



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 United Nations bodies report to the General Assembly, but not all of these bodies are subsidiary to the General Assembly. 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 General Assembly 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/

GLOBAL HEALTH AND FOREIGN POLICY

For centuries interstate health crises have been a major concern of States. Beginning in the nineteenth century, measures like quarantines sought to prevent the spread of disease across borders. By the start of the twenty-first century, globalization began to highlight the variety of ways that State health policies interact with foreign relations and economics. Epidemics like HIV/AIDS and new influenza strains have driven unprecedented levels of international cooperation on research and provision of aid. More and more United Nations bodies and regional organizations are coordinating on health-related issues, and private philanthropies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are playing increasingly major roles as donors and activists in developing countries.

There remain a wide diversity of health concerns, including major disease outbreaks, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and poor health systems in many countries. Additionally, problems with poverty, famine and health worker safety stem directly from war, forced migration, climate change and natural disasters. However, while the improvement of global health is a goal shared by the vast majority of Member States, each actor brings its own set of health issues, its own medical systems and its own perspective on health practices as attempts are made to implement an international approach to health. The global community is constantly challenged to address root problems without simply reacting to successive crises, and bringing together often conflicting foreign policy objectives is a key goal for the coming decades.

The United Nations has been concerned with coordinating international health policy since the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. Its main focus was on disease eradication for the first several decades of its existence. The late 1970s saw smallpox become the first disease to be completely eliminated by human effort alone. In



1978, WHO began a pivot toward “Health for All” at the Alma-Ata International Conference on Primary Healthcare, pushing for all governments to focus on high quality universal primary care. It continued putting forth new initiatives to battle polio, HIV/AIDS, NCDs like cancer and heart disease, and even campaigns promoting healthy living and tobacco-free societies.

In the early 2000’s, the United Nations put greater emphasis on the need for coordinated health policy. Three of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the General Assembly in 2000 were health-related. In 2005, WHO passed the International Health Regulations (IHR), creating binding international law that requires all States to report on health emergencies and establish specific health procedures.

The 2007 Oslo Ministerial Declaration launched a new initiative on Global Health and Foreign Policy. This collaboration between seven foreign ministers was the first explicit effort to elevate global health to a new strategic place on the international agenda. The document advocated a number of recommendations to improve foreign policy support for global health, leading to the first General Assembly resolution on the issue in 2008. The United Nations has subsequently kept the topic on its agenda every year, focusing on a new area with each resolution. Resolution 70/183 includes provisions on transitioning toward universal healthcare coverage, healthcare worker protection, research on deadly tropical diseases like Ebola and increased surveillance of disease outbreaks, with information to be shared among States in times of crisis.

One of the biggest challenges facing the international community is how to prioritize the varied global health issues. Foreign policy incentives are the main drivers of priority, not health impact, thus creating major disparities in funding for health issues. Nearly 36 billion dollars were donated to health causes in 2014, and AIDS alone benefited from over 30 percent of the total. But the leading causes of worldwide death, NCDs like heart disease, only received about 1.7 percent of the aid. They are not mutually dangerous in the way that pandemics are, so State cooperation and funding has remained low. The new Sustainable Development Goals notably include NCDs as a part of the post-2015 development agenda.

Additionally, crises drive the global health agenda, and this creates uneven support for health issues. The recent Ebola outbreak is a prime example. Millions of dollars and large amounts of manpower went to Ebola relief and research on vaccines. This kind of reactive response illustrates how attention and funding for health lessen when there are no major crises. A myriad of underlying problems need attention in order to improve crisis management in the future. Strengthening health infrastructure in developing States and improving disease reporting would go a long way toward preventing future pandemics and allow improved control of diseases that do break out.

Health problems also often stem from other major world issues like war, natural disasters and climate change. In May 2016, the Security Council adopted a resolution for improving protection of health workers in war zones, responding in part to the bombing of 250 hospitals by government and rebel forces in Syria.

Limited capabilities and coordination remain challenges. Although multilateral approaches between States are growing, there remains little coordination with major NGOs. In June 2016, the General Assembly

hosted a high-level meeting to discuss progress made on the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. Acknowledging the important contributions of non-state actors, the process began with an informal civil society hearing in early April for the purpose of facilitating cooperation between Member States, NGOs and the private sector. Although such meetings are useful, there are still few formal avenues for bringing States and NGOs together.

As the General Assembly reconvenes, many challenges must be addressed. Developing States continue to have major gaps in health care system capacity. The Ebola outbreak highlighted the lack of trained health professionals in West African States. Plus, weaknesses in worker protection led to deaths among workers who were not fully trained and equipped. Recent work toward an African Center for Disease Control is an important step for multilateral collaboration, but the initiative is still largely supported by donors. While some States and United Nations organs do help fund collaboration and information sharing, more work can be done in this area by both parties.

There are also new disease flare-ups, providing further opportunities for State cooperation. In February, the WHO Director-General declared the Zika virus outbreak in Latin America an international public health emergency. States have adopted widespread mosquito control and travel warnings, but it is difficult to diagnose and there is still no vaccine. Concern over safety at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro is increasing. Despite the ever widening array of issues, global health concerns are seeing more attention than ever before. The United Nations has just entered the 2030 development agenda, adopting major new goals to build on the MDGs. As it does so, Member States must seize the opportunity to further synchronize global health policy and cooperate in all areas of mutual interest.

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

- Given that global health issues involve the coordination of many Member States and non-governmental actors, what kinds of problems should be prioritized? Are the current forums for organizing policy objectives sufficient?
- What role should NGOs play in the implementation of global health objectives? How can the United Nations and Member States better coordinate their own policies with non-state actors?
- How can the international community better work to support States experiencing global health emergencies?

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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Since the late 1970s, Afghanistan has existed in an almost-perpetual state of conflict. A series of devastating civil wars have made the country one of the poorest in the world. In 1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan staged a coup against Afghan President Muhammed Daoud Kahn, leading to Soviet intervention to prop up the new socialist government. In 1980, the United Nations General Assembly held an emergency special session on Afghanistan, condemning the violence and calling for increased humanitarian aid from Member States. By 1989, the last Soviet troops had left Afghanistan; intermittent fighting continued, culminating in rise of the Taliban and their capture of Kabul in 1996. In addition to declaring hardline Islamic rule, the Afghan government was hosting militant bases loyal to Osama bin Laden, who was accused of terror attacks on United States embassies. This led the Security Council to impose economic sanctions.

In 2001, the United States of America invaded Afghanistan in response to the 11 September terrorist attacks in New York City. The invasion toppled the Taliban-led government of Afghanistan. Following the invasion, the United Nations organized a meeting with Afghan political leaders in Bonn, Germany, to plan the establishment of an effective Afghan government. The resulting agreement, known as the Bonn Agreement, established the Afghan Interim Authority and paved the way for the Security Council to pass Resolution 1386, which authorized the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF helped the fledgling Afghan government begin a prolonged war against the Taliban. The Security Council also established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in 2002 to support the work of the Bonn Conference.

While ISAF terminated operations in 2014, UNAMA continues to work to create Afghan democracy and bring Afghanistan fully into the world community. It has overseen Afghanistan's democratic elections and worked to promote and protect human rights, especially women's rights. UNAMA continues to work toward integrating Afghanistan with its neighbors, particularly through the 2011 Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process. The regional initiative is ongoing, pushing for increased cooperation on mutual goals and building interstate ties amongst 14 States in the Middle East and Central Asia.

In 2014, Afghanistan exited Inteqal, the three-year process of transitioning combat roles from ISAF to Afghan troops. The Security Council quickly welcomed NATO's post-2014 non-combat Resolute Support Mission, focusing on training. However, the Taliban are making a strong return, taking back areas held by ISAF and Afghan forces for over a decade. In the fall of 2015, the Taliban overran the city of Kunduz in northern Afghanistan, capturing it from Afghan security forces. Although those security forces reclaimed the city days later, this event shows that the Taliban are still a major threat, and the ISAF-trained Afghan National Army appears far from ready to fight alone. Civilian casualties continue to climb, with over 11,000 killed or wounded.

Looking ahead, a new combat role in Afghanistan is one solution for bolstering the government. Aside from reviving ISAF, an international recommitment to fighting could take the form of a broader anti-ISIS movement, as the Taliban have considered joining the group. At the same time, rapprochement between the warring parties could be preferable. During 2015, representatives of the Taliban and Afghan government officials began conducting informal peace talks in Qatar, even while Taliban forces continued operations against NATO and Afghan troops. The Security Council renewed the mandate of the UNAMA again in March 2016, and pledged to continue engagement with the Taliban.

Constant conflict has enabled a variety of human rights violations. The Taliban continue to target civilians, especially government workers and aid workers. UNAMA also reported last year that one-third of detainees have been tortured by government security forces. Despite the efforts of rights groups and the government's own statements on human rights, abuses continue. International fatigue with Afghanistan among major donors has led to decreased aid. The most recent aid conference last September saw little enthusiasm from donors to tie Afghanistan's aid to human rights benchmarks. With the economy and security issues taking priority, further work on rights will require providing new incentives for the government to follow through with reforms.



Despite the military and humanitarian work completed during the last fifteen years, results have been mixed. The issues remain complicated and challenging, ranging from local politics to relations with neighboring countries. The Afghan economy has been unable to recover from the decades of war and regime changes. This is compounded by allegations of corruption and inefficiencies in the central government, which has little to show for the large amount of foreign aid it has received. A recently resurgent Taliban also creates problems on multiple fronts, by taking back government territory, promoting the opium trade and further hampering economic growth through murder and destruction of property. ISAF troop withdrawal, combined with poor Afghan army training and funding, contributes to the situation. Amidst the violence, human rights continue to worsen. Taliban election attacks, government-sponsored torture and women's rights violations represent just a few of the problems facing the country. As the Afghan government continues to take on more and more responsibilities in the coming decade, the United Nations will continue to provide a vital support structure.

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

- How can Member States support security and economic development in Afghanistan? How can economic aid be allocated more effectively?
- Are there ways for Member States to enable greater cooperation or trade integration in the region? What effect could that have on the situation in Afghanistan?
- How might Member States balance support for security with the protection of human rights in the region?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE

DISARMAMENT & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE

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 United Nations General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

Website: www.un.org/ga/first/index.shtml

NATIONAL LEGISLATION ON TRANSFER OF ARMS, MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND DUAL-USE GOODS AND TECHNOLOGY

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recently estimated that the world currently spends more on arms than it did during the Cold War. According to SIPRI, the international transfer of arms increased by 14 percent from 2004-2008 to 2009-2013. Although it is difficult to determine an exact cause for these trends, past events have demonstrated that financial resources, perceived threats to national security, need for military upgrades, demonstrations of national status, the development of domestic arms industries and a desire to strengthen ties with suppliers all influence the acquisition of arms. Determining the scope of the international arms trade can also be difficult, in part because there are no globally agreed-upon definitions of arms or what activities constitute the arms trade. Furthermore, arms transfers lack transparency and the blurry lines between nuclear and non-nuclear transfers complicate the matter, especially when compared to small arms and light weapons, which move across borders more easily and fluidly.

The transfer of arms, military equipment, and dual-use goods and technology can threaten the security of the international community when left unchecked. While the United Nations has always recognized the global arms trade as legitimate and in line with a State's sovereign right to self-defense, the spread of lethal arms to unstable environments and into the hands of violent non-state actors has increased calls for greater regulation of the global arms trade. However, lenient controls and an absence of regulations concerning the arms trade have led to increased violence. Conflicts in many developing countries have been linked to uncontrolled arms transfers. The widespread availability of arms also has implications for the United Nations, with armed attacks disrupting humanitarian and development operations. While States have long been loath to relinquish control of regulating the transfer of arms, the United Nations recognizes how important regulation of their transfer is.

The United Nations first acknowledged the need for disarmament in 1952 and has subsequently addressed the issue in both the General Assembly and through actions by the Secretariat. In 1982, the Second Special Session on Disarmament established the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, primarily focused on nuclear weapons. In 1992, it was renamed the Centre for Disarmament Affairs; in 1997 the Department for Disarmament; and in 2007 the UN Office

of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). Over that period the focus of the group has also changed. UNODA is tasked with promoting non-proliferation and strengthening disarmament efforts for chemical and biological weapons, as well as conventional weapons and small arms.

To address the dangers of the illicit arms trade and potential lapses in national governments' oversight of the industry, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, held in July 2001, brought together many States involved in the arms trade industry, including importers and consumers, producers and exporters. This conference produced a Programme of Action (PoA) that acknowledged the dangers of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the links that illicit trade has to violence and dangerous non-state actors, and the responsibility States have in curtailing this dangerous black market. The PoA held Member States responsible to issue end-user certificates for weapons exports, to mark guns so they may be identified by the point of manufacture, and to increase enforcement of weapons embargoes and sanctions, among other provisions to curb the illicit arms trade.

In 2013, the General Assembly endorsed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), marking a major step toward addressing the spread of arms and lethal technology to conflict zones and non-state actors. The ATT is the result of years of work and opened for signature on 3 June 2013. It entered into force on 24 December 2014, and currently has 130 signatories and 82 States Parties. The ATT obliges signatories to commit to greater cooperation to restrict the illicit arms trade. In addition, it requires States to establish protocols for arms transfers in small arms and light weapons, missiles, missile launchers, tanks, armored combat vehicles, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, and artillery. The ATT also requires States to consider the risk weapons will be used to further organized crime, support acts of terrorism or commit human rights violations and to block deals with substantial risks.

Furthermore, the ATT requires all States Parties to accept basic controls and approval processes for the transfer of weapons across international borders and to provide annual information on exports and imports of conventional arms to the ATT secretariat. The ATT is comprehensive and specific on the international regulation of arms transfer, but there remain many issues regarding arms transfers. Unlike previous resolutions and reports, the ATT attempts to provide common definitions and guidelines intended to aid States in the control of the global arms trade. For example, the ATT outlines different categories of conventional weapons. It also differentiates between the roles of importing and exporting States when it comes to arms transfers.

There are also limitations to the ATT. For example, the ATT does not place restrictions on the types or quantities of arms that may be bought, sold or owned by States. It also does not affect domestic gun control laws. Furthermore, issues of interpretation, implementation and enforcement could affect the Treaty's effectiveness. Although the main sanction for violation is embarrassment, and previous weapons treaties show that this is indeed a powerful deterrent, this is not always an effective or legally-binding response. Additionally, the three largest arms exporters in the world have not yet ratified the treaty; indeed, France is



the first ratifier in the rank order but is only the fourth largest arms exporter.

In the future, the United Nations hopes to continue strengthening international standards of regulating the transfer of arms, military equipment, and dual-use goods and technology. By emphasizing the negative impacts of uncontrolled arms trade, such as civilian populations trapped in situations of armed violence and the disruption of humanitarian efforts and operations, the United Nations also hopes to instill increasing concern over this topic area.

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

- How can Member States work together to improve regulation on transfer of arms, military equipment, and dual-use goods and technology? How might they improve implementation and enforcement of current measures?
- How is the Arms Trade Treaty being enforced? Are there ways the ATT has been or should be built on, or a direction the international community should go in?
- What incentives can be used to encourage States to sign and/or ratify the ATT? Would this help the ATT be more effective?

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PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

The use of space is critical to global society. Modern militaries rely heavily on man-made satellites in orbit around the earth, which are used for communication, targeting and global positioning systems. Satellites are also critical to civilian operations such as telecommunications and scientific research. All countries rely upon space-based technology in some way, even if they are not space-faring themselves. Due to the global vantage point provided simply by being in space and the unique and global dangers space weapons pose, a debate has emerged over the past few decades on whether militaries should be permitted to station weapons in orbit. The fledgling commercial space industry, eager to develop near-earth orbit and mine the asteroid belt for resources, also has a vested interest in keeping space peaceful and developing clear international law governing military use of space.

The weaponization of space has long been a concern of the United Nations. In 1963, the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on all Member States to refrain from placing nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit or from installing such weapons on celestial bodies. The General Assembly also noted that the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly those prohibiting the use or threat of use of force, apply in space as well.

In 1967, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (commonly known as the "Outer Space Treaty") entered into force. This treaty is the main instrument of international law governing the use of outer space and tracks the language of the 1963 resolution by banning the stationing of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in orbit or on any celestial body. It does not ban the stationing of conventional weapons in space or prohibit the use of conventional weapons launched from the surface of the Earth to destroy objects in space. The Outer Space Treaty currently has 104 States Parties, including all Member States with significant space-faring capability. Another 24 Member States have signed but not ratified the treaty.

Subsequent efforts to develop and enforce multilateral treaties regarding this topic have not met with success. In 1979, Member States proposed the adoption of the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (commonly known as the "Moon Treaty"). The treaty never gained significant traction, in part because it would have required Member States to share space-derived resources and the means for extracting such resources. It has been ratified by only 14 Member States, none of which have space-launch capability.

In 1985, the Conference on Disarmament, where this topic has also been debated at length, established the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The Ad Hoc Committee disbanded in 1994 after failing to generate any formal agreements. Discussion on this topic in the First Committee has continued through the end of the Cold War to the present day. In recent resolutions related to this topic, the First Committee encouraged the adoption of verifiable measures to prevent an arms race in space, including the creation and implementation of better transparency and confidence-building measures among space-faring States.

The first way that an arms race in space could erupt is by deploying existing nuclear weapons such as inter-continental ballistic missiles



(ICBMs) in orbit. The nuclear deterrence that has prevented the use of nuclear weapons in combat since the detonations at Hiroshima and Nagasaki is based on each side's ability to destroy the other should any nuclear attack take place. Because space-based nuclear weapons would have a much faster response time than even ICBMs, one side's implementation of such weapons would threaten the balance of power and could potentially lead to an arms race of ever-faster and more responsive nuclear satellites.

However, space weapons could also be something as simple as a satellite that drops rods of concrete rebar. When dropped from 60+ miles up, virtually any object that can survive the heat stress of atmospheric reentry can become a deadly missile. The extent to which conventional weapons in space should be banned is therefore a key part of the global debate on this issue. The destruction of one satellite, whether it is from a space-based weapon or a surface-to-space missile, could create a chain reaction of explosions, filling low-earth orbit with debris and rendering it unusable for any satellites or human and robotic exploration missions. This situation, known as Kessler Syndrome, would have a catastrophic effect on global society. While some global positioning and other highly specialized satellites orbit high enough to be out of reach of such a disaster, the vast majority of currently operating satellites are in low-earth orbit, including most scientific and weather satellites, constellations of communications satellites such as the Iridium satellite telephone system, and the International Space Station. Losing all of these capabilities in short succession would have far-reaching effects such as cutting communications from remote regions of the Earth and a decreased ability to predict natural disasters. Low-earth orbit is also by far the cheapest orbit to launch a satellite in and has a number of advantages, such as a short orbital period to cover more of the Earth with one satellite. The economic cost to shift satellite development and launch to higher orbits would be enormous.

Recently, this debate has become more urgent due to signs that some States are gearing up to wage space-based warfare or to develop the capacity to destroy another State's assets in space. The United States military has earmarked \$2 billion for developing space weapons in 2016, citing concerns that its military has become so dependent on satellites that they are an "Achilles' heel" that must be better protected. In 2007, the People's Republic of China destroyed one of their own satellites with a surface-to-space missile, 530 miles above the Earth's surface. The United States has also destroyed one of its own satellites in similar fashion, and Russia has successfully tested its own anti-satellite missile.

Debate has taken place as to whether to extend the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty or develop other bilateral or multilateral treaties that go further toward banning weapons in space. The Space Preservation Treaty, which would ban all weapons in space, including conventional weapons, was proposed to the General Assembly in the mid-2000s; to date it has not been signed by any Member State. In 2008 and again in 2014, at the Conference for Disarmament, Member States proposed the adoption of a "draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects." This treaty has yet to come before the General Assembly.

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

- What constitutes a "weapon" in space? How can an instrument limiting the use of weapons in space carve out room for civilian, scientific and other benign operations to continue to operate?

- How can existing United Nations arms treaties be modified to better address the prevention of an arms race in outer space?
- Are new multilateral agreements necessary or advisable to incorporate into the framework of agreements banning or otherwise limiting space weaponization? How can the United Nations improve the implementation and integration of existing agreements that deal with space weapons?
- What lessons can be learned from the failure of the Moon Treaty to gain any significant traction?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE

ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE

The Second Committee makes recommendations on means to improve the economic development of Member States and maintain the stability of international financial and trade networks. The economic issues considered by the Second Committee are distinguished from those considered by the Fifth Committee in that this Committee deals solely with financing the economic assistance to Member States, whereas the Fifth Committee addresses the budgetary issues within the United Nations System. The Second Committee does not address social issues that affect development; such issues are considered by the Third Committee. For more information concerning the purview of the United Nations General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

Website: www.un.org/ga/second/index.shtml

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

In the past fifty years, industrial development cooperation has expanded greatly because of globalization and the shift away from rural societies into urban living. In the same vein, a move toward industrial development has shifted countries closer to achieving “developed” status and spurred the creation of jobs and economic growth. This growth, strengthening the economy and the State’s viable credit amongst other States, is important for development. As many States classified as developing may not individually possess what they need to shift toward industrial development, cooperation becomes important. Aid in the form of information sharing, development and assistance is key to this, creating equity among States to continue the developmental process. As the latest wave of industrialization slows down, there is a need to find new and innovative means to bring the developing States into the ranks of developed States.

Development has come to be understood in three main facets: long-term sustained industrialization, social inclusiveness and the equal distribution of opportunities, and environmental sustainability. Sustained industrialization stems from the development of infrastructure within a State, such as roads and public transportation, water systems, as well as energy and information technologies. Many developing countries still lack basic infrastructure. According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) report, over 2.5 billion people still lack access to reliable, around-the-clock electricity and basic sanitation. Adopted on 26 September 2015, some of the SDGs do pertain directly to industrial cooperation and development: SDG 9 aims to “build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.” Additionally, by advancing the developing States, developed States can achieve a more environmentally sustainable use of technology to generate new markets for goods and services.

In 1966, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 2152, creating the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as an autonomous body. In 1975, it was converted into a specialized agency, operating as a forum for cooperation to share technology, information and other resources between States. Currently, UNIDO has 171 members. UNIDO

negotiations are often contributed to by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to create shared prosperity.

The Lima Declaration: Towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development, was adopted at the fifteenth session of the General Conference of UNIDO, was held in Lima from 2 to 6 December 2013. The Lima Declaration encourages the integration of all three areas of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) into UNIDO’s work. Additionally, the Declaration recognizes the basis for this industrial development as being foreign direct investment, transfer of knowledge and technology, appropriate financial mechanisms, and on mutually agreed terms. Emphasis is placed on UNIDO’s position as a unique global facilitator of advice regarding sustainable industrial development and these development services should be provided according to differentiated needs of Member States, especially to least developed countries but also considering countries at other stages of industrial development.

The concept of inclusive and sustainable industrial development was introduced in the General Assembly’s 2 August 2012 report on industrial development cooperation (67/223) as the primary mandate of UNIDO for the post-2015 development agenda. It determined that “challenges should be addressed through international industrial cooperation, including growth and jobs; resource efficiency, energy poverty and climate change; shifting demographics; knowledge creation and transfer; and growing inequalities.” In 2014, the General Assembly’s resolution on industrial development cooperation recognized the importance of recent and future moves towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development strategies. Both of these, among other reports and resolutions, have shaped debate on this topic by focusing on the inclusivity between States and the future of sustainable actions.

Because of the lingering effects of the global financial and economic crisis and the continued effects of frequent natural disasters, there has been a renewed focus on the importance of the relationship between economic growth, environmental safeguards and inclusive development. This has helped the international community grow toward recognition of industrialization as the core of sustainable development for eradicating poverty post-2015. There are benefits for individual developing countries to take responsibility and finance their own industrial development to achieve a positive long-term future impact within their country and region, and this responsibility should be encouraged.

Within industrial development, international and regional effort should be made towards inclusiveness, particularly between genders and cultural or ethnic groups. Working toward these goals, the international community, as well as the private sector, must collaborate to enable sustainable industrial development. There should be more importance placed on corporate sustainability, especially for publicly listed or large companies, to integrate sustainability information into their reports, and industry regulators and governments should facilitate and integrate this sustainability reporting. Member States should play their part by considering adoption of goals toward inclusive and sustainable industrialization, considering the post-2015 development agenda.



The unique role of UNIDO must be used to promote dialogue between stakeholders at the local, regional and international level to encourage progress towards these goals, especially in least developed countries, as well as other developing countries through environmentally-sound and sustainable agro-industry and agribusiness. UNIDO should continue working toward effectiveness in improving the quality of services provided to developing countries by using its four capacities: technological cooperation, research and analysis, normative assistance, and global forum activities. As UNIDO adopts more policies, moving forward these should be reviewed to ensure alignment with UN frameworks, as well as responsiveness to new developmental challenges. Additionally, as many States continue to view UNIDO as politicized and ineffective, its Members must work together to overcome these perceptions and change the culture of the organization to encourage larger and more effective participation.

Finally, industrial development cooperation is not without a larger controversy, particularly around who owns the means of production. Foreign direct investment is often a positive means of spurring industrial development, but frequently it removes ownership from the citizens of a Member State. With the onus of development taken off those individuals, and with industrialized countries generally wanting to be able to invest wherever they like, a lingering form of dependence can occur, creating a State that has some industrial development but it has taken the shape of what its funder has in mind. While some developing States do not mind this, just as many do; carefully navigating this line will be of utmost importance moving forward on this issue.

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

- How will industrial development cooperation change as it is shaped by the Sustainable Development Goals? Are there other Sustainable Development Goals that could be incorporated?
- Which other agencies or organs of the United Nations touch on this issue in a similar way? How can that work be used toward creating industrial development cooperation?
- What is the responsibility of developed countries to help those still developing implement this particular topic or Sustainable Development Goal?

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Natural resources and ecosystems play an enormous role in humankind's development: from crop production to natural disasters, the delicate balance of the Earth's resources has come to the forefront in the last few decades. In November 1988, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convened the Ad Hoc Working Group on biological diversity; UNEP established the Ad Hoc Working Group of Technical and Legal Experts in May 1989 to begin outlining an international legal means of protecting the Earth and its resources. Eventually known as the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in February 1991, this group completed its work with the 22 May 1992 Nairobi Conference on the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Opened for signature in June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio "Earth Summit"), the Earth Summit helped to bring together scientists from around the world to discuss climate change in unprecedented clarity. For one of the first times, people representing all different countries, backgrounds and specialties from around the world could discuss the impact of climate change on the environment and, in turn, the changing environment's impact on humanity. The Convention on Biological Diversity was signed by 168 United Nations Member States and entered into force in December 1993. It stresses the importance of protecting all natural resources, as they are not infinite. The Convention identifies and outlines three main objectives: conservation of biological diversity; sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. Additionally, the Convention provides a global legal framework for biodiversity and its protection. The Convention also creates a handful of bodies to continue work on this issue. The Conference of Parties (COP) meets every two years, or as needed, to review progress on the Convention's implementation and to provide guidance on biodiversity policy. The COP is complemented by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), made up of experts in relevant fields, as well as government and non-government representatives providing recommendations on implementation.

The Convention requires that all States Parties submit National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans to the COP. These identify key areas for implementing the Convention at the State level and how to integrate these into existing programs and activities that have a positive or negative affect on the environment. The COP has also established offshoot programs to address biomes individually and specifically; this is unique, as previous work has been specifically on the preservation or conservation of a specific animal or habitat.



Since its adoption in 1992, the Convention has added supplementary agreements: the 2000 Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2011 Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. These seek to more clearly implement the Convention's goals. The Cartagena Protocol, outlining the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms, seeks to protect natural biological diversity; the Nagoya Protocol speaks to the sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, contributing to biodiversity through sustainable use and conservation.

Integrating not only United Nations agencies and organizations, the Nagoya Protocol also calls upon non-governmental organizations, and even regional economic partnerships, to help monitor and maintain the environmental protection agreements. While mostly centered in Europe and the Arctic, these agreements help to protect for future generations vital wildlife and floral native ranges.

Additionally, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets have extended specific Convention goals until 2020. Principal themes include maintenance of existing forests and ecosystems, prevention of human intrusion, intrusion by human factors into non-human and protected areas, and cooperating with existing regional and local stakeholders into protecting conservation lands. It is the overall goal of the Aichi Plan to work on the local level with those most at-risk and with those best poised to help implement and protect this plan of action.

While recognition for the protection of the environment continues to grow, there have been significant hurdles in reaching the goals set out in the original Convention on Biological Diversity. As States face other pressing issues such as war or instability, concern and funding for environmental protections fall to the wayside. Additionally, non-state actors frequently have little regard for the environment or sustainable practices: they are also not held to the legal ramifications outlined in the Convention, as they are not signatories. A sharp increase in consumer culture in many developed States creates a problem of what to do with and how to dispose of waste; as landfills reach capacity and man-made plastics take centuries to decompose, the question of next steps remains unanswered.

In the Convention and its addenda alone, challenges arise with regard to bureaucracy; some argue that the Nagoya Protocol in particular adds so many layers of legislation and red tape that its overall effect will be to hamper global response to infectious disease, conservation and biodiversity at large. Moving forward, the international community will need to place greater importance on biological diversity and sustainability. As ecosystems shrink and global temperatures increase, spurring natural disasters and famine, facing the challenge of conservation and sustainability is more pressing than ever.

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

- How should States balance the need to protect vital habitats with humanity's need for growth into new environments and its ever-growing need for resources?
- How can the international community assist States Parties in meeting their national biodiversity targets, through cooperation, information sharing or other means?

- How might the international community address the environmental impacts of non-State actors who are not bound by the Convention and Protocols?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN & CULTURAL

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE

While the Committee's areas of concern and its work often overlap with other United Nations organs, the Third Committee focuses its discussions on social, humanitarian and cultural concerns that arise in the General Assembly. The Third Committee discusses issues with, recognizes reports of, and submits recommendations to the General Assembly in coordination with other United Nations organs, such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). For more information concerning the purview of the United Nations General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

Website: www.un.org/ga/third/index.shtml

THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* declared freedom of opinion and expression as fundamental human rights. A free press is key to achieving this goal. To secure these rights, the United Nations has worked to reduce persecution of and retribution against journalists. Over the past decade, 700 journalists have been killed as a result of their reporting—one journalist every five days. Since 1992, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) counts 1,187 reporters killed as a direct result of their work; in approximately 90 percent of those cases, no conviction was obtained. In addition to those killed in the line of work, 221 more journalists were imprisoned in 2014 and 2015. Even more frequently, journalists are subject to bodily injury, mistreatment and intimidation. Especially with the advent and widespread use of the internet and expanded definitions of journalism that stem from its use, more and more journalists are at risk of intimidation, harm and death for publishing their works. The United Nations struggles to bring Member States into agreement on standards for domestic law and protections for journalists and especially struggles to ensure adoption of these standards on a domestic level.

Domestic laws have long provided cover for many States to detain journalists without recourse. Many laws used to detain or otherwise harm or impede journalists have been passed in the past ten years. Journalists have been prosecuted or detained under provisions of domestic anti-terrorism laws, libel laws and military protocols in a number of countries, including both developing and developed States. Vaguely worded and overbroad laws pose some of the greatest threats to journalism and journalists' safety.

In 1997, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference adopted 29C/Resolution 29, which condemned violence against journalists. The resolution tied safety of journalists to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and to goals that would later be incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals. In the early 2000s, the United Nations laid out standards for the protection of journalists in conflict areas and war zones in the United Nations Charter for the Safety of Journalists Working in War Zones or Dangerous Areas and in Security Council Resolution 1738. While these protections are in place for conflict areas, the vast majority of journalists are detained, imprisoned or otherwise harmed domestically. Despite the framework and recommendations made by

the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity established in 2010, many States have failed to implement safety standards for journalists.

In 2013, the General Assembly designated 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI), a continuation of a long history of similar days meant to raise awareness. These actions, and the ones that follow, still rely heavily on commitments from States and, by and large, their commitment to regional agreements and organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Notable action plans have been created by numerous organizations, including the International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists (IDPJ), by the International Press Institute (IPI) and the Global Safety Principles and Practices, which was created by a news and journalism coalition.

In Operationalizing the United Nations Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issues of Impunity at the Country Level, the Special Rapporteur's 2012 update and the 2013 implementation review of the Plan of Action, the same key problems were identified: a lack of political will in regions known for crimes against journalists; difficulty in reporting incidents on behalf of victims and their organizations; lack of preventive as opposed to reactionary measures; and an increased severity in punishment when the victims are women, minorities or other vulnerable persons. At present, only 50 percent of United Nations requests for statistics on violence and crime against journalists are answered. The most recent Resolution A/RES/70/162 unequivocally condemns all forms of violence against journalists; continues to expand the definition of journalism for a modern age; and calls upon governments, relevant agencies, organizations, funds and programs to unite to protect the safety of journalists and end impunity.

Protecting journalists from intimidation, threat and harm as a result of their work is key to providing stability, transparency and accountability in government. With the expanding definition of journalism and consistent underreporting of retaliatory or work-related incidents, the Third Committee faces a significant challenge on this topic. Incentivising reporting, encouraging adoption of policies that support United Nations recommendations and providing guidance on policy implementation are key to progress on this topic. Solutions need to focus on implementation of existing standards and the expansion of those standards and definitions to include forms of journalism that have arisen in the modern age.

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

- What can the international community do to encourage domestic policies in compliance with United Nations standards for journalist safety?
- How has the use of the internet expanded the definition of journalism?
- What can the United Nations do to increase reporting and get more accurate statistics on journalists and impunity?



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PROTECTION OF AND ASSISTANCE TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person forced or obligated to flee or leave their homes in order to avoid the effects of natural disasters, armed conflict, violence or other violations of human rights. IDPs differ from refugees in that IDPs have not crossed an internationally recognized border, whereas refugees are outside their home State or place of habitual residence. IDPs remain within their own countries and retain their citizenship status in addition to their protection as a citizen of their country under human rights and international humanitarian law.

In 2011, there were an estimated 26.4 million IDPs around the world. An additional 14.9 million people were displaced by natural disasters globally in 2011. In five years time, numbers have escalated to nearly 38 million internally displaced people globally. The majority of this increase in displacement was the result of crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan and Syria.

The status of IDPs and providing for their care are difficult problems for the United Nations. Because IDPs remain within their home States, the United Nations has little formal power over their care. Instead, the United Nations has worked to create viable standards and foster international cooperation on the issue. Issues surrounding the protection of IDPs include the lack of a centralized body responsible for IDPs and the need for additional environmental, structural and political supports for countries with elevated IDP populations. Because of the varying causes of internal displacement, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and the displacements often go hand-in-hand with existing problems within the country. Political tensions or infrastructural and monetary constraints limit States' ability to respond to IDPs. In many cases, the State has failed, leaving IDPs in even more precarious positions with little to no assistance. As a result, the Third Committee has focused not only on coordination of United Nations and non-United Nations organizations, but also on garnering widespread adoption of generalized standards for both prevention and protection of IDPs, including preventative measures like sustainable development.

The 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, commonly known as the Fourth Geneva Convention, sets the international norms for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. States developed the 1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which provides internationally agreed upon standards for the treatment of both refugees and IDPs. In 1992, the General Assembly requested that any existing best practices and standards regarding internally displaced people be collected and compiled into comprehensive guidelines for States. As a result the Secretary-General's office provided the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to the United Nations General Assembly in 1998. These principles are non-binding and cannot be mandated, only promoted; they expand upon preexisting standards and regional agreements. In the Principles, Member States are given direction on how to address internal displacement, as well as how to prevent it.

Currently, the United Nations is working both to ensure that IDPs are granted access to their human rights without discrimination and on resolving the unique issues facing IDPs displaced due to conflict or instability, particularly the special concerns facing women and girls. While the responsibility for the protection of these persons remains with the State, the United Nations has urged for increased cooperation between United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and States in burden-sharing, provision of resources and creating policy frameworks to respond to the issue. The United Nations began enhancing the predictability of its operations regarding IDPs through the March 2014 release of a provisional guidance on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement. The subsequent launch in April 2014 of the Solutions Alliance, an organization focusing on coordinating and expediting services for IDPs, has provided a platform for humanitarian and development actors to come together to provide durable and lasting solutions to the problem of displacement.



In recent resolutions, the General Assembly has recognized the need for regionally-specific and applied IDP standards such as the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, otherwise known as the Kampala Convention, as well as for the international support for IDPs. The General Assembly requested that the Office of the High Commissioner look into the sustainability of voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement of IDPs and further requested the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons to continue to seek contributions from States and relevant institutions to assist in creating a more stable base for this work, as well as to compile a report on the implementation of the resolutions. The Special Rapporteur subsequently released reports on IDPs generally and on specific instances and topics related to IDPs. Additionally, the Office of the High Commissioner has been working to open new camps, such as the two opened in Baghdad in September, 2015.

In the face of continuing displacement globally, the General Assembly Third Committee has been seeking durable solutions, stronger links between humanitarian relief and longer-term development programs, burden-sharing and preventative measures that can keep the number of internally displaced peoples down. In light of the ongoing displacement within Syria and Iraq as well as the ongoing threat of manmade and natural disasters, the Third Committee continues to look for collaborative solutions. The scale of this humanitarian issue, however, has continued to test the capacity of the international community. Standards for care are not universally used; women, children and the disabled are still highly vulnerable and often without adequate protections and oversight; and preventative measures like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development need much improvement. The Third Committee struggles to get enough funding and the commitment of Member States to address these problems. Solutions should include the reintegration of IDPs safely into their places of origin, integration into their current communities or safe integration into another part of the country, while ensuring that IDPs retain the ability to make informed choices that best meet their perceived needs. The United Nations will be working toward including IDPs in all State development planning programs, as well as to place the protection of IDPs and refugees at the center of humanitarian actions, through accessible expert and technical resources, clear guidance and appropriate tools.

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

- How could regional cooperation provide for and better protect internally displaced persons?
- How can coordination of services be streamlined and what services need to be prioritized?
- In what ways can the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement be strengthened? Are there principles that are outdated, inefficient or ineffective?
- As vulnerable groups, what can be done to assist women, children and persons with disability who are internally displaced?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOURTH COMMITTEE

SPECIAL POLITICAL & DECOLONIZATION

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOURTH COMMITTEE

The Fourth Committee is charged with addressing a variety of political and peacekeeping issues. Its political work covers aspects of decolonization, mine action and Palestinian refugee issues. Its recommendations should address political aspects of an issue and not focus on the economic, social or development aspects of the topic. For example, while the Fourth Committee may discuss the political problems of the Syrian Golan, it cannot discuss the details of how to promote development in the area, a task better suited for the Second Committee. The Fourth Committee is also charged with the coordination and operational aspects of UN peacekeeping missions and the oversight of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. This is an important distinction from the Security Council, which develops peacekeeping missions and objectives. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

Website: www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/

ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION

Over the last 65 years, roughly 110 million landmines have been deployed across 70 countries. Unlike other weapons, deployed landmines remain dangerous long after a conflict is over and pose long term social, political, economic and public health problems for those countries affected. Unmarked or active minefields are often concentrated in countries that saw significant fighting in the late twentieth century. In 2014 the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) estimated 79 percent of those killed or injured by landmines were civilians. Following immense international action in the 1990s, the number of individuals injured each year by landmines has fallen dramatically from a high of 20,000 in 1996 to 3,308 in 2013, the lowest level of casualties recorded by ICBL. However, the need for continued mine action remains; up to 7.9 million people live near areas affected by landmines, and major stockpiles are still held by China, Russia, the United States, India and many more Member States. New mines have been laid in conflicts in Syria, Libya, South Korea and many other places. While many States talk about the dangers of landmines, the United Nations struggles to obtain commitments from Member States to both sign and ratify major landmine agreements and, once ratified, to implement the protocols of the agreements.

In 1996, after failing to ban landmines in Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and to effectively outline methods for eradicating landmine use, a group of 50 delegations, led by Canada, opened independent talks to establish a treaty to end landmine use. Late in the year, Protocol II was amended to restrict the transfer of mines and other similar devices alongside prohibitions on directing landmines against civilian populations. In the following year, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction came into force. This agreement, commonly known as the Ottawa Convention or the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty, saw over 90 States and 1,400 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) call for the destruction of anti-personnel landmines (APMs) and the elimination of remaining stockpiles. In the

2015 report of the Secretary-General on Assistance in Mine Action, the Secretary-General reported that 162 countries have ratified the Ottawa Convention, with 157 States no longer holding stockpiles of APMs. The United Nations is continuing to work with the 31 States yet to complete their obligation to clear mines; 35 States have still not ratified the treaty.

In 1997 the United Nations established the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), an office in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations responsible for coordinating mine action and demining activities across the United Nations system. In 1999, the role of UNMAS was expanded to include coordinating between non-governmental organizations. UNMAS focuses on five areas of work: mine clearance, education, victim assistance, advocacy and stockpile destruction. The United Nations work on mine action is guided by the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018. For this period, the United Nations prioritized four strategic objectives: reducing the risk and impact of mines, providing comprehensive support to victims of mines, transfer of mine action function to national actors, and promotion and integration of mine action plans.

In addition to action against APMs, the United Nations has taken action against cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERWs). In 2006, Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons came into effect, which bound States Parties to take responsibility for the effect of unexploded munitions in their territory after a conflict. In 2010, the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force and called upon signatories to eliminate their stockpiles of cluster munitions. In his 2015 midterm review, the Secretary-General noted that 51 percent of suspected hazard areas have been declared free of landmines and commended Mozambique, which declared 97 percent of its districts free from landmines in January 2015. Similarly, Latin American States like Colombia have committed to reducing the number of deployed landmines in their territories. However, many States continue to maintain their stockpiles of landmines and APMs.

In light of international conflicts, some States have failed to maintain the Ottawa Treaty and have come under pressure to withdraw entirely. Libya and Syria have used landmines in recent conflicts. In 2014, Finland came under political pressure from its National Coalition Party to withdraw from the Ottawa Treaty entirely. Ukraine has faced similar pressures and new landmines have been placed on the border between Ukrainian and Russian troops. Compounding the problem, the United Nations struggles to keep landmines out of the hands of nonstate actors. Landmines are cheap, easy to make and effective. As a result, organizations like ISIL and Al-Shabab have begun to use APMs. The United Nations needs to work on both enforcing the Ottawa Treaty and expanding its measures to impact non-state actors.

Although extensive frameworks exist for eliminating APMs and limiting the use of cluster munitions, the United Nations still faces multiple issues with mine clearance activities. One of the goals of the current Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy is to transfer mine action programs to national actors, but recent transitions have been difficult. Additionally, given the intent to transfer mine action programs to State



actors, the proliferation of NGOs and offices involved in mine action may hinder coordination. Continued action on denying the transfer of APMs to non-state actors remains important, as recent conflicts have seen an increase in the use of APMs and improvised explosive devices. Furthermore, in recent years the Secretary-General has noted an increasing number of mine action personnel being attacked, kidnapped or killed. As with all United Nations actions, funding remains a pressing issue. The existence of these issues should not distract from the significant progress made toward the elimination of APMs and assistance to the victims.

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

- How can the United Nations obtain universal adoption of the Ottawa Treaty and what steps can be taken to make it more effective?
- What steps can the United Nations take to protect mine action personnel working in complex conflict environments?
- What pre-emptive steps can the United Nations take to address APMs in current conflict areas and how can the United Nations prevent further use of landmines?
- How can the United Nations incentivise the reduction of existing APM landmines?

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PERSONS DISPLACED AS A RESULT OF THE JUNE 1967 AND SUBSEQUENT HOSTILITIES

Following the hostilities between Israel and its neighbors in June 1967, commonly known as the Six-Day War, an estimated 700,000 individuals were displaced from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Most of those displaced ended up in one of 58 refugee camps recognized by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and received what was intended to be temporary humanitarian assistance until repatriation was possible. Due to continued political difficulties between the involved parties, a full agreement on repatriation has not been found, and what was intended by the United Nations as a temporary measure has, instead, become a long term project to provide humanitarian assistance. Today, those displaced by the Six-Day War and subsequent hostilities remain in a precarious position—as do their descendants. UNRWA currently supports more than an estimated 1.5 million individuals living in UNRWA-recognized refugee camps across the Middle East and an additional estimated 3.5 million living outside these camps, receiving some form of assistance from UNRWA.

After the Six-Day War, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for the rapid return of those displaced to their homes. Until that could be accomplished, the General Assembly called upon the international community to increase funding for UNRWA and to authorize the provision of temporary humanitarian relief measures to those displaced. The General Assembly based much of this work on the 1951 Refugee Convention, which provided the framework by which the General Assembly and other UN bodies have addressed persons displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities. This authorization was later extended to those displaced as a result of subsequent hostilities in the region. Despite the call for immediate repatriation, the 1971 Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories found that the Israeli government had made little progress toward allowing repatriation. The Report found that repatriation activities were limited to a summer visitors program which admitted, on a temporary basis, only a few thousand displaced persons each year. In accordance with the 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Article XII, the United Nations, Israel and refugee host countries attempted to resolve the repatriation issue affecting those displaced, but no permanent solution has emerged. Today UNRWA provides education, health and other social services in addition to support for microfinance and camp improvement projects.

Poverty, overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, limited economic opportunities, and unorganized and unclear administrative responsibilities are common in the refugee camps. UNRWA does not own the refugee camps, nor is it responsible for day-to-day operations; rather, the ownership, administration and responsibility for maintaining order in the camps and among displaced populations is considered the responsibility of the host states, while UNRWA provides humanitarian assistance to



those living in the recognized camps. This arrangement has led to unclear responsibility for providing services and maintaining order while contributing to an overall sense of lawlessness in the camps and to chronic underdevelopment.

Children are the hardest hit by their refugee status and poorly organized camps. Over 80 percent of the Palestinian refugee population lives below the poverty line; infant mortality rates are high; and school facilities are substandard and overpopulated. Children born in the camps must be registered as refugees at birth to qualify for services and must be born to registered parents. Tens of thousands of children go unregistered, leaving them stateless and vulnerable to the worst conditions of refugee life and unable to seek recourse.

To alleviate poor conditions in the refugee camps, UNRWA launched the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program (ICIP) in 2007. ICIP worked with local groups in the camps to identify needs and to support building projects that address overcrowding, poverty and inadequate infrastructure. The program was built on the premise that the largely urban refugee camps have different needs than temporary refugee camps, such as long-term urban planning. Urban planning was a key component of the rebuilding of the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in Lebanon in 2008. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, UNRWA worked to ensure that the rebuilding plan takes into account long term habitation in the camp and provision of utilities, economic opportunities and integration with the larger community, incorporating the 2015 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its applicable urban planning guidelines.

Repatriation, compensation and assimilation efforts remain one of the largest problems facing Palestinian refugees. Although recent resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly still call for repatriation of those displaced as a result of the hostilities, repatriation of both those inside and outside of the camps is not likely in the foreseeable future. Integration, asylum and dual citizenship have been past solutions for refugees. However, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan have resisted integration attempts, citing economic and infrastructural strain, political upheaval, and security concerns. Refugees in foreign camps have been denied rights to work and own property by State domestic laws; host States show no interest in amending or striking these laws. Host States have, in the past, attempted to force migration of Palestinian refugees to varying success. Refugees in Gaza and the West Bank are routinely further displaced within the camp by fighting. Israel has claimed many impediments to repatriation, including that Palestinian refugees are in the historic Palestine; security concerns related to the presence of Hezbollah and Hamas members and supporters among the refugees; and some refugees' resistance to repatriation into the existing Israeli state. In lieu of repatriation or assimilation, refugee advocates have tried to obtain financial compensation for property losses, an option first proposed by the General Assembly in 1948, but have had little success. The General Assembly discussed the concept again in 2014 and called on the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine to track and identify property and assets originally held by those displaced by the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities. So far, movement toward financial compensation has been inadequate.

An additional issue has severely curtailed UNRWA activities in Syria. As a result of the lack of a resolution for those displaced, UNRWA has provided services to the refugee camps beyond emergency humanitarian assistance. With regional instability creating ever-more-urgent situations

for existing displaced persons and increasing host countries' populations of internally displaced persons, the issue is both urgent and complicated. Balancing the long-term needs of those displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities and those more recently displaced has spread United Nations efforts and resources thin. Documentation, resources and regional politics have prevented Palestinian refugees from traveling to Palestinian refugee camps farther away from the war in Syria.

The Fourth Committee will continue to address the situation of those displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, along with the role of UNRWA in providing assistance to those displaced. With the lack of progress in repatriation, the Fourth Committee has increasingly looked at ways to alleviate problems in the refugee camps and reach arrangements acceptable to the involved parties. Funding and resource allocation remains a problem. In recent years there has been criticism of ICIP, notably that the organization accepts the denial of repatriation as a given going forward and instead treats the temporary refugee camps as permanent settlements. There is also concern that UNRWA has moved beyond its mandate of providing humanitarian assistance and is instead adopting a governmental and administrative role in the camps by coordinating with local groups on development projects beyond humanitarian assistance. Going forward, the Fourth Committee will need to balance the situations inside the camps and the problems faced by those displaced with a long-term resolution to the ongoing situation, most notably funding, coordination of UN and non-governmental organization services, refugee asset protection, and the desire and feasibility of repatriation.

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

- Under what conditions would repatriation of persons displaced by the 1967 and subsequent hostilities be feasible?
- How do the concerns of refugee populations in general differ from the concerns of those displaced by the 1967 and subsequent hostilities?
- What services and funding structures are most effective and most applicable for the population?
- How can the Fourth Committee aid in coordinating UN and non-UN services to those displaced?

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