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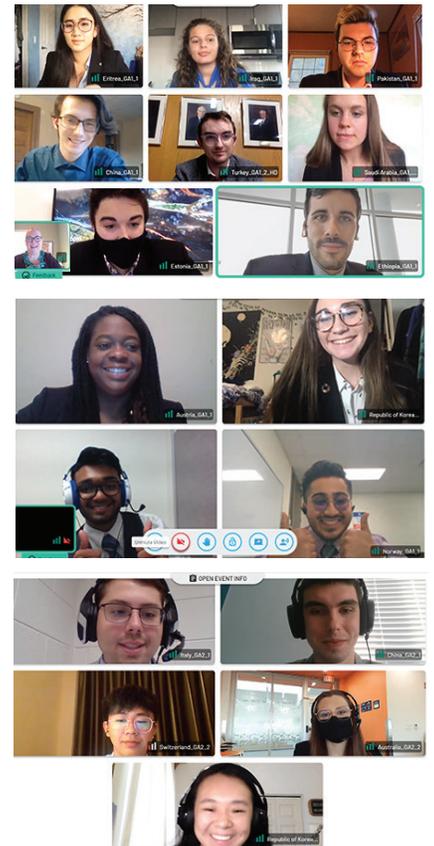
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General Assembly First Committee Background Guide 2021

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Joli McSherry, Assistant Director; Zachary Parker, Director-IS



NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2021 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly First Committee (GA1). This year's staff is: Director Tobias Dietrich and Assistant Director Joli McSherry. Tobi graduated with a master's degree in Nanoscience from the University of Regensburg and has been involved with NMUN for several years. Joli holds a master's degree in Global Communication with a concentration in Public Diplomacy from The George Washington University and works at a strategic communications firm in Washington, D.C.

The topics under discussion for GA1 are:

- I. Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security
- II. Strengthening and Developing the Systems of Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation Treaties and Agreements

The General Assembly First Committee is responsible to address issues of disarmament, promotion of peace, and international security. As one of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, the First Committee focuses on guidance for disarmament as well as cooperative agreements for international peace and security. The First Committee works closely with other UN entities including the United Nations Disarmament Commission on issues related to armament regulation and disarmament initiatives.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to conduct additional research, explore your Member State's policies in-depth, and examine the policies of other Member States to improve your ability to negotiate and reach consensus. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their research to draft and submit a [position paper](#). Guidelines are available in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

The [NMUN website](#) has many additional resources, including two that are essential both in preparation for the conference and as a resource during the conference. They are:

1. The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not discuss the topics or agenda with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretary-General Chris Duggan at usgchris.dc@nmun.org or Secretary-General Courtney Indart at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,
Tobias Dietrich, Director
Joli McSherry, Assistant Director



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Committee Overview

Introduction

With universal membership, the General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body of the United Nations (UN) and one of the six principal organs established by the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).¹ The work of the General Assembly is undertaken in subsidiary committees, each of which debate and adopt draft resolutions on their particular topics and allocated agenda items.² The General Assembly First Committee considers matters related to disarmament and international peace and security as outlined in the *Charter of the United Nations*.³ Along with nuclear disarmament, the First Committee discusses issues related to international peace and security.⁴ Agenda items addressing other types of weapons, disarmament in outer space, and the role of science and technology in disarmament and international security are some of the First Committee's areas of work.⁵ Additionally, agenda items such as state behavior in cyberspace, developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and the illicit trade and curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons (SALW) are considered.⁶

After the 74th session of the General Assembly was delayed over concerns regarding travel restrictions impacting delegations attending; the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted other proceedings and procedural work of the committee.⁷ Since the beginning of the pandemic, the General Assembly adapted its workflow by using a silent procedure, adopted under General Assembly decision 75/544, to consider decisions and draft resolutions.⁸ Among other events, the Seventh Biennial meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects (PoA SALW) and the scheduled session of the Disarmament Commission were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹ Two resolutions of the General Assembly have addressed the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted the need for international cooperation to mitigate and defeat the pandemic.¹⁰

Governance, Structure, and Membership

The General Assembly is comprised of all 193 UN Member States.¹¹ Observer status can be granted to intergovernmental organizations and states without full UN membership.¹² During the 75th session of the General Assembly, 107 intergovernmental organizations, and two non-Member States, the Holy See and the State of Palestine, were granted observer status.¹³ In the General Assembly, each Member State has one equal vote.¹⁴ Decisions on serious matters require a two-thirds majority vote, which include the

¹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

² Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 68.

³ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter IV, Article 11.

⁴ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 4-5.

⁵ UN General Assembly, *List of Draft Proposals for the 75th Session (as of 11 Nov 2020)*, 2020.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Reaching Critical Will, *First Committee Briefing Book / 2020*, 2020, p. 4.

⁸ UN Department of Global Communications (14 May 2020). *Amid COVID-19 Pandemic, General Assembly, in Silence Procedure, Adopts 7 Resolutions, 13 Decisions between 27 March and 14 May.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ UN, Department of Global Communications (14 May 2020). *Amid COVID-19 Pandemic, General Assembly, in Silence Procedure, Adopts 7 Resolutions, 13 Decisions between 27 March and 14 May*; UN General Assembly, *Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) (A/RES/74/27)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 (A/RES/74/274)*, 2020.

¹¹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. IV.

¹² UN Department of Global Communications, *About Permanent Observers*; UN Department of Global Communications, *Non-Member States.*

¹³ UN General Assembly, *List of non-Member States, Entities and Organizations Having Received a Standing Invitation to Participate as Observers in the Sessions and Work of the General Assembly: Note by the Secretariat (A/INF/75/3*)*, 2020.

¹⁴ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter IV, Article 18.

maintenance of international peace and security, budgetary questions, as well as the admission, suspension, and expulsion of Member States.¹⁵ All other matters require a simple majority, such as the General Assembly resolution 74/66 on “Strengthening and Developing the System of Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Treaties and Agreements.”¹⁶ A majority of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are adopted by consensus without a recorded vote.¹⁷ In 2020, around 85% of resolutions were adopted without a vote, illustrating the consensus-based nature of the body.¹⁸ Resolutions from the First Committee are non-binding, meaning it is up to individual Member States to implement, and serve as international policies and norms.¹⁹

Each session of the First Committee has a Bureau comprised of one Chairperson, three Vice-Chairs, and one Rapporteur. For its 75th session, Augustin Santos Maraver from Spain served as the Chairperson; Ariel Penaranda from the Philippines, Corrina-Cristina Lefter from Romania, and Bassem Hassan from Egypt as Vice-Chairs; and Maria del Rosario Estrada Giron from Guatemala as Rapporteur.²⁰ The First Committee receives substantive and organizational support from three entities: the General Committee, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM).²¹ The General Committee’s main duty is to determine the agenda of the General Assembly Plenary and the six main committees as well as make recommendations on organizational issues.²² The President of the General Assembly is selected based on geographic rotation and elected by the General Assembly Plenary.²³ Volkan Bozkır of Turkey was elected as President for the 75th session of the General Assembly on 17 June 2020.²⁴

Within the Secretariat, UNODA provides “objective, impartial and up-to-date information on multilateral disarmament issues,” substantive and organizational support, and promotes the implementation of measures for a general and complete disarmament, especially in post-conflict settings.²⁵ While nuclear weapons remain a primary work area, disarmament and non-proliferation of conventional weapons also are addressed by UNODA.²⁶ It further encourages norm-setting across the General Assembly, Conference of Disarmament (CD), and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).²⁷ The First Committee works in close cooperation with the CD and UNDC.²⁸ The CD is an independent entity, made up of 65 Member States, with a crucial role in addressing disarmament issues, as it is the only recognized “multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.”²⁹ Unlike the CD, UNDC is a subsidiary organ of the First Committee and is composed of all 193 Member States.³⁰ It is mandated to provide recommendations on disarmament issues to the First Committee and to follow-up on the implementation of decisions.³¹ Both CD and UNDC report at least annually, though sometimes more frequently, to the First Committee.³² Several other disarmament-related entities and organizations also report to the General Assembly through the First Committee, such as the regional centers on disarmament and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.³³

¹⁵ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 54.

¹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening and Developing the System of Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Treaties and Agreements (A/RES/74/66)*, 2019.

¹⁷ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 68.

¹⁸ UN Digital Library, *Voting Records*.

¹⁹ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 52.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Bureau of the 75th Session*.

²¹ UN General Assembly, *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*.

²² Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 17-18.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Election of the 75th President of the General Assembly*, 2020.

²⁵ UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, *About Us*; UN General Assembly, *General and Complete Disarmament (A/RES/1378 (XIV))*.

²⁶ UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, *About Us*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*.

²⁹ UNODA, *Conference on Disarmament*.

³⁰ UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, *United Nations Disarmament Commission*.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² UN General Assembly, *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*.

³³ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 63.

In addition, the General Assembly and its First Committee can make recommendations to Member States and the Security Council regarding cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, and can point out situations to the Security Council endangering peace and security.³⁴ Further, it discusses questions of international peace and security brought forward by the Security Council.³⁵ Civil society organizations have an important relationship with the General Assembly First Committee, as they provide alternative research and perspectives on disarmament issues.³⁶

Mandate, Function, and Powers

Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations states that the General Assembly may consider matters relating to international peace and security, including disarmament.³⁷ Thus, Article 11 is the basis for the First Committee's mandate.³⁸ The First Committee is mandated to act as a forum for dialogue and cooperation to provide recommendations and norms to guide the international community when addressing disarmament issues and other threats to international peace and security.³⁹ Therefore, it focuses on general policy recommendations, but does not carry out operative tasks; the implementation of General Assembly decisions is conducted by Member States, the UN Secretariat, and its subsidiary bodies.⁴⁰ In addition, the General Assembly and its subsidiary committees are not permitted to make decisions on current situations and conflicts under consideration by the Security Council.⁴¹

Currently, disarmament is organized into seven clusters: nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, disarmament aspects in outer space, conventional weapons, regional disarmament and security, the disarmament machinery, and other disarmament measures and security.⁴² This includes addressing thematic areas like information and telecommunications, and technology in the context of international peace and security during sessions, including the 75th session.⁴³ The First Committee adopted a resolution on "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament" in 2020.⁴⁴

Matters under consideration by the First Committee include disarmament and international security in the scope of the Charter, but also the development of norms and principles in disarmament and arms control, measures for increased stability with low-level SALW armament, and the promotion of cooperation in international peace and security.⁴⁵ The First Committee also addresses efforts in regard to the ongoing reform agenda of the General Assembly.⁴⁶ The aim is to arrange the agenda items so that organizational aspects and workflows in the UN system are improved, as part of ongoing discussion on UN reform.⁴⁷ Guiding its work is the General Assembly resolution on the "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly" from 1994.⁴⁸

The customary workflow for each item of the First Committee consists of a General Debate.⁴⁹ The debate is followed by an interactive dialogue between experts, UN organizations, and Member States assisting

³⁴ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter IV, Article 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017.

³⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter IV, Article 11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Nuclear Threat Initiative, *United Nations First Committee*, 2019.

⁴⁰ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 52.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-63.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *List of Draft Proposals for the 75th Session (as of 11 Nov 2020)*, 2020.

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Peace and Security (A/C.1/75/L.33)*, 2020.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*.

⁴⁶ UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly*.

⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, *Management Reform*; UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/C.1/75/INF/4)*, 2020.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/C.1/75/INF/4)*, 2020.

⁴⁹ Switzerland, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 69-71.

by submitting reports and answering questions.⁵⁰ An example of such an expert is the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) or the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.⁵¹ Based on the input given by experts and other UN entities, draft resolutions are developed and later voted upon; the First Committee adopts on average 50 to 70 resolutions and decisions per session.⁵² Once adopted, they are presented to the General Assembly Plenary.⁵³

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

Prior to the start of the 75th session, the Secretary-General, CD, and UNDC submitted reports and recommendations to the First Committee which aided in drafting of the preliminary agenda for the session.⁵⁴ The recent agenda of the General Assembly First Committee included topics on the reduction of military budgets, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, general and complete disarmament, strengthening security efforts in the Mediterranean, and the role of science and technology in security and disarmament amongst others.⁵⁵ At the conclusion of the 75th session, the First Committee had adopted 72 drafts.⁵⁶

While all thematic priorities were discussed during the 75th session, the General Assembly's continued to have nuclear weapons at the forefront of many of its resolutions, including that of resolution 74/L.2 on "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East", resolution 75/L.5 on the "Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons", and resolution 75/L.36 on the "Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapon."⁵⁷ The report of the CD was also adopted, however, this report did not provide much substantive action, due to their inability to commence "it's substantive work by means of negotiation or agree to a programme of work."⁵⁸ In March 2021, a decision was made to postpone the 2021 session to a later date, which has not yet been set.⁵⁹

Additionally, the General Assembly has had to adjust to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁰ For example, the President of the General Assembly submitted a draft decision in May 2020 regarding election procedures by secret ballot during the June 2020 elections, and a silence procedure was introduced for the General Assembly to continue being able to adopt draft resolutions during the pandemic.⁶¹ This means that if all Member States stay silent in regards to a resolution for 72 hours, the resolution is automatically adopted.⁶² The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, scheduled for June 2020, was also postponed until August 2021.⁶³ In addition, the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of information and communication technologies while at the same time cybercrime against

⁵⁰ Ibid, pp. 69-71.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 70.

⁵² Ibid, p. 70.

⁵³ Ibid p. 68.

⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *Status of Documentation for the First Committee (A/C.1/75/INF/1)*, 2020.

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items to the First Committee (A/C.1/75/1)*, 2020.

⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *List of Draft Proposals for the 75th Session (as of 11 Nov 2020)*, 2020.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp.1-6.

⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/C.1/75/L.51)*, 2020.

⁵⁹ UN General Assembly, *Disarmament Commission (A/75/L.71)*, 2021.

⁶⁰ UN Department of Global Communications (14 May 2020). *Amid COVID-19 Pandemic, General Assembly, in Silence Procedure, Adopts 7 Resolutions, 13 Decisions between 27 March and 14 May*.

⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Procedure for holding elections by secret ballot without a plenary meeting during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (A/74/L.67)*, 2020; UN Department of Global Communications (14 May 2020). *Amid COVID-19 Pandemic, General Assembly, in Silence Procedure, Adopts 7 Resolutions, 13 Decisions between 27 March and 14 May*.

⁶² UN Department of Global Communications (14 May 2020). *Amid COVID-19 Pandemic, General Assembly, in Silence Procedure, Adopts 7 Resolutions, 13 Decisions between 27 March and 14 May*

⁶³ Reaching Critical Will, *2021 NPT Review Conference, 2021; Reaching Critical Will, First Committee Briefing Book / 2020*, 2020, p. 35.

individuals and critical infrastructure has increased.⁶⁴ The 76th session of the General Assembly First Committee is scheduled for September to November 2021.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Since the establishment of the UN, the First Committee has acted as a global forum to foster dialogue and cooperation to achieve disarmament.⁶⁶ The issues of regional nuclear disarmament in the Middle East, advancing responsible state behavior in cyberspace, and addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects are areas in which the First Committee acts as a universal forum promoting cooperation between Member States and providing recommendations to the entire UN system.⁶⁷ The First Committee will continue to play an important role in settings standards and norms, as well as promoting treaties to advance disarmament and maintain international peace and security.⁶⁸

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The Nuclear Threat Initiative presents a very detailed overview of the developments in the General Assembly First Committee in the last years. In addition, one can find more information on the different topics, which are addressed by the First Committee, such as outer space and disarmament, conventional weapons, and regional disarmament and security. Delegates should find this source very helpful to gain a first impression on the thematic areas of the First Committee, how they are understood, and how the committee has addressed them.

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. (2017). *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. Retrieved 19 March 2021 from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-new-york/en/documents/UN_GA_Final.pdf

This handbook was published by the Permanent Mission to the United Nations of Switzerland. It is a very good introduction to the General Assembly and its First Committee. The handbook is a good point to begin understanding the General Assembly, its processes, and structure. It gives a lot of summarized information. This source helps to better understand the General Assembly in its entirety as well as gain more information on existing rules of procedure, the structure of resolutions, and the workflow of the General Assembly.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2020). *List of Draft Proposals for the 75th session (as of 11 Nov 2020)*. Retrieved 19 March 2021 from: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/75/pdf/FC%20List%20of%20draft%20proposals%20with%20voting%20results%20\(as%20of%2011%20Nov%202020\).pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/75/pdf/FC%20List%20of%20draft%20proposals%20with%20voting%20results%20(as%20of%2011%20Nov%202020).pdf)

This document provides delegates with a high-level overview of all of the decisions and topics discussed at the recent 75th session of the first commission. It will give delegates an understanding of the types of decisions the body makes and how the committee typically votes. This will also give delegates a better understanding of the breadth of topics and current priorities of the committee.

⁶⁴ Reaching Critical Will, *First Committee Briefing Book / 2020*, 2020, pp. 44-45.

⁶⁵ UN General Assembly, *Draft Provisional Programme of Work and Timetable of the First Committee for 2021 (A/C.1/75/CRP.5)*, 2020.

⁶⁶ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items to the First Committee (A/C.1/75/1)*, 2020.

⁶⁸ Reaching Critical Will, *UN General Assembly First Committee*, 2014.



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I. Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

Introduction

Developments in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) since the middle of the 20th century have changed many aspects of everyday life.⁶⁹ The invention of tools such as computers, internet, and mobile phones has created numerous opportunities for people around the world, but has also led to new dangers that the international community needs to address.⁷⁰ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines ICT as “information-handling tools – a varied set of goods, applications and services that are used to produce, store, process, distribute and exchange information.”⁷¹ Most recently many global industries have been able to switch to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the availability and increasing accessibility of ICTs.⁷² The development of these technologies led to a need for new international norms on how people and international actors need to behave in the digital environment.⁷³ The General Assembly and particularly the First Committee of the General Assembly is doing this normative work.⁷⁴ The first time the General Assembly addressed the issue was in resolution 53/70 which was adopted in 1999 on the topic of “Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunication in the Context of International Security” and since then, annual resolutions on the issue have been adopted.⁷⁵

The biggest issues arise from “cyber insecurities”, which are created by Member States and non-state actors in combination with vulnerabilities of ICT.⁷⁶ These insecurities can reach from people gaining access to private data to security breaches which might endanger critical infrastructure like power plants.⁷⁷ To make safe ICTs available to as many people as possible, the international community aims to establish strategies for cybersecurity and is also working on establishing the necessary norms for the ICT environment.⁷⁸ While progress towards these goals has been made, many questions concerning aspects like human rights, privacy, and rule of law in the so called cyberspace still remain.⁷⁹

International and Regional Framework

Since adopting the first resolution on the issue in 1999, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has used different tools to establish the norms needed for well-regulated use of ICT.⁸⁰ The most important tool involves the Groups of Governmental Experts (GGEs), supporting the Secretary General in submitting his reports to the General Assembly on different aspects of the topic, such as how to apply international law in the cyber-sphere, information exchange, or the question of localizing crimes in the cyber environment.⁸¹ The first General Assembly resolution establishing a GGE was adopted in 2003 and while five of the six GGEs have already concluded their work, only three of them have submitted a substantive

⁶⁹ ITU, *Overview of ITU's History*, 2021.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ UNDP Evaluation Office, *Information Communications Technology for Development*, 2001, p. 2.

⁷² UN DGC, *'Business as Unusual': How COVID-19 Could Change the Future of Work*, 2020.

⁷³ UNIDIR, *The United Nations, Cyberspace and International Peace and Security: Responding to Complexity in the 21st Century*, 2017.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunication in the Context of International Security (A/RES/53/70)*, 1999; UN General Assembly, *Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunication in the Context of International Security (A/RES/75/240)*, 2021.

⁷⁶ UNIDIR, *The United Nations, Cyberspace and International Peace and Security: Responding to Complexity in the 21st Century*, 2017, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ UNODA, *Fact Sheet: Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security*, 2019.

⁸¹ Ibid.

report, as the first and fifth GGE did not reach consensus.⁸² In 2018 the General Assembly adopted resolution 73/27, which for the first time included a “set of international rules, norms and principles of responsible behavior” that are based on the reports submitted by the GGEs in 2013 and 2015.⁸³ The rules include aspects like state responsibility for wrongful acts using ICTs within their territory, respecting human rights on the internet, encouragement to protect critical infrastructure, or encouraging civil society engagement to improve ICT security.⁸⁴ While the established rules are an important step, there are no direct consequences for Member States that do not adopt or follow these rules, since General Assembly resolutions are non-binding.⁸⁵

As the UN’s specialized agency on ICT, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) plays a major role in establishing the international framework for safe ICT use.⁸⁶ The main tool is the ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA), launched in 2007 as a “framework for international cooperation aimed at enhancing confidence and security in the information society.”⁸⁷ The GCA focuses on legal, technical, and organizational aspects, as well as capacity building and international cooperation.⁸⁸ Working in close cooperation with the ITU is the International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber Threats (IMPACT) which was founded in 2008 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ITU in the same year.⁸⁹ The cooperation of IMPACT and the GCA provides all ITU Member States with various tools to address cyber threats.⁹⁰

On a regional level, Member States are cooperating to find suitable solutions to improve the security of ICT.⁹¹ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is trying to implement the guidance by the GGEs and utilizes several confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict related to ICT use.⁹² To improve interstate transparency and communication, OSCE launched an online course on “OSCE cyber/ICT Security Confidence Building Measures” earlier this year, which will allow participants to better understand how international cooperation helps to increase ICT security.⁹³ Similarly, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) adopted the *Final APEC Framework for Securing the Digital Economy* in 2019.⁹⁴ The framework provides strategies for Member States to achieve the four adopted principles of awareness, responsibility, cooperation, and privacy.⁹⁵ Also on a regional level, organizations have been working to improve cybersecurity and to define regulations for this rapidly developing field.⁹⁶ In 2019 the European Parliament adopted the “Cybersecurity Act”, in which it established a cybersecurity certification framework allowing the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) to evaluate products, services, and processes to provide an independent security assurance to users.⁹⁷ The European Union (EU) is still working on finalizing the processes, but will soon be providing ICT certifications for products and services.⁹⁸

Role of the International System

While the General Assembly has been successful in utilizing the GGEs to address various aspects of information and telecommunication in the context of international security, there is discussion among

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (A/RES/73/27)*, 2018.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ ITU, *About International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*, 2021.

⁸⁷ ITU, *Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA)*, 2021.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ ITU News, *Making an IMPACT on Global Cybersecurity*, 2009.

⁹⁰ Ntoko, *Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA): A Framework for International Cooperation*, 2011.

⁹¹ OSCE, *Cyber/ICT Security*.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ OSCE, *New e-learning Course on OSCE Cyber/ICT Security Confidence-Building Measures now Available*, 2021.

⁹⁴ APEC, *Final APEC Framework for Securing the Digital Economy*, 2019.

⁹⁵ Ibid, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁶ ENISA, *About ENISA – The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity*, 2021.

⁹⁷ ENISA, *EU Cybersecurity Certification Framework*, 2021.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Member States whether this is the right way to involve all Member States in the process, because initially the GGEs only had 15 members.⁹⁹ While the size of the GGEs was increased to 20 in 2014/2015 and to 25 in 2016/2017 to involve more Member States, the 2017 GGE was not able to come to consensus on a substantive final report.¹⁰⁰ As a consequence, resolution 73/27 created an Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) that included all Member States as well as other interested parties like business, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia.¹⁰¹ At the same session, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 73/266 titled “Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security” that established a sixth GGE to continue the work of the previous GGEs to further address threats in the sphere of information security.¹⁰² The initiative to continue the GGE was mainly driven by the United States and Western Member States, while the push for the OEWG was led by states including China, Cuba and Russia and was opposed by many supporters of the GGE.¹⁰³

With the adoption of these two resolutions, the General Assembly is utilizing the GGE and the OEWG as two different paths at the same time.¹⁰⁴ Originally the OEWG was scheduled to submit their report in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was delayed until 2021.¹⁰⁵ The last meeting of the OEWG was held in March 2021 and it adopted a final substantive report.¹⁰⁶ The report reaffirmed the framework based on the GGE reports and adopted in resolution 73/27, and reemphasized the importance of involvement of all stakeholders to achieve better ICT security.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the OEWG recommends that Member States should continue to inform the Secretary General on national views and stressed the need to continue confidence and capacity building measures as well as institutional dialogue.¹⁰⁸ The current GGE is also scheduled to submit its report in 2021, provided it can come to a consensus, and is likely to build off the OEWG recommendations.¹⁰⁹ The General Assembly continues to actively work on this issue and established a new iteration of the OEWG for the period of 2021-2025.¹¹⁰ This means the UN will continue to work on these two different paths (GGEs and OEWGs), which could be complementing each other, but could also lead to conflicting decisions and outcomes.¹¹¹ A main point of discussion and contention among both groups in upcoming sessions, is how to apply international humanitarian law in an ICT environment.¹¹²

In 2020, following the work of the Third Committee, the General Assembly created an Open-ended ad hoc Intergovernmental Committee of Experts to work on “a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes.”¹¹³ The committee will likely consider various national and international efforts and instruments, and also the

⁹⁹ UNODA, *Fact Sheet: Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security*, 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Ruhl et al., *Cyberspace and Geopolitics: Assessing Global Cybersecurity Norm Processes at a Crossroads*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (A/RES/73/27)*, 2018.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² UN General Assembly, *Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (A/RES/73/266)*, 2018.

¹⁰³ Iasiello, OEWG or GGE – Which has the Best Shot of Succeeding?, *Technative*, 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Ruhl et al., *Cyberspace and Geopolitics: Assessing Global Cybersecurity Norm Processes at a Crossroads*, 2020, pp. 4-9.

¹⁰⁵ UNODA, *Open-ended Working Group*.

¹⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security: Final Substantive Report (A/AC.290/2021/CRP.2)*, 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ UN General Assembly, *Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (A/RES/73/266)*, 2019.

¹¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (A/RES/75/32)*, 2020.

¹¹¹ Ruhl et al., *Cyberspace and Geopolitics: Assessing Global Cybersecurity Norm Processes at a Crossroads*, 2020.

¹¹² Iasiello, OEWG or GGR – Which has the Best Shot of Succeeding?, *Technative*, 2019.

¹¹³ UN General Assembly, *Countering the use of Information and Communication Technologies for Criminal Purposes (A/RES/74/247)*, 2020.

outcomes of the open-ended intergovernmental Expert Group to Conduct a Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime that has been established in resolution 65/230 and is reporting to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).¹¹⁴

While many of the processes to define norms and procedures in the field of ICT are carried out among Member States, much of the work to improve the security of ICT is being done by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs.¹¹⁵ Organizations such as the CyberPeace Institute, a non-profit organization based in Switzerland, are active in various fields like assistance to victims of cyberattacks, advancement of norms, capacity building, and analysis of cyberattacks.¹¹⁶ The CyberPeace Institute is currently working on improving cybersecurity in the health care sector, which is especially critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹⁷ A different organization that is working closely with the European Commission is the European Cyber Security Organisation (ECSO).¹¹⁸ ECSO is responsible for the implementation of public-private partnerships and works with companies, research centers, universities, end-users and many more stakeholders across all EU Member States.¹¹⁹ ECSO is undertaking a wide range of projects, with Women4Cyber (W4C) being one of them.¹²⁰ W4C tries to increase the participation of women in the cybersecurity field, to better use their expertise.¹²¹ Within the first two years, W4C was able to create a European network of women active in the ICT field working towards better inclusion and career advancements of women in this field.¹²²

The Singapore Cybersecurity Consortium (SGCSC), anchored at the National University of Singapore, is also working to foster cooperation between industry, academia and government agencies.¹²³ Hosting meetings to discuss cybersecurity developments and educate about them while connecting different parties, SGCSC also is involved in research in the field and awards grants to address gaps in the cybersecurity landscape.¹²⁴

Cybercrime

With the development of ICT and most importantly the increased use of the internet, the issue of cybercrime, which describes criminal activity targeting or using computers or network devices, has become more and more relevant.¹²⁵ While there is no internationally recognized definition of cybercrime or cyberattacks, it is possible to distinguish different categories.¹²⁶ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) distinguishes between cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crime.¹²⁷ Cyber-enabled crime describes illegal acts which can occur offline, but can also utilize ICT to be committed, for example fraud, money laundering or illegal purchases.¹²⁸ Cyber-dependent crime on the other hand can only be committed in the presence of ICT infrastructure.¹²⁹ This would include attacks on critical infrastructure like power plants or attacking websites by means of distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, which overload a website with data, causing it to go offline.¹³⁰ A specific form of cybercrime is cyberterrorism,

¹¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Twelfth United National Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/RES/65/230)*, 2011; *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Choucri et al., *Institutions for Cyber Security: International Responses and Data Sharing Initiatives*, 2016.

¹¹⁶ CyberPeace Institute, *Who We Are*, 2020.

¹¹⁷ CyberPeace Institute, *Healthcare*, 2020.

¹¹⁸ European Cyber Security Organisation, *About ECSO*, 2021.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ European Cyber Security Organisation, *Women4Cyber Initiative*, 2021.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Singapore Cybersecurity Consortium, *About us*.

¹²⁴ Singapore Cybersecurity Consortium, *Research*.

¹²⁵ Kaspersky, *Tips on how to Protect Yourself Against Cybercrime*, 2021; UNODC, *Global Programme on Cybercrime*.

¹²⁶ UNODC, *Global Programme on Cybercrime*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

but similar to cybercrime, there is no universally accepted definition for cyberterrorism.¹³¹ According to UNODC, it either refers to “any form of online terrorist activity” or if you want to be more specific to “cyber-dependent crime perpetrated for political objectives” with the goal of causing fear or intimidating governments or the population.¹³² According to Cybersecurity Ventures, the damage caused by cybercrime is predicted to grow from \$3 trillion in 2015 to \$6 trillion in 2021, and to \$10.5 trillion in 2025.¹³³

To understand the impacts of cybercrime, the 2013 UNODC Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime focused on 12 different sub-topics and was conducted by questionnaires sent to Member States, as well as IGOs, and representatives from the private sector and academia.¹³⁴ To further contribute to the study, various documents on the issue were reviewed.¹³⁵ The main issues the study was able to identify include: varying cybercrime laws in different areas of the world, the need to reevaluate the concept of “location” in an ICT environment, lacking technical support for law enforcement authorities, and a general need to strengthen cybercrime prevention.¹³⁶ The study also proposed solutions to different aspects of cybercrime which often involve strengthening multilateral instruments and international cooperation to make the response to cybercrime more efficient.¹³⁷ An NGO trying to support this process is the International Cyber Security Protection Alliance (ICSPA).¹³⁸ Based in the UK, ICSPA’s goal is to support law enforcement with funding, expertise and assistance.¹³⁹ They are operating on a multinational level to utilize means from all around the world to protect citizens from cyber threats, by improving cyber resilience especially for critical infrastructure in countries that face great challenges in this field.¹⁴⁰

Cybercrime has been on the rise due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴¹ According to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) there has been an increase of various activities including malicious websites, online scams, data-harvesting malware being distributed through fictitious emails, or attacking network vulnerabilities of staff working from home.¹⁴² ZDNet reported that in March 2020 alone there was an increase by 667% of email scams related to COVID-19.¹⁴³ Aside from the rise in cybercrime activities, which is already challenging for the available personnel, the issue is intensified by the fact that in many Member States law enforcement personnel is needed in COVID-19 related activities like enforcing quarantine, which leads to less work being done on cybercrime.¹⁴⁴ The current situation shows the importance of improving international measures to fight cybercrime, but also illustrates how important small steps against cybercrime, like implementing strong authentication measures or improving education about cyber threats, are.¹⁴⁵

ICT Developments to Improve International Security

The development of ICT is still progressing at a fast pace and security measures have to follow this rate.¹⁴⁶ As the ITU noted in the *Measuring the Information Society Report* (2017), policies will have to adapt to risks to information security and it will be necessary to find comparable indicators to measure ICT development.¹⁴⁷ Trying to get a better understanding of the global cybersecurity situation, the ITU

¹³¹ UNODC, *Cyberterrorism*.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Morgan, Cybercrime to Cost the World \$10.5 Trillion Annually by 2025, *Cybercrime Magazine*, 2020.

¹³⁴ UNODC, *Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime*, 2013, pp. ix-x.

¹³⁵ UNODC, *Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime*, 2013, p. x.

¹³⁶ UNODC, *Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime*, 2013, pp. xi-xii.

¹³⁷ UNODC, *Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime*, 2013, p. xii.

¹³⁸ ICSPA, *About us*, 2017.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ INTERPOL, *Global Landscape on COVID-19 Cyberthreat*, 2020.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Gewirtz, COVID Cybercrime: 10 Disturbing Statistics to Keep you Awake Tonight, *ZDNet*, 2020.

¹⁴⁴ Brighton, COVID-19 and Cybersecurity Staffing Shortages, *infosecurity Magazine*, 2020; UNODC, *Cybercrime and COVID-19: Risks and Responses*, 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Capps, Fight Back against COVID-19 Cyberfraud, *Security Boulevard*, 2021.

¹⁴⁶ ITU, *Measuring the Information Society Report 2017*, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

introduced the Global Cybersecurity Index in 2013.¹⁴⁸ The most recent 2017 version, including survey results from 134 Member States, illustrates that while cybersecurity on the global level has improved, there are still significant issues in developing Member States, as they often lack well-trained experts, practical knowledge, and the ability to invest in national ICT infrastructure.¹⁴⁹ An important platform for information sharing is the World Telecommunication Conference, last held in 2017 in Buenos Aires and scheduled to take place again in November 2021.¹⁵⁰ The Buenos Aires Action Plan focuses on securing ICT infrastructure through capacity building and assistance to Member States which are still developing their digital infrastructure.¹⁵¹ The proposed program on cybersecurity would support Member States in developing their own cybersecurity strategies, establishing the necessary capabilities like computer incident response teams, sharing good practices, and raising cybersecurity awareness.¹⁵² The ITU “Guide to Developing a National Cybersecurity Strategy” aims to help Member States facilitate this process.¹⁵³ ITU brought together partners from the public and private sectors to compile a comprehensive overview on what is needed for a successful cybersecurity strategy.¹⁵⁴ The guide gives instructions to policy makers on how to set up a cybersecurity strategy and focuses on all necessary aspects.¹⁵⁵ While, according to ITU, international guidance is also important for cybersecurity, implementing those national policies is an equally important factor and therefore ITU tries to support this process.¹⁵⁶

The International Cybersecurity Forum (FIC) is one of many conferences connecting stakeholders to establish cybersecurity solutions internationally.¹⁵⁷ The FIC aims to bring many parties involved in cybersecurity together and exchange information to promote digital trust while creating synergies between stakeholders, like public entities, private sector, industry, and academia.¹⁵⁸ A big challenge for cybersecurity institutions like ENISA is the necessity to evaluate the security of every new piece of technology.¹⁵⁹ With the introduction of 5G as a new mobile standard, ENISA published an update to its “Technical Guideline on Security Measures” to give guidance to national authorities on how to ensure security of the new 5G networks.¹⁶⁰ Developing these updated guidelines for new technologies is a big task for the international bodies, given the speed of technology innovation, and will remain a challenge in achieving cybersecurity.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

With the fast developments in the field of ICT the challenges for the international community to find suitable frameworks to address the safety of ICT remain.¹⁶² While the General Assembly has been addressing the issue since 1998, it has not always been easy to find consensus.¹⁶³ Most recently the First Committee has started to utilize two different paths to continue the work on ICT security although it remains to be seen if GGEs or OEWGs will be more successful.¹⁶⁴ The GGEs as well as the OEWG both have advantages and faults, and Member States will need to make sure to utilize the strengths of both

¹⁴⁸ ITU, *Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2017*, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ ITU, *World Telecommunication Development Conferences*, 2021.

¹⁵¹ ITU, *Final Report: World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17)*, 2018.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

¹⁵³ ITU, *Guide to Developing a National Cybersecurity Strategy: Strategic Engagement in Cybersecurity*, 2018.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ International Cybersecurity Forum, *The FIC*, 2021.

¹⁵⁸ International Cybersecurity Forum, *What is the FIC?*, 2021.

¹⁵⁹ ENISA, *New Guidelines for Telecom and 5G Security*, 2020.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² UNODA, *Fact Sheet: Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security*, 2019.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Ruhl et al., *Cyberspace and Geopolitics: Assessing Global Cybersecurity Norm Processes at a Crossroads*, 2020.

paths.¹⁶⁵ The General Assembly will need to continue to improve international cooperation and utilize multilateral organizations like the ITU to facilitate this process.¹⁶⁶

The question of cybercrime and the necessary developments of cybersecurity will continue to be challenging, especially for developing countries.¹⁶⁷ Multilateral support for those Member States that do not have a well-developed cybersecurity strategy will be important, according to ITU, as localizing cybercrimes is difficult and still part of the discussion in the different international forums.¹⁶⁸ This continued international cooperation will be necessary to develop the norms to keep ICT safe, while maximizing the use for all involved parties.¹⁶⁹

Further Research

While further researching the topic, delegates should consider the following questions: What are the most important things the UN needs to define in the ICT field? Which path – GGEs or OWEG – should the UN continue, or are both paths in parallel most effective? How can the UN continue to support the development of cybersecurity strategies? How can Member States be encouraged to become more active in the field of ICT security? Which laws and norms should apply to cybercrime? How do developments in the field of artificial intelligence influence ICT security? What tools can the General Assembly use to adequately address the developments of ICTs in their deliberations?

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https://www.intgovforum.org/Substantive_2nd_IGF/ITU_GCA_E.pdf

The Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) was launched by ITU Secretary General Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré in 2007 and has the goal to facilitate cooperation among Member States to address the question of cybersecurity. The strategy tries to bring different stakeholders together to understand the challenges and find solutions for cybersecurity issues. This document helps delegates understand the strategy of the ITU to address the issue with its five-part platform, which bases on: Legal framework, technical measures, organizational structures, capacity building, and international cooperation. Understanding these aspects will allow delegates to recognize these pillars in many documents addressing cybersecurity.

Kumar, S. (2019, May 1). UN First Committee Processes on Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace: An Explainer. *Global Partners Digital*. Retrieved 14 February 2021 from: <https://www.gp-digital.org/un-first-committee-processes-on-responsible-state-behaviour-in-cyberspace-a-briefing/>

This article describes the role of the First Committee in addressing Member State behavior in cyberspace. Therefore, it first establishes the role of the committee in this field before discussing the past and current measures. It also considers the two paths the General Assembly is currently taking with the GGE and the OEWG. Delegates can use this document to get a good overview of the work of the First Committee and use this understanding for further research.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-third session. (2018). *Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (A/RES/73/27)*. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/73/505). Retrieved 6 February 2021 from:

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/73/27>

This resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 2018 welcomes a “set of international rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour of States”. These rules

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ ITU, *Guide to Developing a National Cybersecurity Strategy: Strategic Engagement in Cybersecurity*, 2018.

¹⁶⁷ ITU, *Final Report: World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17)*, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

are based on the reports submitted by the GGEs to the General Assembly. The rules lined out in this resolution are the first of their kind for the field of information and telecommunications. Delegates should know these rules as they represent the result of several GGEs and stand as one of the few frameworks on ICT use in the context of international security.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2021). *Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security: Final Substantive Report (A/AC.290/2021/CRP.2)*. Retrieved 19 March 2021 from: <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final-report-A-AC.290-2021-CRP.2.pdf>

This substantive report submitted by the first OEWG on Information and Telecommunication in the Context of International Security is a great success for the international community, as all involved Member States were able to agree on a consensus report. The report focuses on the following aspects of the topic: existing and potential threats; rules, norms and principles for responsible state behaviour; international law; confidence-building measures; capacity-building; and regular institutional dialogue. The report stresses the importance of cooperation on international levels to reach better ICT security. Delegates will want to read this report to have a good understanding of the latest piece of defining a UN framework for ICT use and security.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. (2017). *The United Nations, Cyberspace and International Peace and Security: Responding to Complexity in the 21st Century*. Retrieved 6 February 2021 from: <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/the-united-nations-cyberspace-and-international-peace-and-security-en-691.pdf>

This report by UNIDIR discusses the relevance of ICT to various topics including international peace and security. While the report recognizes the significant benefits which can be gained through the use of ICT, it discusses several aspects that can lead to security issues. The report defines important terms before discussing various actors within the UN-system that deal with ICT security. Understanding those will be key for delegates to be able to utilize the existing bodies to the highest extent. The report furthermore elaborates about all GGEs and discusses their results and problems.

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This comprehensive study on cybercrime prepared by UNODC together with an open-ended intergovernmental expert group and CCPCJ addresses several aspects of cybercrime. The study addresses cybercrime in general, but also examines aspects like legal frameworks, international cooperation or electronic evidence. The study used questionnaires for Member States to understand the state of cybercrime across the world. While this study is a couple years old, many of the issues still need to be solved. Delegates can therefore understand underlying problems for cybersecurity and use this as a basis to develop new solutions for these issues.

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II. Strengthening and Developing the Systems of Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation Treaties and Agreements

*“Removing the threat of a world war – a nuclear war – is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Mankind is confronted with one choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation.”*¹⁷⁰

Introduction

Disarmament and non-proliferation play essential roles in maintaining international peace and security.¹⁷¹ The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has committed to promoting complete and effective disarmament, which it defines as a gradual process of reducing the current level of armaments in Member States’ possession.¹⁷² This refers to both weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and conventional weapons.¹⁷³ A WMD is a weapon that has the capability to harm or kill millions of civilians and destroy the natural environment.¹⁷⁴ The UN considers all nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons to be WMDs.¹⁷⁵ Conventional weapons are any armament not considered a WMD, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), defined as any lethal weapon designed to expel or launch a shot.¹⁷⁶

The General Assembly outlined its commitment to arms control and the non-proliferation of WMDs in the First Special Session Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD).¹⁷⁷ Held in 1978, the session was convened out of concern for the threat that the post-World War II arms race posed to international peace and security.¹⁷⁸ The SSOD established the UN’s disarmament machinery, the processes and bodies which handle issues surrounding disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.¹⁷⁹ In 2000, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan raised concerns over the beginning of “rust” in the disarmament machinery.¹⁸⁰ He further stated that while disarmament and non-proliferation measures were necessary, the degree of their implementation was unsatisfactory.¹⁸¹

The General Assembly First Committee has acknowledged this lapse in effectiveness, with Member States expressing frustrations over the deadlock in progress.¹⁸² Some argue that the issue is political in nature, with stalled negotiations being a result of some Member States’ resistance to adhere to their obligations, or their belief in deterrence versus collective security.¹⁸³ However, the disarmament machinery faces challenges that are related to new developments in the international system, such as the increase of global military spending and arms competition.¹⁸⁴ UN Secretary General António Guterres has argued for a new disarmament agenda on the backdrop of the multipolar international environment,

¹⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (A/RES/S-10/2), 1978.

¹⁷¹ UN General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization (A/72/1), 2017, pp. 31-32.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ UN General Assembly, Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (A/RES/S-10/2), 1978.

¹⁷⁴ UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Weapons of Mass Destruction, 2021.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, Report of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (A/60/88), 2005.

¹⁷⁷ IAEA, A Report on the UN Special Session on Disarmament, 1978.

¹⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (A/RES/S-10/2), 1978.

¹⁷⁹ UNIDR, Disarmament Machinery: A Fresh Approach, 2010.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ UN DGC, Review Conference of Parties to NPT Opens at Headquarters; Much Disarmament Machinery has “Started to Rust,” Secretary General Warns (DC/2692), 2000.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ UN DGC, Warning Against Danger of Disarmament Machinery ‘Rusting’, First Committee Delegates Call for Greater Political Will to Clear Decades-Long Deadlock (GA/DIS/3614), 2018.

¹⁸⁴ UNODA, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament, 2018.

arguing that Cold War-era mechanisms that encouraged dialogue between two superpowers are no longer relevant.¹⁸⁵ Due to heightening international tensions and the evolving complexity of armed conflict, pursuing stronger, more comprehensive disarmament and non-proliferation systems has become essential for the continued pursuit of international peace and security.¹⁸⁶

International and Regional Framework

Disarmament, non-proliferation, and the systems that maintain them are linked to individuals' right to life, liberty, and security of person, which is codified by Article 3 of the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR).¹⁸⁷ Additionally, Article 5 of the UDHR affirms the right of all persons to not be subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, which validates the presence of the disarmament machinery.¹⁸⁸ The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) was developed as a blueprint for peace and prosperity within the international community.¹⁸⁹ Sustainable development and peace are intrinsically linked and, as such, the 2030 Agenda includes disarmament in its development agenda.¹⁹⁰ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 8, 11, and 16 all relate to disarmament and non-proliferation.¹⁹¹ SDG 16, ensuring peace, justice, and strong institutions directly reflects the linkages between disarmament, peace, and development.¹⁹² SDGs 3 (good health and wellbeing), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 11 (sustainable cities and communities) all relate to the implications for society when actively pursuing disarmament.¹⁹³

The *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) was negotiated in 1968 and entered into force in 1970.¹⁹⁴ The NPT is a landmark international treaty designed to enforce nuclear non-proliferation and work towards the goal of both nuclear and complete disarmament.¹⁹⁵ Per the NPT, nuclear-weapon states (NWS) – China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America – agreed not to transfer nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear-weapon State (NNWS), or assist them in manufacturing one.¹⁹⁶ NNWS agreed to not obtain a nuclear weapon from a NWS or accept assistance to manufacture one.¹⁹⁷ The NPT is the only binding obligation for Member States to engage in nuclear disarmament.¹⁹⁸ In addition to directly addressing weapons and non-proliferation, the NPT also encourages the peaceful use of nuclear technologies.¹⁹⁹ While more countries have joined the NPT than any other arms control agreement, NWS party to the agreement are reluctant to fully disarm their nuclear stockpiles.²⁰⁰ There has also been a “crisis of NPT noncompliance,” with at least four NNWS violating the NPT through gaining access to technologies and materials to develop a nuclear weapon.²⁰¹ Without compliance by all members, there is doubt over the lasting strength of the NPT.²⁰²

Other nuclear non-proliferation frameworks include the *Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty* (CTBT) and the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW).²⁰³ Adopted in 1996, the CTBT bans

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ UN DESA, *The 17 Goals*, 2021.

¹⁹⁰ UNODA, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, 2018.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ UN DESA, *The 17 Goals*, 2021.

¹⁹⁴ UNODA, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)*.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ UNODA, *Fact Sheet: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, 2021.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ UNODA, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)*.

²⁰⁰ Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Nuclear Disarmament Resource Collection*, 2021.

²⁰¹ UN DGC, *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Being Used As 'Cover' By Four States For Development of Weapons Programmes, Preparatory Committee Told (DC/2921)*, 2004.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Nuclear Disarmament Resource Collection*, 2021.

nuclear weapon test explosions as well as prohibiting non-peaceful fissile material production.²⁰⁴ However, it has yet to fully enter into force due to China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, the Democratic Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and the United States not ratifying the treaty.²⁰⁵ The TPNW, adopted in 2017, is the first legally binding treaty that fully prohibits the use of nuclear weapons with the objective being their total elimination.²⁰⁶ This is done through a comprehensive group of measures that ultimately prohibit the development, production, acquisition, and possession of nuclear weapons.²⁰⁷ The TPNW entered into force in 2021, but remains opposed by every NWS.²⁰⁸

The proliferation of conventional arms has also been addressed by arms control instruments such as and the *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons* (PoA SALW) and the *Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition* (Firearms Protocol).²⁰⁹ The PoA SALW aims to mitigate the consequences of illicit SALW trading and was adopted by every UN Member State in 2001.²¹⁰ It is designed to be carried out on national, regional, and international levels and led to the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), which fosters cooperative weapons tracing, record keeping, and stockpile tracing.²¹¹ Member States must implement the laws, regulations, and administrative processes necessary to cooperate with the ITI on a national level, and report their progress biennially to the Secretary General.²¹² The Firearms Protocol, which was adopted in 2001 and entered into force in 2005, serves as a framework to regulate the licit flow of arms as well as facilitate the investigation and prosecution of illicit arms trading.²¹³

The 2013 *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT) continues the work laid out by the PoA SALW and Firearms Protocol by addressing the international trade of all conventional weapons.²¹⁴ The ATT calls on Member States to strengthen their tracking and record keeping of the import and export of conventional weapons, as well as conduct risk analysis for the impact of exported weapons.²¹⁵ The ATT is the first legally binding instrument developed by the UN for the purpose of regulating international transfer of conventional weapons; however, it is only legally binding to its signatories.²¹⁶ The ATT has been signed by 130 Member States and ratified by 109 Member States, but faces opposition due to its implications for state sovereignty and domestic firearm regulations.²¹⁷ For example, in 2019 the United States announced it would withdraw from the ATT due to its impact on American sovereignty and the constitutional right to possess a firearm.²¹⁸

Member States have developed regional frameworks to support disarmament and non-proliferation, such as nuclear-weapon-free-zones (NWFZ).²¹⁹ A NWFZ is a specific region where Member States agree to not manufacture, acquire, or test nuclear weapons.²²⁰ There are currently five NWFZ, covering Latin America, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central Asia.²²¹

²⁰⁴ Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)*, 2020.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ UNODA, *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*.

²⁰⁷ Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)*, 2021.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (A/CONF.192/15)*, 2021.

²¹⁰ UNODA, *Small Arms and Light Weapons*.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² UNODA, *Programme of Action on small arms and its International Tracing Instrument*.

²¹³ UNODC, *The Firearms Protocol*, 2021.

²¹⁴ UNODA, *Arms Trade Treaty*.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Blain, *What Happened to the Arms Trade Treaty?*, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 2017.

²¹⁸ Olabuenaga, *Why the Arms Trade Treaty Matters – and Why It Matters That the US Is Walking Away, Just Security*, 2019.

²¹⁹ Arms Control Association, *Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZ) At a Glance*, 2017.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

Role of the International System

Article 11 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) provides the General Assembly with the ability to address issues relating the maintenance of international peace and security, including disarmament and non-proliferation.²²² The General Assembly has held three SSODs in 1978, 1982, and 1988.²²³ The first SSOD resulted in the development of the UN “disarmament machinery,” which includes the General Assembly First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), also referred to as the three branches of the disarmament machinery.²²⁴ These processes and bodies handle issues surrounding disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.²²⁵

The General Assembly First Committee is the premiere deliberative body that handles disarmament and arms control.²²⁶ It is reported to by the CD, which acts as a multilateral negotiation forum to address issues such as nuclear disarmament, prevention of nuclear war, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.²²⁷ The CD is comprised of 65 Member States; the five NWS as designated by the NPT and 60 other militarily significant Member States.²²⁸ UNDC also reports annually to the General Assembly First Committee, and focuses on the regulation and balanced reduction of all armaments.²²⁹ The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) offers substantive and organizational support to all three branches of the disarmament machinery, and provides Member States with current and impartial information on multilateral disarmament issues.²³⁰ These efforts are also supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which serves as the primary body within the UN system responsible for the promotion of safe and peaceful nuclear energy usage.²³¹

Certain Member States have also developed non-proliferation agreements among themselves, for example, the *Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty* (START I) was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1991 and was adopted by all post-Soviet NWS following the USSR’s dissolution.²³² START I aimed to reduce and limit all parties’ strategic nuclear weapons and its reductions were completed by December 2001.²³³ Regional organizations have also developed their own non-proliferation treaties, often in the form of NWFZ; for example, the Organization of American States adheres to the Latin America Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, which prohibits Latin American parties from possessing nuclear weapons.²³⁴

Civil society plays a significant role in systems for disarmament and non-proliferation, primarily through their ability to bring issues to the attention of governments and the public.²³⁵ Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often partner with governments and other actors to develop solutions and strengthen norms that can lead to future agreements and resolutions.²³⁶ The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation is one example as a nonpartisan organization that seeks to reduce nuclear weapons and the risk of war through educating policymakers and the public.²³⁷ The Center for Arms Control operates as a center for expertise on the reduction of the threat of war through limiting the spread of

²²² Charter of the United Nations, 1945.

²²³ Nuclear Threat Initiative, United Nations First Committee, 2020; UNODA, Special Sessions of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ UNIDR, *Disarmament Machinery: A Fresh Approach*, 2010.

²²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Disarmament and International Security* (First Committee).

²²⁷ UNODA, *Conference on Disarmament*.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ UNODA, *United Nations Disarmament Commission*.

²³⁰ UNODA, *About Us*.

²³¹ IAEA, *Overview*, 2021.

²³² Arms Control Association, *START I at a Glance*, 2019.

²³³ Arms Control Association, *U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Agreements at a Glance*, 2020.

²³⁴ Arms Control Association, *Latin America Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty* (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

²³⁵ UNIDR, *Civil Society and the Conference on Disarmament*, 2011.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, *About the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, 2021.

nuclear weapons.²³⁸ The Arms Control Association shares a similar goal of fostering public understanding of effective arms control measures.²³⁹ By delivering information and analysis on the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Arms Control Association helps shape the policy debate around non-proliferation throughout the world.²⁴⁰ The Small Arms Survey also provides expertise on small arms and armed violence, operating as a disseminator of evidence-based information and analysis for governments, policymakers, researchers, and civil society.²⁴¹

Addressing Evolving Conflict and Emerging Weapon Technologies

The acceleration of scientific and technological advances has changed nature of conflict in the international system.²⁴² Conflict and violence is on the rise as non-state actors and domestic groups engage more in regional disputes.²⁴³ Technological advancements help decrease barriers to access to conventional arms that utilize outdated technology, which diversifies the number and type of actors that can engage in armed conflict.²⁴⁴ These actors can possess a number of motives and means of violence, and the boundaries between internal and international armed conflict, organized crime, and terrorism can be blurry.²⁴⁵

New technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning have the potential to enhance cyber, physical, and biological attacks beyond their previous scope by becoming more targeted and easier to carry out.²⁴⁶ The development of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), capable of engaging with a target without human guidance, transfer responsibility for life and death from humans with an ethical compass to an inanimate system.²⁴⁷ International frameworks restricting LAWS are nascent, but in 2018 the UN affirmed that human responsibility for use of LAWS “must be retained, since accountability cannot be transferred to machines.”²⁴⁸ In 2019, the Group of Governmental Experts, which meets under the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, established 11 Guiding Principles on LAWS, which focus on maintaining meaningful human control over these weapons systems.²⁴⁹ The weaponization of space is also a concern under consideration, as space technology is often used for both civilian and military applications and presents difficulties when determining if these applications are for offensive or defensive purposes.²⁵⁰ The General Assembly has established its own Group of Governmental Experts to consider and make recommendations on the development of a legally binding framework to prevent an arms race in outer space.²⁵¹

The UN first addressed the role of emerging weapons technologies through the General Assembly’s first official resolution titled *Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy*.²⁵² With this resolution, Member States recognized that, in order for science and technology to benefit humanity, it must be pursued by peaceful means.²⁵³ Evolving sciences and the subsequent technologies developed from them are directly tied to sustainable development, with

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Arms Control Association, *About the Arms Control Association*.

²⁴⁰ Arms Control Association, *50 Years of History and Accomplishments*.

²⁴¹ Small Arms Survey, *About the Small Arms Survey*.

²⁴² UNODA, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, 2018.

²⁴³ UN DPI, *A New Era of Conflict and Violence*.

²⁴⁴ UNODA, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, 2018.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ UN DPI, *A New Era of Conflict and Violence*.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ UN DPI, *Autonomous weapons that kill must be banned, insists UN chief*, 2019.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Warnke, *The Effect of New Technologies on Nuclear-Non-proliferation and Disarmament: Artificial Intelligence, Hypersonic Technology and Outer Space*, UNODA, 2017.

²⁵¹ UNODA, *Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space*.

²⁵² UN General Assembly, *Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy (A/RES/1(I))*, 1946.

²⁵³ Ibid.

technological advancements being the subject of 10 SDGs.²⁵⁴ These goals emphasize multilateral cooperation on innovation and peaceful technological advancements to aid the promotion of international security.²⁵⁵ In 2015, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* was incorporated into the 2030 Agenda.²⁵⁶ This framework allows the General Assembly First Committee to monitor technological developments that could impact international security through its Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM).²⁵⁷ The TFM was launched to support multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, UN entities and other relevant stakeholders as a mean to implement the SDGs.²⁵⁸ Through the TFM, thousands of scientific and technological stakeholders have engaged in information sharing, many of which have no previous engagement with the UN.²⁵⁹

Case Study: New START Treaty

Following on the success of START I, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) is another system of disarmament and arms control.²⁶⁰ In 2010, the United States and Russia adopted New START, a continuation of the agreement to verifiably continue the reduction of both countries' nuclear arsenals that begun with START I.²⁶¹ New START further restricted the number of strategic warheads of each country and placed a clear timeframe for reduction on both parties, requiring them to take the necessary steps by 2018.²⁶² The treaty allowed both the United States and Russia the flexibility to maintain the structure of their own nuclear forces, subject to the treaty's limits.²⁶³ Both parties also outlined detailed measures to ensure the implementation and verification of the treaty's obligations, such as the establishment of a database for information required through the agreement and a commitment to refrain from interfering with each other's means of verification.²⁶⁴ This provides each state the ability to assess the other's compliance with the treaty as well as providing transparency on available nuclear forces.²⁶⁵ Both Member States achieved the treaty's reduction goal by 2018.²⁶⁶

Following the 2018 reduction, Russia expressed interest in extending the treaty by five years following its impending 2021 expiration, as did the United States Congress.²⁶⁷ However, negotiations between both governments stalled due to the United States' push for additional provisions under President Donald Trump, such as a short-term freeze on nuclear arsenals.²⁶⁸ In January 2021, after the election of President Joe Biden, the United States agreed to extend New START until 2026.²⁶⁹

While New START led to a significant reduction in strategic missiles, the warhead numbers that are counted under the treaty are only representative of a portion of what is present in either state's arsenal because the treaty only counts deployed warheads rather than ones included in their nuclear stockpile.²⁷⁰ For this reason, advocates encouraged the extension of the treaty, as failing to do opened potential for a

²⁵⁴ UN DESA, *The 17 Goals*, 2021.

²⁵⁵ UN DESA, *The 17 Goals*, 2021.

²⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

²⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

²⁵⁸ UN DESA, *Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM)*.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ O'Connor, Joe Biden's Plan to Extend Russia Nuclear Treaty Praised by Arms Control Groups, *Newsweek*, 2021.

²⁶¹ Arms Control Association, *New Start at a Glance*, 2021.

²⁶² Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START)*, 2021.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State, *New START Treaty*, 2021.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START)*, 2021.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Kristensen, After Seven Years of Implementation, New START Treaty Enters Into Effect, *Federation of American Scientists*, 2018.

new nuclear arms race.²⁷¹ However, criticisms of the agreement remain, with opponents expressing concern over its failure to include non-strategic nuclear weapons and the ramifications of not including other Member States such as China in the treaty.²⁷²

Conclusion

The UN and the international community have developed robust existing systems of disarmament and non-proliferation measures to prevent crises and armed conflict.²⁷³ However, concern over this system's effectiveness is legitimate, due to the changing nature of international conflict and weapon technologies.²⁷⁴ Since the first SSOD in 1978, the international system has evolved from two superpowers to a more complex, multipolar environment.²⁷⁵ The responsibility placed upon Member States and their willingness to adhere to the disarmament and non-proliferation obligations outlined in adopted agreements must also be considered, as a lack of political will is commonly cited as an issue contributing to the disarmament machinery's decline.²⁷⁶ As the primary deliberative body for issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, the First Committee must consider these factors when developing solutions to strengthen these systems.

Further Research

Going forward delegates should consider the following questions: How can existing disarmament and non-proliferation frameworks be better adapted to a multipolar international system? How should the UN and Member States address arms proliferation among non-state actors? What gaps exist between measures that focus on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons versus conventional weapons? How can the UN implement arms control measures that both address the negative implications of emerging technologies as well as preserve the benefits of technological advancement? What are ways that civil society and the private sector can better engage with disarmament measures?

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Nuclear Threat Initiative. (2020). *United Nations First Committee*. Retrieved 23 March 2021 from: <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/un-first-committee/>

The Nuclear Threat Initiative provides an in-depth overview of all developments in the General Assembly First Committee since 1997. This compilation provides a chronological view of how the First Committee has set out its mandated work to address issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. While not deep in scope, its wide breadth can provide delegates with a sense not only of the progression of deliberation, but the capacity for stagnation and stalemate when attempting to achieve consensus on matters of international security.

United Nations, General Assembly, Tenth special session. (1978). *Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (A/RES/S-10/2)*. Retrieved 23 March 2021 from:

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/S-10/2>

The Final document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly is the foundational document of the creation of an international framework towards disarmament and non-proliferation. It outlines many critical parts of the current disarmament machinery, including the new scope of the General Assembly First Committee and the creation of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Arms Control Association, Responses to Common Criticisms About Extending New START, 2020.

²⁷³ UNODA, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament, 2018.

²⁷⁴ UN, A New Era of Conflict and Violence.

²⁷⁵ UNODA, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament, 2018.

²⁷⁶ UN DGC, Review Conference of Parties to NPT Opens at Headquarters; Much Disarmament Machinery has "Started to Rust," Secretary General Warns (DC/2692), 2000.

Disarmament Commission. Delegates should use this as their reference for the historical pretexts under which the existing frameworks were developed.

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (2018). *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. Retrieved 23 March 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/>

This report was published by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to outline the United Nations' agenda to address disarmament and non-proliferation in the new era of armed conflict. This report will be useful for delegates as it explains the reasons why reform to the current disarmament machinery is necessary. It also discusses how disarmament can be integrated into the priorities of the entire United Nations system and partnerships that could be developed between the UN, governments, civil society, and the private sector.

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (2021). *Fact Sheet: Humanitarian Approaches to Disarmament*. Retrieved 23 March 2021 from: <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Humanitarian-Approaches-to-Disarmament-Fact-Sheet-Jan2021.pdf>

This fact sheet by the Office for Disarmament Affairs provides information on the humanitarian approach on disarmament, which contrasts approaches that emphasize the prevention of escalating tensions. As delegates look further into the evolution of armed conflict in the 21st century and how this applies to strengthening the disarmament machinery, they may find the explanation of humanitarian disarmament initiatives useful.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. (2010). *Disarmament Machinery: A Fresh Approach*. Retrieved 23 March 2021 from: <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/disarmament-machinery-a-fresh-approach-362.pdf>

This report provides an overview of existing disarmament machinery, including its features and structural issues. It also places into context Secretary-General Kofi Annan's warnings about "rust" in the machinery. The latter half of the document suggests ways the UN can improve upon current systems both through reform and through the development of new mechanisms that fit the changing international environment. Despite being over a decade old, delegates will find this document useful for thinking through solutions for disarmament's deadlock and as a basis for research into why these suggestions have not taken hold.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. (2011). *Civil Society and the Conference on Disarmament*. Retrieved 23 March 2021 from: <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/civil-society-and-the-conference-on-disarmament-360.pdf>

This report from the Conference on Disarmament Discussion Series provides an overview of how civil society interacts with the body as well as civil society's larger effort toward promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. It provides a contrast of the core types of civil society players and their benefits and drawbacks in partnership. Delegates will find this information useful in determining how best to use both existing partnerships and developing new ones to strengthen disarmament systems.

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