

## CHAPTER IV.

# THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

All delegations are represented on each committee of the General Assembly. Two topics will be discussed in each committee, as listed below. Any resolutions passed on these topics will be automatically submitted to the General Assembly Plenary session for final approval. To allow all Representatives an equal opportunity for preparation, resolutions will only be accepted on the topics listed in this handbook. No new topics will be accepted in the General Assembly.

Each of the Main Committees of the General Assembly are assigned specific tasks and topics to discuss during for the session. Since all Member States are seated on each of these Committees, it is important to note that the topics of discussion usually do not overlap, or when they do each Committee is responsible for discussion of a very specific area within that topic. Participants in each Committee should take care to not expand the discussion of their topic in a direction that would normally be discussed by another Committee. As an example, the Sixth Committee might discuss a topic that deals with the legal issues faced by states in alleviating poverty and improving the legal climate in each state, but this Committee would not discuss the broader topic. A full treatment of the poverty topic would be left to the Third Committee or more likely to ECOSOC. A brief description of each Committee simulated at AMUN is provided below, along with that Committee's web page link.

- First Committee: [www.un.org/ga/57/first/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/57/first/index.html) -- agenda items relating to disarmament and international security are allocated to this body.
- Second Committee: [www.un.org/ga/57/second/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/57/second/index.html) -- agenda items relating to economic and financial matters are allocated to this body.
- Third Committee: [www.un.org/ga/57/third/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/57/third/index.html) -- agenda items relating to social, humanitarian and cultural matters are allocated to this body.
- Sixth Committee: [www.un.org/ga/57/sixth/index.html](http://www.un.org/ga/57/sixth/index.html) -- agenda items relating to international legal matters are allocated to this body.

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

#### THE FIRST COMMITTEE (DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY)

##### THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

The issues of technology transfer, the regulation of existing and future technologies, and the relationship of these concepts to disarmament have been and continue to be important to the UN and its Member States. Technology transfer among member states is often strained by politics as well as the “dual-use” of many technologies for civilian and military applications. The regulation of technology through multilateral treaties and other control regimes has proved difficult, as some states wish to pursue limited access control regimes, especially in the case of nuclear technologies. Disarmament has a close relationship with both technology transfer and the regulation of science and technology. Disarmament often cannot occur without the regulation of existing technologies, while problematically the transfer of certain technologies can undermine disarmament. These issues primarily impact developing states, whose societies seek access to new technologies for development and economic growth. Unfortunately, states that possess such technologies are often hesitant to share them given underlying military, political, and relative power concerns. Disarmament linked with non-proliferation is often seen by developing states as a hindrance to success, because without disarmament, non-proliferation cannot be fully addressed.

In the past, the UN has made attempts to advance the

transfer of technologies to increase development, with only limited success. In his report on 2 July 2002, the Secretary-General noted that the financial constraints of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development limited the number of programs that could be pursued and that further work was still needed (A/57/167, 2 July 2002). Technology transfers between Member States remain somewhat limited, and often decisions are based upon politics and less upon practical needs for technology for development. With regard to multilateral control regimes, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) addresses proliferation concerns originating from unregulated transfers of technology, while at the same time promoting the economic development of Member States. In addition, the UN has attempted to strengthen the shortcomings of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) with regard to unregulated technology transfers through the Conference on Disarmament and other UN bodies.

Currently, the UN actively promotes technology transfers of peaceful goods; while at the same time taking disarmament concerns into consideration through the development of multilateral control regimes for such transfers. Also of concern is the rise in investment in developing new military technologies, mostly on the part of the United States. With a major increase in military spending, and the accompanying propensity for the unregulated and non-transparent use of such technologies, there is much hope for greater multilateral efforts. Of particular interest is finding ways to continue to develop technolo-



gies at a rapid pace, while making sure that such developments do not destabilize the existing balance of security. Greater emphasis is being placed on the transfer of existing technologies from developed countries to other UN Member States in order to stimulate economic growth and development. Through these transactions, work is being done on developing an equitable and unbiased global regime to see that technology is transferred without concern for power or politics, and rather for development and economics.

The future of such difficult issues as equitable technology transfer, regulation of such technology, and the relationship of disarmament is uncertain. For the most part, a solution to such problems has only existing models from which to look for guidance. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) control regimes mark a success in the regulation of technology, with provisions for the transfer of peaceful technologies. Nevertheless, the CWC has to compete with existing export control regimes. The challenge for the future will be to replace existing restricted regimes with universal multilateral controls. How to achieve a balance between security concerns of some Member States and the often non-parallel needs of developing states in seeking technology for development has placed a great strain on the current system. Its effect upon disarmament, with the lack of regulation of the proliferation of technology, is a major challenge. There is currently consideration toward the development of an international treaty concerning technology transfer, disarmament and development, but that is still in its infancy.

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

- What incentives do developed nations have to transfer technology that may lead to an overall decrease in their security, if such technology is not used for peaceful purposes?
- With regard to existing exclusive export control regimes, how can they be expanded to include all parties, and make them more responsive to the needs of both developing and developed countries?
- How can technology transfers be effectively monitored, and if a discovery is made that is of great concern to the world, how can it be dealt with?
- As there is no universal regime concerning the proliferation of nuclear material, and taking into account the goal of non-proliferation, how does a lack of disarmament contribute to the problem?

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- “Science and Technology Diplomacy: Concepts and Elements of a Work Programme,” Feb 2003. [www.unctad.org/en/docs/itetebmisc5\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/itetebmisc5_en.pdf)

“Science and Technology Diplomacy Initiative”  
[r0.unctad.org/stdev/services/glance.pdf](http://r0.unctad.org/stdev/services/glance.pdf)

### UN Documents:

- A/57/167, 2 Jul 2002, Report of the Secretary-General on the Relationship between disarmament and development
- A/53/202, 28 Jul 1998, Report of the Secretary-General on the Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament
- A/Res/57/65, 30 Dec 2002, Relationship between disarmament and development
- A/Res/57/54, 30 Dec 2002, Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament
- E/CN.16/1995/13, 3 Mar 1995, Technological Aspects of Conversion of Military Capacity

### Additional Web Resources:

- [r0.unctad.org/stdev/](http://r0.unctad.org/stdev/), UNCTAD Science & Technology for Development Network
- [r0.unctad.org/stdev/un/uncstd.html](http://r0.unctad.org/stdev/un/uncstd.html), UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development
- [disarmament.un.org/dda.htm](http://disarmament.un.org/dda.htm), UN Department of Disarmament Affairs
- [www.un.org/partners/civil\\_society/m-disarm.htm](http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/m-disarm.htm), UN Global Issues: Disarmament
- [www.unidir.org/](http://www.unidir.org/), UN Institute for Disarmament Research

### GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: CONSOLIDATION OF PEACE THROUGH PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT MEASURES

Since 1996, the issue of consolidation of peace through practical disarmament has been a topic of discussion in the First Committee. The concept attempts to link weapons control, especially in the area of small arms, with peacekeeping and post conflict settlement. The nation most vocal in support for practical disarmament has been Germany, which has sponsored a series of resolutions both introducing the concept and furthering defining it in practical terms. Resolutions on practical disarmament measures often argue that “questions of control of small arms and light weapons, de-mining, and demobilization and reintegration of former combatants are increasingly considered to be crucial to effective conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation” (Kastrup, 1999). Focusing on UN efforts in Angola, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, El Salvador, the former Yugoslavia, Albania and Cambodia, the concept calls on states to attempt to achieve lasting peace through practical disarmament measures. The great advantage of this concept, and the programs behind it, is its practical relevance. Besides the initial UN resolution, (A/51/45N, 10 December 1996) Germany has sponsored a series of follow up resolutions, each year gaining more co-sponsors, from 42 in 1996 to 86 in 2000.

The primary initiative undertaken by the UN so far on this issue has been the establishment of the Group of Interested States (GIS). The GIS was established as part of Resolution A/52/38G (9 December 1997) in an effort to maintain momentum on efforts to introduce practical disarmament



measures as a means toward peace in post conflict regions. The GIS was established to facilitate ongoing practical disarmament, building on the progress that practical disarmament had experienced at the time, by working not only at the supra-national level, but also with affected countries directly. The group is open to all willing and interested states, and holds regular meetings to discuss the effectiveness of action taken and possible future measures. The group has met six times to facilitate major projects in Central Africa, Guatemala and Albania. The Yaounde seminar in 1998 was designed to “train the trainers” and focus on the training of Central African experts in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. A similar project was introduced in November 1998 in Guatemala that focused on combatants in Central America. The Albania project was initiated in the summer of 1999 and not only attempted to rebuild civilian infrastructure, it also sought to create a weapons collection and destruction program. Following the success of the Albanian project, a similar project has been undertaken in Niger. The GIS is determined to continue with this approach.

Currently, the UN is supporting the GIS to continue its initiatives as it has in the past. The GIS requested that the Secretary-General report to the committee on several fact-finding missions in the past year. The Report of the Secretary-General on 12 July 2002 outlines the reports of missions in Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea (A/57/210). The GIS is also considering several other projects, similar to those that they have undertaken in the past. The GIS faces several problems, most of which are the usual difficulties in dealing with small arms in the UN setting. There are concerns over infringement and the right to self-defense, and more importantly, with nuclear crises appearing in several areas, opposition to “deflecting” attention away from nuclear weapons.

The GIS is considering several future actions, in line with the 12 July report of the Secretary-General. First, the Secretary-General reported that the fact finding mission to Papua New Guinea suggested that the GIS should give increased support to the Bougainville Peace process, with intense focus on creating an enhanced weapons disposal plan. The Secretary-General also reported that the mission to Sri Lanka suggested two actions to the GIS. First, there must be a lasting peace settlement; and second, there must be action taken to enhance the socio-economic situation in Sri Lanka. The committee intends to continue to develop programs in a manner similar to their previous actions.

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

- What efforts are being made by the UN, the GIS and regional governments to implement practical disarmament measures?
- What commitments or obligations has your nation agreed to in order to implement programs of practical disarmament?
- How can the UN help support the GIS in completing the goal of implementing practical disarmament?
- What new programs and projects should the GIS and the UN undertake in order to effectively implement practical disarmament measures in other conflict regions?

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- A/C.1/55/L.15, 13 Oct 2000
- A/C.1/54/L.20, 22 Oct 1999
- A/C.1/53/L.31/Rev.1, 28 Oct 1998
- A/Res/57/81, 22 Nov 2002, Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures
- A/Res/57/70, 22 Nov 2002, Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them
- A/Res/56/24 P, 29 Nov 2001, Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures
- A/Res/55/33 G, 20 Nov 2000, Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures
- A/Res/54/54 H, 1 Dec 1999, Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures
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- A/Res/52/38 G, 9 Dec 1997, Peace through practical disarmament measures
- A/Res/51/45 N, 10 Dec 1996, Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures
- Assessment Mission to Sri Lanka, 11-18 Feb 2002 (Executive Summary)
- Fact Finding Mission to Bougainville (Papua New Guinea), 1-10 May 2002 (Executive Summary)

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.smallarmsurvey.org/General%20Assembly.htm](http://www.smallarmsurvey.org/General%20Assembly.htm)
- [disarmament.un.org/firstcom/57reportsum.html](http://disarmament.un.org/firstcom/57reportsum.html)
- [disarmament.un.org/cab/pdms.html](http://disarmament.un.org/cab/pdms.html), Practical Disarmament Measures



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## THE SECOND COMMITTEE (ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL)

### ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PROMOTION OF NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME 1996-2005

One of the greatest aims of the UN over the past couple of decades is the issue of creating feasible means and methods for sustainable development, especially in regards to the environment. Many Member States at the UN have a growing concern as to the consequences of the continued strains placed on an environment that has experienced over the past 100 years an 18-fold growth in world economic output and a four fold increase in the population of humans. This has led to efforts by the UN to encourage the growth of ways to strengthen new and renewable sources of energy, both through the encouragement of market incentives for the creation of new technologies, as well as a large push to disperse these new systems of renewable energy to areas of the world most in need.

One of the most prominent examples of such an effort is the World Solar Programme 1996-2005. This program was founded following the framework established at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, specifically referred to as Agenda 21. Following the events at the UNCED, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), together with several other participating organizations both within and outside the UN, began to address the growing problems of the continuation of the current patterns in the development and use of unsustainable energy production. The result was the creation of the World Solar Programme, covering the period of 1996 through 2005. The World Solar Commission made up of 18 heads of state and chaired by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, approved the program in June 1997.

The movement for the creation and use of renewable sources of energy is not, however, limited to the initiatives laid out in the World Solar Programme. Many other sources of renewable energy have been and continue to be pursued today. Such initiatives include the dissemination of renewable energy knowledge and information through the creation of regional centers dedicated to the development of new and renewable energy sources. However, due to economic reasons, funding has not become available. Nonetheless, nations such as the Russian Federation and Algeria continue to pursue the creation of such centers within their own countries. Other potential sources of renewable energy being considered include: advanced hydroelectric capabilities, wind power, biomass energy, and hydrogen. These are just some examples of renewable sources of energy being considered and pursued around the globe.

The largest difficulty faced in implementing renewable energy programs is in the area of financing such projects for lesser-developed nations, where energy systems are most needed. Recent work within the UN has complemented

nations on the pursuit and creation of renewable sources of energy and continues to push more nations to participate in cooperative partnerships in dispersing such technologies beyond their own borders. Not only does this provide renewable energy sources to areas in great need; it also aids in the establishment of markets for renewable resources, thus allowing for their continued use and expansion. Some areas of cooperation and finance do exist. One example is the global Renewable Energy and Efficiency Fund and the Solar Development Group, which originates from a partnership with the World Bank. The UN has also been somewhat successful in tying financing for the advancement of renewable resources to poverty reduction.

Recent action in the UN has focused primarily on regional organizations. One successful example is the Asia Alternative Energy Program (ASTAE). ASTAE has been successful in securing funding for programs across Asia and has been credited with being productive in bringing down barriers to alternative energy development. India has taken a giant lead in the area of renewable energy sources, contributing some of its developmental expertise to other developing countries. The UN is currently pursuing the development of an African equivalent to Asia's ASTAE within the framework of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, although it has been largely unsuccessful due to the lack of participation of outside investment.

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

- What partnerships are being formed between regional financial and non-governmental international organizations in regards to new and renewable sources of energy?
- How can the UN more effectively forge financial partnerships to continue its commitment to the World Solar Programme?
- What kind of programs for renewable energy systems exists in your nation, and what projects are currently being funded through the UN?
- Is the current action with respect to the development of new and renewable sources of energy (specifically the World Solar Programme) within the UN sufficient to achieve the goals outlined in Agenda 21 to provide a more sustainable environment?

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on Energy  
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[www.un.int](http://www.un.int)  
[www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org), United Nations Foundation  
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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: INTEGRATION OF THE ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION INTO THE WORLD ECONOMY**

Since its founding, the UN has strived to realize all peoples' rights to live free from hunger, poverty, ignorance, disease and fear. Developing nations suffer from these problems far more than industrialized nations. One suggested solution to decreasing this gap between developing and industrialized nations has been to increase economic growth by integrating these nations into the world economy. Despite attempts at integration, a large number of developing nations still struggle with international debt problems, meeting the needs for development finance, creating an equitable trading system, and diversifying and modernizing their economies.

The Fourth UN Development Decade, beginning in 1991, began with an analysis of the progress developing nations made in financial integration during the 1980s. According to the analysis, developing nations were largely unable to achieve progress, due mostly to instabilities in the economies of industrialized nations with a large impact on the world economy. For a majority of developing nations, the decade was one of falling growth rates, declining living standards and deepening poverty.

In response to these issues, the GA adopted the International Development Strategy for the Fourth UN Development Decade, providing recommendations for integrating the economies of developing nations into the world economy. With respect to debt relief, the Strategy suggested creditor nations review their loan policies and continue to provide debt and debt-service reduction packages using external organizations. To reduce the effects of instabilities in the world economy, lending by commercial banks, direct private investment and multilateral financial institutions needed to be increased during the decade. To assist in obtaining resources through trade, the use of reverse protectionism and tariff and non-tariff barriers needed to be discontinued. The overall goal of these and the remainder of the discussions in the Strategy are to provide a means for developing nations to stabilize their economies in relation to the international economy through increased trade, improved GDP, industrial growth, debt reduction, and low inflation.

The outcome of recent GA discussions has been to provide assistance and recommendations to developing nations in transition. To this end, the GA has requested that the Secretary-General provide a report every two years containing an analysis of the progress made by the developing nations. In addition, the GA has asked internal, regional, and multilateral institutions to continue to conduct analytical activities and



provide policy advice and recommendations to developing nations. This particularly includes the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The GA also has as a guide, the international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium (A/55/89, 27 June 2000).

The most recent status report by the Secretary-General indicates that, overall, developing countries have achieved a number of successes in integrating with the world economy. The Central and Eastern European and Baltic nations have increased foreign trade and investment, private sector development, and rates of growth. The overall debt of developing countries has decreased by three percent from 1999 to 2000, the first decrease since 1991. The amount of inflation in the economies in transition has also decreased dramatically. In contrast, the Commonwealth of Independent States showed less increase in foreign trade and investment and unmanageable debt levels. They have also experienced problems with exports due to distance from major importers and difficulty in finding suitable markets for their products.

The issues of debt and foreign investment remain critical to the continued development of nations in transition. Debt reduction and cancellation have been discussed as a means of assisting developing countries. However, a number of nations have stressed that this will impact future incentives to lend and will deprive other nations of resources for development. Alternative solutions have been to improve investments by better managing programs and consolidating partnerships between UN agencies, international financial institutions, and multilateral and bilateral organizations. In addition, improvements and accelerated implementation of the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative would allow developing countries in extreme debt to mobilize resources for integration and development.

Another important issue is that economic integration, by itself, may expose developing countries to excessive risks. According to reports by the IMF, the existence of good institutions and the quality of governance also appear to be important in helping countries benefit from economic globalization. In addition, the importance of a stable macroeconomic framework must be stressed. Developing countries are initially unable to invest at the same level as industrial countries, thus exposing them to greater fluctuations in the market economy. This, again, stresses the importance of the various organizational and institutional arrangements, to both nations that have made significant progress toward integration, as well as nations still struggling to achieve economic integration.

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

- What efforts are currently under way by the UN, regional, and financial organizations to address the issues brought forth by analysis of the countries in transition?
- What assistance does your nation provide to developing nations in transition?
- What additional steps can be taken by the UN to support

developing nations in transition?

- How can industrialized nations be encouraged to set policies that better assist developing nations in transition?

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- [www.imf.org/](http://www.imf.org/)
- [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)



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## THE THIRD COMMITTEE (SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL)

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Social problems have been recognized by the UN as an urgent need to be addressed by all Member States. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, health and welfare, malnutrition, aging, and education affect every country. As a macro-level concern, social development affects all aspects of human life. As a result, the UN convened the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 in Copenhagen, Denmark, to reaffirm the importance of social development and its interdependence with economic and political development, and to develop a framework of action to address the issues of social development.

Participants to the World Summit agreed to the Copenhagen Declaration, which contains ten commitments related to a variety of issues surrounding social development. In particular, the Declaration called upon Member States to create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment to enable the citizenry of each state to achieve the goals of social development; to progress toward the eradication of poverty by a target date set by each Member State; to support full employment; to promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all basic human rights; to achieve equality between the sexes; to accelerate development efforts in Africa and the Least Developed Countries; to ensure structural adjustment programmes include social development goals; to increase overall resources allocated to social development; and to strengthen cooperative efforts between Member States and various UN agencies. The commitments were detailed in their expectations and goals to address social problems and Summit participants went to great lengths to develop national, regional, and international action plans for each commitment. At the conclusion of the Summit, Member States agreed to hold another summit to evaluate the progress being made in 2000 in Geneva.

From 26 June - 1 July 2000, 178 nations, 500 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 56 inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) held a follow-up summit in Geneva (Summit +5) to discuss the progress made on the commitments agreed to in the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration. It was discovered that in many areas the global community had made little or no progress and in some cases the social conditions in some countries had worsened considerably. Concerns were expressed by numerous Member States about the weakening of the ability of state governments by the forces of globalization and that this weakening was a leading factor in the lack of progress. Other nations and representatives argued that the developed nations showed a lack of overall concern for the plight of developing nations and asked that the programs developed be of a partnership nature, in which the two worlds might be on equal footing to share ideas and plan together for a better future. The African nations and relevant NGOs and IGOs brought a new emphasis to the HIV/AIDS pandemic

as a contributing factor to the regression that the continent faced and asked that greater focus be given to the pandemic as a root cause, and that the spotlight be turned to root causes across the board. New goals were set in light of the reality that faced the nations in 2000 and ten new commitments were adopted by the body. The Government of Switzerland also hosted a parallel meeting it named the Geneva 2000 Forum. This gathering explored practical and applied experiences in order to facilitate a larger understanding of positive practices and obstacles from all sides of the development situation. The findings and commitments of this meeting can be found in the Secretary-General's report (A/55/344) and the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 2000 (A/RES/S-24/2).

Following the Geneva Summit, the General Assembly held its 24th Special Session and urged every organization of the UN to reevaluate its role in the realm of social development. UN agencies initiated programs or planned to address the points relevant to their overall role as requested by the Special Session. The organization charged with the coordination of UN efforts is the Commission for Social Development (CSD), a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The CSD has developed a multi-year programme to focus agency work, beginning in 2002 and expiring in 2006. Each year has a focus, with stated goals and plans to educate other international organizations, both within and independent of the UN. In 2006, the First UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty will be the next large test and evaluation of the work requested by the Member States in Copenhagen, Geneva and through the CSD. Until this meeting, it is up to the GA and the CSD to guide the progress toward their stated initiatives and commitments. The refocusing has in some cases created new non-traditional working blocs, centered on common plights and common solutions. These new blocs are working in coalition with the traditional regional, social and economic blocs to solve collectively the problems that face the developing world.

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

- Where does your nation fit in the newly created non-traditional blocs? Have these blocs been helpful in your nation's pursuit of its policy agenda in this realm?
- Where does your nation stand in relation to the efforts of the UN system to address the interrelated issues of social development?
- What, if any, solutions and experimental data can your nation bring to the discussion?
- How can the CSD working in partnership with old and new blocs address the concerns expressed by some nations over policies that meant to help, but continue to hinder their progress?

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## **PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF THE WORLD’S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

Globally, approximately 370 million indigenous people live in over 70 countries. Compared to their respective societies, indigenous people hold differentiating social, cultural, economic and political attributes. As a unique group, the rights of indigenous people may need special protection, because their needs and concerns are different than that of the general population. Specific categories that have been identified as affecting indigenous people differently include human rights, the environment, development, education and health. Within these contexts, it is important that indigenous people retain their cultural identity and have input into issues that directly concern them. In order for this to be possible, it is necessary for respective countries and the international community to be cognizant of and understand the unique qualities of these issues. Further, indigenous people must be educated in policy matters that concern them and should be included in such matters.

In response to much-needed international awareness and indigenous education, the UN and the international community have taken many steps to these ends. In 1982, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to protect the rights of indigenous people worldwide. The WGIP issued numerous programs, but most noteworthy was the creation of a declaration of rights of indigenous people from 1985-1993. If ratified, this treaty will be the most comprehensive, collective human rights initiative specifically aimed at indigenous people. Another noteworthy event was the International Year of the World’s Indigenous People in 1993. The purpose of this year was to encourage international cooperation in addressing concerns that indigenous people face. It was expanded into an entire decade in the following year in order to strengthen the dedication of the UN on these issues, and to implement programs with the purpose of promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous people. This International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People focused on improving the health, education, housing, employment, development, and environment of indigenous people.

GA Resolution 50/157 enumerates eight programs to address the focal points of the International Decade: 1) the protection of the rights of indigenous people while empowering them to make choices that enable them to retain their cultural identity; 2) educating both indigenous and non-indigenous societies on the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people; 3) implementation of the recommendations pertaining to indigenous people adopted at the international conferences of the 1990s; 4) completion and adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; 5) special attention by the UN system to development activities which would benefit indigenous populations; 6) creation of a UN fellowship programme to assist indigenous people wishing to gain experience in the area of human rights,





as well as other programmes of the UN system; 7) establishment of an adequately staffed and resourced UN unit on indigenous people, and requesting governments to second qualified indigenous people to assist in UN work for the Decade; and 8) worldwide observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9 August each year. These activities were specified as the responsibility of the international community and were named the Programme of Activities for the Decade.

UNESCO, ECOSOC and the UN have been instrumental in putting this Programme into action. Following the establishment of the annual observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9 August, a number of UN agencies have implemented programs to help indigenous people. Participating agencies including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Inter-regional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization, the World Bank, UNICEF, and UN HABITAT, to name a few. These programs range from raising awareness of indigenous issues to protecting the natural resources of indigenous people to providing health care and creating educational opportunities for disadvantaged populations. Finally, one of the most important aims of the Programme of Activities, the creation of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, has indeed been created as a subsidiary of the UN. This body has the mandate of researching indigenous issues; reporting and providing advice to ECOSOC; raising awareness on indigenous issues; and integrating activities of indigenous peoples into the UN system.

The progress of the global movement for indigenous people will most likely continue in the coming years thanks to the establishment of the aforementioned programs. Additional research and education about indigenous people is essential. Including indigenous people in policies and decision that directly and indirectly affect their lives and futures.

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

- What indigenous populations exist in your country, and what is their relationship with the government?
- How have conditions for indigenous people improved, and in what ways have conditions worsened or stayed the same?
- What has been the effect of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and was the Programme of Activities comprehensive enough for the purpose of the Decade?
- What obstacles currently exist that hinders the attainment of these goals, and what new issues regarding indigenous people must be addressed in the future?

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## THE SIXTH COMMITTEE (LEGAL)

### STATUS OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF 1949 AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT

The 1949 Geneva Conventions were held as a reaction to the horrible devastation of World War II. The nations party to the conventions agreed to a series of international laws and agreements, which would, they hoped, govern warfare and prevent any undue destruction or casualties during future conflicts. In 1977, two Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were finalized concerning protection of victims of international and domestic armed conflicts. The Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions are specifically pointed towards the protection of victims of international conflicts, and contain numerous measures to safeguard medical personnel, clergy, civilians, journalists, and other categories of non-combatants. While 190 states are party to the Geneva Conventions, 161 are party to the first Additional Protocol of 1977, dealing with international armed conflicts and 156 are party to the second Additional Protocol. Since 1977, there have been several conferences on re-interpreting and updating the status of the Geneva Conventions and the Protocols Additional. Ways in which war is to be limited have long been considered an important subject for international law, and the Geneva Conventions are considered by many nations to be the most important tool the international community has in dealing with this subject. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent is closely linked with the history and current execution of the Conventions and Protocols Additional.

Recent global situations, like those in the Balkans, have led to a renewed interest in the Geneva Conventions. As the number of actual declared wars falls to an almost non-existent number, while the frequency of smaller, undeclared conflicts surges, there is much debate about how the Geneva Conventions might be applied. Situations in Africa, southeastern Europe, parts of Asia and Latin America, and in smaller nations throughout the world have recently yielded great humanitarian alarm. For instance, the recent fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the tribal wars in Rwanda, the fighting in Chechnya, the former Yugoslavia, and Colombia can all be considered in terms of the widespread use of paramilitary forces, tactics and methods commonly associated with criminal and terrorist organizations such as kidnapping, bombings of mainly civil or public targets and assassination. Tribalism, political ideology, and/or personal ambition of some leaders have spurred on these conflicts. Nevertheless, the Geneva Conventions do not necessarily apply in these circumstances, as often the sides are formed along ethnic, ideological and religious allegiances and may transcend borders or may occur within the borders of a single nation.

The UN has served as a forum for discussing the status of the Geneva Conventions and the Protocols Additional. The Secretary-General has, in the past, delivered reports to the GA based on information received from Member States concerning the status of the Conventions and the Protocols Additional. The UN has concerned itself, as a body, with two tasks regarding the Geneva Conventions and Protocols Additional. The first is to

serve as a place for the international community to discuss these issues without formally convening a conference, and the second is to examine specific conflicts. Both the Sixth Committee and the Human Rights Commission have discussed the Geneva Conventions and the Protocols Additional in the past. While most of the actual work on the Conventions and Protocols Additional is conducted outside of the UN proper, the UN continues to be a forum for discussing transgressions and the status of these documents.

Currently, the UN is examining new ways to expand or solidify the Conventions and the Protocols Additional. Resolutions have been passed urging states not party to the Protocols Additional to become party to them. These same resolutions also call on nations party to the Protocols to ensure their full implementation. Following the 25 years since their initial drafting, the situation has changed drastically, and the UN constantly keeps itself abreast as to the concerns of Member States regarding the Conventions and the Protocols Additional. With the changing face of modern warfare, where those persons who would otherwise be considered formerly exempt from hostilities and due for protection under the Geneva Conventions have now become prime targets and essential players in many conflicts, there is much hope of firming up the content of the Protocols in the face of these new threats to the security of non-combatants.

The main concern for the UN appears to be the problems various Member States party to the Geneva Conventions have with the two Protocols. Most past, current, and likely future action has been and will be taken to address these concerns. The UN may also be able to take action to ensure compliance among states party to the Protocols, and if the UN decides the Protocols need to be amended, it may recommend that Member States meet to this end. This recent change in the dynamics of modern warfare—away from nation-state versus nation-state toward partisan and partisan versus government versus rival is making it very difficult for international peacekeepers, observers, and human rights organizations to monitor and prevent future conflicts. The recent ratification of the Rome Treaty has been a topic for discussion in light of the past concerns regarding the implementation of the Protocols Additional, and subsequent UN action may work to bolster the ability of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to deal with the vagaries of modern conflict.

Questions for consideration from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What steps can be taken within and outside the UN system to ensure universal recognition and compliance with the Geneva Conventions and the Protocols Additional?
- How do the Protocols fit in with the commitments of various Member States to fight terrorism and deal with civil unrest?
- Does the “war on terrorism” that the UN agreed to after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 require the Protocols to be re-interpreted or updated?
- To what extent can the UN act to ensure implementation of the Protocols and what legal recourse do non-combatants have in relation to the ICC and the Protocols Additional?



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## **THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ON THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations was established on 15 December 1975 by GA Resolution 3499 (XXX). Initially an ad hoc committee, the newly established body met in 1976 to examine questions and suggestions regarding the Charter, the strengthening of the role of the UN in maintaining international peace and security, cooperation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law between States. The Special Committee originally consisted of 47 Member States, until 1995 when GA Resolution 50/52 opened its membership to all Member States. The resolution also authorized the Committee to accept as observers non-Member States that belonged to the specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Intergovernmental organizations could take part in plenary debates (A/Res/50/52, 15 Dec 1995). Throughout its tenure, the GA has requested the Special Committee to look at various aspects of the UN Organization in an effort to develop concrete suggestions for ways to improve the various functions of the UN as prescribed under the Charter.

In 1996, the GA asked the Committee to consider proposals concerning the maintenance of international peace and security, assistance to third states affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter and the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes between states, including proposals on establishing a dispute settlement service. The Committee was also asked to continue considering the future role of the Trusteeship Council. In terms of the maintenance of international peace and security, the Committee focused on a draft declaration on the basic principles for UN peace keeping missions and mechanisms for preventing and settling crises and conflicts. With the end of the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, significant demands were being placed on the UN System to respond to and address a variety of intrastate conflicts that threatened to engulf nations in close proximity to these conflicts. A number of Member States were concerned that the UN was becoming embroiled in too many operations and set out to develop basic principles for guiding the UN's peacekeeping operations. A global instrument containing a compendium of principles relevant to its activities in the field was suggested as a means of harmonizing UN policy in this area.

Another topic of considerable interest to the Member States was the issue of assistance to third states affected by sanctions. The primary concern was whether or not such assistance was a legal obligation under the Charter and that the UN should establish appropriate mechanisms to deal with the problem, including the establishment of a funding mechanism financed from assessed and voluntary contributions to help offset the economic



losses suffered by third states. It was recommended that the Security Council take the lead role in addressing this issue. During the discussions on proposed criteria for imposing sanctions, Member States noted that although sanctions had been imposed 116 times, they had achieved their objectives in only 41 instances. The success rate in the latter instances had been about 50 percent before the 1980s and some 25 percent since then. The drop was due to the destructive effects sanctions have on civilian populations -- resulting in hunger, poverty, and economic destruction -- and to their negative economic effects on third states. As a result, the Committee stressed that sanctions should be used as a last resort and applied only when there was genuine threat to peace and security.

In 1997, the Special Committee sought to address issues related to strengthening the International Court of Justice (ICJ), implementing Charter provisions on assistance to third states affected by UN sanctions and increasing the number of officers in the GA's main committees. In terms of strengthening the ICJ, feedback was solicited from Member States and states party to the Statue of the Court on the impact of increased workloads on its operations. Member States also suggested that the jurisdiction of the Court should be expanded to include disputes between states and international organizations. Concerns were raised about the difficulty in amending the Charter and the Statue of the Court to accomplish this goal, as well as its effect on the scope and purview of international organizations operating with the sanction of the UN. On the issue of strengthening the main committees, the Committee sent a draft resolution for consideration by the GA to amend the first sentence of Rule 103 of the Rules of Procedure to read: "Each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur." Originally, Rule 103 allows each GA committee to elect four officers, drawn from each of the regional groups represented in the UN. Since there are now five regional groups, the proposal would ensure equitable geographical representation in the main committees' bureaux.

In 2000, the Committee was asked by the GA to give priority to an examination of the question of assistance to third states affected by Security Council sanctions, as well as to a review of its own working methods. Before the approval of its working agenda by the GA, a number of Member States raised the concern that the Special Committee was not effectively addressing key issues affecting the role of the UN in fulfilling its Charter obligations. In addition, concerns were raised that questioned the Committee's role in pushing the reform agenda ahead. The United States, in particular, emphasized that the key to the success of the UN was its ability to live within its resources and to use them where they were most needed. The ideas and mechanisms generated from past mistakes and sharing best practices were only now just being implemented. With an eye to the future, the GA subsequently instructed the Special Committee to include future issues the UN must address as they relate to the UN Charter.

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

- What strategic role can the Special Committee play in addressing key issues such as third states affected by sanctions or

peacekeeping operations?

- How have the events of 11 September 2001 changed the role of the UN?
- What issues should the Special Committee consider as the UN seeks to address the key issues of terrorism, organized crime, and other interstate concerns?

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