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 political components of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. 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. 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 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 will be respected. It would thus be rare for significant changes to be made or for a resolution to fail in the Combined Plenary session after passing in committee. The Combined Plenary will also receive presentations from several other bodies.

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 are best addressed in a comprehensive manner or that require coordinating work between many bodies of the United Nations. For example, the 60th General Assembly 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. Additionally, only the Fifth Committee is able to set or discuss the United Nations budget. No other bodies, including the Plenary, are able to do so. The Plenary committees, both concurrent and combined, have the widest latitude of the deliberative bodies to discuss and pass resolutions on a wide variety of topics.

Website: www.un.org/ga/

A WORLD AGAINST VIOLENCE & VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The United Nations General Assembly has worked hard to combat violent extremism and unite the world against violence. Violent extremism aims to advance ideological, religious or political ends through physical and non-physical violence. Violent extremism includes the violent actions taken by individuals, actions taken to support violence committed by others and the underlying set of beliefs that justify the use of violence to advance ideological ends. While typically associated with religious beliefs of extremists, violent extremism is not limited to religion. Violent extremism is often included as part of a broader discussion of terrorism, though not all terrorism is motivated by violent extremism. The rise of global transportation and telecommunications networks have allowed many violent extremist groups to build global networks. The General Assembly's work on violent extremism focuses on addressing the root causes of extremism. The underlying argument is that by eliminating the factors that allow extremist ideologies to spread, the acts of terror and support for those actions can be reduced or eliminated.

Terrorism has been a near ever-present phenomenon since the twentieth century. A growing number of major terrorist attacks in the 1970s spurred increased global awareness and action by the United Nations. Many prominent terror groups of the 1970s aimed to advance primarily political objectives, including far-right ideologies, far-left ideologies and political independence. In 1972, the General Assembly established an Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism, which worked to identify the root causes of terrorism. This Committee recognized that terrorism often occurred as a reaction to oppressive regimes or other restrictive societies, and thus urged the end of colonialist and racist governments. The Ad Hoc Committee reconvened several times in

the following years, supporting the creation of the Declaration of Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in 1994. The Declaration called for greater cooperation among Member States in counter-terrorism activities and for Member States to end all support to terrorist organizations. Following this declaration, the General Assembly re-established the Committee on International Terrorism in 1996 with the goal of producing a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, however there has been little progress on this issue due to an inability to agree on an acceptable definition of terrorism.

The focus on countering terrorism greatly intensified following the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. In the wake of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, discussions increasingly focused on the perceived root causes of terror and violent ideologies. There was significant disagreement about the root causes, but States and experts regularly pointed at political repression and economic hardship as two major factors. In 2006, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which sought to address the underlying conditions that lead to the spread of terrorism, improve efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, increase the capacity of States and the United Nations to respond to terrorism, and to maintain human rights and rule of law. This Global Strategy marked the first unanimous agreement on counter-terrorism efforts, and its first and fourth pillars reflect a desire to address the root causes of terrorism.

The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the years following the adoption of the Global Strategy indicated that a different approach was needed to prevent the spread of violent extremism. Indeed, the international community realized that addressing the underlying condition that may foster terrorism is a goal separate from the security aspects of counter-terrorism. Further, the inability of the Ad Hoc Committee to progress on developing a comprehensive convention on international terrorism encouraged the international community to devote special focus to attaining a World against Violence and Extremism (WAVE). In 2013, the General Assembly adopted by consensus its first resolution specifically on WAVE. This resolution recognized the importance of education and community engagement in preventing the rise of violent extremism, as well as the utility of upholding freedoms of expression and of the press in fighting intolerance. Additionally, the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in 2015 brought together over 100 countries and relevant parties to develop an action agenda to prevent and counter violent extremism and raise the importance of CVE for fighting the spread of the Islamic State.

In 2016, the Secretary-General presented the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to the General Assembly, which called for incorporating both security-based processes and for preventing the underlying conditions that radicalize and foster violent extremist groups. In particular, the Secretary-General called for Member States to create national and regional plans of action to achieve WAVE, noting that existing plans to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals may fit well with the WAVE goals. Later that year, the General Assembly revisited the topic, passing a resolution which emphasized the importance of calling attention to violence against children and women, educating citizens on the importance of human rights, and promoting and practicing tolerance in life and online. Additionally, the General Assembly undertook its fifth biennial review of the Global Counterterrorism Strategy, which echoed the Secretary-General's concerns about the impact of radicalization in prisons and the impact of violent extremism on women and youth.

Looking forward, the United Nations has increased its emphasis on the importance of women and youth to preventing and countering violent extremism. Secretary-General Guterres spoke in 2017 to the Commission on the Status of Women on the importance of women's empowerment, noting that peace processes have been shown to be significantly more effective with women's involvement. The United Nations has been criticized, however, for restricting their attention to women as passive targets of extremism, when women have also actively worked in the leadership and in supportive roles of extremist groups. Increased focus has also fallen on the role of youth in preventing the spread of violent extremism, as they are especially vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment, particularly in conflict-torn regions where their future prospects are uncertain. The 2015 Global Youth Summit Against Violent Extremism adopted an action agenda highlighting this role, placing an emphasis on the importance of social media in the spread of violent extremism. Social media itself is an important aspect of this problem, as the Internet has become an effective tool for radicalization and recruitment. However, recent efforts have attempted to exploit the same qualities that make social media so effective in the spread of violent extremism to help counter and prevent it.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How should the General Assembly address the relationship between women and violent extremism?
- What role do youth play in preventing and combating violent extremism?
- How can the international community combat the spread of violent extremism online?

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REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURE

One of the founding missions of the United Nations is to ensure international peace and security. The United Nations has used peacekeeping forces to that end since the first mission in the Middle East in 1948. These peacekeeping missions have evolved from mostly-unarmed observers and supporting personnel to an armed security force and finally to today's hybrid operations that support post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. Despite these changes in structure, the prevailing reason for the missions remained the same: to defuse conflicts between Member States and support diplomatic resolution of conflicts. At the end of the Cold War, the nature of conflicts shifted. More conflicts were intrastate conflicts triggered by local unrest, and therefore, less able to be resolved through international means. These intrastate conflicts also endured much longer than the interstate conflicts of the Cold War era. This shift in the nature of conflict pushed the United Nations to adapt.

The response was to emphasize peacebuilding: rebuilding civil institutions while ensuring safety and security. Former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali placed peacebuilding firmly on the agenda with his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, as the United Nations looked toward a post-Cold War world and a decade marred with civil wars. The failures of the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding architecture became especially apparent later that decade, following the heavily-criticized response to the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the Bosnian civil war in 1995. In 2000, the UN Department of Peace Operations produced the Brahimi report, which called for greater clarity in peacekeeping operations as well as institutional changes.

At the 2005 World Summit, the General Assembly and the Security Council established the three entities that compose the modern peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations: the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Peacebuilding Commission was established as an intergovernmental UN body to aid States emerging from conflicts and advise the Security Council and General Assembly. It is charged with identifying clear peacebuilding objectives and working closely with the UN operations in the field. The Peacebuilding Fund focuses on monitoring and evaluating potential conflicts while also raising funds for peacebuilding initiatives. These two arms are supported by the Support Office, which provides strategic advice and policy guidance to the Commission, helps administer the Fund, and educates the public on peacebuilding.

Over the following years, the new peacebuilding architecture saw progress, including success in supporting elections in Guinea-Bissau and establishing reintegration programs for combatants in Cote d'Ivoire. However, the peacebuilding architecture was not without flaws, and, in preparation for the General Assembly's ten-year review, the Advisory Group of Experts published a report in 2015 reviewing the effectiveness of the peacebuilding architecture. This report identified several flaws in the architecture, such as the short attention span of the international community and the instability of funding to peacebuilding operations. Its most important recommendation was to have the Commission bridge the gaps among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The Advisory Group noted that effective peacebuilding requires action spanning the purview of those three organs, but a lack of coherence resulted in a vastly unbalanced distribution of the UN's attention to different aspects of peacebuilding. In particular, the Advisory Group described the pattern as an "inverted U," with the majority of effort spent as a crisis flared, not on prevention before or rebuilding after.

In 2016, the Security Council and the General Assembly passed a joint review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, taking the Advisory Group report into strong consideration. In it, they reaffirm the necessity of levelling out the "inverted U" by adopting the Advisory Group's terminology of "sustaining peace" as the primary goal of peacebuilding. They also noted the problem of fragmentation of the UN system, and urged the Commission to connect the principal organs for peacebuilding activities, as well as to regularly meet with regional and subregional organizations to improve cooperation at those levels. The review also laid out several key priorities for the UN in their future efforts to maintain international peace and security, including increasing the Commission's emphasis on women's leadership and the integration of gender perspectives into conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies. However, the review did not address the issue of funding, instead asking for a report from the Secretary-General on potential options. As the Fund currently depends on voluntary contributions, the Advisory Group had recommended providing a moderate baseline of funding from the budget of peacekeeping operations. This recommendation raised concerns about the Fund's flexibility, largely seen as one of its greatest strengths, as it would place the Fund under the purview of the Fifth Committee. Additionally, as development and peacebuilding are mutually beneficial, the review also encouraged cooperation between

peacebuilding programs and the World Bank—particularly the World Bank's State and Peacebuilding Fund, established in 2008—however no real suggestions were made as to how this would be accomplished.

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

- How can the Peacebuilding Commission improve cooperation among the principal organs and with relevant peacebuilding organizations, such as the World Bank?
- Should the Peacebuilding Fund be funded through voluntary contributions from Member States, from the peacekeeping budget or through some other method?
- How can the United Nations better facilitate the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding?

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