4 CHAPTER FOUR
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly is the main deliberative policy-making body of the United Nations (UN) and is empowered to address all international issues covered by the Charter. In many ways, it acts as the central hub of the United Nations. Many UN bodies report to the General Assembly, but not all of these bodies are subsidiary to the GA. For example, the Security Council constantly updates the General Assembly on its work, but it is an independent body; its work does not require the General Assembly's independent approval. In contrast, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and is governed by General Assembly mandates. Other subsidiary bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), also have direct reporting relationships with the General Assembly.

The UN Charter assigns each of the main Committees of the General Assembly specific tasks and topics to discuss during each session. Because every Member State has a seat in every Committee, it is important to note that the points of discussion do not overlap; even if two or more Committees are discussing a general topic area, each Committee is responsible for discussing a very specific point or aspect of that topic. For example, the Fourth Committee may discuss the Israeli-Palestine conflict with regard to its political components. However, issues concerning the legal, social, or economic components of the Israeli-Palestine conflict are left to other Committees, the General Assembly Plenary, or the Security Council. Therefore, Representatives in each Committee should take care not to expand the discussion of any topic beyond the limitations set by their Committee's mandate and into another Committee's area of discussion. This is known as the Committee's purview.

A note concerning funding: The Fifth Committee makes financing decisions concerning only the 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.

The purpose of the Combined Plenary session on the final day is to ratify the resolutions which passed in the four Main GA Committees and build consensus. While a small amount of additional debate is typical, it is expected that the work done by each Committee over the first three days of the Conference will be respected. It would thus be rare for significant changes to be made, or for a resolution to fail in the Plenary session after passing in Committee.

The following are brief descriptions of each Committee simulated at AMUN, along with the Committee's agenda, a brief purview of each committee, a brief background and research guide for each agenda topic, and the Committee's website address. Representatives should use this information as the first step in their research on the powers and limitations of their particular Committee in relation to the agenda topics.

PURVIEW OF THE CONCURRENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY

The General Assembly Plenary typically considers issues that several Committees would have the power to discuss, but which would best be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Likewise, the General Assembly Plenary is also responsible for coordinating work between the many different bodies of the United Nations. For example, the 60th General Assembly recently established a Peacebuilding Commission that oversees the United Nations' peacebuilding processes and 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/

THE UN GLOBAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY REVIEW

Countering terrorism is one of the most complex and multi-faceted issues facing the international community, and the international community continues to struggle with the best way to address the issue. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon; the era of modern terrorism began with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881. Yet the last several decades have seen new complexities. First and foremost, the ease of global communication enabled by the Internet and other communication technologies make it increasingly simple for terrorists to reach larger audiences, communicate with associates around the world and recruit more easily. Second, the globalized trade and transportation systems have enabled terrorists to more easily move and acquire resources. Third, the number and diversity of terrorist attacks have increased significantly. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism estimates that there were around 650 terrorist incidents in 1970 and approximately 5,000 in 2011. The reasons have also changed: while nationalism was the primary motivator in the 19th century, political ideology, religion and independence movements all emerged as motivating factors in the 20th century. The methodologies employed by terrorists are equally diverse: ranging from fear and coercion through major violent attacks to drug and human trafficking. Individual governments are increasingly struggling with counter-terrorism efforts and are turning to the international community for support and cooperation. The UN plays an important role as a key platform for multilateral, systemic approaches to addressing these threats.

Since 1972, preventing international terrorism has been on the General Assembly's agenda. The General Assembly adopted its

earliest counter-terrorism conventions in 1973 and 1979: the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons and the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages. These conventions were spurred by the growing trend of terrorists to seize or attack embassies or hijack planes and other vehicles. The conventions were designed to create effective measures to prevent, address and punish the taking of hostages and the targeting of diplomats and government employees. They also made taking hostages and attacks against diplomats an offense for which offenders could be extradited regardless of existing extradition treaties between States Parties. In 1994, the Assembly passed a new Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which led to an Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism in 1996. The Declaration was the first to highlight the growing nexus between terrorist networks and organized crime, an important source of sustaining revenue and an avenue for access to weapons. Further work was done on condemning and suppressing terrorists' bombings, financing and access to nuclear weapons, with conventions passed on each topic through the late 90s. The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism inhibits the ability of terrorists to raise money, targeting charities, individuals, businesses and other organizations that raise, channel or launder money in support of terrorists in other States. Unfortunately, even with the many conventions and an international consensus condemning terrorism, attacks continue.

The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the United States brought the topic of combating terrorism to the forefront of the international agenda. After considerable discussion and debate, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006. It was the first time the international community agreed to a comprehensive and strategic approach to combating terrorism and was the clearest condemnation to date of terrorism as a legitimate tactic. The Strategy centered on four pillars: measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; measures to prevent and combat terrorism; measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard; and measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism. This strategy is designed to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), established by the Secretary-General in 2005, is mandated to enhance coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism efforts of the UN system. While the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Global Strategy still remains in the hands of Member States, the CTITF helps coordinate the UN system with Member State action, providing policy support and helping deliver technical assistance.

Though the Strategy was agreed to and adopted, Member States struggled in its formulation on how to approach the issue, with questions concerning whether prevention of radicalization is more effective than suppression. If terrorism is a symptom and not the disease, then suppression does nothing to correct the underlying causes of the attacks. When an attack occurs, it is much easier to counter-strike, seeking those who are responsible, than to consider serious structural reforms that may be required locally or abroad to address the long-term threat. This debate is further compounded because there is no agreement over what motivates or causes terrorism. Limited economic opportunity, poverty, religious differences, weak governance and social conflict are some of the conditions that can motivate individuals to resort to terrorism, issues that will be unaffected by security measures undertaken domestically by outside States. If the legitimate grievances and underlying socioeconomic weaknesses are allowed to fester, attacks may continue. Economic development and governance reform may be just as important to counter-terrorism as is military force.

The General Assembly conducts biennial reviews of the Global Strategy. In July 2012, the third and most recent review reaffirmed the UN commitment to the Global Strategy and was adopted unanimously. Renewed interest in strengthening the four pillars, especially countering the appeal of terrorism, will focus on promoting dialogue and understanding as important elements in future efforts. The reaffirmation also emphasized a need for the international community to commit to solidarity with the victims of terrorism, which could help make terrorism less attractive as the victims get the attention, not the attackers or their motives. This furthers the key goal of delegitimizing terrorism, making it morally indefensible and a tactic that will cost groups social and economic support. The CTITF also continues to issue reports and policy recommendations through its working groups, most recently hoping to combat usage of the internet for terrorist communications and recruitment, working in the broader context of cyber security with Member States, academia, and the private sector.
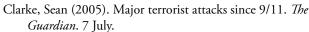
With the Global Strategy and apparently strong support for countering terrorism, it would seem counter-intuitive that terrorism remains such a scourge. However, the international community remains severely divided over multiple issues. Beset by political divisions and with limited resources, the United Nations has struggled to articulate a vision for its role in the international effort against terrorism. The 2003 car bombing of a UN compound in Iraq, among many other attacks against UN officials, has limited the appeal of a large UN footprint in combating terrorism. Negotiations on a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism remain deadlocked, hampered by disagreements over several basic points. States continue to pursue unilateral military action against perceived threats, including within the sovereign territory of other States, often with little or no accountability. Some governments use the threat of terrorism to justify curbing fundamental human rights or even kill its own citizens. As attacks continue, the international community must continue a multi-faceted approach to delegitimize terrorism while addressing its causes.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How can the UN further cooperate to fight terrorism? How can Member States work together to support the four pillars of the UN's strategy?
- How can States cooperate to combat terrorist activities on the Internet? Are additional steps needed to prevent terrorists from using the Internet for communication, recruitment and financial transactions?
- What steps can the international community take to make terrorism a less attractive option, particularly for young people?

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CONSOLIDATING GAINS AND ACCELERATING EFFORTS TO CONTROL AND ELIMINATE MALARIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA, BY 2015

Malaria is widely viewed as one of the most severe problems facing global health today. Malaria is a parasitic infection transmitted to humans via mosquito bites. In the human body, the parasites multiply in the liver and infect red blood cells, ultimately producing fever, headache and vomiting. If the infection goes untreated, it frequently becomes life threatening. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that there were 219 million infections and 660,000 deaths in 2010; over 90 percent of the deaths were in Africa. Malaria is a leading cause of death in many developing countries, and it disproportionately affects women and children. Almost 40 percent of the planet's population is at risk for malaria infection. Malaria is endemic in large areas of Africa, Central and South America, the island of Hispaniola (which includes Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Asia (including the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the Middle East), Eastern Europe, and the South Pacific. Six out of every ten hospital admissions in Sub-Saharan Africa are attributed to malaria.

The two most discussed issues regarding malaria are how best to combat the disease and the fiscal impact of the disease. Because mosquitoes are the vectors of infection, eradication of mosquitoes has been a main focus in the past. Unfortunately, insecticide-resistant mosquitoes have become more prevalent, rendering this mode increasingly infeasible. Efforts to combat the disease are further complicated by the lack of licensed vaccine for the disease. Widespread infections have a crippling effect on both individual families and the economy. Because mosquitoes breed and spread malaria primarily during the peak seasons for agricultural labor, the loss of productivity for several weeks can decimate a poor family's income. The direct costs of malaria in Africa alone are an estimated $12 billion U.S. dollars a year.

The WHO has the primary responsibility within the UN system for coordinating efforts to eliminate malaria. Regional efforts to eliminate malaria were underway as early as the 1940s, culminating in the 1955 Global Malaria Eradication Programme. Between 1955 and 1969, the WHO and national governments spent more than $1 billion trying to eliminate the disease in 10 years, by using tens of thousands of tons of pesticides each year to limit mosquito populations. The program saw some notable success: malaria was wiped out in the United States, Caribbean, South Pacific, Balkans, India and Taiwan. The program was cut short due to environmental concerns about the widespread use of DDT, ultimately resulting in the restriction of the use of the chemical. Despite success in some areas, the disease persisted in the deep tropics and ultimately made a resurgence after the program concluded in 1969. The disease was quickly reintroduced to India, and sub-Saharan Africa, which had not participated in the Program, continued to suffer. At the same time, widespread emergence of drug resistant malaria resulted in large-scale epidemics with limited treatment options.

In the early 1990s the renewed spread of malaria alarmed the international community. In response, the WHO convened a series of conferences, ultimately producing the 1992 Global Malaria Control Strategy. The Global Strategy calls for strengthening local and national capabilities for disease control, community partnership, decentralized decision-making and the integration of malaria control into the work of other sectors, including education, agriculture and the environment. In 1998, the WHO launched the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) campaign, based on four major pillars: prompt access to treatment for all (especially young children) with effective drugs; the increased use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), which provide the most effective method for families to avoid malaria; prevention and control of malaria in pregnant women, which reduces infant mortality and other birth complications; and malaria epidemic and emergency response for victims of natural climate variations or disasters and man-made outbreaks stemming from war or industry. In 2000, halting the spread of malaria and decreasing incidents of the disease was included as part of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Six. To better achieve this objective and continue the international community's work against malaria, in 2008 WHO adopted its 2008 RBM Global Malaria Action Plan. The plan offered guidance for the prevention of the disease, especially long lasting instecticide treated mosquito nets, and expanding the prevalence of rapid diagnostic testing to provide quick diagnosis in the field.

Because of strong support for the issue, the international community has made remarkable gains. Since 2000, transmissions of malaria have decreased by 17 percent globally, with a 25 percent drop in mortality. Over one million deaths due to malaria were averted due to UN efforts over the last decade. But these gains are unevenly distributed. Some of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to suffer disproportionately. Reaching populations in these countries continues to bedevil international efforts. More than 250 million long-lasting ITNs are still needed. Investment in combating malaria peaked at $1.9 billion in 2011, far short of the $5-6 billion target. With funding declining and the MDGs expiring in 2015, the international community risks a resurgence of malaria in tropical areas if it abandons efforts as it did in 1969.

A steady source of funding is crucial to ensuring that insecticidal nets and other tools continue to be available to individuals in impacted regions. Funding alone will not solve the problem, however, and the international community will need to address several other problems as well.

Prevention is key: every case of malaria avoided provides one less opportunity for drug resistance to increase, one less sick worker, and possibly one less death. ITNs have a demonstrated effectiveness as does intermittent indoor spraying. Drug-resistant strains of malaria and insecticide-resistant mosquitoes are both increasing and could pose a major threat to eradication efforts in the next few years. The international community will need to identify and support new approaches and remedies. Early diagnosis and treatment can also help dramatically reduce deaths, but these basic medical services are not available to many. Rapid diagnostic tests are available, and increasing access could prove important. New technologies, like mobile phone-based systems, show promise, as well. Limited information on the range of drug resistant strains makes treatment difficult. Medicine to treat malaria and ITNs are both relatively expensive and in limited supply in many of the most effected countries. Experts have suggested that supplies could be increased through local production, but intellectual property restrictions restrict the ability to produce goods locally.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How can the United Nations ensure that efforts to combat malaria reach the marginalized and poorest communities?
- How can the international community ensure that adequate early testing for malaria is available?
- What steps can Member States take to increase access to medication to treat malaria?
- How should the United Nations manage the increased prevalence of drug-resistant malaria?

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PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE

The General Assembly First Committee addresses the disarmament of conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction and related international security questions. The First Committee makes recommendations on the regulations of these weapons as they relate to international peace and security. The First Committee does not address legal issues surrounding weapons possession or control complex peace and security issues addressed by the Security Council. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

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

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

No single technology in mankind's development has brought with it a greater existential threat than nuclear weapons. With some eighteen thousand warheads estimated in global stockpiles, the world remains only one launch away from destruction. From the United Nations' very beginning, the international community has struggled with balancing the danger of these weapons with access to the technology and the energy nuclear fission can provide. One tool used by the international community has been the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ), a geographical group of Member States that have renounced nuclear weapons technology, maintain no such weapons and have established a system of verification and monitoring.

The international community, fearing what the uncontrolled expansion of nuclear weapons could herald, promotes nuclear non-proliferation as a central element of ensuring international peace and stability. The goal of a NWFZ is to avert regional nuclear proliferation and encourage global disarmament. The first NWFZ was created by the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. The treaty forbade the stationing of nuclear weapons and waste in the Antarctic while also outlawing testing in the area. Latin America followed, establishing its own NWFZ with the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967. New clauses in the Treaty of Tlatelolco prohibited States Parties possessing nuclear weapons from stationing them within the area and prohibited Parties from using or threatening the use of nuclear weapons against other Parties.

The broader international effort toward addressing the nuclear threat saw another success when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force in 1970. The treaty is intended to limit the expansion of nuclear weapon technology while ensuring that states have the continued right to pursue and safely use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The NPT created the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to oversee safeguards and confidence-building measures and to implement verification measures. Today, NWFZ treaties cover Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central Asia. The creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East would bring the region into the regime of existing NWFZ treaties and diminish the threat of nuclear war within the region.

A NWFZ in the Middle East was first proposed in 1962, and the General Assembly passed the first resolution endorsing the concept in 1974. Little progress was made over the next 35 years as actors in the region struggled to overcome conflict and mistrust. The 1990s saw a spurt of action as Egypt and Israel led an effort to renew talks. Instead of focusing on just nuclear weapons, States in the region aimed for a more comprehensive disarmament, including all forms of weapons of mass destruction. Talks stalled and then ultimately broke up in 1995.

Currently, the United Nations continues to encourage peaceful talks between States of the Middle East regarding creating an NWFZ. In 2010, the parties to the NPT asked the Secretary-General to consult with States in the region to encourage a 2012 NWFZ conference. Unfortunately, Member States could not to agree to an agenda for the conference and it was ultimately abandoned. On 11 December, the General Assembly once again adopted a resolution for the establishment of a nuclear-free-weapon zone in the Middle East. In the resolution, the General Assembly emphasized the need for action based on reciprocity between States, implying a request for increased trust and civil discourse. It also asked for oversight from the IAEA, which would better enable the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. As the international community's center for coordination in the nuclear field, the IAEA would play an important role in both verifying the NWFZ and in supporting transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful uses, such as energy production. Unfortunately, the IAEA has limited standing in the region, as it struggles to engage with uncooperative governments suspicious of its actual mission, its staff and their motives.

Despite the broad consensus of Member States in the region and the international community, there are clearly challenges surrounding the creation of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. Historical geopolitical struggles, exacerbated by fears of nuclear proliferation in the region, continually fuel a state of confrontation. A lack of transparency by multiple states in the region compounds the issues while further diminishing trust amongst the parties. The 2003 conflict in Iraq, its aftermath, and the Arab Spring have further roiled the region, with several changes in government, a fluctuating balance of power in the region and several active proxy wars.

Some States believe that nuclear weapons and the deterrence they bring are vital to their safety, especially if other regional powers already posses or are developing nuclear weapons. At the same time, removing the risk of nuclear weapons in an already volatile region could lead to increased stability and peace in the region. In order to proceed toward an NWFZ, Member States will need to, in effect, restart the dialogue with Member States and intergovernmental organizations in the region. Trust is essential for moving forward with a treaty. IAEA safeguards and confidence-building measures could be of critical assistance in increasing trust. States have previously disagreed about whether the safeguards should be implemented before or after a NWFZ treaty. With high levels of distrust, the General Assembly could work with States in the region to design and implement a confidence-building program that helps reduce tensions. Such an agreement can only succeed if the General Assembly considers what steps would allow

regional actors to disavow the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons. Achieving these foundational steps while minimizing geopolitical tensions in the region is difficult, but the threat of nuclear proliferation demands the effort.

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

- What steps can be taken to improve trust among regional actors and between States in the region and the IAEA?
- Can transparency and regular inspection of nuclear programs improve trust in the region?
- How can the international community ensure that States in the region have safe access to nuclear technology for peaceful use?
- What should the geographical scope of an NWFZ agreement in the Middle East be? What transparency and confidence-building measures should be included in a treaty?

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PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE ACCUMULATION OF CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION STOCKPILES IN SURPLUS

Disarmament—the reduction, limitation or abolition of weapons—has long been a goal for the United Nations. Its approach has grown more comprehensive over time, and includes efforts aimed at both nuclear and conventional disarmament. After the end of the Cold War, with the de-escalation in tensions between the United States and the former Soviet Union, the proliferation of new States, and the existence of enormous stockpiles of conventional weapons, the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW) became paramount as these weapons fueled violent conflicts the world over. Because of their mobility and relative ease of use and maintenance, small arms remain the weapons of choice in many of the world's conflicts, and their proliferation can quickly escalate violence between armed groups (including military forces) and threaten population security. Weapons themselves were long the focus of disarmament, but the ordnance or ammunition is also an important part of the disarmament regime.

Ammunition stockpiles, comprised of bullets for SALW, missiles, rockets, landmines and other explosive devices, pose specific problems distinct from the larger issues surrounding disarmament. For example, when not stored properly, conventional ammunition stockpiles create a significant risk of unplanned explosions and unintentional discharges that endanger military personnel, civilian workers and surrounding communities. Between 2000 and 2009, there were 289 documented explosions, causing 3,486 fatalities and 4,427 significant injuries; the fatalities accounted for approximately 21 percent of the global fatalities due to landmines and unexploded ordnance worldwide. In light of these incidents, the need for UN action on the issue was evident. Furthermore, poorly-guarded and maintained ammunition stockpiles provide ample opportunity for the diversion of ammunition to violent groups and individuals, including gangs, terrorist organizations, criminal syndicates and individual criminals.

After receiving a report from a group of experts, which acknowledged the significant financial and technical challenges of surplus ammunition stockpile management in 2008, the UN organized a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE or Group) on the subject to provide recommendations on possible courses of action. The primary substantive notes of the GGE report were the recognition of a lack of technical guidance regarding stockpile management and an emphasis on the fact that effective stockpile management must be comprehensive—including categorizing ammunition, building accounting systems to identify surplus, establishing procedures to ensure safe handling, enhancing physical security systems and developing testing procedures to assess stability and reliability. The Group recommended the development of appropriate technical guidelines. The General Assembly endorsed the Report in 2008 and encouraged States to implement its recommendations.

Disarmament represents a significant area of parallel lines of effort within the United Nations. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) is responsible for tracking and coordinating disarmament efforts across UN bodies and technical agencies. The General Assembly First Committee is concerned with disarmament and related international security issues and its resolutions on the topic have focused on developing comprehensive,

integrated, and pragmatic approaches to the problem. Previous resolutions also encouraged States to voluntarily assess whether their conventional ammunition stockpiles could be considered in surplus and the risks associated with continuing to store the ammunition or destroy it. States must determine what comprises a surplus, though factors to consider include the country's security situation, the size of the military, and international commitments, such as peacekeeping. The resolution also encouraged international, regional and subregional cooperation to improve ammunition stockpile management and coordination efforts to prevent illicit trafficking in ammunition. The First Committee also urged coordination with the UNODA and the involvement of the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in these matters.

To date, the most significant achievements in the area of conventional weapons ammunition disarmament have been with the establishment of the UN SaferGuard programme in 2011 and the establishment and implementation of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). Currently, there are twelve published guidelines regarding the storage and detonation of surplus ammunition, ranging from risk management to transporting ammunition to the destruction of surplus ammunition. The IATG are meant to assist States in establishing national standards and Standard Operating Procedures by establishing principles for ammunition stockpile management, technical references and scientific data about explosives; they do not define detailed or prescriptive requirements for stockpile management. All Member States have welcomed the guidelines, and governments interested in implementing the guidelines and increasing the security of their stockpiles are encouraged to contact the SaferGuard programme.

Regional and subregional disarmament programs, such as the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) have had some success in helping interested States reduce their surplus ammunition stockpiles through financial and technical assistance and by providing access to equipment such as the Small Arms Ammunition Burning Tanks (SAABT), which would be prohibitively expensive for many nations. Other regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have also established regional guidelines for conventional ammunition stockpile management.

While the Technical Guidelines deal directly with ammunition stockpiles, the broader program of disarmament is of some import as well. The United Nations along with governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector, has developed International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). The ISACS are used by the more than twenty UN organizations that make up the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) whose job it is to coordinate and support implementation efforts on the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, the International Tracing Instrument, and the United Nations Firearms Protocol. To date, issues resulting from surplus ammunition stockpiles have not been addressed directly in these bodies; this is one area in which increased coordination may be both desirable and possible.

Though the IATG and the SaferGuard programme have made significant gains, the crux of the problem of surplus ammunition stockpiles still exists. Ammunition stockpiles are not managed internationally and are not subject to the same scrutiny as weapons stockpiles or the transfer of SALW among armed groups. The management and security of ammunition stockpiles has existed as a secondary concern to other disarmament programs, rather than being integrated into efforts at more general conventional disarmament. While regional and subregional frameworks to address this issue operate in conjunction with frameworks to combat illicit arms trafficking, progress is still hampered by budgetary constraints of states and technical knowledge. Member States may be reluctant to destroy surplus ammunition stockpiles in order to maintain their defense posture and readiness, and they may have difficulty in safely storing and guarding the stockpiles because doing so is expensive and requires significant technical expertise. The primary challenges for the United Nations remain how to encourage the adoption of best practices for ammunition stockpile management, how to build capacity for States that wish to secure and manage their ammunition stockpiles over the full life of the ammunition, and how best to monitor compliance with national, subregional, regional and international standards.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How can the international community encourage the adoption of best practices for ammunition stockpile management, such as those laid out by the IATG?
- How can the United Nations encourage international, regional, and subregional frameworks and organizations to cooperate and coordinate action on the issue of surplus ammunition?
- What further action is needed to tie issues related to surplus conventional ammunition stockpiles to UN action more broadly related to SALW disarmament?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE
ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE

The Second Committee makes recommendations on means to improve the economic development of Member States and maintain the stability of 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 addresses the budgetary issues within the UN System. The Second Committee does not address social issues that affect development; such issues are considered by the Third Committee. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

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

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Science and technology are key drivers of progress and change within the global economic system. The international community is committed to leveraging these tools to promote sustainable development and growth. Developing countries have explored and benefited from green and environmentally sustainable energy programs, advanced and strategic urban development, Internet broadband for an inclusive digital society, and many other technologies. These developments have improved lives and enabled millions to escape poverty. To continue this progress, developing countries need access to and assistance with relevant technologies that may help spur further development. While rapid progress has been achieved in improving access to information and communications technologies at the global level, significant gaps remain between the demand for and access to the ability to use such technologies. Some of the main impediments faced by developing countries in accessing the new technologies include insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, and intellectual property rights.

Social entrepreneurs, States, and various non-profits have capitalized on technology to make real differences. Ushahidi is one such program where an individual with a cell phone can be instrumental in enhancing the availability and accuracy of information that makes governments more transparent, responsive and accountable, and makes markets more efficient. This access has strengthened democracy and economic development, with myriad applications, such as verifying election results across Brazil or tracking teacher absenteeism in Uganda. It has facilitated market efficiency, through mapping biogas market prices and production across six countries in Africa. And, it has helped aid workers in Haiti and Japan reach those affected by natural disasters. In Zambia and other States mobile phones are also being used to fight diseases. Malaria, which affects over 200 million people per year, is an economic handicap that affects States with nearly half the world's population. Health coordinators now receive free cell phones, which they use to send treatment and evaluation reports, allowing them to double the number of patients they are able to see while more rapidly disseminating the latest information on the disease. These success stories are just a few among many, and the United Nations plays a crucial role in supporting the use of science and technology for development. The United Nations has been very active on the topic over the past decades. The seminal 1992 Conference on Environment and Development produced Agenda 21, a program for global sustainable development. Transfers of environmentally sound technologies were key to implementation. Intended to minimize waste and energy consumption, Agenda 21 envisioned that developing countries could leverage technology outside of patent protection, using either technologies in the public domain or bought from the private sector to achieve those goals and protect the environment. States were to increase funding agreements and technology transfers, but it was not until 2002 that funding, including technology transfers, recovered from aid cuts undertaken through the 1990s. Funding grew modestly over the next decade, and technology is a vital multiplier to help those aid dollars go further.

The international community has extensively followed up on the work done in Rio in 1992. The 2002 and 2005 World Summits on Sustainable Development (WSSD) supported initiatives for research and development through voluntary partnerships between the public and private sectors to address the special needs of developing countries in the areas of health, agriculture, conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and environmental management, energy, forestry, and the impact of climate change. The World Summit Outcome document encourages the promotion of greater efforts to develop renewable sources of energy, such as solar, wind and geothermal.

The 2004 Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building (BSP) established guidelines for increasing technology support at the national, regional and global levels. The plan calls for the strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at both regional and national levels; capacity-building programmes to support the implementation of environmental conventions and other legal instruments, training and enhancement of existing centres of excellence; and exchanges of best practices and lessons learned. The General Assembly's most recent work on the topic has recognized the important role of science and technology in sustainable development and achieving many of the targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals. Working with ECOSOC's Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the General Assembly is attempting to increase capacity building efforts, reform State's development policies to capitalize on science and technology, and prioritize research in fields especially relevant to developing countries, like agriculture, communication technologies and environmental management.

Technology transfers are not the answer in and of themselves. Sustainable development requires access to technology but also the investments in infrastructure and education needed to capitalize on the tools. Intellectual property rights have been strengthened under many bi- and multi-lateral trade agreements, limiting the ability of States to make use of many technologies in a cost-effective manner. The Second Committee must consider how sharing technology, especially that which the receiving State will be able to sustain the use of, can be

better integrated as an alternative of or companion to foreign aid. Entrepreneurs around the world are continuing to leverage existing technologies and create new technologies that support international development. Through the Second Committee, the international community must promote these successes and encourage the structural reforms that allow them: education, Internet connectivity and infrastructure.

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

- How can the international community promote technology transfers while protecting intellectual property rights?
- How effective has the Bali Strategic Plan been, and what steps could be taken to further its implementation?
- How can the United Nations encourage new areas of technological and scientific progress that might support international development?
- How can current technology transfers be better organized to ensure their maximum benefit?

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE WORLD FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT

The year 2008 marked the beginning of the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. For years, banks lent money to borrowers who would prove to be unable to pay them back. When the housing bubble in the United States began to deflate, a serious of events were triggered, creating a crisis of confidence in financial markets and, because of complex financial instruments tied to the sub-prime loans, the contagion of the crisis spread rapidly through the world's financial sectors. This ripple triggered another round of problems, as other structural issues came to the forefront after the support of the global financial system for lending, particularly for mortgages, dried up. While the crisis began in the world's major financial centers, it quickly swept across the globe, affecting all Member States. Least developing countries were strongly affected. In all, it is estimated that $14.5 trillion in wealth and value was lost as a result of the crisis.

To limit the scope and depth of the damage, Member States, central banks and international organizations came together to forge a series of reforms, bail-outs and alternative lending schemes. Large banks, reeling from losses tied to both bad loans and complex investments meant to limit risk, were especially unstable. The repercussions of the crisis undermined faith in some government debt, forcing States to undertake unique measures to maintain the stability of theirs and other's finances. Unfortunately, some States, small businesses and poorer populations did not have access to the same financial and monetary tools available to the world's largest and strongest economies. While some States have rebounded, many of the world's poorest remain worse off as a result of the crisis. The crisis prompted States to reduce foreign aid funding, and foreign aid contracted sharply in 2011. Least developed countries suffer a disproportionate impact from these funding cuts, and these cuts continue to hamper efforts to achieve MDG targets. The World Bank estimates that over 50 million people were driven into extreme poverty during the crisis, with the number of undernourished and hungry reaching a historic high of over one billion people. This crisis was a sharp reversal for the international community's fight against poverty, and it required an international response.

In June 2009, world leaders met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. The goal of the conference was to identify emergency and long-term responses to alleviate the impact of the crisis and the transformation of financial and economic systems. Member States and representatives from various United Nations' organizations including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) attended the Conference, as well as representatives from civil society organizations and the private sector. Leaders were tasked with finding appropriate solutions that were commensurate with the depth and scale of the crisis and appropriate for the unique situations of each Member State. Specifically, the Conference focused on the impact of the crisis on employment, trade, investment and development, including the Millennium Development Goals; appropriate actions and measures to be taken to mitigate the impact of the crisis on development; the role of the United Nations and Member States in the discussion surrounding financial and economic reforms; and the contributions of United Nations Development Systems in response to the crisis.

The Conference's report to the UN examined the damage of the crisis as well as the opportunities it created. Years of progress toward many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were wiped out, global trade contracted sharply and unemployment rose dramatically. At the same time, the participants saw the crisis as a chance to redouble efforts toward a fair, globalized economic system. By focusing the responses toward those least able to help themselves, the world's economic powers could correct imbalances in development and provide for sustainable development paths. No longer just a crisis, the financial and economic collapse could become an opportunity. Prompt access to short-term credit and liquidity coupled with long-term development financing, investments in green technology and a rejection of protectionism could transform the global economy and its distribution of wealth and inequality. Front-loading already agreed upon loans and limiting conditions for disbursement would enable immediate progress on these points.

Subsequently, the United Nations established the ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. In its first report to the General Assembly in 2010, the working group found that while millions more than initially estimated were pushed into poverty, the pace of recovery in emerging economies was surpassing developed States. Unfortunately, the aftermath of the crisis continues to hamper growth. The sovereign debt crisis in Europe continues to harm trade and financial markets, as well as affect the poor, the unemployed and migrant workers.

As the aftershocks of the economic meltdown pass and growth returns, the international community has to address uneven economic development and the international regulatory system. The Second Committee must consider how foreign aid flows can be better managed to limit unstable and volatile funding flows and to ensure that macroeconomic crises do not have the same impact. To better regulate the global financial system, the international community adopted voluntary standards under Basel III in 2011. Designed to enhance capital, liquidity and leverage ratio requirements for banks and financial institutions, they are being implemented in stages between 2011 and 2019. Designed to directly address the causes of the global financial crisis, Basel III has faced severe opposition from banks and financial institutions. The Second Committee must consider how the ad-hoc and regional approach so far taken to address financial regulation can be better managed and identify strategies for a more inclusive and global regulatory response. The IMF has been a key player during the crisis, providing key loans to support States' finances, but the loans have come with unpopular conditions. The Second Committee should review how loans are made available and ensure that the long-term goals of macroeconomic stability and growth are maintained. As demonstrated during the 2008-2009 crisis, the global financial markets have an impact not only on developed countries, but a profound effect on the world's poorest – potentially threatening life and well-being. Balancing structural reforms with growth and development has proven difficult, but the international community must find a way to succeed at this crucial task.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- What steps can the international community take to enhance global regulatory effectiveness and financial transparency?
- How can the international community revise the system of foreign aid to improve stability of funding levels?
- How can the international community prevent the next global financial crisis?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE
SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN & CULTURAL

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE

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

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

TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

Torture is strictly defined by the United Nations as the intentional infliction of physical or emotional distress by a public official for the purposes of gathering information, compelling a confession, or intimidation or coercion. It is important to note that this definition only covers actions by public officials or people acting in an official state-sponsored capacity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights expressly states that, "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment." Furthermore, the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment explicitly prohibits States Parties from allowing acts of torture to occur within their borders. Even with these protections in place, the UN still receives numerous allegations of torture each year. These allegations 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 in 1948. The General Assembly passed its first resolution on the issue in 1973, outlining the continuing global problems concerning torture and the need for all nations to join and uphold existing international accords. In 1984, the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was adopted by the General Assembly. Currently, there are 153 States Parties to the Convention.

These agreements are 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 by its States Parties. States are required to submit regular reports to the Committee; the Committee also has the power to investigate claims of violations, initiate inquiries and address inter-state complaints. The Committee also meets regularly to discuss current themes and issues regarding torture concerns and publishes "general comments" on interpretations of the Convention.

In 2002, the General Assembly passed the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which 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, an appointment renewed by the UN Human Rights Council. 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 Human Rights Council and General Assembly outlining what steps States should take to eradicate the practice of torture within their borders. The Special Rapporteur also conducts site visits to Member States to examine their compliance with the Convention.

Despite the legal and political responsibilities to prevent torture, cases of torture have been regularly reported in both developed and developing countries over the last decade. In the first half of 2013 alone, Human Rights Watch reported cases of torture or alleged cases of torture in two dozen countries. Ethnic and regional conflict, civil war, and terrorist activity all elevate the risk of torture. The continued threat of terrorism worldwide has pushed many countries to engage in extrajudicial detention of suspected terrorists and in many cases created an environment conducive to torture. These extrajudicial detentions create an environment of legal impunity. Over the past two years, countries within the Middle East and North Africa have faced increased scrutiny over allegations of torture as they seek to quell political unrest. However, many of the countries involved argue that their actions are well within their rights and within international protocols. Countries in transition also face allegations of torture, as they seek to build new accountability structures.

While it is unlikely that the General Assembly will be able to fully address the conditions that allow for torture to take place, the UN has numerous opportunities to improve monitoring, support the creation of judicial remedies for torture and to improve human rights training for security personnel. For many States, torture is actively discouraged by national policy, but ineffective legal remedies and impunity for State officials allow torture to continue. The Third Committee is also uniquely suited to consider how supporting other human rights—such as freedom of speech and association—can also help to combat torture. Finally, many States with alleged cases of torture have refused to allow the Special Rapporteur to conduct site visits in their country or have refused the Special Rapporteur permission to interview alleged torture victims. Encouraging States to allow visits from the Special Rapporteur could improve monitoring and accountability, particularly in States with strong existing judicial remedies for torture.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How can States that have not ratified the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel or Degrading Treatment or Punishment be convinced to do so?

- What steps can the UN take to encourage States to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other monitoring mechanisms?
- How is the UN supporting judicial systems in prosecuting torture cases, and what additional actions are necessary to prevent impunity for torture?
- What steps can the UN take to prevent torture in countries in transition?

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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Since its founding, the United Nations has regarded children as deserving special protections. Unable to defend and provide for themselves, children are dependent on their family and the State for education, food, protection, health care and many other vital services. Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is an integral component of protecting their rights to survival, growth and development. Education is a basic human right, vital to the development and well-being of individuals and societies as a whole. Unfortunately, only 63 percent of the secondary school aged population globally is enrolled, and over 71 million children of secondary school age are not in school. Education is critically important to helping adolescents develop the skills they will need as adults in the work force and in the community. Girls are less likely than boys to attend and complete secondary school – even though educated girls earn more income for their families and have healthier, better-educated children. In the least developed countries, a quarter of young men and a third of young women are illiterate. Decades after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, children especially continue to suffer the abuse of many of their most basic rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1990, recognizes that children have special rights in addition to those presented in the Declaration of Human Rights and other documents. The Convention became the first legally binding international treaty to denote specific civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights for children. The treaty details these rights in 54 articles and is expanded upon in three Optional Protocols. Formally adopted by 193 States, the Convention is currently the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in history. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has been tasked with monitoring the progress of the Convention.

The Convention has been built upon as an instrument in transforming the way children are viewed and treated worldwide. Having established that children have distinct and unique rights, it became possible for the international community to determine the responsibility of States to uphold, protect and expand those rights. The UN established a Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children in 1990 and a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in 1996. The Security Council strengthened the Office of the Special Representative in 2005 by establishing a monitoring and reporting mechanism specifically for six grave violations, which include attacking schools, recruiting child soldiers and killing or maiming children. Going further in 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the first two optional protocols, specifically addressing the exploitation of children in sex trafficking and armed conflicts. The protocols use a multifaceted approach to tackle child exploitation by reducing demand for children and increasing awareness of these problems. By strengthening the international legal framework, the Convention continues to play a major role in creating local and global policies and programs that support the advancement of children. As a result of Member States' commitments to the Convention, more children are surviving, attending school and fewer are forced into labor or armed conflict. Over the last decade, secondary school completion has risen from 60 percent in 2000 to over 71 percent in 2011. Similarly, child mortality has gone from from 73 per 1000 live births in 2000 to 51.4 per 1000 live births in 2011.

Unfortunately, these documents and norms have not benefited every child. In many places, children continue to fall victim to disease, are enlisted into militaries and paramilitary forces, recruited into criminal gangs and are trafficked. Verification and supervision of States' respect for their international obligations to protect children remains weak, with the Special Rapporteur and Special Representative's work limited by state cooperation. However, in 2011 the General Assembly opened the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communication procedure (OPIC). OPIC would allow the Committee on the Rights of the Child to address accusations raised by private parties—including individual children—of violations of a party's responsibilities and obligations under the CRC or the two other

optional protocols. The Protocol will enter into force once ten States have ratified it. Pushing Member States to ratify OPIC will be an issue for the Third Committee. The Protocol improves accountability for Member States' obligations under the Convention.

There are several other issues that the Third Committee will also need to address at its upcoming session. The ongoing economic crisis has continued to force governments to reduce spending, particularly on social services. Social service spending cuts tend to disproportionately affect children, who are significant consumers of health and education services. Member States will need to consider how the international community can ensure that the rights of children are protected in this more austere budget environment. As the General Assembly prepares to set the post-2015 development agenda, the Third Committee may also want to evaluate what issues pose the greatest threat to the well-being of children. Unprecedented progress has been made in reducing poverty and bringing more children to school, in reducing child mortality and providing safe water to drink. The daunting task ahead is to extend these gains, which have yet to reach everyone. Stark disparities that remain or are even widening put the poorest communities in many countries consistently at a disadvantage.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- What are the most pressing threats to the welfare of children?
- What steps can the United Nations take to strengthen Member States' protection of children?
- How has the world financial and economic crisis affected Member States' protection of children?
- How effective are the Optional Protocols in protecting children from being trafficked or used in armed conflicts? What additional steps can the international community take to prevent trafficking in children?

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOURTH COMMITTEE
SPECIAL POLITICAL & DECOLONIZATION

PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOURTH COMMITTEE

The Fourth Committee is charged with addressing a variety of political and peacekeeping issues. Its political work covers aspects of decolonization, mine action, and Palestinian refugee issues. Its recommendations should address political aspects of an issue and not focus on the economic, social, or development aspects of the topic. For example, while the Fourth Committee may discuss the political problems of the Syrian Golan, it cannot discuss the details of how to promote development in the area, a task better suited for the Second Committee.

The Fourth Committee is also charged with the coordination and operational aspects of UN peacekeeping missions and the oversight of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. This is an important distinction from the Security Council, which develops peacekeeping missions and objectives. For more information concerning the purview of the UN's General Assembly as a whole, see page 25.

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

PROMOTING THE PEACEFUL USE OF OUTER SPACE

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the very first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1, into outer space. The ability to place objects in orbit around the earth, while a terrific milestone in human development, also expanded the scope of man's existential threat by opening a whole new arena to competition from a bitterly divided international community. By the end of 1958, driven primarily by the concern that Cold War rivalries would spill over into this new arena, the General Assembly created an ad hoc Committee designed to ensure that outer space was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The work of the UN has spurred cooperation and information sharing amongst the international community, furthering scientific discovery, weather monitoring and meteorology, and disaster preparedness and response. Today however, the growing presence of commercial and private enterprise and the expansive deployment of non-weaponized military hardware into space could destabilize the regime providing for the so-far peaceful use of space.

In 1959, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) as a permanent body and expanded its work. In addition to non-proliferation efforts, the COPUOS was charged with promoting productive international cooperation on space-based projects. COPUOS also established that benefits from outer space exploration should benefit States regardless of the stage of their economic or scientific development. Mapping and predicting global weather patterns via satellite offers tangible benefits to all countries, and COPUOS consequently cooperates with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Most recently, the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS has been charged with developing consensus on a legal definition of outer space and continues to work with Member States on this challenging issue. As the number of UN agencies involved in outer space issues expanded, the UN created the UN Coordination of Space Activities (UNCOSA) program, which coordinates the efforts of more than 25 organs and specialized agencies of the UN.

In 1963, the General Assembly called for the total prohibition of the placement of nuclear weapons platforms (or any other weapon of mass destruction) into space or upon any celestial object to further promote the goal of maintaining outer space as a weapons-free zone. Moreover, the General Assembly adopted the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (the "Outer Space Treaty") in 1966, explicitly prohibiting the placement of such weapons in outer space and the establishment of military bases and the conduct of military activities on celestial bodies. The Treaty has been interpreted to prevent territorial claims of sovereignty in outer space or on celestial bodies. With 102 parties and 27 other signatories, the Outer Space Treaty and four subsequent treaties expanding upon provisions of the Outer Space Treaty are widely considered the foundation of international law concerning outer space.

Additionally, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has led efforts to track and coordinate the placement and orbit of objects launched into outer space for both commercial and public purposes, such as communications satellites. The UN Secretariat has maintained a registry of launches since 1962. Currently, such registration is conducted pursuant to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (the Registration Convention). Under the Registration Convention, launch States (States from whose territory a space object is launched and that has taken responsibility for the launch) report any launches conducted under their jurisdiction to UNOOSA, which in turn maintains a record of all registered space objects in orbit.

At its most recent meeting, the Fourth Committee focused on two major themes. The first was the usage of extant technology for disaster detection and response. Being able to share high-quality imagery from around the globe in real-time conditions is a significant boon to first responders, while weather system detection allows for more time to prepare and even evacuate ahead of life-threatening weather events. Both can save lives, especially in less-developed nations. The second topic of discussion was the mitigation of space debris. Debris poses a threat to both spacecraft as well as to those on land via unexpected re-entry. This issue has been on the agenda since 1994, and the Committee has developed guidelines to reduce the accumulation of space debris. These guidelines include a focus on reducing or eliminating ejected waste material during a mission, end-of-life planning for decommissioned objects, and improving collision avoidance systems. All of these initiatives are voluntary measures, though they do carry strong recommendations.

In spite of these successes, the United Nations and the broader international community face many challenges to preserving outer space as a peaceful sphere for the benefit of all mankind. While outer space remains free of any known conventional offensive weapons, communications, surveillance and intelligence collected from satellites have all changed modern armed conflict. These technologies are not explicitly prohibited by convention or treaty, but the continuing advancement of space-deployable military hardware will almost certainly be an area of future contention.

Additionally, there is a great deal of concern surrounding the registration of space objects, which entails sharing some information about technologies used to develop them. Many developed countries are hesitant to be completely transparent about their technologies, because space is still a highly competitive field. Consequently, they are concerned about intellectual property rights. Protecting these rights for those States that disclose the technology, developed under their space programs, will be essential for increased cooperation in registering space objects.

Finally, with the advent of the use of private spacecraft in national space programs and increasing commercial interests in the bounty of natural resources in outer space, private actors are beginning to add a new dimension to the complex relationship between outer space and humankind. In the not-too-distant future, the international community will be required to deal with the question of private property rights in outer space. How we deal with these challenges will shape the future of humankind in very real and existential ways. Human aspirations have already reached beyond the sky's limit, yet the heights of what we may achieve together remain uncharted.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- How can the concerns of nations regarding intelligence-gathering imagery be balanced against benefits of high-resolution imaging for weather monitoring and disaster detection/response?
- How should commercial exploration and use of space be regulated?
- Should international organizations offer incentives to private entities to engage in research and exploration of outer space?

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EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Whether from the generation of electricity, medical devices and diagnostics, nuclear weapons or natural background radiation, we are all exposed to varying degrees of radiation over our lives. The harmful effects of radiation were not fully understood at the dawn of the Nuclear Age in 1945. As society grew to understand the harmful effects of radiation exposure, including nausea, burns, increased risks of cancers and death, the international community agreed that coordinated action was necessary to better understand the effects of atomic radiation and to collect information about exposures of civilian populations to atomic radiation.

In 1955, the UN General Assembly established the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) to standardize collection of data on exposure and disseminate information about its effects. UNSCEAR reports to the General Assembly Fourth Committee. In 1957, the United Nations created the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to oversee safeguards and confidence-building measures and to implement verification measures as States pursue nuclear technologies. Together these bodies provide knowledge and assistance to States, most recently highlighted in the technical and scientific assistance rendered during and in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

Since its creation, UNSCEAR has played a significant role in shaping the public debate on the effects of atomic radiation. Shortly after its inception, the Committee published two landmark reports that served as the scientific basis for the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty. In the decades that followed, UNSCEAR emerged as the de facto standard-setting authority on safe levels of radiation and the effects of ionizing radiation on people and the environment. This complements the IAEA's work, which focuses on how nuclear technology is applied for secure, peaceful and safe uses. For example, the IAEA studies the engineering processes and safeguards that worked or failed, updating best practices and international standards accordingly.

On 26 April 1986, a series of explosions destroyed the Chernobyl nuclear power plant located in present-day Ukraine. After the accident

authorities evacuated approximately 115,000 people in the immediate area surrounding the plant, and later another 220,000 people in Belarus, the present-day Russian Federation and Ukraine. UNSCEAR has followed sample groups from the exposed population for evidence of the effects of their potential exposure. Their studies after the Chernobyl disaster estimated that about thirty workers died as a result of acute radiation exposure and six thousand cases of thyroid cancer have been linked to exposure from Chernobyl. With an estimated direct and indirect cost of over $200 billion U.S. dollars, the disaster crippled an entire region with economic, health and environmental damages that continue to this day.

Over the past two years the subject of the effects and costs of atomic radiation have once again come to the forefront following the 9.0 magnitude earthquake off the eastern coast of Japan on 11 March 2011. In the aftermath of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami, a disaster unfolded as the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant experienced a series of failures. UNSCEAR mobilized to assist the Japanese scientific and medical communities to address the repercussions of the meltdown at Fukushima, lending its expertise and knowledge. A preliminary study by UNSCEAR found that the general public was largely protected due in large part to prompt evacuation orders. Scientists hope that this report will alleviate some of the fear of widespread nuclear fallout. UNSCEAR expects to provide a final report to the Fourth Committee this year. The international community should use the report as a point of reflection, examining the costs of radiation exposure and possibility of new safeguards. The general public's faith in nuclear energy has been shaken, with many States vowing to abandon the technology altogether. A sudden and dramatic shift in the method of energy generation in the aftermath of this single disaster has serious implications, especially for climate change.

Ahead of the General Assembly, UNSCEAR will issue two reports: one providing its final findings from Fukushima and a second detailing the unique risks to children from atomic radiation. The Fourth Committee is expected to consider the information provided by UNSCEAR and determine if action is required. Most imminently, UNSCEAR must review and address the findings of the final report on Fukushima. With an estimated cost of over $250 billion, this disaster has dire ramifications far beyond the immediate and future health effects.

There also are lingering questions about the risks unique to children from atomic radiation as well as the scope and effects of naturally occurring sources of radiation. While less publicized than Fukushima, Member States will also be expected to evaluate the report provided by UNSCEAR and determine if any actions are required. With a sudden renewal of focus on the question of the effects of atomic radiation, the international community must prioritize its concerns, increase cooperation and appropriate resources accordingly. An international debate and standardization of nuclear liability laws could renew faith in the safety of nuclear power if people believe that the threat of damages would spur companies to maintain the highest safety standards.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include the following:
- What steps should the international community take in the wake of events at the Fukushima reactor?
- What more can the international community do to limit the risks of atomic radiation? How can this risk be balanced against other issues, like the need for energy resources?
- Who is financially responsible for assisting those harmed by the effects of atomic radiation?
- Are additional measures necessary to protect children from the effects of atomic radiation?

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