

## Human Rights Council

### *The Committee at the National Model United Nations Conference*

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is a forum for discussing the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe, along with addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them.<sup>1</sup> The HRC is comprised of 47 Member States, which are elected by the UN General Assembly.<sup>2</sup> Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution; Member States are elected for three-year terms and are allowed to serve up to two consecutive terms.<sup>3</sup> The structure of a HRC regular session includes panels, reports, followed by General Debate, and finally resolutions. The Institution-building Package guides the HRC, which involves mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review, Advisory Committees, and Complaint Procedures.<sup>4</sup> It also works with UN Special Procedures, which are made up of special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts, and working groups.<sup>5</sup>

**Format:** The Human Rights Council is a Resolution Writing Committee.

**Voting:** In the Human Rights Council, each Member State has one vote and it does not allow for special privileges such as veto power. All decisions are decided on by a majority vote of members present for both procedural and substantive matters.

### *21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council*

At the September 2012 session, the HRC elected four new members of the Advisory Council, appointed Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in Eritrea and in Belarus and on the disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, and named two new Commissioners for the Commission of Inquiry on Syria.<sup>6</sup> In November 2012, the UN General Assembly elected 18 new countries to serve on the HRC for three-year terms starting January 1, 2013.<sup>7</sup> The HRC also elected a new President, Remigiusz A. Henczel of Poland; four Vice-Presidents, Cheikh Ahmed Ould Zahaf of Mauritania, Iruthisham Adam of the Maldives, Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador, and Alexandre Fasel of Switzerland; and a Rapporteur, Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga, for the 2013 year.<sup>8</sup>

During this session, a total of 33 resolutions were adopted by the HRC and were sent to the General Assembly for final adoption.<sup>9</sup> In Resolution A/HRC/RES/21/26, the HRC recalls its previous resolutions on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and condemns the Syrian government for its lack of cooperation with the international community and its use of violence and violations of international human rights against civilians; this resolution further highlights the rift within the international community on how to approach the situation in Syria, as demonstrated by the voting record.<sup>10</sup> The rights of indigenous peoples were also addressed at the 21<sup>st</sup> session. Resolution A/HRC/RES/21/24 welcomes the tabling of a report from the High Commissioner for Human Rights on this topic and presses upon all Member States to maintain dialogue with indigenous peoples in the protection and promotion of their languages and cultures.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *Background Information on the Human Rights Council*, n.d., pg. 1.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *Background Information on the Human Rights Council*, n.d., pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *Membership of the Human Rights Council*, n.d., pg. 1.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *Background Information on the Human Rights Council*, n.d., pg. 1.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council, *Background Information on the Human Rights Council*, n.d., pg. 1.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Council Adopts Five Texts, Appoints Members of Advisory Committee, Commission of Inquiry on Syria*, Special Rapporteurs, 2012, pg. 1.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *General Assembly Elects 18 Countries to Serve on UN Human Rights Council*, 2012, pg. 1.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human Rights Council holds Organizational Meeting to elect new President and Vice-Presidents for 2013*, 2012, pg. 1.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *21<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council: Resolutions, decisions and President's statements*, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/RES/21/26)*, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human rights and indigenous peoples (A/HRC/RES/21/24)*, 2013.

A panel discussion was held on the issue of intimidation or reprisal against individuals and groups who have cooperated with the United Nations (UN) in the field of human rights.<sup>12</sup> The focus of this panel was to provide a multi-stakeholder perspective and draw the attention of the international community to this very important and timely issue.<sup>13</sup> Another panel discussion was held regarding access to justice for indigenous peoples, which included both the procedural and substantive aspects of this pressing issue.<sup>14</sup> The objective of this panel was to identify good practices and challenges that indigenous individuals, especially women and youth, face in accessing justice.<sup>15</sup>

### *15<sup>th</sup> Session of the Universal Periodic Review*

The 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) took place from January 21 to February 1, 2013, and the Working Group assessed the human rights records of 14 UN Member States.<sup>16</sup> While each UPR session usually takes place without complications, the 15<sup>th</sup> session marks the first instance where a UN Member State, Israel, did not participate in its review.<sup>17</sup> Responding to its absence, the HRC deeply regretted Israel's lack of participation, recalled that all Member States had participated in the UPR until this incident, and called upon Israel to participate in its UPR during its rescheduled slot at the 17<sup>th</sup> session.<sup>18</sup> The review of the United Arab Emirates highlighted the need for the country to improve its labor rights vis-à-vis migrant workers, to adopt legislation that specifically addresses xenophobia and discrimination, and to further ratify international human rights instruments.<sup>19</sup> In its review of France, the Working Group's recommendations include a national plan on human trafficking, a review of legislation on religious symbols in public areas, and conformity of the country's policies on the Roma towards international and European human rights instruments.<sup>20</sup> This highlights that the UPR mechanism has been effective in addressing human rights issues and that all Member States, regardless of geography, history, or politics, must remain cognizant of their human rights obligations.

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *21<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council Concept Note*, 2012, pg. 1.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *21<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council Concept Note*, 2012, pg. 1.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples*, 2012, pg. 1.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples*, 2012, pg. 2.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Meeting Highlights for the 15<sup>th</sup> Session*, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> UN News Centre, *In face of non-cooperation, UN calls on Israel to take part in human rights review*, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> UN News Centre, *In face of non-cooperation, UN calls on Israel to take part in human rights review*, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Highlights 28 January 2013 pm - United Arab Emirates*, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Highlights 21 January 2013 AM - France*, 2013.

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*This annual report of the Secretary-General is important for the dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This report shows how the United Nations system as a whole can contribute to the advancement of the business and human rights agenda. It is important for the delegates to see what the Human Rights Council has been working on and whether it is applicable to their issue.*

United Nations Human Rights Council. (2012) *21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council: Resolutions, Decisions, and President's Statements*. Retrieved on January 25, 2013 from:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session21/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session21/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx)

*This link is important because it is the delegates' connection to all the resolutions, decisions, and President's statements that came out of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council. It also lists the end voting result for each of these. This will help with the delegates' research, especially with resolutions that tie in to our topics. One of the resolutions has to do with access to safe drinking water.*

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012) *Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples*. Retrieved on January 8, 2012 from:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session21/Pages/21RegularSession.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session21/Pages/21RegularSession.aspx)

*This article gives an explanation of the panel on access to justice for indigenous peoples, its focus and objectives. It starts out with a very good introduction on the issue and why it is important. The panel covered specific issues that indigenous women and youth face in accessing justice, some structural and institutional factors that can impede this access to justice and positive examples of this on an international level. It also gives the delegate the format and composition of the panel.*

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012) *Council Adopts Five Texts, Appoints Members of Advisory Committee, Commission of Inquiry on Syria, Special Rapporteurs*. Retrieved on January 10, 2013 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12608&LangID=E>

*This article is important because it gives more detail in what was adopted in the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council. The delegate can also find the names of the members elected to the Advisory Council and the new Commissioners. The names and concentrations of the new Special Rapporteurs are also listed. This article is helpful in researching what the HRC was working on in the session.*

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012) *Human Rights Council Adopts 10 Resolutions on Safe Drinking Water, Preventable Maternal Mortality and use of Mercenaries*. Retrieved on January 10, 2013 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12592&LangID=E>

*This article is important because it gives more detail on the resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council in the 21<sup>st</sup> session. It gives some detail on all 10 resolutions, which can be helpful for the delegates' research. It is a good starting point for the delegate, to be followed by looking up the specific resolution listed here.*

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (N.D.) *21<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council Concept Note*. Retrieved on January 8, 2013 from:

[www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session21/PanelDiscussionReprisal.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session21/PanelDiscussionReprisal.pdf)

*This Concept Note explains the mandate, focus, and objectives of the panel discussion on the issue of intimidation or reprisal against individuals and groups who cooperate or have cooperated with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. It also outlines who the panelists are and the format of the discussion.*

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## I. Strengthening Human Rights of Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Conflict-Ridden Regions

### *Recent Activity*

The Human Rights Council (HRC) has not made any recent progress in the area of human rights and internally displaced persons (IDPs); however the international community has taken several steps in this area.

### *Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons*

On November 22, 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of (IDPs), Mr. Chaloka Beyani, urged stakeholders in Sudan, including IDPs, to consolidate peace and stability in Sudan.<sup>21</sup> Mr. Beyani was invited by the Government of Sudan to assess and gather first-hand information on IDPs in the country.<sup>22</sup> He highlighted the efforts of the international community in supporting peace and security and finding solutions for IDPs in that region.<sup>23</sup> Specific to people with South Sudanese origin, Mr. Beyani urged the Government of Sudan to promote a culture of respect for human rights.<sup>24</sup> This entails the prevention of human rights violations and the adoption of “a comprehensive approach to durable solutions, which facilitates voluntary returns as well as local integration and resettlement.”<sup>25</sup>

Internally displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence.<sup>26</sup> For example, women and girls who are internally displaced may be at risk of female genital mutilation.<sup>27</sup> On November 26, 2012, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution A/C.3/67/L.21/Rev.1, calling on Member States to adopt internal legislation banning female genital mutilation.<sup>28</sup> The hope is that this resolution will help to protect the rights of internally displaced women and girls at risk of undergoing FGM in order to adapt to local customs.<sup>29</sup>

### *Entry into force of the Kampala Convention*

On December 6, 2012, the African Union Convention on the Protection of Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention) came into force.<sup>30</sup> The Convention required 15 Member States to ratify before coming into force and this was met on November 6, 2012, when Swaziland ratified.<sup>31</sup> In a statement made by Mr. Beyani, he said that the Kampala Convention would help to stabilize displaced populations and consolidate peace through obligations set upon States.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Antonio Guterres said, “[a]round the world, the number of people forced into displacement within their own countries is growing. The Kampala Convention puts Africa in a leading position when it comes to having a legal framework for protecting and helping the internally displaced.”<sup>33</sup> One of the current key priorities is to have international and donor communities support African States to implement and raise awareness for the Convention.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, concludes his country visit to Sudan, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sudan: UN expert to assess situation of internally displaced persons and affected communities, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, concludes his country visit to Sudan, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, concludes his country visit to Sudan, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sudan: “Durable solutions and respect of internally displaced persons’ rights, key for peace and stability”, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Internally Displaced Women, n.d.

<sup>27</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDP News Alert, 14 December 2012, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Third Committee Approves Draft Resolution Amid At Intensifying Global Effort to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDP News Alert, 14 December 2012, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UN High Commissioner for Refugees hails “historic” breakthrough on the protection of internally displaced people in Africa, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UN High Commissioner for Refugees hails “historic” breakthrough on the protection of internally displaced people in Africa, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> The Brookings Institution, On the Occasion of the Commemoration of the Entry into Force of the African Union, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UN High Commissioner for Refugees hails “historic” breakthrough on the protection of internally displaced people in Africa, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, An International Model Emerges Today in Africa to Address the Plight of Millions of Internally Displaced Persons, 2012.

On December 7, 2012, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) followed up with a report to the United Nations Third Committee titled *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced person and humanitarian questions (A/67/451)* which contained two draft resolutions that were passed by the committee with no vote.<sup>35</sup> The first resolution, Resolution A/Res/67/149,<sup>36</sup> encouraged states to mobilize resources and emphasized UNHCR's humanitarian and non-political character role.<sup>36</sup> Resolution A/Res/67/150 encouraged states to sign or ratify the Kampala Convention in addition to refugee protection and observance of international humanitarian law.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Further action in protecting internally displaced persons*

Progress has been made in Yemen, where 80,000 internally displaced people have returned home as a result of the reestablishment of government authority in the southern province of Abyan in July 2012.<sup>38</sup> This figure is the first significant fall in the number of displaced persons in the area since the start of the local fight 18 months ago.<sup>39</sup> Extreme damage to infrastructure the widespread presence of landmines made the initial return slow but security improvements, including de-mining, has led to more families returning to Abyan.<sup>40</sup> The Government of Yemen has also alleviated the cost of transportation by covering the cost at around \$70 per person and security checkpoints help to ensure safe passage.<sup>41</sup>

#### **Challenges and Outlook**

IDP-related issues still exist in other states, such as Myanmar.<sup>42</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep concerns in October 2012 over the continuing inter-communal violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar, which has led to mass displacement.<sup>43</sup> In particular, local and national governments and society at large must end the endemic discrimination of the Muslim Rohingya community, guarantee their safety and respond to needs such as shelter, food and medical care.<sup>44</sup> In particular, human rights experts expressed their concern about the assertion of the Government that “the Rohungya are illegal immigrants and stateless persons.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> United Nations General Assembly, General Assembly Strongly Condemns Widespread, Systematic Human Rights Violations in Syria, As It Adopts 56 Resolutions Recommended by Third Committee, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations General Assembly, General Assembly Strongly Condemns Widespread, Systematic Human Rights Violations in Syria, As It Adopts 56 Resolutions Recommended by Third Committee, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations General Assembly, General Assembly Strongly Condemns Widespread, Systematic Human Rights Violations in Syria, As It Adopts 56 Resolutions Recommended by Third Committee, 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, 80,000 internally displaced people return home to southern Yemen, 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, 80,000 internally displaced people return home to southern Yemen, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, 80,000 internally displaced people return home to southern Yemen, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, 80,000 internally displaced people return home to southern Yemen, 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Myanmar urged to end violence and protect vulnerable communities in Rakhine State – UN experts, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Myanmar urged to end violence and protect vulnerable communities in Rakhine State – UN experts, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Myanmar urged to end violence and protect vulnerable communities in Rakhine State – UN experts, 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Myanmar urged to end violence and protect vulnerable communities in Rakhine State – UN experts, 2012.

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*This source provides links several recent global events that have a direct relation to IDPs. Delegates will find this link useful as it provides multiple cases of displacement in several countries including Sudan, Congo and Israel. The site also provides information on some of the previously discussed themes and issues including security of IDPs and cultural problems. Overall, the site provides excellent up to date information on IDP related issues.*

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012). *An International Model Emerges Today in Africa to Address the Plight of Millions of Internally Displaced Persons*. Retrieved on January 10, 2013 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12868&LangID=E>.

*This press release highlights the significance of the Kampala Convention and rights for IDPs. Though the Convention is specific to Africa, it also a global impact as it calls on support from the international community in its implementation. The link provides a summary of some of the obligations placed on states as a result of the Convention. Furthermore, the press release highlights the affects that IDPs have on state stability.*

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012). *Myanmar urged to end violence and protect vulnerable communities in Rakhine State – UN experts*. Retrieved on January 10, 2013 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12716&LangID=E>.

*This press release highlights the progress that Myanmar has made in its country as it moves towards democracy but also the impacts that the government has on IDPs. The article focuses on the issue of IDP in Myanmar and suggests some action items that can be taken by the local and national government. This situation in Myanmar is not unique and delegates will find the suggested solutions useful in IDP related situations around the world.*

Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. (2012). *80,000 internally displaced people return home to southern Yemen*. Retrieved on January 14, 2013 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/50a644266.html>.

*This news article highlights some of the issues in Yemen. As these issues are not specific to Yemen, delegates will find the solutions adopted in Yemen as a good starting point and model for cases of IDPs in other states. The article also examines some of the outstanding issues faced by IDPs and the role of the UN Refugee Agency in supporting refugees.*

United Nations General Assembly. (2012). *Third Committee Approves Draft Resolution Amid At Intensifying Global Effort to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation*. Retrieved on January 14, 2013 from: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gashc4061.doc.htm>

*This news press examines the significance of the Third Committee's approval of the Draft Resolution on FGM. The article highlights the committee's recognition of the reparable abuse of the human rights on women and girls and the need to promote and protect their human rights. Though not specifically linked to IDPs, this resolution is a significant step moving forward in highlighting one of the issues faced by internally displaced women and girls.*

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Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012). *The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani, concludes his country visit to Sudan*. Retrieved on January 10, 2013 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12822&LangID=E>

Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. (2012). *UN High Commissioner for Refugees hails “historic” breakthrough on the protection of internally displaced people in Africa*. Retrieved on January 14, 2013 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/50c0a1c79.html>.

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## II. Access to Safe Drinking Water as a Fundamental Human Right

### *Recent Developments*

On August 21, 2012 the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) introduced its report "Feeding a thirsty world: Challenges and opportunities for a water and food secure world" produced in collaboration with experts from the SIWI, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).<sup>46</sup> The report presents new evidence illustrating how the current trends in food production can actually lead to further increased water shortages and more competition for scarce water resources in many regions worldwide.<sup>47</sup> Seventy percent of all drinking water resources are already used just for agriculture and this number will even rise as our population is increasing.<sup>48</sup> Some of the solutions the report suggest are improvements in on-farm water efficiency, reductions in losses and waste in the food supply chain, and increased investment to close the gender gap in agricultural production.<sup>49</sup>

In September 2012, the State of California in the United States passed a new law on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.<sup>50</sup> This new law provides for cooperation and coordination among state agencies concerning the use of water for consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, welcomed the adoption of this new law and said that it could serve as a good example for other countries worldwide.<sup>51</sup>

On October 30, 2012, Special Rapporteur De Albuquerque reported before the General Assembly (GA) Third Committee on principal challenges related to the realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.<sup>52</sup> De Albuquerque prepared a report, which stated that next to the alarming fact that still one out of three people worldwide lack an access to safe drinking water (which means approximately 2.5 billion humans), it is important to note that one of the main reasons for it is that the access to water is not evenly distributed.<sup>53</sup> Especially groups that are marginalized every day such as slum dwellers, people with disabilities, or women and girls are also being discriminated against when it comes to the access to safe drinking water and sanitation.<sup>54</sup> In the report, she therefore recommended that water, sanitation, and hygiene must have specific goals, targets and indicators that are on equal terms with other main priorities for development so that access to safe drinking water is being fully integrated into the elimination of the inequality gap.<sup>55</sup> The report furthermore suggests that the post-2015 development agenda should create an independent goal that aims at universal access to safe drinking water so that it will be treated as an important feature of social and economic development.<sup>56</sup>

On January 4, 2013, Bangladesh started a project that will provide clean drinking water to 45 municipalities in seven districts of the country.<sup>57</sup> The project, called 'Environmental Sanitation and Water Supply with Piped Network in Thana Sadar and Growth Centre Pourasabhas' aims to eventually supply all residents of these 45 municipalities with clean drinking water and thereby tries to also reduce the chances of people getting infected with water-borne diseases and diarrhea.<sup>58</sup> Since this is a very recent project, its effectiveness still has to be proven, but if it is successful, this

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<sup>46</sup> Jägerskog, A., Jønch Clausen, T. (2012). *Feeding a Thirsty World – Challenges and Opportunities for a Water and Food Secure Future*.

<sup>47</sup> Jägerskog, A., Jønch Clausen, T. (2012). *Feeding a Thirsty World – Challenges and Opportunities for a Water and Food Secure Future*.

<sup>48</sup> Water World (2012). *SIWI report outlines major threats, opportunities for water, food security*.

<sup>49</sup> Water World (2012). *SIWI report outlines major threats, opportunities for water, food security*.

<sup>50</sup> United Nations (2012). *California law on human right to water sets example for others*.

<sup>51</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *California: New law on the human right to water and sanitation sets "inspiring example for others"*.

<sup>52</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation 67th session of the General Assembly*.

<sup>53</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation 67th session of the General Assembly*.

<sup>54</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation 67th session of the General Assembly*.

<sup>55</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation 67th session of the General Assembly*.

<sup>56</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation 67th session of the General Assembly*.

<sup>57</sup> Water World (2012). *Bangladesh approves water supply project for 45 municipalities*.

<sup>58</sup> Water World (2012). *Bangladesh approves water supply project for 45 municipalities*.

could serve as an example for further municipalities in Bangladesh and other countries and the Human Rights Council can use the experiences made in Bangladesh to support installing such projects elsewhere<sup>59</sup>

GA resolution 65/154 (2011) has declared 2013 the United Nations' International Year of Water Cooperation calling on UN Member States and other actors to use this year to promote actions on all levels in order to achieve the water-related goals that were agreed upon in Agenda 21, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.<sup>60</sup> In order to prepare for the International Year of Water Cooperation, the UN conference "Water Cooperation, Making it Happen. Preparing for the 2013 International Year" took place from January 8-10, 2013 in Zaragoza, Spain.<sup>61</sup> UN experts from all over the world tried to identify the best approaches to promote successful cooperation and discussed lessons learnt from past experiences and what can be learnt from them concerning improved water management.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, case studies were presented to show how effective water cooperation can be facilitated and certain locally specific barriers and challenges were discussed so that others can learn from them.<sup>63</sup>

From January 15-17, 2013, governments, businesses, and water experts from around the world will be participating in the International Water Summit (IWS) in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates to seek and present solutions for the urgent problem of water scarcity and on water sustainability<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Water World (2012). *Bangladesh approves water supply project for 45 municipalities.*

<sup>60</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2011). *International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013.* Resolution A/RES/65/154.

<sup>61</sup> United Nations (2012). *Preparing for the 2013 International Year. Water Cooperation: Making it Happen.*

<sup>62</sup> United Nations (2012). *Preparing for the 2013 International Year. Water Cooperation: Making it Happen.*

<sup>63</sup> United Nations (2012). *Preparing for the 2013 International Year. Water Cooperation: Making it Happen.*

<sup>64</sup> International Water Summit (2012). *Bringing the water-energy nexus to life.*

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Jägerskog, A., Jønch Clausen, T. (2012). *Feeding a Thirsty World – Challenges and Opportunities for a Water and Food Secure Future*. Report Nr. 31. Retrieved January 14, 2013 from [http://www.siwi.org/documents/Resources/Reports/Feeding\\_a\\_thirsty\\_world\\_2012worldwaterweek\\_report\\_31.pdf](http://www.siwi.org/documents/Resources/Reports/Feeding_a_thirsty_world_2012worldwaterweek_report_31.pdf).

*This comprehensive report gives a very good overview on different issues concerning water distribution. It introduces the thematic scope of the world water week 2012 and touches upon issues such as water scarcity and food security or gender inequality and water distribution. Furthermore, it introduces some new innovations in the field of agricultural water management and early warning systems for water in agriculture. This will be helpful for delegates when doing research for their position papers and also when working on their working papers.*

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012). *Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation 67th session of the General Assembly*. Retrieved January 14, 2012 from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12853&LangID=E>.

*This statement by The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, gives a basic overview over principal challenges related to the realization of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. She summarizes the main recommendations of her report to the General Assembly and explains why they are crucial to follow. For more thorough information, it is important for delegates to study the actual report, but this statement gives a very good and concise first insight into the topic.*

Scanlon, J., Cassar, A., Nemes, N. (2004). *Water as a human right?* IUCN Environmental Policy and Law Paper no 51. Retrieved January 14, 2013 from <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/EPLP-051.pdf>.

*The authors of this paper give a very comprehensive overview about the legal framework of water as a basic human right. They furthermore list the reasons why it is important to link water and human rights, such as more effective protection, enhancing sustainable development, and putting attention on conflicts over the use of shared water sources. They also list all legally and non-legally binding instruments concerning this issue which will be helpful for delegates during the working paper process.*

United Nations General Assembly (2011). *International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013*. Resolution A/RES/65/154.

*The General Assembly resolution on the International Year of Water Cooperation will be a helpful source for delegates since it quotes most of the important water-related resolutions, summits, and dialogues. It also states what has been done so far in this field and where more action is needed. It furthermore gives suggestions and advice on what the UN system and the Member States can do to take advantage of the International Year Water 2013.*

United Nations (2012). *Preparing for the 2013 International Year. Water Cooperation: Making it Happen*. Retrieved January 14, 2013 from [http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/water\\_cooperation\\_2013/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/water_cooperation_2013/index.shtml).

*This website contains all information about the International Year of Water Cooperation 2013. It publishes all conference outcomes and introduces presentations from participants and also provides a lot of background information on water. It also presents cases of water cooperation which might be helpful for delegates for case studies and best practice examples.*

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Water World (2012). *Bangladesh approves water supply project for 45 municipalities*. Retrieved September 14, 2012 from <http://www.waterworld.com/articles/2013/01/bangladesh-approves-water-supply-project-for-45-municipalities.html>.

### III. Deterring Discrimination and Violence Against People with Disabilities

#### *Toward universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol of 2006, held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2012, discussed mechanisms to facilitate the ‘Implementation of the Convention by the United Nations System’.<sup>65</sup> The President of the Conference, Mr. Grunditz, representing Sweden, reminded everyone of the importance of the universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol even if it remained a challenge to ratify such a ‘comprehensive and state-of-the-art instrument’.<sup>66</sup> Following the conference, new ratifications were made to the CRPD and its Optional Protocol. Afghanistan, Israel, Malta, Swaziland, Singapore and Cambodia finally ratified the Convention, and Malta, Afghanistan, Poland, the Russian Federation, Swaziland, and Dominica took a step in the right direction by ratifying the Optional Protocol.<sup>67</sup> Today, there are 127 ratifications and 155 signatories to the CRPD and 76 ratifications and 90 signatories to its Optional Protocol.<sup>68</sup>

#### *An interdisciplinary topic of human development*

##### *Gender Perspective*

On October 23, 2012, a Panel Discussion on Preventing and Ending Violence against Women was held in partnership with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), to cover a program relating to the elimination of violence against women with disabilities.<sup>69</sup> They reminded that it was an issue related to both human rights and to development programs.<sup>70</sup> Discussions will continue on April 17, 2013 with a General Discussion on Women and Girls with Disabilities taking place.<sup>71</sup>

##### *The Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) strategy*

From November 26 – 28, 2012, the first CBR Congress, called ‘CBR: The Key to realizing CRPD’ was held in Agra, India.<sup>72</sup> CBR is a multi-sector development strategy that aims at improving the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families. It requires the combined efforts of people, organizations, governmental health, education and social services.<sup>73</sup> It aims at providing guidelines in the context of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as the General Assembly (GA) highlighted in its resolution A/RES/65/186 (2011) ‘Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond’ acknowledging the fact that some policies must focus on persons with disability and the implementation of the CRPD.<sup>74</sup>

##### *Raising awareness initiatives*

On December 3, 2012, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities raised awareness about the necessity to remove barriers in society and to reduce the exclusion of the world’s largest minority.<sup>75</sup> Events such as a United Nations Enable Film Festival, round tables, forums and formal commemorations, were organized all over the world highlighting the diversity of perceptions towards persons with disabilities.<sup>76</sup> The United Nations (UN) Secretary-

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<sup>65</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2012). *States Parties to Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting (AM)*, HR/519.

<sup>66</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2012). *States Parties to Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting (AM)*, HR/519.

<sup>67</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Convention and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications*.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter November 2012*, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter November 2012*, p. 3; United Nations Enable (2012). *Panel Discussion on Preventing and Ending Violence against Women with Disabilities*.

<sup>70</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Panel Discussion on Preventing and Ending Violence against Women with Disabilities*.

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter December 2012*, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter December 2012*, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> World Health Organization (2012). *CBR and Millennium Development*, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2011). *Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for Persons with disabilities toward 2015 and beyond, A/RES/65/186*.

<sup>75</sup> United Nations News Centre (2012). *On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Ban calls for new push to improve access to society*.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *International Day of Persons with Disabilities*, 3 December 2012.

General took this opportunity to highlight the positive impact of persons with disabilities in the society and pointed out the challenge of the UN to ‘bridge the gap between well-meaning commitments and long-overdue actions’.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Progress in the UN***

Furthermore, the General Assembly Third Committee adopted three resolutions on the topic of disability.<sup>78</sup> A first resolution A/RES/67/82, adopted on December 12, 2012, deals with the socio-economic needs of persons affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Development Disorders (DD) to help relieve the issues surrounding communities and families of individuals affected by ASDs and DDs.<sup>79</sup> Focusing on the inclusion of persons with disability, the resolution A/RES/67/140 (YEAR) ‘Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond’ was adopted on December 20, 2012.<sup>80</sup> On that same day, a third resolution A/RES/67/160 (2012) was adopted, addressing the work of the Committee monitoring the CPRD.<sup>81</sup>

Finally, the preparatory process has started for the High-Level meeting of the GA on disability and development that will take place on September 23, 2012.<sup>82</sup> In this regard, the Commission for Social Development has submitted two reports for its 51<sup>st</sup> session of 2013: one from the UN Secretary-General on ‘Mainstreaming Disability in the Development Agenda’ and one from the Special Rapporteur on ‘Monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with disabilities’.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Secretary General (2012). *Message on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities*, 3 December 2012

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter November 2012*, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2012). *Addressing Socio-Economic Needs of Individuals, Families and Societies Affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Developmental Disorders (DD) and associated disabilities*, A/RES/67/82.

<sup>80</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2012). *Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond*, A/RES/67/140.

<sup>81</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2012). *Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto*, A/RES/67/160.

<sup>82</sup> United Nations Enable (2012). *High-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development*, 23 September 2013.

<sup>83</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council (2013). *Report of the Secretary General on Mainstreaming Disability in the Development Agenda*, E/CN.5/2013/9; *Report of the Special Rapporteur to the 51st Session of the Commission for Social Development: Note by the Secretary-General on monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*, E/CN.5/2013/10.

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*The Newsletter from the United Nations Enable provides a comprehensive insight into the new developments and current issues surrounding the topic of persons with disabilities. It reminds both of past work linking it to the present and future work and opportunities of this special agency. Delegates will be kept updated about the last information and progress made by their countries in regard to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society.*

United Nations Enable (2012). Panel Discussion on Preventing and Ending Violence against Women with Disabilities, 23 October 2012. Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012 from:

[http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/events/23\\_oct\\_2012\\_women\\_bn.doc](http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/events/23_oct_2012_women_bn.doc)

*The background note of this Panel Discussion will provide Delegates with far-reaching knowledge about one specific branch on the topic. This way they can understand in depth the mechanisms set up to end violence against women with disabilities, which can be a source of inspirations for further mechanisms and policies targeting a different part of the society.*

United Nations General Assembly (2012). *Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond*, A/RES/67/140, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012. Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/67/resolutions.shtml>

*This resolution shows the progress made by the General Assembly on this topic. It can be a broad source of inspirations for further work made within the Human Rights Council. It is a good starting point for a thought on recommendations and formulation of resolutions. Delegates should be aware of the wordings of resolution for their work coming in the committee.*

United Nations Enable (2012). *International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2012*. Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012 from:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1597>

*This brief insight of the events that took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> December will raise delegates' awareness about the universal importance of this debate. It replaces the topic in a multilateral context, and shows that initiatives matters, whether they are undertaken on an international scale or local-based. A look at this campaign from the main agency of interests regarding this topic will help participants to better understand what is at stake while discussing on disabilities.*

World Health Organization (2012). *CBR and Millennium Development*. Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012 from: [http://www.who.int/entity/disabilities/cbr/mdg\\_cbr\\_infosheet.pdf](http://www.who.int/entity/disabilities/cbr/mdg_cbr_infosheet.pdf)

*Developing on the strategy of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), this paper released by the World Health Organization will allow delegates to learn more about a specific type of strategy that can be implemented. It would provide them with an understanding of how to relate individuals, community and policy goals. CBR represents a source of inspiration for further ideas on mechanisms to be implemented in each country*

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United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter November 2012*. Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012 from:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/newsletter/november2012.doc>

United Nations Enable (2012). *Enable Newsletter December 2012*. Retrieved 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 from:

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[http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/gadocs/a\\_res\\_65\\_186.doc](http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/gadocs/a_res_65_186.doc)

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