



CHAPTER FOUR

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly is the main deliberative policy-making body of the United Nations (UN) and is empowered to address all international issues covered by the Charter. In many ways, it acts as the central hub of the United Nations. Many UN bodies report to the General Assembly, but not all of these bodies are subsidiary to the GA. For example, the Security Council constantly updates the General Assembly on its work, but it is an independent body; its work does not require the General Assembly's independent approval. In contrast, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and is governed by General Assembly mandates. Other subsidiary bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), also have direct reporting relationships with the General Assembly.

The UN Charter assigns each of the main Committees of the General Assembly specific tasks and topics to discuss during each session. Because every Member State has a seat in every Committee, it is important to note that the points of discussion do not overlap; even if two or more Committees are discussing a general topic area, each Committee is responsible for discussing a very specific point or aspect of that topic. For example, the Fourth Committee may discuss the Israeli-Palestine conflict with regard to its political components. However, issues concerning the legal, social, or economic components of the Israeli-Palestine conflict are left to other Committees, the General Assembly Plenary, or the Security Council. Therefore, Representatives in each Committee should take care not to expand the discussion of any topic beyond the limitations set by their Committee's mandate and into another Committee's area of discussion. This is known as the Committee's purview.

A note concerning funding: The Fifth Committee makes financing decisions concerning only the UN's regular, annual budget, not those decisions dealing with voluntary contributions or new outlays. Even though AMUN will not be simulating the Fifth Committee, other Committees generally do not act unless sufficient funds are available for their proposals, thus financial questions should still be considered during the other Committees' deliberations. Therefore, if a Committee creates a new program or initiative, that Committee should specify how the program can or will be funded, and if the program falls within the UN's regular annual budget, that resolution should defer to the Fifth Committee to establish funding.

The purpose of the Combined Plenary session on the final day is to ratify the resolutions which passed in the four Main GA Committees and build consensus. While a small amount of additional debate is typical, it is expected that the work done by each Committee over the first three days of the Conference will be respected. It would thus be rare for significant changes to be made, or for a resolution to fail in the Plenary session after passing in Committee.

The following are brief descriptions of each Committee simulated at AMUN, along with the Committee's agenda, a brief purview of each committee, a brief background and research guide for each agenda

topic, and the Committee's website address. Representatives should use this information as the first step in their research on the powers and limitations of their particular Committee in relation to the agenda topics.

PURVIEW OF THE CONCURRENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY

The General Assembly Plenary typically considers issues that several Committees would have the power to discuss, but which would best be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Likewise, the General Assembly Plenary is also responsible for coordinating work between the many different bodies of the United Nations. For example, the 60th General Assembly recently established a Peacebuilding Commission that oversees the United Nations' peacebuilding processes and coordinate the work of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General, and Member States emerging from conflict situations. Note that if the Security Council, which is given the primary task of ensuring peace and security by the Charter, is discussing a particular issue, the General Assembly Plenary will cease its own deliberations and defer to the Security Council.

Website: www.un.org/ga/

THE UN GLOBAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY REVIEW

Countering terrorism is one of the most complex and multi-faceted issues facing the international community, and the international community continues to struggle with the best way to address the issue. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon; the era of modern terrorism began with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881. Yet the last several decades have seen new complexities. First and foremost, the ease of global communication enabled by the Internet and other communication technologies make it increasingly simple for terrorists to reach larger audiences, communicate with associates around the world and recruit more easily. Second, the globalized trade and transportation systems have enabled terrorists to more easily move and acquire resources. Third, the number and diversity of terrorist attacks have increased significantly. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism estimates that there were around 650 terrorist incidents in 1970 and approximately 5,000 in 2011. The reasons have also changed: while nationalism was the primary motivator in the 19th century, political ideology, religion and independence movements all emerged as motivating factors in the 20th century. The methodologies employed by terrorists are equally diverse: ranging from fear and coercion through major violent attacks to drug and human trafficking. Individual governments are increasingly struggling with counter-terrorism efforts and are turning to the international community for support and cooperation. The UN plays an important role as a key platform for multilateral, systemic approaches to addressing these threats.

Since 1972, preventing international terrorism has been on the General Assembly's agenda. The General Assembly adopted its



earliest counter-terrorism conventions in 1973 and 1979: the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons and the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages. These conventions were spurred by the growing trend of terrorists to seize or attack embassies or hijack planes and other vehicles. The conventions were designed to create effective measures to prevent, address and punish the taking of hostages and the targeting of diplomats and government employees. They also made taking hostages and attacks against diplomats an offense for which offenders could be extradited regardless of existing extradition treaties between States Parties. In 1994, the Assembly passed a new Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which led to an Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism in 1996. The Declaration was the first to highlight the growing nexus between terrorist networks and organized crime, an important source of sustaining revenue and an avenue for access to weapons. Further work was done on condemning and suppressing terrorists' bombings, financing and access to nuclear weapons, with conventions passed on each topic through the late 90s. The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism inhibits the ability of terrorists to raise money, targeting charities, individuals, businesses and other organizations that raise, channel or launder money in support of terrorists in other States. Unfortunately, even with the many conventions and an international consensus condemning terrorism, attacks continue.

The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the United States brought the topic of combating terrorism to the forefront of the international agenda. After considerable discussion and debate, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006. It was the first time the international community agreed to a comprehensive and strategic approach to combating terrorism and was the clearest condemnation to date of terrorism as a legitimate tactic. The Strategy centered on four pillars: measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; measures to prevent and combat terrorism; measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard; and measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism. This strategy is designed to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), established by the Secretary-General in 2005, is mandated to enhance coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism efforts of the UN system. While the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Global Strategy still remains in the hands of Member States, the CTITF helps coordinate the UN system with Member State action, providing policy support and helping deliver technical assistance.

Though the Strategy was agreed to and adopted, Member States struggled in its formulation on how to approach the issue, with questions concerning whether prevention of radicalization is more effective than suppression. If terrorism is a symptom and not the disease, then suppression does nothing to correct the underlying causes of the attacks. When an attack occurs, it is much easier to counter-strike, seeking those who are responsible, than to consider serious structural reforms that may be required locally or abroad to address the long-term threat. This debate is further compounded because there is no agreement over what motivates or causes terrorism. Limited economic opportunity, poverty, religious differences, weak governance and social conflict are

some of the conditions that can motivate individuals to resort to terrorism, issues that will be unaffected by security measures undertaken domestically by outside States. If the legitimate grievances and underlying socioeconomic weaknesses are allowed to fester, attacks may continue. Economic development and governance reform may be just as important to counter-terrorism as is military force.

The General Assembly conducts biennial reviews of the Global Strategy. In July 2012, the third and most recent review reaffirmed the UN commitment to the Global Strategy and was adopted unanimously. Renewed interest in strengthening the four pillars, especially countering the appeal of terrorism, will focus on promoting dialogue and understanding as important elements in future efforts. The reaffirmation also emphasized a need for the international community to commit to solidarity with the victims of terrorism, which could help make terrorism less attractive as the victims get the attention, not the attackers or their motives. This furthers the key goal of delegitimizing terrorism, making it morally indefensible and a tactic that will cost groups social and economic support. The CTITF also continues to issue reports and policy recommendations through its working groups, most recently hoping to combat usage of the internet for terrorist communications and recruitment, working in the broader context of cyber security with Member States, academia, and the private sector.

With the Global Strategy and apparently strong support for counter-terroring terrorism, it would seem counter-intuitive that terrorism remains such a scourge. However, the international community remains severely divided over multiple issues. Beset by political divisions and with limited resources, the United Nations has struggled to articulate a vision for its role in the international effort against terrorism. The 2003 car bombing of a UN compound in Iraq, among many other attacks against UN officials, has limited the appeal of a large UN footprint in combating terrorism. Negotiations on a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism remain deadlocked, hampered by disagreements over several basic points. States continue to pursue unilateral military action against perceived threats, including within the sovereign territory of other States, often with little or no accountability. Some governments use the threat of terrorism to justify curbing fundamental human rights or even kill its own citizens. As attacks continue, the international community must continue a multi-faceted approach to delegitimize terrorism while addressing its causes.

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

- How can the UN further cooperate to fight terrorism? How can Member States work together to support the four pillars of the UN's strategy?
- How can States cooperate to combat terrorist activities on the Internet? Are additional steps needed to prevent terrorists from using the Internet for communication, recruitment and financial transactions?
- What steps can the international community take to make terrorism a less attractive option, particularly for young people?

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CONSOLIDATING GAINS AND ACCELERATING EFFORTS TO CONTROL AND ELIMINATE MALARIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA, BY 2015

Malaria is widely viewed as one of the most severe problems facing global health today. Malaria is a parasitic infection transmitted to humans via mosquito bites. In the human body, the parasites multiply in the liver and infect red blood cells, ultimately producing fever, headache and vomiting. If the infection goes untreated, it frequently becomes life threatening. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that there were 219 million infections and 660,000 deaths in 2010; over 90 percent of the deaths were in Africa. Malaria is a leading cause of death in many developing countries, and it disproportionately affects women and children. Almost 40 percent of the planet's population is at risk for malaria infection. Malaria is endemic in large areas of Africa, Central and South America, the island of Hispaniola (which includes Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Asia (including the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the Middle East), Eastern

Europe, and the South Pacific. Six out of every ten hospital admissions in Sub-Saharan Africa are attributed to malaria.

The two most discussed issues regarding malaria are how best to combat the disease and the fiscal impact of the disease. Because mosquitoes are the vectors of infection, eradication of mosquitoes has been a main focus in the past. Unfortunately, insecticide-resistant mosquitoes have become more prevalent, rendering this mode increasingly infeasible. Efforts to combat the disease are further complicated by the lack of licensed vaccine for the disease. Widespread infections have a crippling effect on both individual families and the economy. Because mosquitoes breed and spread malaria primarily during the peak seasons for agricultural labor, the loss of productivity for several weeks can decimate a poor family's income. The direct costs of malaria in Africa alone are an estimated \$12 billion U.S. dollars a year.

The WHO has the primary responsibility within the UN system for coordinating efforts to eliminate malaria. Regional efforts to eliminate malaria were underway as early as the 1940s, culminating in the 1955 Global Malaria Eradication Programme. Between 1955 and 1969, the WHO and national governments spent more than \$1 billion trying to eliminate the disease in 10 years, by using tens of thousands of tons of pesticides each year to limit mosquito populations. The program saw some notable success: malaria was wiped out in the United States, Caribbean, South Pacific, Balkans, India and Taiwan. The program was cut short due to environmental concerns about the widespread use of DDT, ultimately resulting in the restriction of the use of the chemical. Despite success in some areas, the disease persisted in the deep tropics and ultimately made a resurgence after the program concluded in 1969. The disease was quickly reintroduced to India, and sub-Saharan Africa, which had not participated in the Program, continued to suffer. At the same time, widespread emergence of drug resistant malaria resulted in large-scale epidemics with limited treatment options.

In the early 1990s the renewed spread of malaria alarmed the international community. In response, the WHO convened a series of conferences, ultimately producing the 1992 Global Malaria Control Strategy. The Global Strategy calls for strengthening local and national capabilities for disease control, community partnership, decentralized decision-making and the integration of malaria control into the work of other sectors, including education, agriculture and the environment. In 1998, the WHO launched the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) campaign, based on four major pillars: prompt access to treatment for all (especially young children) with effective drugs; the increased use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), which provide the most effective method for families to avoid malaria; prevention and control of malaria in pregnant women, which reduces infant mortality and other birth complications; and malaria epidemic and emergency response for victims of natural climate variations or disasters and man-made outbreaks stemming from war or industry. In 2000, halting the spread of malaria and decreasing incidents of the disease was included as part of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Six. To better achieve this objective and continue the international community's work against malaria, in 2008 WHO adopted its 2008 RBM Global Malaria Action Plan. The plan offered guidance for the prevention of the disease, especially long lasting insecticide treated mosquito nets, and expanding the prevalence of rapid diagnostic testing to provide quick diagnosis in the field.



Because of strong support for the issue, the international community has made remarkable gains. Since 2000, transmissions of malaria have decreased by 17 percent globally, with a 25 percent drop in mortality. Over one million deaths due to malaria were averted due to UN efforts over the last decade. But these gains are unevenly distributed. Some of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to suffer disproportionately. Reaching populations in these countries continues to bedevil international efforts. More than 250 million long-lasting ITNs are still needed. Investment in combating malaria peaked at \$1.9 billion in 2011, far short of the \$5-6 billion target. With funding declining and the MDGs expiring in 2015, the international community risks a resurgence of malaria in tropical areas if it abandons efforts as it did in 1969.

A steady source of funding is crucial to ensuring that insecticidal nets and other tools continue to be available to individuals in impacted regions. Funding alone will not solve the problem, however, and the international community will need to address several other problems as well.

Prevention is key: every case of malaria avoided provides one less opportunity for drug resistance to increase, one less sick worker, and possibly one less death. ITNs have a demonstrated effectiveness as does intermittent indoor spraying. Drug-resistant strains of malaria and insecticide-resistant mosquitoes are both increasing and could pose a major threat to eradication efforts in the next few years. The international community will need to identify and support new approaches and remedies. Early diagnosis and treatment can also help dramatically reduce deaths, but these basic medical services are not available to many. Rapid diagnostic tests are available, and increasing access could prove important. New technologies, like mobile phone-based systems, show promise, as well. Limited information on the range of drug resistant strains makes treatment difficult. Medicine to treat malaria and ITNs are both relatively expensive and in limited supply in many of the most effected countries. Experts have suggested that supplies could be increased through local production, but intellectual property restrictions restrict the ability to produce goods locally.

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

- How can the United Nations ensure that efforts to combat malaria reach the marginalized and poorest communities?
- How can the international community ensure that adequate early testing for malaria is available?
- What steps can Member States take to increase access to medication to treat malaria?
- How should the United Nations manage the increased prevalence of drug-resistant malaria?

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