



# CHAPTER FOUR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND COMMITTEES

## Introduction

The General Assembly is the main deliberative policy-making body of the United Nations (UN) and is empowered to address all international issues covered by the Charter. In many ways, it acts as the “central hub” of the United Nations. Many UN bodies report to the General Assembly, but not all of these bodies are subsidiary. 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 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), also have direct reporting relationships with the General Assembly.

The UN Charter assigns each of the main Committees of the General Assembly specific tasks and topics to discuss during each session. Since each Member State has a seat in every Committee, it is important to note that the points of discussion do not overlap; that is, even if two or more Committees are discussing a general topic area, each Committee is responsible for discussing a very specific point or aspect of that topic. For example, the Fourth Committee may discuss the Israeli-Palestine conflict with regard to its political components. However, issues concerning the legal, social, or

economic components of the Israeli-Palestine conflict are left to other Committees, the General Assembly Plenary, or the Security Council. Therefore, Representatives in each Committee should take care not to expand the discussion of any topic beyond the limitations set by their Committee’s mandate and into another Committee’s area of discussion.

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

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.

## THE CONCURRENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY

**Purview of the Simulation:** 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 60<sup>th</sup> General Assembly recently established a Peacebuilding Commission that will oversee the United Nations’ peacebuilding processes and

coordinate the work of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General, and Member States emerging from conflict situations. Note that if the Security Council, which is given the primary task of ensuring peace and security by the Charter, is discussing a particular issue, the General Assembly (Plenary) will cease its own deliberations and defer to the Security Council.

**Website:** [www.un.org/ga/61/plenary/plenary.shtml](http://www.un.org/ga/61/plenary/plenary.shtml)

## Cooperation Between the United Nations and Regional and Other Organizations

The General Assembly’s primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. Increasingly, the UN has collaborated with regional and other organizations to meet its goals, regional organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). While the relationship between regional and organizations and the UN is recognized in the Charter through Chapter VIII, the exact nature of the relationship has never been ultimately defined. The UN has turned to these organizations for partnerships in areas such as peacekeeping and peacemaking, responding to humanitarian emergencies, and promoting human rights. As newer organizations emerge, the UN must adapt to different structures and protocols while determining the most effective means of dealing with regional and non-regional organizations. Former

Secretary-General Kofi Annan recognized the growing importance of international bodies and stated “[we are increasingly drawing on the resources and legitimacy of a network of multilateral mechanisms – regional and global – to provide collective responses to the peace and security challenges of today.”

Historically the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, has worked in close cooperation with organizations such as NATO. However, in the years since the inception of the United Nations, the number of international organizations has grown dramatically. There are currently more than eighteen organizations working with the UN Department of Peacekeeping to maintain peacekeeping operations abroad. In 2005, the Security Council invited regional organizations to participate in United Nations standby peacekeeping arrangements, urging States and international organizations to help them build their capabilities for that purpose, and for the varied peace building functions they have begun to assume.

Currently the UN works closely with several regional and non-regional organizations. Among the most high profile are the

collaborations between the United Nations and the African Union regarding the situation in Darfur. However, many other collaborations exist, including those in Haiti and work on the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, developed following the Tsunami disaster in 2005. The Secretary-General convenes yearly high-level meetings with the heads of regional and other intergovernmental organizations focusing on measures the UN and these organizations can take towards practical cooperation. At the World Summit in 1995, world leaders again supported a stronger relationship between regional organizations and the UN, and they resolved to expand cooperation, including through formalized agreements between the UN and the respective secretariats of the organizations.

The General Assembly continues to encourage cooperation with regional and other organizations. At the 2005 World Summit, and the subsequent 2006 World Summit, the General Assembly focused on reinforcing the cooperation between these organizations and the UN. While these Summits had broad agendas, there was a particular focus on Africa. With a long standing relationship between the UN and the Continent's regional organizations, first the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and later the AU, there has been an appeal to increase the transparency and decrease the bureaucracy in the cooperation between the organizations. While drawing on positive work accomplished through this collaboration, there was a call to increase the humanitarian aid and other assistance between the UN, the AU and the rest of the international community. Because of the relationships built, and the obvious needs, the established associations between organizations in Africa, where they are successful and how they can be strengthened, serve as a template for areas where these types of cooperation can be improved. Because of the relationships built, and the obvious needs, the cooperation between organizations in Africa, where they are successful and how they can be strengthened, serve as a template for areas where cooperation can be improved.

The increased working relationship between the United Nations and the other organizations has obvious benefits: the regional organizations have expert knowledge of the area, resources and structures already in place, and, frequently, positive relationships with the parties involved. However, there are many obstacles to effective cooperation. The various organizations often represent diverse regions, with different cultural values and procedural norms. Consequently, reconciling different bodies to working within the UN structure or with UN personnel can prove challenging if the mission seems contrary to cultural or traditional behaviors of the organization. Additionally, not all regional organizations are particularly cohesive. While some organizations have behaviors expected of their Member States, and the Member States can be counted on to comply with the organization's position, other organizations are less structured. In these instances, Member States may not comply with some or all of the organizational decisions. It is consequently difficult for the UN to create a single protocol with which to deal with all organizations.

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

- How can the UN General Assembly encourage implementation of the expanded cooperation and formalized agreements promised at the 2005 World Summit?
- How can participation in regional or non-regional organization be encouraged?
- How can the delivery of aid be made more efficient through the UN System and regional and other organizations?
- How contributions to regional or non-regional groups be encouraged?

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## UN Documents:

- A/RES/61/167  
A/RES/61/94  
A/61/256 – Report of the Secretary General: Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and other Organizations  
A/61/1 – Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization  
A/Res/60/1 – 2005 World Summit  
A/59/303  
S/PRST/2006/39  
Press Release 6032  
Cooperation with Regional Organizations, 1995 Secretary-General Report

## Additional Web Resources:

- [disarmament.un.org/rdb/cooperation.html](http://disarmament.un.org/rdb/cooperation.html) - UN office of Disarmament (UNODA) - Cooperation between United Nations and Regional Organizations
- [www.globalpolicy.org/security/peacekpg/region/index.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/peacekpg/region/index.htm) - Global Policy, Regional Organizations and Peacekeeping page
- [www.unog.ch/80256EE600583A0B/\(httpPages\)/2BE770FCC31A50F980256EF700769637?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600583A0B/(httpPages)/2BE770FCC31A50F980256EF700769637?OpenDocument) – UN Office in Geneva, Cooperation with Regional Organizations page

## The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

For decades terrorism has been an issue of serious concern on the United Nations agenda, resulting in thirteen international conventions within the framework of the United Nations system relating to specific terrorist activities. As terrorist acts have become more widespread, it becomes increasingly apparent that no one State can combat terrorism alone. The General Assembly has worked to increase coordination of Member States' counter-terrorism efforts.

In 2004, the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change recommended that the Secretary-General promote a comprehensive global strategy against terrorism to strengthen the ability of responsible States to counter terrorism and promote the

rule of law, all while protecting human rights. In accordance with this recommendation, the Secretary-General devised a strategy based on five pillars: dissuading people from resorting to or supporting terrorism; denying terrorists the means to carry out attacks; deterring States from supporting terrorism; developing State capacity to defeat terrorism; and defending human rights. In his report entitled “In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All” (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General urged the adoption of such a strategy, which was viewed favorably by Member States in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1).

The report on the 2005 World Summit Outcome issued a strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever, and for whatever purposes. The new strategy was formally proposed in the report, “Uniting against Terrorism: Recommendations for a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.” Annex I to the Secretary-General’s report also provides an “[i]nventory of United Nations counter-terrorism activities,” while Annex II details the “[s]tatus of universal instruments related to the prevention and suppression of international terrorism.”

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Plan of Action was officially adopted on 8 September 2006. The strategy, formally launched on 19 December 2006, marked the first time in the history of the United Nations that all Member States agreed to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In addition, the General Assembly, during its sixty-first session, adopted three additional resolutions, A/RES/61/40, A/RES/61/86 and A/RES/61/171, all aimed at eliminating international terrorism, preventing terrorist access to weapons of mass destruction, and protecting human rights while fighting terrorism. In conjunction with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and annexed Plan of Action, these instruments adopted by the GA represent a comprehensive and concerted effort on the part of Member States to quell the growing threat of terrorism.

While mindful of the need to aggressively pursue a global counter terrorism strategy, the General Assembly has been equally aware of the need to ensure fundamental human rights are not violated during State efforts to quell terrorism within their borders and that counter terrorism activities are conducted within the rule of law. To that end, the General Assembly has called upon States to take necessary measures to ensure that the appropriate legal frameworks are in place to support counter terrorism activities but do not violate internationally agreed upon civil liberties. Underpinning these activities, the General Assembly has called for open dialogue to improve interfaith and intercultural understanding as one of the most important elements in successfully combating terrorism.

Agreement on a common strategy to counter terrorism is only a beginning. In the future, Member States will need to cooperate to ensure that the strategy is being fully implemented, in addition to being regularly updated, in order to effectively respond to evolving challenges and threats. A primary focus of the UN’s Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will be prevention. Crucial to this strategy is the need to help build States’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, while also strengthening the role of the UN system in this regard. One of the greatest challenges in implementing the Strategy remains the protection of human rights and the use of rule of law as the basis of any measures aimed at countering terrorism.

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

- What are your country’s foreign and domestic policies with regard to countering terrorism?
- What level of involvement has your country had in recent global efforts to prevent and combat terrorism? In what areas and by what means?
- What recent issues or events does your country seek to highlight (or downplay) in the course of the discussion on this topic area?

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- UN Action to Counter Terrorism Fact Sheet, May 2007.
- “UN Officials Urge Countries To Act On Counter-terrorism Strategy,” UN News Centre, 2007, [www.un.org/news](http://www.un.org/news).

## UN Documents:

- A/RES/61/171  
A/RES/61/86  
A/RES/61/40  
A/61/353  
A/60/825 Uniting Against Terrorism: Recommendations for a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy  
A/RES/60/288 United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy  
A/RES/60/1  
A/59/2005  
A/59/565  
A/RES/49/60  
S/RES/1566  
S/RES/1535  
S/RES/1373

## Additional Web Resources:

- [web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-index-eng](http://web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-index-eng) – Amnesty International  
*Cruel. Inhuman. Degrades Us All* Campaign homepage  
[www.un.org/terrorism/cthandbook/index.html](http://www.un.org/terrorism/cthandbook/index.html) - UN Counter-Terrorism Online Handbook  
[www.un.org/terrorism](http://www.un.org/terrorism) - UN Action to Counter Terrorism  
[www.un.org/unitingagainstterrorism](http://www.un.org/unitingagainstterrorism) - Uniting against Terrorism



# THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE: DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

**Purview of the Simulation:** The General Assembly First Committee addresses the disarmament of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction and related international security questions. The First Committee makes recommendations on the regulations of these weapons as they relate to international peace and security. The First Committee does not address legal issues

surrounding weapons possession or control complex peace and security issues addressed by the Security Council. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 15.

**Website:** [www.un.org/ga/61/first/first.shtml](http://www.un.org/ga/61/first/first.shtml)

## Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) was drafted in 1972 in an effort to exclude biological agents from modern warfare. Since that time, the Convention has gained all but 23 signatories. The Convention calls for the prohibition of any microbial or biological agent that has no justifiable use for the purposes of peace, protection, or preventive measures.

The United Nations has been the parliamentary organ engaged in the development of the Convention and its ongoing evolution since its adoption in 1972. Since the Convention's inception, the UN has launched six reviews of the Convention, most recently in December 2006, which serve to keep the Convention viable and applicable to any circumstances. Previous reviews strived to strengthen voluntary confidence building measures between States party to the Convention. Measures within the Convention, such as States voluntarily submitting data, are aimed at increasing transparency while at the same time building confidence in the Convention itself.

In the most recent review of the Convention, several areas for improvement were debated. Among these is the continued promotion of confidence-building measures as a cornerstone to the Convention. Likewise, Member States discussed the increasing need for education to prevent the misuse of bio-technology and bio-sciences while great advancements in those fields are being made. Other suggestions included the revision of the title and content of Article I of the Convention to include the prohibition of the use bacteriological and toxin weapons. The UN also recently reaffirmed its commitment to review the Convention every five years.

Despite the broad commitment to the Convention, it remains without a process of verification of compliance. While State parties to the Convention are to report their implementation of the Convention to the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs, this measure is voluntary with no method of verification. The lack of verification of compliance language in the Convention has been a subject of great debate; however no binding language has been added to the Convention to this end. Currently the only means of verification lies in the investigation of compliance in accordance with A/44/561, Annex I, and even this method is often after the fact and difficult to enforce.

Another issue that remains a problem within the Convention is the underutilization of Article X. Article X calls for the fullest possible exchange of information and equipment in the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful uses. The spirit of this Article is to provide another level of transparency in bio-weapons related activities. However, with the risk of abuse most often cited as the reason for the lack of exchanging the information, this Article has seen little use. Technology in this field has the distinction of being almost entirely dual-use, and with no concrete method of compliance verification, Article X is not likely to see its full potential.

Welcoming the work done at the Sixth Review Conference, the General Assembly continues to reiterate its call for State parties to the Convention to actively participate in information and data exchange. Furthermore, the General Assembly has continued its calls for the promotion and development of a common understanding of such topics as the adoption of necessary measures to implement the prohibitions outlined in the Convention and enhancing international capabilities for the mitigation, investigation and response to potential or real attacks using biological and toxic weapons. The Secretary-General, at the General Assembly's requests, continues his efforts to offer technical assistance to States in their efforts to come into compliance with the BWC.

The Seventh Review Conference will be held in Geneva once again before the year 2011. Discussion will focus on operations of the Convention itself, as well as taking into account new scientific technology, progress made by Member States, and review the progress of decisions made by the Sixth Review Convention in 2006.

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

- What is the status of implementation of the Convention in your nation?
- How would a verification process impact the Convention? What affects could a verification protocol have on your country?
- Would the full use of Article X, the transfer of information on biological agents and toxins, show significant scientific benefits to your country?
- How would you balance the full implementation of Article X with dual-use risks of these agents?

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Zanders, Dr. Jean Pascal, “Security through Universality: Some Fundamentals Underlying Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention,” *Federation of American Scientists*, 24 Jan. 1999.

## UN Documents:

A/Res/61/102

A/Res/60/96

A/Res/59/110

A/Res/58/72

A/Res/53/84

A/Res/50/79

A/44/561

BWC-Convention Text

BWC/CONF.I/10

BWC/CONF.II/13/II

BWC/CONF.III/23

BWC/CONF.IV/9

BWC/CONF.V/17

BWC/CONF.VI/6

BWC/MSP/2005/MX/INF.5

BWC/AD\_HOC\_GROUP/55-1

BWC/SPCONF/I

DC/2567 – Press Release

## Additional Web Resources:

[www.armscontrol.org/](http://www.armscontrol.org/) - Arms Control Association  
[disarmament2.un.org/index.html](http://disarmament2.un.org/index.html) – UN Department for Disarmament Affairs

[www.opbw.org](http://www.opbw.org) - The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Website

## Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Accelerating the Implementation of Nuclear Disarmament Commitments

It has been over sixty years since the nuclear attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, yet the use of nuclear weapons still poses a great threat to international peace and security. There are an estimated 27,000 nuclear weapons around the globe, many of which are on hair-trigger alerts. Beyond the threat of use by the nuclear weapon-possessing States, trafficking of nuclear technology and information may result in a future threat by other States or non-state actors. To reduce the threat of nuclear weapons, a commonly accepted goal is to convince nuclear States to limit their nuclear arsenals and disarm wherever possible, while at the same time convincing non-nuclear States not to develop nuclear weapons technologies.

The primary agreement for controlling the spread of nuclear

weapons is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT or NPT). Signed or ratified by 188 States, the treaty was opened for signatures in 1968. Despite its name, the NPT does address disarmament in addition to non-proliferation. It asks all States to “pursue negotiations in good faith,” to end the arms race and consider treaties for general disarmament. The treaty has met with some success; for example, South Africa signed the NPT in 1991, revealing their limited nuclear weapon capabilities in 1993, followed by the ultimate dismantling of that program.

In addition to the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1996 discourages nations from carrying out any nuclear test explosions and encourages the prevention of explosions under its jurisdiction. This has been signed or ratified by 177 States. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been given the responsibility of monitoring nuclear weapons capabilities, especially dual-use capabilities, and reporting to the United Nations on the risk of inappropriate or military use.

Recent resolutions adopted by the First Committee and the General Assembly have continued to urge Member States which have not yet signed the NPT to do so immediately. These resolutions also remind nuclear-weapon States of the importance and commitment to complete and total disarmament. Other resolutions have established nuclear-weapon-free zones around the globe.

Despite the several resolutions adopted by the Committee and the General Assembly, discussions on disarmament are, to some extent, at a standstill. A review of the vote on resolutions related to disarmament will show a lack of consensus by the nuclear-weapon States. These States emphasize non-proliferation over disarmament, despite the majority agreement of the non-nuclear weapon States. And though the consensus against the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons remains strong, their proliferation has continued since the NPT’s inception. States with nuclear technologies are rumored to be developing weapons, while still others withdraw completely from the NPT and publicly claim to be developing nuclear weapons technologies. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT and tested its own nuclear weapons, and the IAEA found undeclared uranium enrichment activity in Iran.

Other UN bodies dealing with disarmament are likewise experiencing a lack of consensus. The Conference on Disarmament has been unable to establish a program of work for eight years. The UN Disarmament Commission has not been able to reach a real agreement since 2000. The review conference of the NPT in 2005 was also unable to come to any substantive agreement.

As a result, this Committee has several challenges ahead of it. With a consensus on complete disarmament improbable, the challenge remains how to keep the NPT and other non-proliferation agreements valid in today’s world. A complete solution must include the needs of nuclear States as well as those non-nuclear States who may feel both threatened by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and at the same time some day seek the use of peaceful nuclear technologies. Suggestions include strengthening the IAEA to assist in their monitoring and providing incentives for nations to avoid proliferation. Proposed discussions have included trafficking and use by non-State actors, but those discussions have not been fully developed. Member States will need to take a strong position for disarmament in order to achieve the goals set forth by the NPT almost 40 years ago.

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

- What are your nation's reasons for or against signing or ratifying the NPT?
- Is the development of dual-use technologies feasible under the current NPT regime, and if not, what does this mean for the future of the NPT?
- What incentives can be instituted to encourage States to disarm?
- What should be done to strengthen the IAEA or deter nations from further proliferating?
- What can be done to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by terrorists?

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"Ban Ki-Moon Urges NPT Review Meeting to Address Crisis on Nuclear Arms Front," UN News Centre, 2007, [www.un.org/news](http://www.un.org/news).

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"Security Council Members 'Strongly Condemn' Nuclear Test by DPR Korea," UN News Centre, 2006, [www.un.org/news](http://www.un.org/news)  
"US and India Seal Nuclear Accord," BBC News, 2 March, 2006, [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com).

## **UN Documents:**

A/RES/61/65

CD/61/27 – Report of the Conference on Disarmament

A/RES/60/56

GA/DIS/3332 – Press Release

GA/DIS/3324 – Press Release

GA/10547 – General Assembly Adopts 54 First Committee Texts

NPT/CONF.2000/28 – Final Document: 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT

NPT/CONF.2005/57 – Final Document: 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons  
Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

## **Additional Web Resources:**

[disarmament2.un.org/wmd/npt/](http://disarmament2.un.org/wmd/npt/) - UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, WMD/NPT page

[disarm.igc.org/](http://disarm.igc.org/) - The NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

[www.iaea.org/](http://www.iaea.org/) - International Atomic Energy Agency

[www.idds.org/](http://www.idds.org/) - Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies



# THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL

**Purview of the Simulation:** The Second Committee makes recommendations on means to improve the economic development of Member States and maintain the stability of the international financial and trade network. 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 address the budgetary issues within the UN System. The Second Committee does not address social issues that impact development; such issues are considered by the Third Committee.

For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 15.

**Website:** [www.un.org/ga/61/second/second.shtml](http://www.un.org/ga/61/second/second.shtml)

## Implementation Of The Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and Strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (ONU-Habitat)

UN-Habitat is the United Nations agency charged with promoting socially and environmentally sound urban areas, including cities and towns, in order to ensure ample shelter for all. Human settlements and urban areas are a critical component of any development strategy as the world becomes more urban. Estimates show that by 2050, nearly 6 billion people will live in urban areas. Urban centers are at the focal point of a State's production and consumption and are a major component in driving a State's economic base. However, they also bring with them significant social problems such as crime, poverty and pollution. UN-Habitat provides States with support and resources to drive the economic capability of cities while enacting policies that ensure proper infrastructure is in place to support the economic and social well being of their inhabitants.

The Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was established in 1977 with a mandate to lead the international community in the development of sustainable human settlements. One year later in 1978, the first international meeting on human settlements and urbanization, Habitat I, was held in Vancouver. Habitat I guided UN work on human settlements for the next nineteen years. During this time, the world experienced rapid urban growth; by 2000, nearly half of the world's population lived in cities. In 2002, the General Assembly, in A/Res/56/206, created a new body, UN-Habitat, to govern human settlement development and to better address the new global urban landscape. UN-Habitat combines both the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and acts as the main organ through which the Habitat Agenda is coordinated and implemented.

The United Nations held its second Human Settlements Conference, Habitat II, in Istanbul from 3-14 June 1996. The findings of Habitat II, including the Habitat Agenda signed at the Conference, remain among the most influential protocols in combating unsustainable human settlements. At the culmination of the Conference, 171 States signed the Habitat Agenda, a comprehensive plan of action for the development of human settlements. Habitat II and the Habitat Agenda strongly advocate for adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements. The General Assembly reaffirmed those goals and objectives in the Declaration on Cities and Other

Human Settlements in the New Millennium of 2001; the Declaration was to enhance the Millennium Development Goals and to continue international momentum toward creating a better world.

The main coordinating body of UN-Habitat is the Governing Council. The Council, consisting of 58 UN Member States, meets every two years to evaluate the progress and efficiency of UN-Habitat's work. During the years when the Council does not meet the international community gathers for the World Urban Forum, created by the General Assembly as a forum for non-legislative technical exchange. The past three meetings were held in Nairobi, Kenya; Barcelona, Spain; and Vancouver, Canada; For 2008, the 4th Forum will be held in Nanjing, China.

In order to support the work being done by UN-Habitat, the General Assembly has called upon the international donor community and multilateral and regional development banks to increase the support offered to developing countries for efforts to promote sound human settlements. The General Assembly has also called for increased voluntary contributions with multi-year funding to promote program planning and implementation. It also recommended increased assistance to developing countries and economies in transition through capacity building and technology transfer.

Habitat II and UN-Habitat aim to promote adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements, while the Global Campaign for Urban Governance and the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure are the main conduits for addressing major concerns. One of the major roles of UN-Habitat is to provide technical assistance to States to help them develop management capabilities to address urbanization at the local and national level.

Cities and urban centers present a tremendous opportunity for economic growth and development. The challenge for States is in balancing the need to drive development while at the same time managing the negative consequences resulting from rapid urbanization. The General Assembly remains committed to supporting States, through UN-Habitat, in their efforts to promote sustainable human settlements.

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

- What does the expanding urban population mean for the future of your State's economy? For the global economy?
- What is the proper role of the international community in addressing urban poverty?
- What are the greatest challenges for the work of UN-Habitat in helping States to meet the Millennium Development Goals?

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A/RES/59/239  
A/RES/58/226  
A/RES/57/275  
A/RES/56/206  
A/RES/56/205  
A/RES/32/162  
A/RES/3327 (XXIX)  
ECOSOC 2002/38 - Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda  
ECOSOC 2003/62 - Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda  
HSP/GC/21/4/Add.1 – Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
Habitat Agenda  
Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development  
State of the World’s Cities 2006/7, UN Human Settlement Programme, 19 June 2006.

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.charity.org/site](http://www.charity.org/site) - Global Impact  
[www.outreach-international.org](http://www.outreach-international.org) - Outreach International  
[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org) – UN-Habitat [www.un.org/Conferences/habitat/](http://www.un.org/Conferences/habitat/)  
- UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)  
[www2.unhabitat.org/mdg/global\\_articles.asp](http://www2.unhabitat.org/mdg/global_articles.asp) – UN-Habitat Millennium Development Goals: Global Articles  
[www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=41](http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=41) – World Urban Forum

## Unilateral Economic Measures as a Means of Political and Economic Coercion against Developing Countries

The international community has a long history of opposing unilateral economic measures as an instrument of political and economic coercion against developing countries. However, the

international community has been more supportive of such measures when economic sanctions are multilateral or directly supported by organs of the United Nations. Economic sanctions vary widely in scale and scope and, for many countries, occupy a central role in developing their foreign policy. Moreover, sanctions are often viewed as an alternative to military intervention. Although the stated goals of sanctions are highly political, the ability of States to enforce them is directly subject to the rules of international economic exchange. As such, unilateral economic sanctions, those enforced on target countries by only one State, frequently fail to produce the desired economic and political outcomes of the sender State, as the target country will find alternative markets or suppliers for sanctioned goods and services. Because of their frequent failure, as well as the negative consequences unilateral coercive measures exert upon the general population of sanctioned countries, the General Assembly has long called into question the efficacy, support of, and future use of unilateral economic measures against developing countries as a form of economic and political coercion.

The exercise of coercive economic sanctions hinders the ability of targeted countries to completely fulfill their duties in accordance with the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, passed by the General Assembly in 1974. Article 32 of this Charter declares that “no State may use or encourage the use of economic, political, or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights.” In 1983, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) specifically condemned the use of economic coercion, particularly when used against developing countries, in that economic sanctions fail to create the climate of peace required for economic development. UNCTAD consistently prevails upon developed nations to refrain from applying trade restrictions, blockades, embargoes, and other economic sanctions against developing countries as a form of political coercion, thus hindering developing countries economic, social, and political development.

In 2003, developing countries were given the opportunity to address the General Assembly directly on the issue. The Secretary-General invited all Member States to comment on the negative impacts of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries. Of the ten respondents to the report, A/58/310, all were from the developing world. Their responses ranged from a call to stricter adherence to the Charter, which forbids the use of economic coercion, to specific examples of the hardships faced by some, and down right economic degradation faced by others, caused by unilateral blockades, embargoes, tariffs, and other forms of unilateral economic measures.

The General Assembly again expressed grave concern that unilateral coercive measures, not in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, adversely affect the situation of children, impede the full realization of social and economic development, and hinder the well-being of the population in targeted countries, with particular consequences for women and children, with the passage of A/RES/61/170 in 2006. Specific to the work of this Committee, the Resolution addresses the negative impact these unilateral economic measures have on the economic development of developing and least developed countries, specifically in the areas of international relations, trade, and cooperation.

The future direction of the UN’s mission in eradicating the use and promulgation of unilateral coercive measures lies in its long-standing promotion of the general principles of the international trade system. The UN has urged all States to refrain from adopting any unilateral coercive measures that would create obstacles to universal

human rights, including the right of everyone to a standard of living necessary for their health and well-being as well as their right to food, medical care, and social services. As pressure continues to mount in the international community to reject unilateral coercive economic measures as a legitimate approach to strategic foreign policy, as well as the burgeoning recognition of the link between unilateral coercive actions and the failure of developing countries to realize full human rights, the global community must face the sustained challenge of eliminating the use of unilateral coercive measures as an instrument of political and economic pressure against developing countries. The committee faces the challenge of convincing the developing world to discontinue the use of such means, while attempting to find measures to counter the negative economic impacts of unilateral economic coercion upon the developing world.

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

- What are the direct economic effects of sanctions, embargoes, blockades, tariffs, etc, and how might the Second Committee address those?
- How has your government supported the United Nations' commitment to reducing and eliminating the use of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion?
- What is the role of the United Nations in curbing the detrimental effects of unilateral coercive actions against developing countries?
- How might the UN convince the developed world to discontinue its use of such measures?

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A/RES/46/210  
A/RES/44/215  
A/RES/40/185  
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RES 1995 (XIX), Report of the Trade and Development Board on its Thirty-Sixth Executive Session

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.fourthfreedom.org/](http://www.fourthfreedom.org/) - Fourth Freedom Forum  
[www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanction/theindex.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanction/theindex.htm) - Global Policy's page on Sanctions  
[www.petersoninstitute.org/](http://www.petersoninstitute.org/) - Institute on International Economics  
[www.un.org/esa/policy/](http://www.un.org/esa/policy/) - UN Development Policy and Analysis  
[www.un.org/sc/committees/](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/) - UN Security Council Sanctions Committee



# THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE: SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN, AND CULTURAL

**Purview of the Simulation:** 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 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 UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 15.

**Website:** [www.un.org/ga/61/third/third.shtml](http://www.un.org/ga/61/third/third.shtml)

## Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Despite numerous international documents condemning the use of torture, evidence suggests its use remains widespread. One of the United Nations founding documents, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, expressly states that, "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment." Furthermore, the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment explicitly prohibits any State from allowing acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to happen within its own borders. Even with these protections in place, Amnesty International estimates that almost 102 countries had some form of torture occur within their borders in 2006. This could range from the mistreatment of prisoners to the physical and mental abuse of alleged terrorist detainees.

The United Nations has a long history of condemning the use of torture; one of the first documents to prohibit torture, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was passed by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The General Assembly passed its first resolution on the issue, A/RES/3052 in 1973. This resolution outlined the continuing global problems with regards to torture and the need for all nations to join in existing international accords and to uphold them.

Other General Assembly resolutions of note include A/RES/3452 in which the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The General Assembly requested the Commission on Human Rights draft a convention against torture in resolutions A/RES/32/62 and A/RES/38/119. Resolution A/RES/39/46, passed in 1984, in which the General Assembly adopted the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment are both intended to protect persons and detainees from torture - both in wartime and peacetime. The Committee against Torture, housed within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, monitors the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by its State parties.

In 2002, the General Assembly passed the Optional Protocol to the Convention that creates an inspection system for detention centers. The Istanbul Protocol, a manual created by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2004, outlines guidelines for

effective investigation and documentation of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Additionally, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur to examine questions relevant to torture. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur covers all countries, irrespective of whether a State has ratified the Convention. The current Special Rapporteur submits an annual report to the General Assembly outlining what steps States should take to eradicate the practice of torture in their borders. The Special Rapporteur also conducts site visits to Member States to examine their compliance with the Convention.

The UN made a special commitment to the rights of children in this arena. The capture and sale of children into forced labor or prostitution, forced female genital mutilation, and violence against women and children are all indicative of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The use of torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment continues to be of major concern in the world's prisons. With the continued threat of terrorism worldwide, many countries have taken to extra-judicial means to detain, and in many cases interrogate, suspected terrorists. These extra-judicial means sometimes include detaining suspects for years without trial or even charges and, in extreme cases, their whereabouts or even the fact that they are being detained are kept secret. Concerns about the treatment of these prisoners and the methods used in their interrogations continue, as many in the international community believe they run counter to the international protocols regarding prisoners and their treatment. However, this is a delicate international situation as many of the countries involved in these extra-judicial detentions of prisoners purport that they are well within their rights and within international protocols. They claim any extreme measures used in interrogation do not cross the line of torture, and are carried out in the name of imminent national defense.

At the 61st General Assembly, the UN again condemned the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. Resolution A/RES/61/153 pointed specifically to the humanitarian issues caused when States engaged in these activities. The resolution also calls upon States to take legal action to see that anyone engaged in the use of torture be punished within their own legal systems and at the same time safeguard the victims.

The use of torture runs counter to the ideals of the United Nations. All States, developed and developing, have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment does not occur in their borders. Ethnic and regional conflict, civil war and terrorist activity all elevate the risk of torture. Now, more than ever, it is imperative for UN Member States to be on guard against the use of torture.

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

- Should the committee support the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on torture?
- What is your country's position on extreme method of interrogations, particularly in times of national crisis?
- Is the definition of torture within the Convention Against Torture sufficient?
- How can States that have not ratified the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment be convinced to do so?

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A/RES/3059  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
Convention against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment  
Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment  
Istanbul Protocol: Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/index.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/index.htm) - Committee Against Torture  
[www.irtc.org/](http://www.irtc.org/) - International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims  
[www.amnesty.org/](http://www.amnesty.org/) - Amnesty International

# International Cooperation against the World Drug Problem

The illicit use of drugs is a problem both personal and universal in scope. Though in many ways the adverse affects of drug use and addiction primarily target the individual, these negative affects increasingly affect the global community. According to 2003 UN estimates, the international illicit drug trade generated an estimated \$321 billion, which is larger than the GDP of 88% of the countries in the world. This money often goes into financing terrorism and organized crime. Other issues such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, the relationship between drug consumers and producers, and the elimination of organic drug crops are all global problems that require global answers. On a humanitarian level, the drug problem not only constitutes a threat to public health and safety, particularly to children and young people, undermines socio-economic stability and sustainable development. Additionally, links between illicit drug trafficking and other criminal activities, like trafficking in human beings are continually shown. As a result, the UN has become increasingly involved with the fight against the world drug problem in the past thirty years.

There are three major UN drug control conventions concerning the control of illicit drug use and trafficking. The first international effort to curb drug use was undertaken in 1961 with the adoption of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. The 1961 Convention sought to unite Member States under one agreement and have them report to one authority, the International Narcotics Control Board. The Convention also created steps to standardize the taxonomy of drugs into four schedules still used today. The second convention, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, drafted in 1971, added synthetic substances to the list of drugs whose use should be limited and brought them under much of the same rules as the 1961 Convention. The third convention, the Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, was drafted in 1988 in response to the minimal affect the first two Conventions were having in reducing the impact of illicit drug use and trade. This last convention sought, in particular, to aid in the confiscation of illicit trafficking proceeds and to restrict the movement of traffickers.

Even with these international agreements in place, the international drug problem continues to grow. As a result, the UN increased its efforts and retargeted its combative efforts in the early 1990s. The 1990 Political Declaration and Global Program of Action, which established 1990-2000 as the UN Decade Against Drug Abuse, helped refocus enforcement efforts around decreasing the demand for drugs, the elimination of illicit narcotic crops, the prevention of drug abuse, and the link between drug trafficking and terrorism. In 1991 the United Nations Drug Control Program, now called the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was created and tasked with strengthening international action against drug production and trafficking.

Today the UN's efforts focus primarily on the maximization and accuracy of information exchange, the decrease in demand for narcotics, and eradicating the link between drugs and terrorism. To assist in information accuracy and exchange, the UNODC has instituted the Global Assessment Program, which gathers annual statistics on drug use and enforcement from each country. The information gathered from these surveys is essential to better understand and combat the global drug problem.

In addition, the UN is addressing the affects of the three Conventions, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the ever changing drug

market. The first two Conventions were written before the advent of HIV/AIDS, and the third was written at a time when little was known about HIV/AIDS's communicability. Growing sentiment suggests that the rules of the Conventions inadvertently help to increase the spread of HIV/AIDS. Some members are calling for either a revision or repeal. There is also concern over the dynamic characteristic of the world drug market. No matter what steps are taken to control drug proliferation and usage, there will always be a new drug, or a new way of producing an old drug. It is imperative the United Nations remain vigilant in its efforts to fight the international drug control problem.

Ever present in the General Assembly's work on the issue is a call for States to measurably reduce drug use and its social impact within their countries. Focusing on early education intervention programs for children and youth, providing broad based treatment programs that overcome barriers limiting access for young girls and women, and providing services for drug users, particularly those with HIV/AIDS and other blood born illnesses are all areas UN has called for improvement within States to combat the social and humanitarian affects of the global drug problem.

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

- What steps can be taken to target the demand side of the drug trafficking equation?
- Should the Conventions be repealed or reformed and rewritten to include HIV/AIDS prevention?
- How can the UNODC best assist Member States in developing affective prevention and treatment programs in their fight against illicit drugs?

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A/RES/60/179

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A/RES/60/178

A/RES/59/163

A/RES/53/115

A/RES/46/104

A/RES/44/141

A/RES/S-20/2

E/RES/2006/32

E/RES/2006/33

Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

Convention on Psychotropic Substances

Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

UNODC Annual Report 2007, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## Additional Web Resources:

[www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org) - UN Office of Drug Control Web site

[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/cnd.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/cnd.html) - Commission on Narcotic Drugs Web site

[www.incb.org/incb/index.html](http://www.incb.org/incb/index.html) - International Narcotics Control Board Web



# THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOURTH COMMITTEE: SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION

**Purview of the Simulation:** The Fourth Committee deals with a variety of political issues on most topics including the political components of decolonization, economic and social issues (excluding disarmament). As the Committee's focus is strictly political, its recommendations should be broad in nature. The Fourth Committee is also charged with the coordination and operational aspects of UN peacekeeping missions. This is an important distinction from the Security Council, which develops peacekeeping

missions and objectives. The Fourth Committee deals solely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' procedures and policies. Similarly, while the Committee may discuss the political problems in funding Palestine, it cannot discuss the details of how to properly fund Palestine. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 15.

**Website:** [www.un.org/ga/61/fourth/fourth.shtml](http://www.un.org/ga/61/fourth/fourth.shtml)

## Comprehensive Review of Peacekeeping Operations in all Their Aspects

Today, peacekeeping operations form an integral component of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. According to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), peacekeeping is defined as the deployment of UN personnel in the field, with the consent of all parties concerned, normally involving UN military or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peacekeeping operations have become the subject of renewed focus over the past several years as the number of peacekeeping troops, police, and uniformed observers under the UN's control increased to over 80,000 – up from 25,000 just ten years ago. The UN has managed over 60 peacekeeping operations since its inception, with 15 of those operations still active today.

To ensure that peacekeeping remains an effective tool for peace and security, the General Assembly first considered the issue on 18 February 1965 by voting on Resolution 2006 (XIX); entitled “Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in all Their Aspects.” This resolution authorized the President of the General Assembly to establish a special committee on peacekeeping operations with a mandate to review all issues relating to peacekeeping and its operations, including financial implications. Every year since 1965, this item has been considered by the General Assembly as part of the agenda and, since 1993, this item has been allocated to the Fourth Committee. Today, the Fourth Committee is responsible for allocating this item to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (SSCPO), reviewing the recommendation the committee provides, and developing a report for the General Assembly on its findings.

On 21 August 2000, the General Assembly adopted the Brahimi Report (A/55/305), which outlines several issues for reform ranging from personnel security and safety to logistic support and management. The report provides 20 recommendations to best reform the DPKO with the intent of making the UN peacekeeping operations a credible and effective force to ensure international peace and security. Since the publication of the Brahimi Report, the SCPO has provided numerous recommendations to the Secretary-General in areas such as, operations and logistics, personnel safety and security, strengthening consultation process, etc. During the 60th session, the SCPO had focused their concerns on addressing issues relating to women's role and participation in post-conflict peace building, addressing concerns relating to sexual misconduct among UN

Peacekeepers and personnel, making deployments rapid and effective, and procurement processes.

At the beginning of the 2007 session, the SCPO began debate on the Secretary-General's proposal on realigning or restructuring the DPKO. The proposal would, “establish two specialized but tightly integrated departments to manage the consolidation of responsibility, authority, and resources for UN peacekeeping operations.” In addition to his proposal, the Secretary-General has introduced a reform agenda known as “Peace Operations 2010,” which is centered on five main areas: personnel, doctrine, partnerships, resources and organization. The purpose of his agenda is to “strengthen the Organization's capacity to mount and sustain peace operations in a professional, effective and accountable way.”

As the SCPO continues to investigate ways to improve the peacekeeping operations the committee has recognized the sustained surge in UN Peacekeeping and the need to consider how to address that demand adequately. According to the Secretary-General's report (61/668), “today's challenges demand three priorities: 1) to structure and increase the capacity of headquarters to plan, manage and oversee UN peacekeeping effectively and accountably; 2) to make future gains in integration and coherence across the system and with non-UN partners, so as to increase efficiency and targeted support to post-conflict environments; 3) and how to plan UN peacekeeping missions so they can be organized to downsize and transition in a timely and sustainable way.” As the 61st session continues, the SCPO will review the implementations of the Secretary-General's recommendations from the 60th session, and it continues to provide recommendations and feedback on issues relating to peacekeeping while at the same time reviewing proposals of restructuring the DPKO and the “Peace Operations 2010.”

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

- As peacekeeping operations continue to expand, what recommendations would you provide to ensure the integrity of peacekeeping? Why?
- Have the recommendations from the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations been influential on Peacekeeping Reform? Why or why not?
- Does your government support the Secretary-General's ideas about restructuring the Department of Peacekeeping Operations? Does this recommendation hinder or enhance the UN Peacekeeping Operations capabilities in the field?

- Does your government think the United Nations and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations benefit from the recommendation presented by the Special Committee? Why or why not?

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 A/61/668/Add.1  
 A/RES/60/289  
 A/RES/60/263  
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 A/60/640/Add.1  
 A/60/19  
 A/RES/57/129  
 A/55/305-S/2000/809 - Brahimi Report  
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## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.globalpolicy.org/security/peacekpg/reform/index.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/peacekpg/reform/index.htm) - Peacekeeping Reform
- [www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/pkindex.html](http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/pkindex.html) - PeaceWomen, Peacekeeping Page
- [www.un.org/peace/reports/peace\\_operations/](http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/) - Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations
- [www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/specpk.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/specpk.htm) - United Nations Documentation: Research Guide-Peacekeeping
- [www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/) -Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- [www.usip.org/library/topics/peacekeeping.html](http://www.usip.org/library/topics/peacekeeping.html) - United States Institute of Peace

## United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Following the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948, the United Nations established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near Middle East (UNRWA) under A/Res/4/302. The UNRWA is a UN humanitarian agency responsible for the welfare of Palestine refugees. Unlike the UN Refugee Agency, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is responsible for serving a global base of refugees, the UNRWA focuses directly on aiding one-nation group. Currently, 4.3 million refugees qualify for assistance from the UNRWA, and the agency maintains an area of operations in Jordan, Lebanon, The Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. UNRWA is mandated “to carry out direct relief and works programs in collaboration with local governments,” and to “consult with the Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available” as well as plan for when assistance to refugees is no longer necessary.

The General Assembly is responsible for renewing the UNRWA’s mandate every three years; 2008 is the next year the mandate will be up for renewal. The agency focuses on five main programs for the Palestine refugees: health, education, relief and social services, microfinance/microenterprise, and new projects. The UNRWA does work with other UN and international agencies to meet these ends, notably the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on health and educational issues. According to the agency’s mandate, UNRWA will continue its service projects within refugee camps until a just settlement of the Palestine refugee problem has been reached.

From its early years UNRWA addressed emergency assistance needs, but now the agency has evolved to provide a greater network of services to Palestine refugees. For example, the microfinance project (MMP), through its four revolving loan funds, has grown to become a source of financial strength in the volatile business sector of the Palestine territory.

Past UN resolutions (see A/RES/61/112) have centered on the continual demands for compensation and repatriation of the refugees, which some believe would alleviate the refugee problem and end the need for the temporary humanitarian services provided by the agency. Past resolutions have also encouraged the “budgetary transparency and efficiency of the Agency” in order to increase donor funding for the Agency, as well modernizing the management of the agency to better serve the camp refugees. Recent problems with the agency’s

dwindling funds, inability keep pace with the growing refugee population and rising inflation are concerns that the General Assembly has continually addressed in recent years. The June 2004 international conference in Geneva resulted in a set of recommendations to improve the overall quality and efficiency of the Agency. UNRWA responded with its Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2005-2009 that aims to address the concerns and recommendations advanced during the Geneva Conference.

Critics claim UNRWA was originally set up to be a temporary organization, but that the agency has now overextended its original purpose. As conflict continues in the area, the agency itself continues to face serious issues of access, safety of its personnel, and of its finances. However, the agency continues to be the primary source of educational, health, relief and social services to 4.3 million Palestine refugees. As the General Assembly considers the UNRWA, it must carefully balance the needs of the Palestine refugees it provides services to and the need to strive for transparency and efficiency in its operations.

The General Assembly and the Fourth Committee in particular, continues to address concerns surrounding the agency's work and sustainability. While continually calling upon Israel to follow agreements and conventions, the Assembly expresses its deep concern both for the dire situation of the Palestine refugees and for the financial means the UNRWA has to ameliorate those needs. And over the last 18 months, the Agency has not only had to cease its work in rebuilding shelters in Gaza due to violence there, but has lost two of its own members in the violence. Faced with the humanitarian needs of the refugees, the political and financial realities of meeting those needs, and dealing with the violence in the area are all questions of concerns for the Committee.

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

- How can the UNRWA better advance the guidelines set out in the Medium Term Plan (MTP)?
- At what point should the international community consider the agency's mission accomplished?
- Is the UNRWA creating a culture of dependency or contributing to the refugees' wellbeing in the long run?
- What should be done about the lack of funding the agency receives in order to continue its humanitarian services?
- What essential services must UNRWA maintain in light of declining funds?
- What impact, if any, does the work of the UNRWA have on the peace and stability in the region?

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A/RES/61/112  
A/RES/61/113  
A/60/476  
A/RES/60/119  
A/RES/60/102  
A/RES/59/100  
UNRWA Medium Term Plan 2005 – 2009

## Additional Web Resources:

- www.un.org/unrwa/ - UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near Middle East
- www.unhcr.org/country/pse.html - The UN Refugee Agency page on the Occupied Palestine Territories
- www.arts.mcgill.ca/mepp/new\_prn/ - Palestine Refugee ResearchNet