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 United Nations 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 United Nations 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, such as 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 United Nations 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 United Nations 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 coordinates 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/

OCEANS AND LAW OF THE SEA

Until the twentieth century, the concept of freedom of the seas was widely accepted. States' sovereign rights to waterways were limited to the narrow space near their coastlines. These rights were largely established by common law or managed on an ad hoc basis by a State and its neighbors. As opportunity for economic exploitation of oceans increased in the 19th and early 20th centuries, States began to assert greater claims of sovereignty, resulting in territorial disputes. Additionally, heavy fishing, whaling and other activities began to cause major ecological and economic concerns that transcended established maritime borders. All of these causes created an increasing demand for regional and global agreements to allocate resources and resolve disputes between States. Today the majority of international agreements distributing sea area are regional in nature. These multilateral agreements cover a vast array of issues within the sea, including regulating peaceful use of the sea, monitoring marine ecology and standardizing sea trade between States.

The United Nations General Assembly has discussed the law of the sea since the 1950s. In 1950, the General Assembly created the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Today, the IMO serves as a forum for States to establish regulations on activities such as ship antipollution measures. In 1958 the Geneva Conference on the Law of the Sea finalized four draft conventions and an optional protocol: the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone (CTS); the Convention on the High Seas (CHS); the Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas (CFCLR); the Convention on the Continental Shelf (CCS); and the Optional Protocol of Signature concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes (OPSD). These Conventions and the Optimal Protocol have codified the way international law is enforced at sea and determined where jurisdiction lies; additionally, entered as five separate-but-related treaties, they are more appealing to a broader population

of States. As the law of the sea has complex political, economic and environmental ramifications, a broad-based package of treaties allows more compliance and understanding between States: for example, most States can agree on safe passage in waterways, whereas territorial boundaries are more difficult to resolve or outline.

These five were later codified into the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982. This broad-based Convention pieced together many agreeable portions of the previous Conventions and the Protocol to create a usable, fundamental document for maritime use and law. While there were many foci within UNCLOS, including definition of high sea and protections of both human and environmental life within the seas, the largest change it brought was the definition of exclusive economic zones, or EEZs. Under UNCLOS, a country's EEZ stretches from their shore out to 200 nautical miles from its coast; this does not include the territorial sea (surface waters) or continental shelf beyond these 200 nautical miles. EEZs include a State's special rights to exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production.

The General Assembly drafts an annual resolution to discuss continuing maritime law issues, most recently in A/RES/69/245. The topics discussed ranged from implementation of UNCLOS to the protection of the marine ecosystem. A major focus was on the safety of mariners, with the main concerns revolving around piracy and robbery at sea. Piracy off the coast of Somalia has and continues to be a major problem for shipping companies operating near Africa's eastern coast. Although the number of reported cases of piracy is at the lowest levels since 2006, the incidents of armed robbery at sea are still a concern for all sea-faring countries.

Along with the discussion of piracy, the General Assembly is concerned about the impact humankind has had on the marine environment and natural resources in the seas. The most recent developments in UNCLOS have primarily examined the need for increased focus on sustainability within international fishing markets. This need is reflected in not only a growing concern for environmental and ecologic stability, but also for the economic welfare of fishing-dependent States. The three primary issues the United Nations is currently taking action on are: the achievement of sustainable fisheries; the enforcement of current legislation while managing fishing at the State level; and the need for capacity growth without reaching over-capacity, as in increasing the capacity to fish without overfishing.

With an increased demand for fish and a rise in the regulated growth and production of fish, the United Nations has also turned its focus to fisheries—specifically, creating sustainable fisheries. Emphasis was placed on the increased use of science and technology in order to gather more accurate data, assisting the creation of more effective plans for sustainability. Significant notice was also given to the need for enforcement of regional and national sustainability plans. In February 2014, the fourth Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop was held in San José, Costa Rica, to increase the effective implementation of responsible management in fisheries worldwide. A fifth Training Workshop has been planned for March 2016.

Moving forward, there are major policy issues surrounding UNCLOS. Free access and navigation of international waters for trade and defense becomes tricky as regional conflicts and non-State actors hinder past treaty agreements and traditional arrangements: for example, internal conflict at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula has disrupted decades-long safe passage in the surrounding waters. It is also important to recognize the impact these conflicts have on security and military issues: an upset in power within a country bordering or having control over specific waterways impacts which States are able to carry out military or security measures within those waters. Additionally, things like military exercises off the Korean peninsula impact surrounding countries and States who are invested in such activities. Furthermore, regional concerns like the heavily-contested EEZs within the South China Sea create international headache, as these territorial disputes occur in one of the busiest shipping zones in the world.

From an environmental standpoint, the uses of fisheries and underwater resource exploitation have a large impact at both the regional and global levels. While the United States and Canada have extremely large global fishing reaches, smaller islands like Palau or Trinidad and Tobago have economies and communities centered almost entirely on their fishing industry. These island nations and smaller coastal States lacking in primary resources other than fishing are the most dependent on UNCLOS, and slight changes in international trade law or fishing policy can have dramatic repercussions for their economies and citizens. Disputes over underwater resources grow in frequency with the thawing of the Arctic; as this area thaws, mineral wealth, oil and gas in those areas becomes easier to exploit. As States begin to expand commercial enterprises into the Arctic, the law of the sea will remain important in settling disputes and outlining positive approaches to new or growing problems.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How does UNCLOS impact the dispute of territories between States?
- How do changes in trade and shipping access shape States' interactions under UNCLOS, and do these changes need to be further clarified or reflected in UNCLOS?
- As States build islands atop atolls, extending the reach of their EEZ, how can the international community make sure UNCLOS is implemented effectively?

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OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE SPECIAL EVENT TO FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a product of the Millennium Development Summit from 6 September to 8 September 2000, were a key part of how the United Nations redefined its role for the 21st century. Addressing topics like poverty, education and health, the MDGs are global goals to be achieved by Member States that intended to uphold the United Nations Charter and ensure human rights to all individuals across the globe. The Millennium Development Goals were given a target deadline: to be reached by 2015. As 2015 approached, the United Nations and its Member States began to consider how to improve on its successes and bolster its weaknesses after the deadline.

For decades, Member States have struggled to comprehensively address poverty and inequality in both developed and developing countries. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new form of addressing these issues emerged. In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All adopted a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. It proposed six priority areas and encouraged Member States to set specific, targeted goals in each area to be achieved by the year 2000. At the 2000 World Education Forum, Member States agreed to common, global targets for each of the six priority areas for 2000-2015, a structure paralleled in the MDGs. The key factor in both remains the States themselves; while the United Nations is the convening body and the forum wherein MDGs are discussed and set, the United Nations' direct steps or programs are secondary to the States' actions. States agree on the targets set forth in the MDGs, and it is the States' responsibility to help see these goals through on a national or regional level.

After the unanimous adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration on 18 September 2000, Member States produced three resolutions that would help define the eight official Millennium Development Goals. Each of these resolutions was titled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit." In these documents, Member States agreed on priorities, approaches and standards to how States could achieve the MDGs. They would also provide guidance for oversight. The first of the three resolutions called for an "integrated, coordinated, comprehensive and balanced approach" in the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration at the national, regional and international levels. The resolution established the reporting process on the MDGs through a request that the Secretary-General prepare a comprehensive report every five years, supplemented by annual reports. The second resolution recognized the report of the Secretary-General entitled, "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration." The resolution specified that the reporting process on the MDGs should focus on the major areas set forth in the road map, inviting Member States to give widespread publicity to the Millennium Declaration in order to increase the dissemination of information. The third resolution produced more extensive language on the progress and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Aside from the reporting process, the United Nations further refined its approach to the MDGs. In May 2007, the Secretary-General established the MDG Gap Task Force to improve monitoring of the global commitments contained in Goal 8, the Global Partnership for Development. Additionally, another Millennium Summit was held in 2010, resulting in the "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields." This document outlined both a recommitment to the MDGs and identified goals where improvements still needed to be made. The document identified areas such as sustainable development, the continued spread of HIV/AIDS cases and continued inaccessibility of treatment, and maternal health as major goals needing to be met, particularly identifying African countries, developing states and countries with ongoing military conflicts as target areas. Accessibility, particularly for these categories of countries, would be an ongoing focus for United Nations efforts.

In September of 2013, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hosted a special event to follow up on the efforts made toward achieving the 2015 MDGs. He presented a report to Member States entitled "A Life of Dignity for All." Member States adopted his recommendations in an outcome document, which renewed Member States' commitment to meet the targets laid out by the MDGs. Member States also agreed to meet at a high-level summit in September of 2015 where they will adopt new goals to build on the MDGs. The outcome document focused on the unevenness in meeting development goals, placing special emphasis on African countries and countries experiencing conflict and humanitarian crises.

In the Secretary-General's report, he identifies areas where Member States are facing difficulty meeting the MDGs. The most important goals are related to poverty and hunger, primary education, reproductive health, environmental sustainability, and sanitation. Specific challenges include ending open defecation, providing antenatal care to women, reducing child deaths from preventable diseases and encouraging young women to stay in school. However, the United Nations has already met some of its goals on reducing poverty, increasing access to cleaner water, improving life in slums and achieving gender parity in primary schools. It is also on track to surpass its goals on malaria, tuberculosis and HIV prevention.

The United Nations is working on taking targeted action to meet the MDGs by their deadline. In many cases, this has been through calling for the complete implementation of previous resolutions and commitments, such as the recommendations of the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force; the previously established Almaty Programme of Action, Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010; and the continuation of better statistics and data tracking practices. The 2013 Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made toward achieving

the Millennium Development Goals has pointed to many of these past commitments and reaffirmed the need for States to meet their funding pledges in order to complete the MDGs on time to the best of the ability of the United Nations.

In addition to new initiatives created to meet the MDGs, Member States are in the midst of a heated debate over what to include in the Post-2015 Development Goals. The Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals hits on a number of issues to focus on in the Post-2015 goals, including continuing efforts on poverty and hunger eradication, sustainable development, and increased efforts on democratic governance, rule of law, and gender equality. The document places additional emphasis on the need for economic assistance, particularly after the lessons learned from the economic crisis of the past decade. However, particulars and expanded goals are under debate as well. Additionally, the Post-2015 agenda hopes to couple the MDGs with the Sustainable Development Goals, an outcome of the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 that builds on the Millennium Development Goals and hopes to ensure a more eco-friendly future.

In keeping with the call to "set the stage," the current sessions will likely focus on ways to bolster past successes and to preempt any problems that may occur in the next phase of the MDGs. Certain goals may no longer benefit from or need enough focus to include as a Post-2015 Development Goal. Additionally, States have begun to realize that tension emerges from the debate on whether to set targets that apply universally: raising people above the $2 per day poverty line means something far different in Sub-Saharan Africa than in Western Europe, for example. Member States should establish strong policy commitments for successful programs to maintain successes and focus on ways to reinforce progress made. This may be in the form of continued monetary, technological or personnel support. Future actions should also consider what type of commitments would provide a good foundation for the future of the Goals. This will prove especially difficult if the body cannot decide what they will ideally focus on in the next phase of the Development Goals.

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

- What areas need continued focus? What could future goals include that may have been missed with the original MDGs?
- How can the United Nations increase the number of Member States actively participating in improvements both within and beyond their borders?
- How can expanded efforts be inclusive of both developing and developed Member States?

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