

# CHAPTER IV.

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

All delegations are represented on the Concurrent General Assembly Plenary and each committee of the General Assembly. Two topics will be discussed in each committee, as listed below. Any resolutions passed on these topics will be automatically submitted to the Combined General Assembly Plenary session on the last day of the conference for final approval. To allow all Representatives an equal opportunity for preparation, resolutions will only be accepted on the topics listed in this handbook. No new topics will be accepted in the General Assembly.

Each of the Main Committees of the General Assembly are assigned specific tasks and topics to discuss during the session. Since all Member States are seated on each of these Committees, it is important to note that the topics of discussion usually do not overlap, or when they do each Committee is responsible for discussion of a very specific area within that topic. Participants in each Committee should take care to not expand the discussion of their topic in a direction that would normally be discussed by another Committee. As an example, the Sixth Committee might discuss a topic that deals with the legal issues faced by states in alleviating poverty and improving the legal climate in each state, but this Committee would not discuss the broader topic. A full treatment of the poverty topic would be left to the Third Committee or more likely to ECOSOC. A brief description of each Committee simulated at AMUN is provided below, along with that Committee's web page link.

- First Committee: [www.un.org/ga/59/first/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/59/first/index.html) -- agenda items relating to disarmament and international security are allocated to this body.
- Second Committee: [www.un.org/ga/59/second/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/59/second/index.html) -- agenda items relating to economic and financial matters are allocated to this body.
- Third Committee: [www.un.org/ga/59/third/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/59/third/index.html) -- agenda items relating to social, humanitarian and cultural matters are allocated to this body.
- Sixth Committee: [www.un.org/ga/59/sixth/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/59/sixth/index.html) -- agenda items relating to international legal matters are allocated to this body.

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

#### THE CONCURRENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY

##### **THE ROLE OF DIAMONDS IN FUELLING CONFLICT: BREAKING THE LINK BETWEEN THE ILLICIT TRANSACTION OF ROUGH DIAMONDS AND ARMED CONFLICT AS A CONTRIBUTION TO PREVENTION AND SETTLEMENT OF CONFLICTS**

Conflict diamonds, according to the United Nations, are rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance their military activities, including attempts to undermine and overthrow legitimate governments. The relationship between diamonds and conflict is complex, and there are many actors involved including governments, NGOs, the United Nations, the diamond industry, arms dealers and smugglers, finance companies, consumers, traders, as well as paramilitary and extra-governmental groups. Civil wars and violent conflict have erupted recently in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where diamonds are frequently mined by rebel groups to use as capital to buy arms and foster civil conflicts. The diamonds from contested regions in Africa are less expensive, and many corporations have a vested interest in keeping prices low. The language surrounding the issue is politically charged. In recent years, the diamonds in question have been called "conflict diamonds," and "blood diamonds," while first-world consumers and corporations equate diamonds with love, romance, and wealth.

The cycle of trade between diamonds and arms adds increasing difficulty for government intervention and international standards. Governments are often unable to halt diamond mining by rebel groups. In states in conflict, areas run by rebel groups are difficult, if not impossible, to control. Standards and legitimacy

are often non-existent in such situations and often governments themselves are dependent on minerals for their own export purposes. And once diamonds are in the marketplace, their origin is increasingly difficult to trace. After the diamonds are polished, they become unidentifiable.

The United Nations' attempts to restrict the trade in conflict diamonds began in 1998 with Security Council resolutions that placed an embargo on the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels, who profited by selling diamonds in order to facilitate civil war. The Security Council adopted similar schemes with respect to the governments of Sierra Leone and the DRC to deprive each country's rebel groups of income. Even after these Security Council resolutions, the rebels continue to mine and sell diamonds in order to purchase arms to continue the conflict.

In May 2000, in response to growing international concern, governments and industry officials gathered in Kimberly, South Africa, to develop a strategy for ensuring that diamond certification schemes have internationally recognized standards. The result was the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme, which was signed by fifty-two countries by November 2002, and was fully implemented in August 2003. The Kimberley Process provides for participating countries to export their diamonds in tamper-proof containers with a forgery-proof export certificate that would be entered into a universal database upon its arrival. The Kimberley Process has been widely embraced by the international community but significant challenges remain. Many consider the most significant weakness of the Kimberley Process to be its emphasis on "voluntary self regulation" by the diamond industry to ensure that diamonds are not from conflict regions.

The situation is further complicated by the complex relationship between the relevant UN organs including the General Assembly, the Security Council, and various UN missions. The United Nations has been central in advocating the position that promoting legitimate diamond trading will lead to peace, which will lead to development. In addition to diamonds, the situation also brings into question issues of arms trading, labor, and violence directed toward communities and groups of people. The United Nations' relationship with paramilitary and rebel groups, NGOs, and corporations are central issues that must be resolved. The UN General Assembly is considering its relationship to the Security Council and UN missions in affected countries. It has called on states with significant interest in the issue to continue open discussions, and it has asked for further reports and considerations on technical issues. Future actions may include further study, funding, developing a new certification scheme or altering the current one.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- Is your country a participant in the Kimberly Process? Why or why not?
- What is the appropriate role of NGOs and corporate or commercial actors in this process? Specifically, what is the role of the industrialized world, as the primary consumers of diamonds, in preventing conflict?
- What is the relationship between the General Assembly and the UN Security Council regarding rough diamonds and conflict?
- What is the relationship between poverty, underdevelopment and conflict diamonds?

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#### Additional Web Resources:

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[www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/diamond/](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/diamond/) -- The Global Policy Project  
[www.globalwitness.org/campaigns/diamonds/](http://www.globalwitness.org/campaigns/diamonds/)  
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[www.worlddiamondcouncil.com](http://www.worlddiamondcouncil.com) – The World Diamond Council

*Special note: for searching purposes in UN Documents, the word "fuelling" is spelled in the British fashion.*

#### FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE SPECIAL SESSION ON CHILDREN

Children are among the most vulnerable of the world's population, without the ability to advocate for themselves. The past few decades have seen an exponential increase in the risks to children. According to the High Commissioner for Refugees, nearly half of refugees and asylum seekers are children and nearly nine million children have been directly affected by internal conflicts and war. Children are also used in several regions as soldiers and young girls are often raped and sexually abused in war zones. Millions of children walk and play on ground covered by landmines. Children are deprived of family members through



war, pestilence, and malnutrition, and nearly ten million children will never make it to the age of five.

The welfare and care of children has been a concern of the United Nations since its founding. UNICEF was created in 1945 to help feed and care for children left behind after World War II, and became a permanent agency of the United Nations in 1953. The General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, which stated that every child is entitled to certain generalized rights. The Declaration on the Rights of the Child remained the only document specifically protecting children until 1989, although many of the conventions adopted by the United Nations and other international organizations concentrated on issues that concerned children, such as landmines, refugee status, and human rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was the first action since 1959 to deal specifically with issues concerning children. The Convention called for the 1990 World Summit on Children, which produced the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration. These documents provided a bill of rights and freedoms for every child, including the right to a healthy childhood without suffering from preventable diseases or illnesses such as polio, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, or complications from malnutrition and unsanitary water. The World Declaration also gave children the right to a basic education and the loving support of their family and stated that children should not live in a state of poverty, nor should they be subject to violence and terror during armed conflict.

The Plan for Action for Implementing the World Declaration also outlined the obligations of each government, including the preparation and execution of national plans of action to implement and adhere to the goals set forth in the Declaration. It urged international organizations, including the UN, UNICEF, and NGOs, to contribute to and support the effort to bring a healthy and happy life to every child.

To review and follow up on the plans of action called for in the 1990 World Summit on Children, the General Assembly and UNICEF convened the 2002 Special Session on Children. In addition to analyzing the progress since the World Summit, the session also concentrated on recalibrating the issues and goals to meet the needs of the world a decade after the World Summit for Children. The Special Session focused on giving children "the best possible start in life," discussing women's health, prenatal care, and breast feeding, as well as infant and "under five" mortality rates and preventable diseases. The Special Session also concentrated on making sure each child is provided "a good quality basic education" and "opportunities... for meaningful participation in their communities." Nearly 400 children and adolescents were invited and participated in the session.

The Special Session on Children also called for continual updates and reviews from the United Nations, national governments, and NGOs. The Secretary-General published "A World Fit for Children" after the Special Session, summarizing the goals, hopes, and actions taken by the Special Session assembly. Since then, individual governments and NGOs report regularly to the General Assembly on the progress their government or organization has made to help make the goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Goals, and the Special Session on Children a reality.

However, even with the concentration on children during the past decade, those goals have yet to become standard in every country and new problems arise every year. The situation changes with every change in government, every new disease, and every

new war. Even where the intent is excellent, limited government resources is also a significant obstacle in many countries. Children are affected by many of the issues that are discussed every year within the UN and it is through continual follow-up and recalibration of goals that we can try to help protect them.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What has your government focused on in trying to attain the goals set out by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Special Session on Children?
- What are some new challenges facing children today that have developed since the World Summit on Children? How has your government approached the problem?
- How have NGOs contributed to children's welfare since the Special Session, and how can NGOs and national governments contribute more to the global problems that affect children?
- How can the UN best work to increase funding for issues involving children?

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[www.unicef.org/wsc/](http://www.unicef.org/wsc/) -- Official Website on the World Summit for Children, 1990

[www.childinfo.org/](http://www.childinfo.org/) -- ChildInfo: UNICEF's statistical Indicators site

[www.crin.org/](http://www.crin.org/) -- Child Rights Information Network

[www.unhcr.ch/children/index.html](http://www.unhcr.ch/children/index.html) -- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Children Website

[www.unicef.org/wsc/goals.htm](http://www.unicef.org/wsc/goals.htm) -- Goals of the World Summit on Children

[www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs\\_new/index.html](http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs_new/index.html) -- UNICEF Special Session on Children-Documents and Links

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## THE FIRST COMMITTEE: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

### THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has only been a specific topic of discussion within the United Nations since the 50th session, but the problem is neither new nor unrelated to previous discussions. Small arms and light weapons have taken more lives than any nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon. Nearly every committee in the United Nations has dealt with the problem of small arms and light weapons whether in the use, traffic or repercussions thereof. In the last ten years, the General Assembly has passed twenty-five resolutions that have dealt solely with the issue of the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons and there have been six different reports published by the United Nations Disarmament Commission dealing with small arms and light weapons.

In 1999 the first Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects took place. A number of recommendations were set forth such as monitoring of production, tougher import and export restrictions on weapons, safer storage facilities and regional cooperation amongst law enforcement and governments to spin a less penetrable web for illicit trade to slip through. But with weapons such as stinger missiles, which have the ability to bring down an aircraft and yet fit in a golf bag, the problem with curbing the illicit trade of these weapons is self-evident.

Presently, the United Nations is encouraging local and regional governments to take an active role in diminishing this prolific problem. Better storage facilities for military weapons caches have been called for, as well as marking systems that manufacturers can use to ascertain the origin of these weapons. The UN has also pushed for states to implement more stringent laws regarding the ownership and licensing of said weapons. Regional organizations such as the EU and OAS have been working to provide better transparency and cooperation in targeting arms traffickers and halting their actions. The illicit trade, however, does not appear to be severely hampered. In particular, those regions recently affected by conflict such as Kosovo and Iraq are apexes of illicit arms trade. Voluntary weapons turn-in programs have been met with limited success in these areas, partly due to culture and partly due to fear and continued instability. While post-conflict areas are difficult to address, these are where the effects of small arms trade are most evident.

Despite the scope of the problem, there are a number of ways in which the situation could be improved. Most importantly, information sharing with regard to identifying smugglers and their methods is crucial to understanding and combating the

problem. Individual states could also develop marking systems for weapons manufacturing in order to more accurately ascertain where these weapons came from. Voluntary turn-in and destruction of surplus small arms are also a target for reform, as seven million small arms are produced each year and far less than that are recovered, despite many efforts. The UN also promotes initiatives to safeguard the storage of weapons caches as they are prime targets for smuggling operations. In regard to post-conflict situations it has been suggested that more immediate financial aid to these areas could help. While the World Bank has financially supported many efforts, this is not always enough to turn the tide; the faster governments are back on their feet, the greater the chance of reasserting control of the area and bringing the loss of life to a minimum. Voluntary moratoriums on the export, import and manufacture of small arms and light weapons could also help curb this problem. In addition to controlling the weapons, restricting the ammunition and explosives which are employed by these weapons is a prime method to be explored in an effort to combat this issue. Thus the First Committee is charged with addressing the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in a practical and cost-effective manner, while still allowing nations to adhere to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What sort of individual measures enacted by a member state would be most effective in combating this problem?
- What endeavors can be made within post-conflict areas to aid in combatting illicit arms trading?
- In what way can regions communicate more effectively to strengthen international cooperation?
- How can UN bodies with mandates to eradicate and limit small arms and light weapons work more efficiently to achieve their goal?
- How can the UN effectively limit or eradicate small arms and light weapon trafficking without infringing on the sovereignty of States?

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[www.unidir.ch](http://www.unidir.ch) – UN Disarmament Institute for Disarmament Research

## **THE RISK OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Since the formation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the acquisition of nuclear technology have been of great concern to the United Nations and its member states. As signatories to the NPT develop, acquire and test nuclear weapons, the impact and the enforcement of the treaty have become more difficult. The region that has been most affected is the Middle East, an area which the United Nations defines to include North Africa, the Gulf States, and eastward towards India. The concerns regarding the Middle East have centered on the lack of stable relations between the states of the Middle East and the large number of non-governmental actors operating and originating within the region.

The First Committee and the Security Council pass several resolutions each year regarding nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, but very little concrete action has been taken. One current proposal is the formation of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East. The Members of the Arab League proposed a resolution asking all Middle Eastern states to sign the NPT and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor all of their nuclear power plants. The United States, Israel and other states oppose the creation of a NWFZ. The General Assembly has also condemned those states unwilling to sign the NPT, and has called on all nations, especially those

in the Middle East, to sign the NPT and the CTBT.

The IAEA, an organization that reports to the General Assembly and is responsible for monitoring the proliferation of nuclear weapons, broadened its mandate in 1999 to track nuclear materials throughout NPT signatories and to attempt to determine the activity of undeclared nuclear weapons programmes. More recently, the IAEA has been working to secure and protect nuclear materials in Iran, which was produced during the development of nuclear energy but has raised concerns that Iran is developing nuclear weapons.

Another goal of the United Nations is the establishment of a universal nuclear weapons accord. Since the end of the Cold War the number of states possessing nuclear weapons has increased. Despite a growing concern with regard to nuclear weapons, many states have failed to ratify treaties such as the CTBT. Among the numerous challenges that the United Nations faces in accomplishing its goals are religious differences, historical conflicts, and the presence and activities of multiple non-governmental groups which could be involved in terrorist activities.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- How does the United Nations bridge the gap between nations with the technology and nations without technology to develop nuclear capacity?
- How can a common ground be formed between the Arab League and other nations in the region?
- What are the tradeoffs between securing nuclear weapons and allowing provisions for developing nuclear energy?

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## THE SECOND COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL

### CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The world population surpassed six billion people in 1999, and both the population and the global economy continue to grow, with an incumbent increase on the demand for natural resources. Most of this demand is concentrated in a relatively few industrialized countries. By consuming more resources, we have gained more abundant food and better shelter, sanitation, and health care. But in the long run, these gains have the potential to result in environmental degradation and declines in local economies. The loss of biodiversity threatens food supplies, opportunities for recreation and tourism, and sources of wood, medicines and energy.

Although biodiversity is typically associated with a decline in animal species, there has also been a rapid decline in plant species. In addition to the loss of individual species, the fragmentation, degradation and outright loss of forests, wetlands and coral reefs is possibly the gravest threat to biological diversity. This weakens the productivity of ecosystems, and weakens their ability to deal with natural disasters and human-caused stresses, such as pollution and climate change.

The Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and entered into force on 29 December 1993. As of July 2005, there were 188 parties to the Convention. The Convention outlines commitments for maintaining the world's ecological diversity, while pursuing economic development. It establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention entered into force on 11 September 2003. The Protocol addresses the protection of biological diversity from potential risks posed by living modified organisms.

The Convention links traditional conservation efforts to the economic goal of using biological resource sustainably. While traditional conservation efforts were primarily aimed at protecting particular species or habitats, the Convention recognizes that ecosystems, species and genes are needed for the benefit of humans. However, it emphasizes that they should be used in such a way that it does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity. The Parties committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels, as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. However, Parties are able to adopt their own plans within the flexible framework of the Convention.

At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly noted that reaching the goal of a reduction by 2010 will require action at all

levels, including the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries. Of highest importance is the transfer of technology and resources to developing countries, including the contribution of developed countries to the Convention trust fund and strengthening of national capacities for making the required information available to the Biosafety Clearing House. Another important issue is that of including considerations of biodiversity in trade and economic policies. There has been a historical tension between economic development and the protection of biodiversity. The Convention has attempted to bridge this gap and accommodate all parties, but there is still much to be done if the 2010 target can be reached.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- How can biological diversity considerations be incorporated into economic development policies?
- What partnerships would improve the prospects of reaching the 2010 target?
- In what ways do developing and industrialized countries differ in their approaches to biological diversity? How can these best be reconciled?
- How does the Convention on Biological Diversity fit with other environmental conventions?
- Are other Protocols to the Convention needed? If so, on what topic?

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 A/Res/51/182  
 A/Res/50/11  
 UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21/Part1  
 UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21/Part2

*Additional Web Resources:*

[www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org)  
[www.earthsummit2002.org](http://www.earthsummit2002.org)  
[www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org)  
[www.un.org/earthwatch/biodiversity](http://www.un.org/earthwatch/biodiversity)  
[www.un.org/esa/earthsummit](http://www.un.org/esa/earthsummit)  
[www.unep.org/themes/biodiversity](http://www.unep.org/themes/biodiversity)

**ROLE OF MICROCREDIT AND MICROFINANCE IN THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY**

The idea of combating poverty using microfinance techniques and microcredit is a topic that has gained increasing interest within the United Nations over the past decade. What started as a subtopic interest within the UN's focus on poverty and development has gained such attention that the United Nations has named 2005 the Year of Microcredit. The idea behind microfinance and microcredit is to provide financial services to the poor in the hopes of empowering them to become economically successful. There are many types of microfinance and microcredit models or strategies, but each seeks to impact poverty by providing basic financial services to persons who cannot meet traditional banking requirements.

Although microfinance and microcredit are related, there are key differences between them. Microfinance describes financial services such as savings, insurance, and loans. The hope behind microfinance is that access to basic financial services will help the poor become more financially stable. Microcredit specifically refers to the loans given under microfinance programs. The microloans are generally small amounts of money, as little as one hundred dollars, given at reduced interest rates. These loans can be given to either a group or an individual, and are often used to help the borrower become a small scale entrepreneur with the goal of not only bettering the individual but their community as well.

Since the 1980s increased confidence in microcredit has resulted in billions of dollars being poured into these programs. There are an estimated 3,000 microfinance projects that presently

aid the poor of the world, and anywhere from 70 million to 750 million people use microcredit programs to improve their conditions. The pioneering institution in the microloan movement has been the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which has been making loans since 1976. Some microcredit programs now provide additional skills training and grants of food in addition to monetary loans. Other programs give goats and cows instead of loans.

The UN's focus on microfinance and microcredit first began in the 1970s when microcredit institutions such as the Grameen Bank began grabbing global attention, although the focus at that time was mostly informal and observatory. The UN's interest heightened in the 1990s, first with a microcredit summit held in Washington, D.C. in 1997, and later that year in two General Assembly resolutions. Both resolutions recognized the potential role of microfinance in the eradication of poverty and called for members to focus on microfinance development. In 1998 the United Nations declared 2005 the International Year of Microcredit, and in 2003 called for members and observers to prepare their own information and recommendations for the microcredit year. Such efforts reflect the growing importance of microcredit in building sustainable financial sectors and achieving the first of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

It is estimated that about 90 to 95 percent of the borrowers of microcredit have been women. Microloan strategies are intended to help support small-business in local economies around the world. Microloans used to be small loans of \$50 to \$100, enough to buy medicine or help a child attend school. Now loans of hundreds or thousands of dollars enable individuals to set up a business, hire workers, and continue operations. The growth of small-businesses typically requires larger commercial financial institutions to meet such new demand for services. However, larger financial institutions are not yet established in many countries, and others lack the confidence needed to invest in bigger microcredit projects.

While loan repayment success rates are generally high, suggesting program success, there is still some question as to whether this actually translates into poverty reduction. Microcredit programs seem to have helped people on the fringe of poverty, but there is little evidence on how beneficial the microcredit programs will be for the very poor of the world. Some research has shown that the very poor are more likely to drop out of microcredit programs. Creative ways may be needed to improve microfinance solutions for the very poor. Much research is being done to determine how much skills training the very poor will require in order to benefit from microfinance programs. The question of the use of public or private channels in the finance and distribution of microfinance is also vital. Increasing support and cooperation with high-tech, venture capitalist markets and large commercial financial institutions have the potential to spur growth of microfinance programs.

In addition to financial hurdles, certain traditions and biases impede the growth of small businesses in developing countries. For example, culture and tradition influence the role of women in business. Despite the challenges, microfinance programs have helped nutrition, health, education, and entrepreneurial needs of the poor worldwide. Microcredit and microfinance programs may not prove to be a panacea, but continued research and improvement of these programs can significantly impact the poor of the world.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- How can microcredit programs help maximize poverty eradication? Should the UN take steps to ensure that financial sec-



- tors become more involved in low-income communities?
- How can the UN help microfinancial programs become more self-sufficient?
- What strategies can be implemented to maximize global access to microfinance and microcredit?
- How can UN member states, NGOs, UN organizations, and the private sector collaborate to promote microfinance initiatives?

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 A/Res/58/221  
 A/Res/53/197  
 A/Res/52/194  
 A/Res/52/193  
 Report for the International Year of Microcredit 2005-September 2004

### Additional Web Resources

- [www.grameen-info.org](http://www.grameen-info.org)  
[www.yearofmicrocredit.org](http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org)

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## THE THIRD COMMITTEE: SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL

### PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS

Over the last 25 years, the global migrant worker population has more than doubled to include 175 million people, or almost 3 percent of the entire population. Migrant workers and their families often feel driven to seek out low paying jobs in areas away from their homes; the definition of migrant workers emphasizes that they are not natives of the country they are living and working in. Much of the growth of migrant worker populations has occurred in developing areas, including many of the eastern European countries which are now a part of the European Union. The tenuous situation of migrant workers puts them at high risk in areas hit by disaster, such as in Thailand and Indonesia, where the situation is even more dangerous for workers not protected by the laws of the countries affected.

The increase in migrant worker populations has highlighted a number of issues at the global level. The primary issue of concern has been the increase in human trafficking of migrant workers and their family members, mainly women and children. Migrants are also subject to poorer working conditions than citizens of the country in which they reside. The migration of labor has resulted in a technological outflow, as the migrants may have skills needed in their home countries. These migrants often leave their native countries due to the lack of general welfare available for them and their families, along with a greater potential to move up in the work force once they have established themselves in another country. The general lack of skilled workers in certain parts of the world has made this a truly global issue, as most underdeveloped countries have neither the power nor the resources to maintain the loyalty of skilled workers within their borders.

In 1990 the UN passed the International Convention on the

Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, which formalized the rights of migrant workers and the responsibilities of the receiving nations. The Convention emphasized that the human rights of migrant workers and their families are essential and declared that migrants have the rights to equal access to education, freedom of opinions and expression, reunification with their families, access to health and medical care, and authorization to stay and work, in addition to many other provisions. The UN has also passed numerous resolutions relating to the protection of migrant workers and their families.

The United Nations is currently conducting research into migrant patterns and the effects of migrants on development as well as supporting monitoring groups such as the International Organization for Migrants (IOM) and the Human Rights Watch group on Migrant Rights. The position of Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights for the human rights of migrants was extended until 2005, and the question of continuing this position is scheduled for discussion this year. Along with the International Labour Migration's assistance, the UN has also discussed a project to attempt to come to global consensus on understanding migration and implementing safer migration practices. Finally, the situations of migrants in disaster-affected areas needs close monitoring so as to avoid a complete erosion of the human rights of those migrants and their family members.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- How can the UN ensure the protection of migrant workers and their families in areas affected by natural disaster?
- How can the UN effectively implement existing international migrant agreements?
- Should the protection of migrants be a regional issue or an issue addressed by the international community as a whole?





- What actions can the United Nations take to reduce the amount of illegal activities that take place within the current system that threaten the lives and safety of migrants?

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 A/Res/58/190  
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### Additional Web Resources:

- [www.asian-migrants.org](http://www.asian-migrants.org) – Asian Migrants
- [www.hrw.org/campaigns/migrants](http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/migrants) -- Human Rights Watch Report on Migrants
- [www.humantrafficking.org](http://www.humantrafficking.org) – Human Trafficking resources
- [www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/index.htm). International Labour Migration.
- [www.iom.int/en/who/main\\_policies\\_trafficking.shtml](http://www.iom.int/en/who/main_policies_trafficking.shtml) --International Organization for Migrants
- [www.migrantwatch.org](http://www.migrantwatch.org) – Migrants Rights International
- [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/index.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/index.htm) - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Committee on Migrant Workers.
- [www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/cmw/features.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/cmw/features.htm). Committee on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; Main Features of the Convention.

## THE RIGHT TO FOOD

Two divergent trends have emerged at the beginning of the 21st century. Many countries in the developed world find themselves facing dramatically increasing obesity rates, while the developing world confronts the problem of growing numbers of hungry and malnourished persons. In 2004 nearly 852 million people suffered from hunger, according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates. Further, the World Food

Programme estimates that nearly 33% of children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition. Hunger and malnutrition thus affect more people than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

Access to food has historically been considered a basic human right. According to the UN, "The right to food is the right to have regular, permanent and free access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear." This right is spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, enshrining it as both an individual right and as a collective responsibility.

The international community has a long history with varying success in eliminating hunger. In 1976, at the World Food Conference, governments pledged to end hunger within a decade. Over twenty years later, the international community came together once again in the 1996 World Food Summit. The outcome of the summit, the Rome Declaration, which was adopted by 112 heads of state, pledged to halve the number of persons in the world who suffer from hunger by 2015. The summit also reaffirmed that food should be a basic right guaranteed to all people. It further requested that the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights become engaged in the process of protecting the right to food. In 2002, world leaders came together again to assess the progress made.

The Human Rights Commission created the position of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in 2000. The Special Rapporteur was given the mandate "to seek, receive and respond to information on all aspects of the realization of the right to food, including the urgent necessity of eradicating hunger." In addition to making annual reports on the general progress toward eliminating hunger, the Special Rapporteur makes country visits to monitor progress in individual countries. Complimenting the work being done by the Special Rapporteur and other UN agencies such as the FAO, the Millennium Development Project has also been committed to reducing the global burden of hunger and malnutrition. Both the Rome Declaration and the Millennium Development Project call for those who go hungry on a daily basis to be reduced in half by 2015.

In spite of the high level of public commitment to reducing hunger, it appears that in many parts of the world, the situation is worsening. The 2004 State of Food Insecurity Report (SOFI) from the FAO states that the number of persons who are hungry has increased in 2004 to 852 million from 842 million in 2003. Even more alarming is that overall, the number of persons who are hungry has increased by 9 million since the 1996 World Food Summit. In order to reach the goals outlined in both the Rome Declaration and the Millennium Development Project, the number of persons who are hungry needs to decrease to approximately 400 million by 2015. According to the Special Rapporteur, important progress has been made, but the overall trend in recent years has been one of increased hunger. In his 2004 report he states that "it appears that hunger has increased every year since the 1996 World Food Summit."

That is not to say that no progress has been made. Approximately 30 countries are on track to meet both World Food Summit and MDP goals. The common approach in all of these countries involves strengthening social safety nets to put food on the tables of those who need it most on the one hand,



while attacking the root causes of hunger with initiatives to stimulate food production, increase employability and reduce poverty on the other.

Another promising effort is the creation of a set of Voluntary Guidelines which were developed by the Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) of the FAO "to elaborate, with the participation of stakeholders, in a period of two years, a set of voluntary guidelines to support Member Nations' efforts to achieve the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security." A draft of these guidelines was produced in 2003. They are intended to serve as a practical tool in order to direct state activity in eliminating hunger.

Many believe that the goal of reducing hunger, as stated by the Rome Declaration and the Millennium Development Project, can be achieved. They stress that it can only be reached through a strong and sincere commitment by individual state governments and actions that follow through on this commitment.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What is the Green Revolution, what has its effect been in your country, and how does it relate to the right to food?
- What is the relationship between the status of women and the right to food? How does your country view the relationship between the two?
- How can the Least Developed Countries best combat food scarcity? How can industrialized countries provide more assistance, financial or otherwise?

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## Additional Web Resources:

[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org) -- Food and Agricultural Organization

[www.fian.org/fian/index.php](http://www.fian.org/fian/index.php) - FIAN International – Defending the Right to Food Worldwide

[www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org) -- Institute for Food and Policy Development

## THE SIXTH COMMITTEE: LEGAL

### MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States of America brought the issue of international terrorism to the forefront of global affairs. The international community had worked on eliminating various elements of terrorism since the inception of the League of Nations in 1937, but it only took concerted efforts to eliminate the problem as a whole after 2001.

Since 1963, the United Nations General Assembly has negotiated 12 conventions designed to prevent and suppress terrorism. These conventions address such issues as airplane and ship safety, the illegal use of nuclear materials, terrorist bombings and terrorist financing. Each convention follows a basic format of: 1) addressing and defining a particular element or type of terrorist violence; 2) requiring members to adopt state laws that penalize the activity; 3) defining the jurisdiction for each State over the crime; and, 4) requiring the prosecution of the offense. In addition,

the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in 1994 and its supplement in 1996. These declarations, among other things, condemn all terrorist acts performed by anyone anywhere.

The Security Council had also adopted a number of resolutions on international terrorism prior to the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, though it too became more active following those attacks. Its most significant work to date is Resolution 1373, passed on September 28, 2001, which created the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). This Committee, composed of all 15 members of the Security Council, monitors the implementation of the resolution and attempts to increase member states' capability to fight terrorism. Resolution 1373 requires States to: 1) deny financial support to terrorist groups; 2) refuse safe-havens for terrorists; 3) share intelligence information with other governments; 4) help other governments investigate and deter terrorist acts; 5) domestically criminalize the giving of

assistance to terrorists; and, 6) become party to relevant international conventions relating to terrorism.

Today, the United Nations is looking at ways to improve the international response to terrorism. The Security Council has adopted two other resolutions on international terrorism: the Declaration on the Global Effort to Combat Terrorism, Resolution 1377, and the Declaration on the Issue of Combating Terrorism, Resolution 1456. Similarly, it adopted Resolution 1566 in October 2004, which expanded the Security Council's focus from Al Qaeda and the Taliban to other terrorist organizations. The Security Council also created a Working Group to study the feasibility of a fund to compensate victims of terrorist activities, with the money coming from frozen terrorist assets, as well as more effective methods to prevent the financing and movement of terrorists.

The Security Council has started working on increasing the potency of the CTC in 2004. Although all Member States are bound by Resolution 1373, many have not fulfilled the requirement of submitting a report on their activities to stop terrorist financing and support and were not party to the existing conventions on terrorism. The Security Council established the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) in 2004 to effectively carry on its capacity-building work, which includes encouraging cooperation between States and international organizations in the fight against terrorism.

Most recently, the Secretary General has created a five-point strategic plan to fight terrorism. The "five D's" of his plan are: 1) dissuading people from choosing the tactic of terrorism; 2) denying terrorists the means to carry out their attacks; 3) deterring state support; 4) developing state preventative capacities; and, 5) defending human rights in the struggle against terrorism. In his plan, Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for a comprehensive definition of terrorism that prohibits any act meant to deliberately kill or maim civilians, even in acts of resistance against occupation. He also called for the creation of a position of a Special Rapporteur who would report to the UN Commission on Human Rights on whether counter-terrorism measures were in line with international law and human rights.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- Does there need to be an international definition of terrorism? If so, what is a comprehensive definition of terrorism that does not offend traditional notions of state sovereignty?
- How can the international community address the problem of terrorism as a whole when it involves so many interconnected elements and issues (e.g. poverty, lack of opportunity, etc.)? What are the roots of terrorism?
- How can the United Nations combat terrorism and still respect human rights and international law?
- How will the United Nations encourage Member States to ratify the existing conventions against terrorism and to change their countries' laws to curtail terrorist financing and punish convicted terrorists?

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E/CN.15/2004/8  
S/Res/1566  
S/Res/1535  
S/Res/1456  
S/Res/1377  
S/Res/1373

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.globalpolicy.org/empire/terrorwar/](http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/terrorwar/)  
[www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/](http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/) -- The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee  
[www.un.org/terrorism/](http://www.un.org/terrorism/)  
[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism.html)

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELATED TO ASSISTANCE TO THIRD STATES AFFECTED BY THE APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations permits the Security Council to take action with respect to threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression. One specific act the Security Council may undertake is the levying of sanctions against a state that is threatening the peace. Article 41 allows the Security Council to recommend that member states take actions that may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations. Although sanctions are to be applied only when necessary, because of the globalized economy sanctions against one state may have unintended effects on other states. A targeted nation may play an important economic role in the region, and



the sanctions can harm both their own commerce and their regional trading partners.

Article 50 grants member countries the right to appeal for financial assistance as compensation for their losses when sanctions taken against another state causes special economic problems to their own country. In an Article 50 application, third party states appeal their case to an established sanctions committee handling these appeals. The sanctions committee then recommends a course of action to be taken by the Security Council. The committee or Security Council considers the recommendation and may issue a request for other member states to provide assistance to the third party state. When member states are unable to assist, the Security Council has sought assistance from other sources such as other organs of the UN, aid agencies, world financial institutions, and regional banks.

In the case of Iraq, the Security Council passed sanctions in August, 1990 in response to Iraq's invasion of neighboring Kuwait. Following the passage of the sanctions, twenty-one states filed under Article 50. Jordan was the first to appeal. The sanctions committee heard Jordan's appeal and made a recommendation for action to the Security Council, which in turn asked the Secretary-General to make the assessment. The Secretary-General dispatched a special representative to visit Jordan and make an assessment. Following this process, the Security Council adopted Resolution 669 (1990) that charged the sanctions committee with examining all requests and making recommendations for action. Article 50 has also been used by states in the Balkans region following sanctions and NATO military actions that contributed to the collapse of the Serbian-Montenegrin economy.

In June of 1998, the Secretariat convened an ad-hoc expert group (Resolution 53/107) meeting on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions. The ad-hoc group devised a recommended methodology for assessing the impact to third States affected by the application of sanctions. Methods that could potentially be used included: (a) a time-series analysis of balance-of-payments changes; (b) sample surveys of affected entities; (c) a gravity model of bilateral trade flows; (d) a regression equation of income shocks; and (e) an analytic hierarchy process for perception surveys. The ad-hoc expert group expressed the opinion that the choice of applicable method(s) would depend on particular circumstances of the affected State in the context of a specific sanctions regime.

The Secretary-General has issued several reports on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter. These reports have included A/50/361, A/51/317, A/52/308, A/53/312, A/54/383 and A/55/295. These reports are recommended readings for representatives looking to familiarize themselves with the issue.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What are some steps that can minimize the impact of sanctions on third party states?
- What method should be used to assess the impact of sanctions on third party states?

- Are third party states being adequately compensated for their special economic problems arising from sanctions on other states, or are more resources needed? Where could those resources come from?

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- A/Res/59/45
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### Additional Web Resources:

- [www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org)
- [www.smartsanctions.ch](http://www.smartsanctions.ch)
- [www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/INTRO.htm](http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/INTRO.htm)
- [www.un.org/News/ossg/sanction.htm](http://www.un.org/News/ossg/sanction.htm)

