



THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Purview of the Simulation

The General Assembly First Committee addresses the disarmament of conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction and related international security questions. The First Committee makes recommendations on the regulations of these weapons as they relate to international peace and security. The First Committee

does not address legal issues surrounding weapons possession or control complex peace and security issues addressed by the Security Council. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 24.

Website: <http://www.un.org/ga/first/index.shtml>

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) present both opportunities and challenges. In the range of threats that states and the global community face, ICTs are unique: they are ubiquitous, and not inherently military in nature. Moreover, there are multiple ways in which ICTs can pose security threats. They can be used to damage information resources and infrastructures, and terrorist or criminal groups can use them to communicate, solicit funding, and could use ICTs as means to disrupt economic institutions. Also, national critical infrastructures are becoming increasingly reliant on ICTs, such that any disruption caused by malicious intent could pose serious consequences for national security and public safety.

ICTs are often owned and operated by the private sector, and their potential to create harm is largely based on users' motives. They have both civilian and military uses, especially for maintaining international stability and security, and ICT maintenance is vital for the development of global and national economies. The United Nations is working closely with Member States and the international community to encourage collaboration on advancing the security and effectiveness of this technology. There is also disagreement at the international level about what constitutes acceptable use of ICTs by states; that is, to what extent can and should states develop ICTs for military and intelligence purposes?

While ICTs are a relatively recent innovation, the United Nations has been engaged in developing a common framework of the role of ICTs in the global community and in assessing the potential threats that they pose to peace and security. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) took place, in 2003 (first phase) and 2005 (second phase). This was the first high-level UN meeting to specifically address communication technology. The WSIS products, the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Tunis Agenda, both took a broad view of information technology within a global context addressing its role in development, capacity-building in the developing world, and a financing mechanism. Action Line C5 in the Declaration of Principles covers the need for building confidence and enhancing the security of ICTs. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is charged with monitoring progress on the WSIS Plan of Action and WSIS plus 5 goals.

In May 2007, the ITU established the Global Cybercrime Agenda (GCA). The GCA established a High-Level Experts Group (HLEG) to provide the ITU with recommendations. In their Global Strategic Report, the group recommended that legal measures, technical and procedural measures, organizational structures, capacity building, and international cooperation all needed further attention from the international community.

The General Assembly (GA) has also been actively engaged in monitoring ICT developments and their impact on international security. The GA has called on Member States to engage in multilateral discussions of current and potential threats to telecommunication networks. The GA has made ongoing requests for Member States to inform the Secretary-General of their progress in strengthening information security and opportunities for the international community to strengthen information security at the global level. Also the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General convene a Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

The Group of Experts outlined potential threats ICTs could pose to the global community, such as terrorist organizations using ICTs to advance their networks. The most recent report to the GA from the Group of Experts in 2010 provided a list of recommendations to the General Assembly that included (1) engaging in dialogue with Member States on acceptable norms for state use of ICT, (2) supporting confidence-building, stability and risk reduction measures for State use of ICTs, (3) facilitating information exchange on national, regional, and international security strategies, and (4) supporting capacity-building in less developed countries.

Information and Communication Technology will continue to play an important role for both economic and social development. Solutions to help fund and develop the efficiency and security of their ICTs are crucial for peace and security. The UN will continue to play a key role in facilitating cooperation among Member States against dangers posed to ICT systems and infrastructure. The General Assembly has requested that the Secretary-General establish a future group of governmental experts in 2012 to continue researching solutions on this topic. Until then, the standards on the use for ICTs and measures to foster strategic security-building are likely to remain on the GA agenda.

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

- How can states and the international community balance to the need for need for enhanced security for ICTs while at the same time capitalizing on their potential benefits to social and economic development?
- How do the challenges of ensuring the security of ICTs differ in developing countries vs. developed countries?
- What role should the private sector play in ensuring the security of telecommunication networks?

Bibliography

- “Ban Underlines the Role of Information Technologies in Accelerating Development.” *UN News Centre* (16 May 2011). www.un.org/news.
- “Cybercrime.” INTERPOL (2008). <http://www.interpol.int/Public/ICPO/FactSheets/FHT02.pdf>.
- “Experts at UN-Backed Meeting Lay Foundation for Global Cybersecurity Roadmap.” *UN News Centre* (8 October 2007). www.un.org/news.
- Hargreaves, Caroline and Sanjana Hattotuwa. “ICTs for the Prevention of Mass Atrocity Crimes.” *ICT for Peace Foundation* (October 2010). <http://ict4peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/ICTs-for-the-Prevention-of-Mass-Atrocity-Crimes1.pdf>.
- “Report on the World Summit on the Information Society Stocktaking 2010: Tracking Progress.” *International Telecommunication Union* (2010). <http://groups.itu.int/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ecY3JFUoRoA%3D&tabid=740>
- “Robust Regulation of Information Technology Crucial for Economic Growth – UN.” *UN News Centre* (31 March 2011). www.un.org/news.
- Schjolberg, Stein and Solange Ghernaouti-Helie. “A Global Treaty on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime,” (2011). http://www.cybercrimelaw.net/documents/A_Global_Treaty_on_Cybersecurity_and_Cybercrime_Second_edition_2011.pdf.
- “Trends in Telecommunication Reform: Enabling Tomorrow's Digital World 2010-11.” *International Telecommunication Union* (March 2011). http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/reg/D-REG-TTR.12-2010-SUM-PDF-E.pdf.
- “UN Forum Urges Asia-Pacific Nations to Band Together to Fight Cyber-Crime.” *UN News Centre* (23 September 2009). www.un.org/news.
- “UN telecommunications agency partners with global coalition to combat cyber threats”, *UN News Centre*, 4 September 2008, www.un.org/news.
- “UN Report Shows Broadband Potential for Economic and Social Development.” *UN News Center* (6 June 2011). www.un.org/news.

UN Documents

A/65/154
A/65/201
A/65/409
A/64/129/Add.1
A/RES/65/41
A/RES/65/141
A/RES/64/25
A/RES/64/211
A/RES/63/37
A/RES/62/17

A/RES/60/45
WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/0009 (rev. 1)
WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6 (rev. 1)

Additional Web Resources

www.itu.int – International Telecommunication Union
www.ict4peace.org – ICT 4 Peace Foundation
www.unidr.org – United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
www.un-gaid.org – Global Alliance for ICT and Development
www.interpol.int – International Criminal Police Organization

CONSOLIDATION OF PEACE THROUGH PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT MEASURES

Disarmament remains one of the United Nations primary objectives. Practical disarmament measures are means to link weapons control, particularly small arms control, to peacekeeping and post-conflict settlement with appropriate assistance from the United Nations system. The work undertaken on practical disarmament measures and small arms control represent integrated and mutually reinforcing efforts to achieve lasting disarmament.

Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures first appeared on the General Assembly (GA) agenda in 1996. The following year, the GA established the Group of Interested States (GIS) to support the GA's goals on practical disarmament. The goal of the GIS is to facilitate ongoing practical disarmament efforts by building on efforts already in progress and by working at both the international level and directly with States in the midst of post-conflict disarmament and reconstruction. By establishing the GIS, the General Assembly acknowledged the importance of small arms control, demining, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants in post-conflict settings and hoped to provide a framework to provide concrete assistance to States.

The GIS continues to meet on and report to the GA on a regular basis. The meetings are open to all States, interested UN partners and non-governmental organizations. Recent agenda items have included a small arms trade treaty, briefings for the GA First Committee, and the International Small Arms Control Standards.

Related to practical disarmament, the General Assembly passed the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001. The Programme of Action also included practical solutions for national legislation and controls for the collection and destruction of illegal weapons and measures to assist states in preventing the illegal transfer of small arms. Since its adoption, the GA has hosted biennial meetings of States to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action. The most recent biennial meeting was held in 2010 and focused on national, regional and global implementation strategies for the Programme of Action; the main topics of discussion at the fourth biennial meeting were four themes: border management, international cooperation and assistance, the International Tracing Instrument and follow-up mechanisms within the Programme of Action. The Fourth Biennial Meeting final report stressed the importance regional mechanisms to support the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The GA also adopted the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) in 2005 which is an additional effort to address international small arms control. Under the ITI, Member States agreed to the marking, record-keeping and tracing objectives in the Programme of Action. The Programme of Action and ITI are significant milestones in international efforts to control small arms, there are remaining challenges with implementation. Specifically, the Programme of Action does not offer a specific framework to provide international or regional assistance nor is it a legally binding instrument. Additionally, many Member States lack the financial and technical resources necessary for small arms control. There is also recognized need for better coordination at the regional level to enhance law enforcement efforts, marking and tracing efforts, record-keeping, and border protection.

At the international level, the General Assembly has stressed the need to include United Nations-mandated peacekeeping missions, when appropriate, in practical disarmament measures for small arms. More recently, the GA has begun to consider practical disarmament measures, assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in a more holistic manner. At the GA's request, the Secretary-General submitted a report in the 65th session that addressed all three topics. Moving forward, the General Assembly will continue to support the work of the Group of Interested States and also stress the importance of evaluating assistance provided to states and explore collaborative processes to support small arms control at both the national and international level.

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

- What efforts are being made by the UN, the GIS and regional governments to implement practical disarmament measures?
- How can the UN help support the GIS in completing the goal of implementing practical disarmament?
- What new programs and projects should the GIS and the UN undertake in order to effectively implement practical disarmament measures in other conflict regions?

Bibliography

“Ban Applauds Progress on Control of Small Arms Trade, but Sees Challenges Ahead.” *UN News Centre* (14 July 2008). www.un.org/news.

Baker, P.J. Noel. “Disarmament.” *International Affairs* 13, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 1934): 3-25.

“Côte d’Ivoire: UN to Collect Surrendered Weapons in Abidjan Suburb.” *UN News Centre* (14 July 2011). www.un.org/news.

Willett, Susan. “Demilitarization, Disarmament, and Development in South Africa.” *Review of African Political Economy* 25, no. 77 (1998): 409-430.

Dzinesa, Gwinyayi A. “Postconflict Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in South Africa.” *International Studies Perspective* 8, no. 1 (Feb 2007): 73-89.

Schroeder, Matt, and Rachel Stohl. “Small Arms, Large Problem: The International Threat of Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse.” *Arms Control Today* (June 2006). http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2006_06/SmallArmsFeature.

“UN Group on Illicit Arms Offers Recommendations on National Laws.” *UN News Centre* (12 June 2007). www.un.org/news.

UN Documents

A/65/153

A/RES/64/30

A/RES/63/50

A/RES/63/6

A/RES/65/64

A/RES/65/67

A/C.1/65/PV.21

A/CONF.192/2006/RC/9

A/CONF.192/BMS/2010/3

A/CONF.192/15

Additional Web Resources

www.un.org/disarmament.org/ - United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

www.poa-iss.org/MGE/ - Open Ended Meeting of Governmental Experts

disarm.igc.org/ - NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace, and Security

www.unidir.org/html/en/home.html - United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research