given ballots that are the mirror image of right-handed ballots
- D)** ballots should only be changed if the proportion of left-handed people in a population is higher than the global average

2. Read the question below and select the best answer.

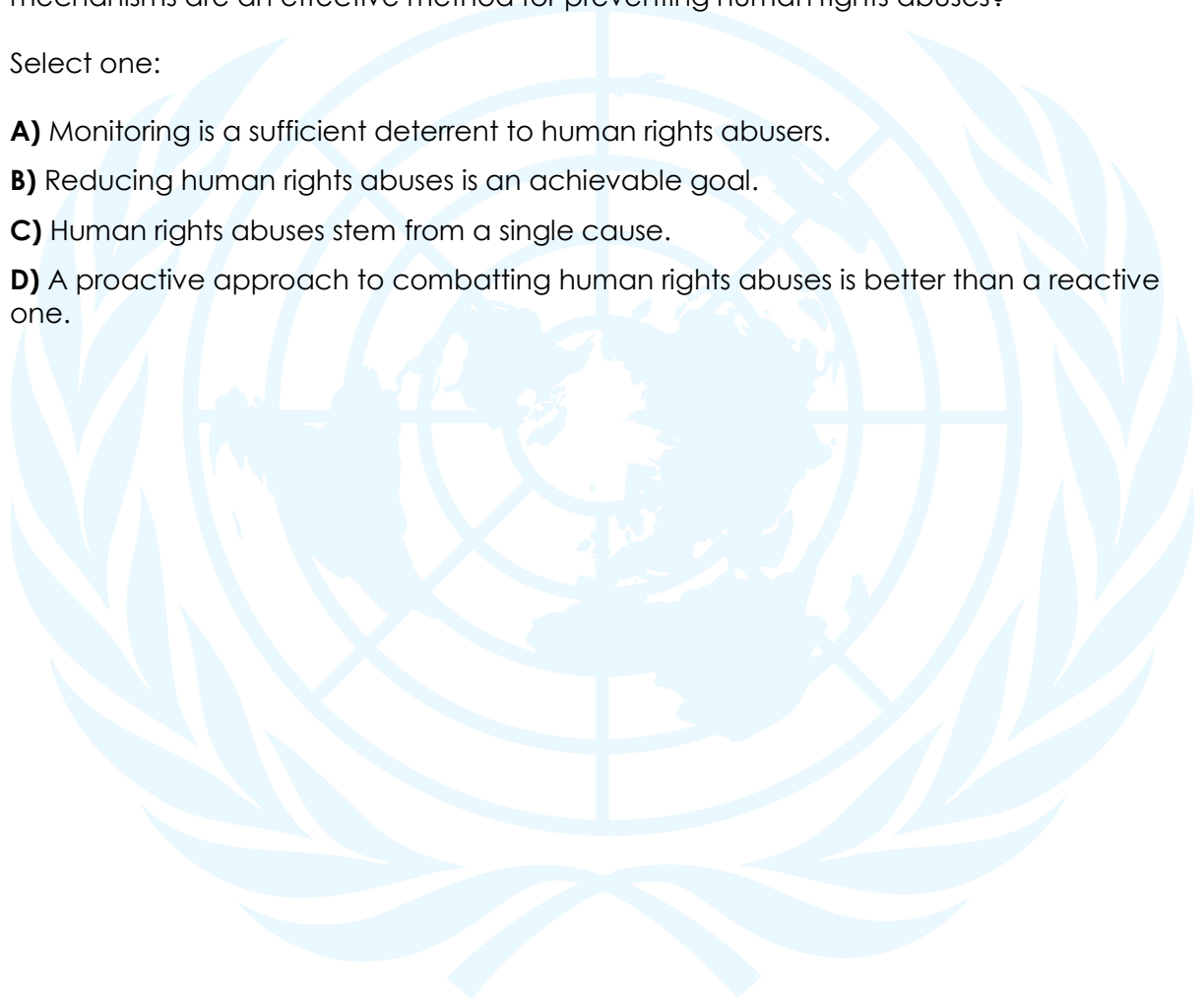
State-sponsored human rights abuse

It is estimated that there are thousands of instances of State-sponsored human rights abuse annually worldwide. Yet, countries that have well-developed and well-established human rights monitoring mechanisms tend to have much better human rights track records than countries that do not. It is therefore essential that resources be provided to implement effective human rights monitoring mechanisms in countries with poor human rights records in order to eradicate human rights abuse in those countries.

Which of the following is an **underlying assumption** of the argument that monitoring mechanisms are an effective method for preventing human rights abuses?

Select one:

- A)** Monitoring is a sufficient deterrent to human rights abusers.
- B)** Reducing human rights abuses is an achievable goal.
- C)** Human rights abuses stem from a single cause.
- D)** A proactive approach to combatting human rights abuses is better than a reactive one.



3. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Rong works for the Large International Organization where he reviews research on human rights monitoring and makes policy recommendations. Rong's manager recently read a study that claimed that age has an impact on the ability of witnesses to recall events. He has asked Rong to consider the study and make a recommendation to ensure that human rights investigations are not compromised by this effect.

Background Information

In order to monitor human rights abuses, human rights officers investigate specific incidents or allegations of human rights violations by collecting evidence that proves or disproves that an incident occurred, how it occurred and who was involved. A key tool used in investigations is eyewitness accounts.

Extract for the Study

In her study, Dr. O'Rourke found that a participant's ability to correctly identify a perpetrator depended on his or her age:

Age Range of Participants	Per cent who Correctly Identified the Perpetrator
18 to 19	61 %
20 to 29	57 %
30 to 39	56 %
40 to 49	52 %
50 to 59	29 %
60 to 72	25 %

This ability was further eroded when the perpetrator was of a different race or gender and when the incident involved violence.

Assuming that the results of the study have been thoroughly replicated and are in fact true, which **recommendation** should Rong make?

Select one:

- A)** Where possible, seek victims of human rights abuses under 50 years old to obtain eyewitness accounts.
- B)** Accounts from eyewitnesses aged 50 and above should generally be discarded if accounts from eyewitness under 50 years of age are available.
- C)** The older the eyewitness, the more supporting evidence should be collected.
- D)** Where possible, find eyewitnesses of the same gender as the suspected perpetrators.

4. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Sara works in a field operation where she has been tasked with arranging housing for internally displaced persons arriving from a conflict zone. There are six groups, the Ail, the Ba, the Cey, the Dut, the Err and the Faj, who have experienced intercommunal clashes. Each group needs to be assigned to a different housing unit.

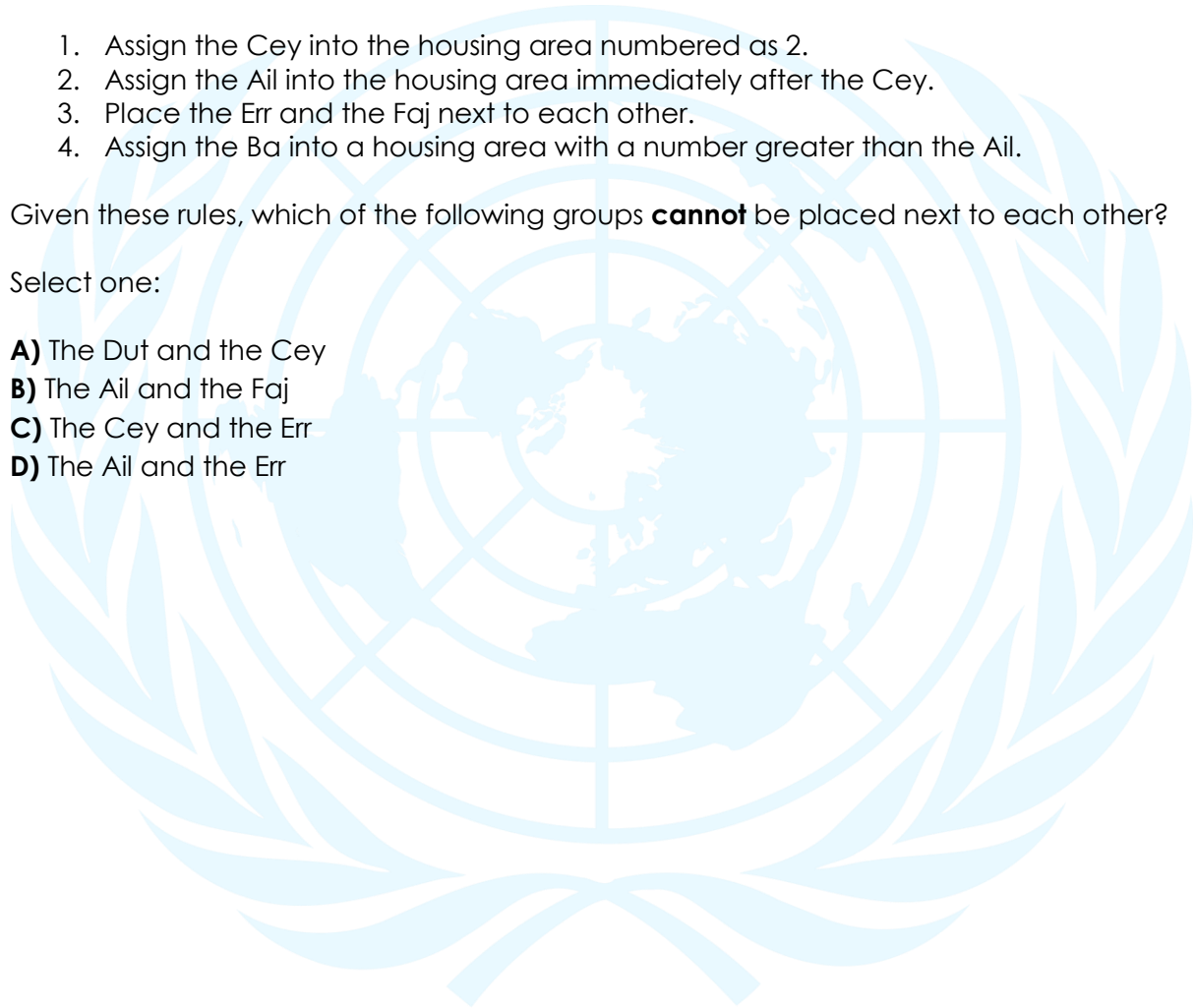
Sara's manager has developed a housing plan with specific rules to minimise the possibility of conflict and promote a culture of dialogue among the groups. Sara is expected to arrange the groups into six housing areas located next to one another, numbered from 1 to 6 (from left to right). According to the rules set out by her manager, Sara should:

1. Assign the Cey into the housing area numbered as 2.
2. Assign the Ail into the housing area immediately after the Cey.
3. Place the Err and the Faj next to each other.
4. Assign the Ba into a housing area with a number greater than the Ail.

Given these rules, which of the following groups **cannot** be placed next to each other?

Select one:

- A)** The Dut and the Cey
- B)** The Ail and the Faj
- C)** The Cey and the Err
- D)** The Ail and the Err



5. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Gregoire is preparing a round table discussion with colleagues on the causes of conflict. He came across the following extract and is not sure whether its argument is fully convincing.

Low Income Countries and Conflict

From an economic perspective, it is important to take into account the cost-benefit calculations made by those who become involved in violence, as the literature on criminal motives has traditionally highlighted. Recent research on civil war has focused on economic motives, with rebellion perceived as offering economic benefits to rebel leaders and a viable living to followers who have no other source of livelihood. In fact, slow-developing, low-income economies that are largely dependent on natural resources are 10 times more likely than others to experience civil war. Under these circumstances, the personal economic benefit exceeds the cost of rebellion; that is to say, it pays to rebel.

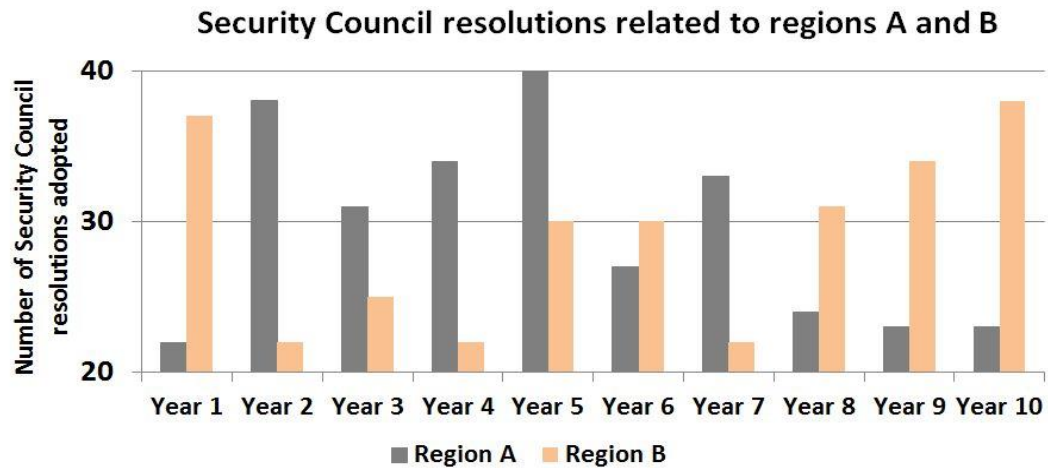
Which of the following, if true, would **weaken** the assertion made in the extract that economic motives underpin participation in conflict?

Select one:

- A)** In a low-income environment, the costs of engaging in violence tend to be small.
- B)** Low per capita income is highly correlated with low institutional capabilities.
- C)** Research shows that violent individuals are primarily driven by ideological beliefs.
- D)** The strength of a state's institutions determines its ability to address acts of violence.

6. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Ben is writing an analysis on Security Council resolutions pertaining to Regions A and B. He came across the following figure comparing the number of resolutions adopted by the Council for each region over a 10-year period. He would like to include a conclusion in his analysis based on this information.



Which one of the following **conclusions** is correct?

Select one:

- A)** In years 8, 9 and 10, the number of resolutions for Region B were more than double those for Region A.
- B)** In year 5, there were exactly twice as many resolutions for Region A than for Region B.
- C)** There was a steady increase in the number of resolutions for both regions over the 10-year period.
- D)** In year 2, Region B had nearly double the number of resolutions than those for Region A.

7. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Pascale works in a field operation responsible for establishing law and order in East Amuria. A recent public opinion poll was conducted to find out how satisfied or dissatisfied the public is with the police. From studying reliable press reports, Pascale knows that the voting intentions of five political parties will largely depend on the results of the public poll.

Pascale's manager wants to know **how many of the political parties will abstain if the results of the survey are neutral**. The five political parties are the BLU, the GRN, the RDS, the ORN and the PRL.

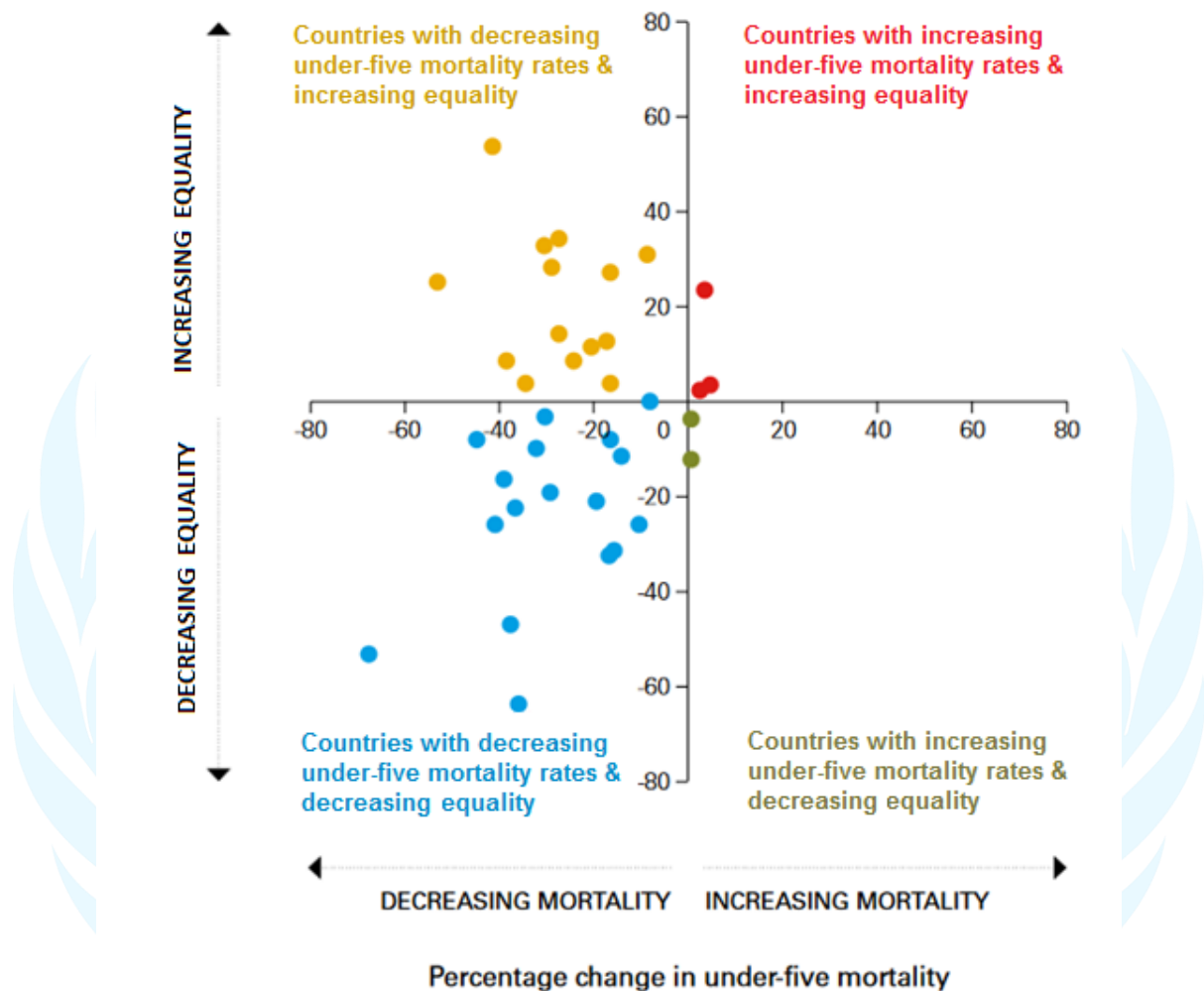
- **Press Report 1.** The BLU will vote for reform if the public is satisfied with the police, vote against it if the public is dissatisfied and abstain if the public is neutral.
- **Press Report 2.** The GRN will vote for reform if the public is satisfied with the police. Otherwise, they will vote against it.
- **Press Report 3.** If the public is satisfied with the police, the RDS will vote for reform. Otherwise, the RDS will abstain.
- **Press Report 4.** The ORN will vote against reform if the GRN vote for it and will vote for reform if the GRN do not.
- **Press Report 5.** The PRL will vote against reform if the majority of other parties decide to vote against it, abstain if there is no clear majority, and vote for reform if the majority decides to vote for it.

Select one:

- A) Four**
- B) Three**
- C) Two**
- D) One**

8. Read the question below and select the best answer.

Your manager has asked you to study a report on child mortality rates. The report contains the figure below.



What **conclusion** can be drawn regarding the impact of levels of economic equality on child mortality rates?

Select one:

- A) Progress in under-five mortality does not necessarily come with greater equality.
- B) As equality increases, so do child mortality rates.
- C) Progress in under-five mortality comes with greater equality.
- D) There has been an increase in the number of countries experiencing a growth in child mortality rates.

9. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Record levels of victims of humanitarian crises

In 2014, the lives of tens of millions of people were severely affected by the crises in the Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan and Iraq, as well as by the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa. Many more people suffered as a result of other new, chronic or recurrent conflicts and disasters. There are no exact data on how many people were affected by crises as many people go unreached and uncounted, situations change swiftly, and population data are often lacking in the most crisis-prone settings. However, United Nations figures indicate that more than 58 million people (the highest to date) were reportedly forced to flee from violence or persecution, while an estimated 107.3 million people (also the highest to date) were affected by natural disasters. Based on these data, it seems that both natural and human-caused humanitarian crises are more devastating than at any other time in history.

Which of the following, if true, would most **undermine the argument** that the proportion of people affected by humanitarian crises is at its highest level ever?

Since the data were first collected, _____.

Select one:

- A) the number of countries included in the data has stayed the same
- B) no figures indicate the severity of the humanitarian crises
- C) the global population has grown significantly
- D) population growth in crises-prone areas has stagnated

10. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Abena is a senior manager in the Large International Organization and is preparing a report on the strategic framework for advancing gender equality within the organization.

Background information

Abena's organization aims to achieve gender parity across all staff positions in the next 10 years. While women represent roughly 55 per cent of staff at lower-level positions, they remain severely underrepresented in high-level positions. To reduce this parity gap, the organization has outlined several key targets, including reducing gender bias in performance evaluations. Abena wants to make a recommendation in her report based on gender bias research and locates the study below.

Extract from the study

Researchers found that using the structured recall method successfully eliminated the effects of gender bias in performance evaluations. In this method, the evaluator is asked to recall a list of positive and negative behaviours observed for an individual and complete an evaluation based on those observations. It is postulated that this method decreases the effects of gender bias by reducing the reliance on stereotypes. It also decreases dependence on information provided by external sources, which can introduce other forms of bias. In the study, participants were assessed for their stereotypes of females in the workplace and were invited to complete performance evaluations of fictional staff members based on their scores. Without structured recall, those who exhibited traditional stereotypes in the initial assessment evaluated female staff less accurately and more negatively compared with those who used the structured recall method.

Assuming that the results of the study have been thoroughly replicated and are in fact true, which of the following is the **most reasonable recommendation** for Abena to include in her report based on the study's conclusions?

Performance evaluators should _____.

Select one:

- A)** be assessed for their stereotypes of females in the workplace before completing their evaluations
- B)** take staff members' prior performance evaluations into account when drafting their evaluations
- C)** rate individuals against other colleagues of the same gender to avoid cross-gender stereotypes
- D)** focus on individuals' achievements and shortcomings in their current roles when drafting evaluations

11. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Declining voter turnout

The recent decline in national voter turnout was spurred on by a rumour that the current ruling party would manipulate election results in its favour. Nevertheless, urban voter turnout seems unaffected because of communications efforts by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The IEC, in these communications, emphasised that the elections were being run in an independent, free and fair manner. In the future, the IEC should be sure to take this message nationwide, including to rural areas.

Which of the following, if true, would cast the **most doubt** on the validity of the above recommendation?

Select one:

- A)** By IEC estimates, rural areas are traditionally the voter stronghold of opposition parties.
- B)** IEC records show that the drop in national voter turnout was more severe than in previous elections.
- C)** The IEC spent more money per capita on voter communications in rural areas than in urban areas.
- D)** The IEC estimates that literacy rates in rural areas are half those of urban areas.

12. Read each passage and answer the question that follows.

Lebna is working in the Large International Organization and is responsible for reporting on the political status of Kirovenia, a country where there have been long periods of ethnic conflict.

He is attending a political event where a high-ranking local government official states that incidents of violent crimes in Kirovenia are disproportionately the fault of the Alu ethnic group. He quotes the following table, which was the result of research by an independent non-profit organization.

Ethnic group	Percentage of reported incidents of violence	Percentage of all reported crimes
Alu	62	55
Bai	28	33
Col	6	7
Other	4	5

Lebna is concerned that there is insufficient evidence to make such a claim and that the claim may be used to incite violence. What **additional information** would Lebna need to evaluate this?

Select one:

- A)** The percentage of all reported crimes that consisted of incidents of violence.
- B)** The percentage of the total population that each ethnic group makes up.
- C)** The raw numbers of incidents of violence attributed to each ethnic group.
- D)** A breakdown of the types of reported incidents of violence.

Answer Key

1) B

2) A

3) C

4) C

5) C

6) D

7) B

8) A

9) C

10) D

11) C

12) B





United Nations

Sample Standard Pre-Selection Test for POLNET

Social Reasoning



Instructions for the Social Reasoning Section

Overview

This test section measures social reasoning, which is defined as the ability to identify an appropriate action, given a work-related scenario.

Each scenario is followed by four actions that must be evaluated on a four-point rating scale of 'appropriateness', as follows:

- 1 - Inappropriate
- 2 - Somewhat inappropriate
- 3 - Somewhat appropriate
- 4 - Appropriate

To make an evaluation about which rating to assign to a particular action, you should take into account the following considerations: First, evaluate the action in terms of its alignment with the United Nations Core Values and Competencies Framework. Secondly, anticipate what the likely outcome of the action may be. In other words, is the action likely to have a positive or negative outcome for task achievement, organizational reputation, and other large scale considerations?

The extent to which an action is more or less appropriate given a particular situation is, therefore, an estimate of:

- (1) its consistency with the United Nations Core Values and Competencies Framework, and
- (2) its likelihood of achieving a positive outcome in the broader context as described in each scenario.

For example, a positive outcome would be one that results in tasks being completed on time while maintaining harmonious work relationships.

Important: Each action should be rated independently of other actions, meaning that it is possible for more than one action to be assigned the same score under the same scenario. For example, you may be able to rate more than one action as "4 – Appropriate" for a particular scenario.

Examples

The following short examples may be helpful in demonstrating how to use this rating scale. Kindly note that the examples listed here are **not** representative of those in the sample and actual tests; these will simply facilitate a clear understanding of the test and will allow you to familiarise yourself with the test format.

Example 1

Case: A prospective supplier offers you and your family a holiday to Hawaii.

Action: You accept this offer, without informing your manager.

Rationale: This is an **inappropriate** course of action as it goes against the core values of Integrity and Professionalism. It is also unlikely to lead to a positive outcome because it may put you in a compromising situation and risk the reputation of the organization.

Example 2

Case: Jean asks you to help her complete a report she's working on, but you already have multiple deadlines to meet, that your manager has assigned as urgent.

Action: You assist Jean first and then get to your own work.

Rationale: This is a **somewhat inappropriate** action. While it suggests that you are a team player, it goes against the core value of Professionalism. While this may result in a positive outcome by strengthening your working relationship with Jean, you risk not meeting deadlines which your manager has indicated as urgent. Ideally, you would want to find a way to complete your own tasks as well as help Jean with her report in a timely manner.

Example 3

Case: Your friend Nora works in a different department and asks you for a favour. She requests access unofficially to a confidential report that only your department has the required permissions for, due to the sensitive nature of the information included in it.

Action: You inform your manager about this and follow his directions.

Rationale: This is a **somewhat appropriate** action as it aligns with the core values of Integrity and Professionalism. Informing your manager and following his directions is the right thing to do, but you already know that you cannot provide this information to Nora without approval. It therefore will likely delay the desired outcome for the client. This course of action is not the most desirable one. Ideally, you would immediately ask Nora to attain official approval from your manager and then give her access to the confidential report.

Example 4

Case: Atul, your co-worker, has asked you to proofread a report that he needs to send to your manager. You notice a calculation error that continues throughout the report.

Action: You inform him of this error and help him correct it.

Rationale: This is an **appropriate** action as it aligns with the core values of Integrity and Professionalism, as well as the core competencies of Teamwork and Communication. It is also likely to lead to a positive outcome, in that it allows you to build trust with Atul whilst ensuring that he can send an accurate report to your manager in a timely manner. As no deadline is mentioned in this scenario, you can assume that there will be sufficient time to correct the error.

Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 1

Tukami works in the Large International Organization. Samuel, his manager, visits him at 10:00 A.M. and asks him to post an announcement on the department's website as a matter of urgency. The information that must be published relates to an upcoming peace summit, its official protocol, and its schedule. Samuel has told important stakeholders that the information will be available by 11:00 A.M. While it will not take Tukami more than an hour to do this, it requires a great deal of attention to detail, as mistakes are easy to make.

Moments later, Kolya, one of his colleagues, approaches him and asks for help proofreading a lengthy report. Tukami, who has provided input on this report, knows that it is not very urgent.

What should Tukami do?

Actions / Responses

1. Tell Kolya that he must first complete Samuel's task and then can help him afterwards.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. Help Kolya first and then work on updating the website.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

3. Tell Kolya that he needs to ask Samuel which task he should prioritise and then get back to him.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

4. Tell Kolya to ask another colleague to proofread the report as he does not have time to do it.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate



Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 2

Murat works for the Large International Organization in Kumpalandiya, a country which is recovering from a civil war. He is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the status of the country to important stakeholders, including high-level officials, partner international organizations, and NGOs, who are all working together to bring stability to the country.

Murat has just completed a very detailed monthly status report and sent it to the stakeholders. Two days later, he receives an email from a high-level official who was sent the report. The official says that he is extremely disappointed that some information is missing from the report. He says that information regarding aid provided by his country to Kumpalandiya has not been included. Murat had checked the report several times before sending it and did not notice this mistake. However, when he checks the report again, he sees that the official is correct and the information was accidentally omitted. Murat knows that, in the past when such mistakes happened, a corrected version of the report was sent out to all stakeholders. However, Murat also knows that sending a correction means admitting to high-level officials that he made a mistake.

What should Murat do?

Actions / Responses

1. Apologise to the official and tell him that he will rectify the mistake by immediately sending a corrected version of the report to all stakeholders.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. Reply by saying that he is sorry for the error and assure the official that the same mistake will not be repeated in future reports.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

3. Reply by acknowledging the mistake, but emphasise that it is a relatively minor error and no further action is required.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate**
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate**
- 3) Somewhat appropriate**
- 4) Appropriate**

4. Apologise to the official but reply that he cannot send a corrected version as this may reflect poorly on the quality of his work.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate**
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate**
- 3) Somewhat appropriate**
- 4) Appropriate**



Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 3

Konjit works in a regional office of the Large International Organization (LIO) and is an acquaintance of Lulu, a country representative from Ablessonia. During an informal meeting, Lulu states that she believes the government of Wellandia is guilty of human rights violations. Konjit replies that it is public knowledge that the LIO is currently investigating reports of those claims. She further states that action will be taken if any evidence of violations is found.

One week later, Rhonda, the country representative of Wellandia, e-mails Konjit and says that she heard through an anonymous source that she had criticised Wellandia and portrayed it in a negative light. Rhonda says that she heard that Konjit had claimed that Wellandia was guilty of torturing political prisoners. She says that she is surprised and very upset, and believes that the LIO is biased against Wellandia. Furthermore, Rhonda says that her comments raise concerns about the integrity of the organization's ongoing investigation as a verdict has seemingly already been reached.

What should Konjit reply?

Dear Rhonda,

Thank you for your e-mail. I'm disappointed to hear of these rumours, but would like to assure you of our impartiality. Also, ...

Actions / Responses

1. I never made those comments and they are untrue.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. I would like to know the source of your information.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate

3) Somewhat appropriate

4) Appropriate

3. I would like to point out that your source has provided you with inaccurate information.

Select one:

1) Inappropriate

2) Somewhat inappropriate

3) Somewhat appropriate

4) Appropriate

4. I cannot comment on what was said during what I consider to be a personal conversation.

Select one:

1) Inappropriate

2) Somewhat inappropriate

3) Somewhat appropriate

4) Appropriate

Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 4

Lee works for the Large International Organization in a field operation. When the operation was set up just over a year ago, it faced a lot of uncertainty and change, and things are just beginning to settle down.

An external body is currently auditing expenditure in Lee's department. While reviewing the information that he is required to submit, Lee notices that some travel expenses incurred by the department have not been recorded.

Lee knows that Bill, a colleague of his, was responsible for compiling the travel expenses. When Lee asks him about the missing information, Bill indicates that he recorded the travel expenses in question under a different budget code, as, earlier in the year, the department had severely underestimated the travel expenses that were likely to be incurred. Bill mentions to Lee that the procedure for obtaining authorisation for additional travel expenditure was long and complicated. Bill believes that the solution he found spared the department time, money and embarrassment.

What should Lee do?

Actions / Responses

1. Tell Bill that, for the sake of the department, they should keep this between the two of them.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. Explain to Bill that not reporting this information could cause him and the department even greater embarrassment, should it appear to be a misrepresentation.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

3. Immediately share his discovery with the auditors, without informing Bill.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate**
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate**
- 3) Somewhat appropriate**
- 4) Appropriate**

4. Work with Bill to draft a memo for the auditors, explaining the rationale for using a different budget code for travel expenses.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate**
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate**
- 3) Somewhat appropriate**
- 4) Appropriate**



Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 5

Lia works for the Large International Organization in a team that supports senior leaders across the organization on crisis-related issues. Due to the nature of the work, the team works in shifts, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Just before 3 a.m. one day, Lia received an encrypted document marked "Confidential and most immediate". She reviewed it and saw that it contained highly confidential information about a possible risk to the security of the organization's staff. Following the official protocol for such documents, Lia called the relevant director and informed her briefly of its content. The director thanked her for the briefing and explained that, as she was currently travelling, she would only be able to read the document if it were sent via e-mail in an unencrypted format.

When Lia explained that the instructions that she had been given did not allow her to do so, the director replied that she wanted an exception to be made in this case, due to her travel circumstances. The director told Lia to send it immediately in an unencrypted format and then ended the call.

It is now 3 a.m.; Lia's supervisor is certainly asleep and is not due in the office until 10 a.m. Lia's shift finishes at 8 a.m.

What should Lia do?

Actions / Responses

1. Send an e-mail to the director, with her supervisor in copy, repeating that, due to the instructions given, she is unable to fulfil her request.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. Call her supervisor to inform her of the request made by the director and follow her supervisor's instructions.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate

- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

3. Send the director the unencrypted document via e-mail and copy her supervisor with a summary of their telephone conversation.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

4. Send her supervisor an e-mail explaining the situation so that her supervisor can decide what to do when she arrives at the office at 10 a.m.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 6

Paula works for the Large International Organization as a political affairs officer and liaises with a committee consisting of 20 Member States. The committee is responsible for peace and security in several regions, including the Palma region which has been plagued with conflict over the last two years. However, the Organization does not have a permanent presence in Palma and is therefore unable to provide a reliable account of what is happening on the ground to the committee.

As such, a humanitarian non-governmental organization (H-NGO) has been invited to address the high-level committee directly on the humanitarian situation in Palma. The H-NGO has been active in the Palma region since the outbreak of the conflict and has a long-standing international reputation as an organization with integrity.

Paula has been working with the H-NGO to coordinate a presentation for the committee. However, a few days before the meeting, Paula receives an email from Member State Xelland stating that they will not attend the meeting if the H-NGO is allowed to make the presentation. Instead, they suggest that an Organization officer be available to simply answer the committee's questions during the discussion. Paula knows that there are well established rumours that Xelland sold arms to the oppressive government of Palma and that this request is likely politically motivated. However, without Xelland's presence at the meeting, any meaningful outcome is unlikely to materialise.

What should Paula do?

Actions / Responses

1. Work with the H-NGO so that she can properly respond to any questions during the committee meeting on their behalf.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. Inform the other committee members of Xelland's ultimatum and possible political motives.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

3. Publish the H-NGO's presentation prior to the meeting in a forum where it is publicly accessible.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

4. Work with other committee members to try to convince Xelland to allow the H-NGO to deliver its presentation.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

Read the scenario and rate the appropriateness of the action/response. Please note that each action / response should be rated independently. In other words, the same rating could be chosen more than once for each scenario.

Scenario 7

Sipho is a political affairs officer for the Large International Organization and works with political parties to promote gender equity initiatives. He is currently stationed in Haval, a country where the representation of women in local government and the level of their participation in the political process remains low. National elections for members of parliament will take place in a few months, and Sipho has received commitment from Haval's two major political parties, the ELL and the BEB, to adopt a quota initiative to increase the number of women in their party leadership structures.

While the ELL party seems to be making positive progress on the quota initiative, the BEB party appears to be manipulating the implementation of the quota initiative by creating "stand-in" roles for women. Upon further investigation, Sipho finds that these roles have no decision-making power in the party's structure and presumably were only created so that the BEB party could claim to have met its quota for women in leadership roles.

Sipho discusses the issue with a senior representative of the BEB party, who acknowledges in private that he and the leadership of his party do not believe that women are capable of effectively serving in leadership roles. It is now obvious to Sipho that the BEB party has a prejudice against women and is intentionally undermining the initiative.

What should Sipho do?

Actions / Responses

1. Take his concerns to the media in an attempt to pressure the BEB party into adopting a more progressive stance.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

2. Persist in trying to persuade the BEB party of the benefits of having women in leadership roles.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

3. Promote the ELL party in the media for their support of gender diversity so that they stand a better chance of winning the election.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

4. Contact experts on gender diversity and have them reach out to the BEB party to discuss the benefits of having women in leadership roles.

Select one:

- 1) Inappropriate
- 2) Somewhat inappropriate
- 3) Somewhat appropriate
- 4) Appropriate

Answer Key

Scenario 1

1) 4

2) 1

3) 2

4) 2

Scenario 2

1) 4

2) 2

3) 1

4) 1

Scenario 3

1) 4

2) 2

3) 3

4) 1

Scenario 4

1) 1

2) 3

3) 2

4) 4

Scenario 5

1) 4

2) 3

3) 1

4) 1



Scenario 6

1) 3

2) 1

3) 2

4) 3

Scenario 7

1) 1

2) 2

3) 1

4) 3

