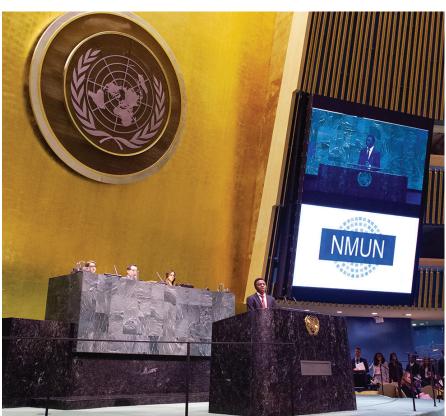# NMUN•NY

New York City, NY, USA
29 March - 2 April (Conf. A) / 5-9 April (Conf. B)

General Assembly Third Committee
Background Guide 2020

Written by: Citlali Mora Catlett and Zachary Parker, Directors
Esther Bickel and Ksenia Shevtsova, Assistant Directors

NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2020 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly, Third Committee (GA3). This year's staff is: Directors Citlali Mora Catlett (Conference A) and Zachary Parker (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Esther Bickel (Conference A) and Ksenia Shevtsova (Conference B). Citlali received her BA in Political Science, Economy, and Business Administration and her MA in Political Science at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich. She has been working as an expert in the area of blockchain technology education. Zachary holds a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Supply Chain Management and works as a Supply Chain Planner for a major international machine and equipment distributor. Esther is finishing her master's in Sustainability Science and works part-time in the customer service of a telemarketing company. Ksenia holds MA in International relations and works as an analyst in the field of Russia's foreign policy and its participation in the intergovernmental organizations.

The topics under discussion for the General Assembly Third Committee are:

  I.   Rights of Indigenous People
 II.   Empowering Conflict-Affected Children and Youth
III.   Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The General Assembly Third Committee is one of six Main Committees of the UN General Assembly, which is a primary organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly Third Committee is tasked with deliberating topics that relate to social and humanitarian affairs and human rights issues. The General Assembly Third Committee is the main facilitator of international human rights issues at the UN and provides a forum for all 193 Member States to discuss and cooperate through the creation of policy and norms. Because of their scope, General Assembly committees deal with a vast range of complex and difficult topics, but it is our hope that this experience will be an incredibly rewarding for all delegates.

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 explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2020 in accordance with the guidelines in the Position Paper Guide and the NMUN•NY Position Papers website.

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide - 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 start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. NMUN Rules of Procedure - include 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-Secretaries-General for the General Assembly Department, Collin King (Conference A) and Leah Schmidt (Conference B), at usg.ga@nmun.org

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

Sincerely,

Conference A	Conference B
Citlali Mora Catlett, *Director*	Zachary Parker, *Director*
Esther Bickel, *Assistant Director*	Ksenia Shevtsova, *Assistant Director*

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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.

General Assembly

Security Council

Economic and Social Council

Secretariat

International Court of Justice

Trusteeship Council

Subsidiary Bodies

GA First – Disarmament and International Security
GA Second – Economic and Financial
GA Third – Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural
HLPF – High-Level Political Forum
HRC – Human Rights Council

PBC – Peacebuilding Commission

Funds and Programmes

UNDP – UN Development Programme
UNEA – UN Environment Assembly
WFP – World Food Programme
UNAIDS – Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS
WFP – World Food Programme
UNFPA – UN Population Fund

Other Entities

UNHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Functional Commissions

CCPCJ – Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
CPD – Population and Development
CSW – Status of Women

Regional Commissions

UNECE – UN Economic Commission for Europe

Specialized Agencies

UNESCO – UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO – UN Industrial Development Organization
WHO – World Health Organization

Conferences

NPT – Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference

Committee Overview

Introduction

Following the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) was formed, and with it the General Assembly, one of the six principal organs established under the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), was created as a multilateral, deliberative forum comprising all Member States.[1] Its mandate's large substantive scope led the General Assembly to allocate its work to six committees, each focusing on a specific thematic area.[2] The Third Committee is mandated with discussing all matters related to social, humanitarian, and cultural affairs.[3] Over time, this mandate has expanded, making it the primary forum for human rights issues.[4] In recent years, more than 50% of the resolutions adopted by the committee were submitted under the human rights agenda.[5] This makes it the world's largest and most prominent forum for international human rights norm creation; deliberating topics such as the rights of indigenous peoples, assisting conflict-affected children and youth, and the implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006).[6] Moreover, more than 90% of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to human rights and labor standards, underlining the importance of human rights.[7]

Governance, Structure, and Membership

In accordance with the *Charter of the United Nations*, the General Assembly is comprised of 193 Member States, as well as the Holy See and the State of Palestine as Observer States.[8] All Member States and Observers of the General Assembly can attend sessions of the Third Committee.[9] The work of the committee is supported by non-governmental and intergovernmental observers like the European Union and the International Criminal Court.[10] The Third Committee meets annually for eight weeks from October to November after agenda items are allocated in September by the General Assembly Plenary depending on their theme and content.[11] The Secretary-General issues reports for the corresponding agenda items to inform the committee, and is at its disposal to answer questions in an allotted time for clarification.[12] Each annual session of the Third Committee begins directly with the substantive debate as there is no General Debate beforehand.[13] The customary workflow for each item consists of an interactive dialogue

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[1] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 55-60; UN General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, 2019.

[2] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; UN General Assembly, *Main Committees*, 2019.

[3] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural*, 2019.

[4] Ibid.; UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Draft Proposals per Agenda Item*, 2019.

[5] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

[6] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006; UN HRC, *Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council (A/HRC/RES/5/1)*, 2007; UN HRC, *Review of the Work and Functioning of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/RES/16/21)*, 2011; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

[7] Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, p. 9.

[8] UN General Assembly, *Member States*, 2019.

[9] International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 7.

[10] UN General Assembly, *List of non-Member States, entities and organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly (A/INF/72/5)*, 2017.

[11] International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, pp. 7, 11; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

[12] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 37-38, 65.

[13] Ibid., p. 74.

between the Member States and experts, who submit reports and answer questions.[14] The Third Committee recommends draft resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary committee which adopts draft resolutions through a simple majority vote.[15] In the General Assembly Plenary, documents addressing agenda items that are considered important questions, like items relating to peace and security, the budget, or new members, require a two-thirds majority to pass.[16] These "important questions" are considered by the Plenary and not the main committees.[17] On each agenda item, the Third Committee can adopt resolutions and decisions by simple majority.[18] Still approximately 70% of its resolutions were adopted by consensus between the 60th and 70th session.[19] It also issues reports to the General Assembly Plenary about its work and recommendations on its decision-making.[20] In December, all documents are presented to the Plenary for adoption either through a vote or by consensus, as recommended in the committee's report.[21] It is customary for the Plenary to follow the recommendations and mirror the form of adoption of the committee; a decision adopted by consensus in the committee is adopted by consensus in the Plenary, as goes for adoption by vote.[22]

The Third Committee has a Secretariat comprised of a Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Assistants.[23] Each year ahead of the session, the committee elects a Bureau with a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur.[24] The Bureau of the committee assists with opening and closing each meeting, managing the discussions, pronouncing decisions, assisting with drafts and documents, and ensuring compliance with the rules of procedure.[25] The Third Committee at its 74th session (2019) is chaired by H.E. Mr. Christian Bruan of Luxembourg.[26] The Vice-Chairs are Ms. Gail Ferngalo from Liberia, Mr. Ihor Yaremenko from Ukraine, and Ms. Maria Emilia Eyheralde from Uruguay, while the Rapporteur was Mr. Firas Hassan Jabbar from Iraq.[27]

Given the large scope of the committee, various experts, special rapporteurs, working groups, regional organizations, and UN entities, such as the UN Volunteers program, are encouraged to participate in an interactive dialogue with the committee and assist in policy implementation.[28] The UN Secretariat assists the Third Committee by delivering substantive and logistical support.[29] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) contribute to the committee's work as it is a focal point for human rights bodies, reports,

[14] Ibid., pp. 73-75.

[15] Ibid., pp. 37-38, p. 62.

[16] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 18; UN General Assembly, *About the General Assembly*, 2019.

[17] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 37-38 & p. 62.

[18] Ibid.

[19] International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 30.

[20] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 37-38, p. 62 & 68.

[21] Ibid., p. 62.

[22] Ibid., p. 68.

[23] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Bureau of the 74th Session*, 2019.

[24] International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 12.

[25] UN General Assembly, *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.18*),* p. 30-31.

[26] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Bureau of the 74th Session*, 2019.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 73-74; UN General Assembly, *Organization of the Work of the Third Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/72/L.1)*, 2017; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 15.

[29] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011

and other publications.[30] Furthermore, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), established in 2006 by General Assembly resolution 60/251, provides an annual report to the Third Committee on its own recent sessions and discussions.[31] Independent experts, special rapporteurs, and working groups that compile reports and advise the HRC also engage in interactive dialogues with the committee.[32] The committee traditionally has not engaged in depth with civil society or private sector representatives.[33]

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The Third Committee's work encompasses a broad variety of issues beyond human rights including topics from the 73rd session like sustainable economic growth and development, the advancement of women, the rights of indigenous people and children, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, crime prevention and criminal justice, international drug control, and terrorism.[34]

The Third Committee derives its mandate from a variety of UN documents.[35] Articles 10 to 17 of the *Charter of the United Nations* are the principal guidelines for the substance and scope of all General Assembly committees, whereas Articles 23, 61, 86, and 97 provide the Third Committee with its mandate and the agenda items allocated to it.[36] In regard to the committee's work in the field of human rights, Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* speaks of the promotion of human rights, and has been said to be the foundation of *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).[37] The Third Committee used the UDHR as the groundwork to adopt additional and more specific international human rights instruments, chief among them the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966).[38] These documents, along with the two optional protocols to the ICCPR make up what is known as the *International Bill of Human Rights* and they guide the work of the committee.[39]

In addition to the human rights framework, the SDGs guide the work of the committee as they relate to many of the committee's issue areas.[40] The SDGs are strongly linked to human rights; among others SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), which *inter alia* relates to the protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation and to the right to access to

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[30] UN OHCHR, *Human Rights – New York: Mainstreaming Human Rights*, 2019; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 75; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 10.

[31] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Human Rights Council (A/72/53)*, 2017; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 19.

[32] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, p. 65.

[33] Ibid., p. 74.

[34] UN General Assembly, Seventy-third session, *Allocation of Agenda Items to the Third Committee (A/C.3/73/1)*, 2018.

[35] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 10-17.

[36] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 10-17, 23, 61, 86, 97.

[37] Ibid., Art. 1; UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

[38] UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

[39] UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1966; UN OHCHR, *Universal Human Rights Instruments*, 2019.

[40] UNRIC, *UNRIC Library Backgrounder: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 2019.

justice, which impacts matters of criminal justice.[41] These are all issue areas the Third Committee engages with and strongly relate to the area of social affairs.[42]

The Third Committee does not focus on operative tasks, but policy recommendations and primarily works through the initiation of studies and the creation of nonbinding recommendations.[43] Studies are then carried out by relevant bodies, like OHCHR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.[44] Its work is of normative nature as it does not carry out operations, field work, or tasks called for in the committee's resolutions.[45] Policy recommendations are primarily delegated to the various agencies and offices of the UN Secretariat.[46] For example, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has prepared a report for the Third Committee's 74th session and the Secretary-General submitted a report on the status of the CRPD.[47] The Third Committee can also call for conferences to highlight certain issues, with a notable recurring example being the World Conference on Women, originating from the Third Committee resolution 3276 (XXIX) (1974).[48]

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

The Third Committee began its 73rd session in October 2018.[49] The committee adopted 57 resolutions in total, 65% by consensus and 35% by vote.[50] A recurring topic has been the revitalization efforts for the General Assembly.[51] The goal is to make the work of committees more inclusive, transparent, effective, streamlined, and publicly supported.[52] In the General Assembly's 73rd session, an ad-hoc working group was established to identify areas that require streamlining.[53]

As a majority of debates center on human rights issues, how to best address these in the UN system has become a prominent topic of debate in the Third Committee.[54] The reasons for increasing debates on issues under the human rights agenda vary, but differing opinions on human rights questions as well as various ways to address the issue are part of it.[55] A big question under debate is whether resolutions on the human rights situation within single Member States are suitable to address human rights issues.[56] Nevertheless, during the 73rd session five country-specific resolutions were adopted against the

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[41] UN OHCHR, S*ummary Table on the Linkages Between the SDGs and Relevant International Human Rights Instruments*.
[42] UN General Assembly, *Third Committee*, 2019.
[43] UN General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, 2019.
[44] UN General Assembly, *Organization of the work of the Third Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/72/L.1)*, 2017.
[45] UN General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, 2019.
[46] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, p. 65; UN OHCHR, *Human Rights – New York: Mainstreaming Human Rights*, 2019.
[47] UN General Assembly, *Documents per Agenda Item – 74th session*, 2019
[48] UN General Assembly, *Conference of the International Women's Year (XXIX) (A/RES/29/3276)*, 1974; UN-Women, *World Conferences on Women*, 2019.
[49] Damplo, *Report on the 73rd Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly*, 2018; UN General Assembly, Seventy-third session, *Allocation of Agenda Items to the Third Committee (A/C.3/73/1)*, 2018; UN, DGC, *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases: General Assembly*, 2019.
[50] Damplo, *Report on the 73rd Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly*, 2018; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017.
[51] UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly*, 2019.
[52] Ibid.
[53] UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly: Current Session (73rd)*, 2019.
[54] Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017.
[55] Ibid.
[56] International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 21; Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017.

remaining opposition of some Member States, which reject country-specific mandates due to their politicized nature.[57] Observed overlaps, such as in the case of over half of the resolutions of the 73rd session, and sometimes even contradictions between the Third Committee and the HRC have been argued to cause coherence issues and duplications.[58] The high degree of overlap can be traced back to the HRC being established as a subsidiary organ instead of a main body leading to a hierarchy competition between both bodies, and with it to lacks in coherence.[59]

Considering other social and human rights issues, the Third Committee adopted one draft resolution each on persons with disabilities, rights of indigenous people, and the world drug problem, as well as multiple ones on children's rights.[60] In its 73rd session, the Third Committee discussed the rights of the child in its diverse facets, from the right to education and access to health care to the issue of child labor and violence against children.[61] The committee reiterated the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989), as well as the role of the *2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* (2015) in the promotion of the rights of the child.[62] The rights of children are connected with several of the SDGs, such as SDG 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).[63] The situation of children in armed conflict was addressed specifically focusing on violence against children and the need for humanitarian assistance.[64] The importance of the CRPD and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) (2007) were reaffirmed.[65] The committee emphasized that persons with disabilities are "development agents and beneficiaries," and as such they are integral for the SDGs.[66] The relevance of including indigenous peoples to achieve the SDGs was also highlighted.[67] For example, UNDRIP can be linked to one-third of the SDGs' targets.[68] Difficulties affecting indigenous peoples, such as violence against women and girls, data and information gathering, sustainable and resilient communities, and the rights of children, were addressed in the committee's debate and decisions.[69] The importance of the rights of children, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples can also be noticed in the provisional program of the Third Committee's 74th session and in the submitted reports by Special Representatives and the Secretary-General.[70]

[57] Damplo, *Report on the 73rd Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly*, 2018; UN General Assembly, *Documents of the 73rd Session*, 2019.

[58] Ibid.; Damplo, *Duplication or complementarity? A Comparative Analysis of Human Rights Council and Third Committee Resolutions*, 2018; Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017; United Nations, General Assembly. *Documents per Agenda Item – 73rd session*, 2019.

[59] Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017.

[60] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Status of Action on Draft Proposals*, 2019; Damplo, *Report on the 73rd Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly*, 2018.

[61] UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Rights of the Child (A/C.3/73/L.26/Rev.1)*, 2018.

[62] Ibid., pp. 1-5, 16.

[63] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Children and Armed Conflict and the SDGs*, 2019.

[64] UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Rights of the Child (A/C.3/73/L.26/Rev.1)*, 2018, pp. 14-16.

[65] UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/C.3/73/L.6/Rev.1)*, 2018; UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/C.3/73/L.24/Rev.1)*, 2018.

[66] UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/C.3/73/L.6/Rev.1)*, 2018, p. 2, 6.

[67] UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/C.3/73/L.24/Rev.1)*, 2018, p. 2.

[68] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*, 2007; Indigenous Navigator, *Where are Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Sustainable Development Goals?*

[69] UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/C.3/73/L.24/Rev.1)*, 2018.

[70] UN General Assembly, *Draft Provisional Programme of Work of the Third Committee - 74th session*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *Documents per Agenda Item -74th session*, 2019.

Conclusion

The Third Committee continues to have a central role as it provides an overarching forum of discussion for a wide variety of social, humanitarian, and cultural issues, and is the largest representative body for human right norms.[71] Particularly within the context of the adoption of the SDGs, the Third Committee's work continues to be integral to improving human rights situations around the world.[72] The General Assembly Third Committee's 74th session reflects the importance of human rights agenda items for the committee.[73] Among others, the committee will extensively address the rights of children, and with it consider reports on the topics of violence against children and sexual exploitation of children.[74] Moreover, the "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People" (74/149) from July 2019 and the report of the Secretary-General on "Accessibility and the Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto" (74/146) will be discussed.[75]

Annotated Bibliography

International Service for Human Rights. (2017). *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*. Retrieved 25 August 2019 from: https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/article/files/ishr_3rd_com_handbook_eng_web.pdf
> *This handbook by the International Service for Human Rights provides an overview of the Third Committee's work and structure. It also highlights the Third Committee's relationship with other UN bodies and stakeholders, as well as the role of regional and political groups. This is a valuable source for delegates looking to familiarize themselves with the work of the Third Committee, and how it falls in the overall General Assembly and United Nations architecture.*

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. (2017). *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. Retrieved 20 August 2019 from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-new-york/en/documents/UN_GA__Final.pdf
> *The Permanent Mission to the United Nations of Switzerland published this handbook as an introductory guidance material for the General Assembly. The handbook is an ideal starting point to understand the General Assembly, gain an overview of its processes, and organizational structure. It gives strongly summarized information and provides context to better understand the functioning of the General Assembly and its committees. Furthermore, delegates should consult this source to not only better understand the General Assembly in its entirety but also to gain more information on the existing rules of procedure, structure of resolutions, and workflow to help familiarizing themselves with the formal structures of the body's work.*

United Nations, Department of Global Communications. (2018). *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases: General Assembly*. Retrieved 23 August 2019 from: https://www.un.org/press/en/content/general-assembly
> *This website includes the latest meetings coverage and press releases from the General Assembly. It is straightforward and easy to navigate, and includes links to the different General Assembly committees, including the Third Committee. This is a useful source for delegates looking for updates on General Assembly meetings and progress or for press releases concerning particular topics.*

United Nations, General Assembly. (2019). *Documents per Agenda Item – 73rd session*. Retrieved 19 August 2019 from: https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/73/documentslist.shtml

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[71] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

[72] Damplo, *Report on the 73rd Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly*, 2018.

[73] UN General Assembly, *Draft Provisional Programme of Work of the Third Committee - 74th session*, 2019.

[74] UN General Assembly, *Documents per Agenda Item -74th session*, 2019.

[75] Ibid.

This website of the General Assembly provides a list of documents of the 73rd session of the General Assembly Third Committee. The adopted documents are structured in regard to the agenda item they correspond to. This source is helpful for delegate's research as it gives a structured overview of the outcomes of the 73rd session, and with it the possibility to easily explore the work of the committee at its last annual session.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2019). *Universal Human Rights Instruments.* Retrieved 20 August 2019 from:
https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/universalhumanrightsinstruments.aspx
This website from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provides a good overview of the most important human rights instruments and the bodies that monitor them. It does not only cite source in regard to human rights in general, but furthermore includes international documents by topic areas, such as for example the rights of child, rights of persons with disabilities, and the prevention of discrimination. It provides delegates with the ideal overview to begin researching the international human rights regime, its fundamentals and specific topic areas.

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http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml

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I. Rights of Indigenous People

Introduction

The term "indigenous peoples" has multiple definitions, however the International Labour Organization (ILO) has broadly defined indigenous peoples as "descendants of populations 'which inhabited a country or geographical region during its conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries' and 'retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions'."[76] Another widely cited definition of "indigenous peoples" is the definition that emerged from the *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations* (1987), submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, José Martínez Cobo.[77] This study defines indigenous peoples as "those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them."[78] Indigenous people are entitled to the same rights as all other people globally, however the international community has begun to increasingly recognize and understand their distinct cultural diversity, and to ensure that their specific rights and needs are met.[79]

While the specific rights of indigenous peoples are primarily outlined in the 2007 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), indigenous people continue to face high levels of social, political, and economic discrimination.[80] There are currently 370 million indigenous peoples globally which account for roughly 5% of the global population, however also comprise roughly 15% of the world's impoverished populations.[81] According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), indigenous peoples often have their rights violated and ignored, including attempts to reduce cultural preservation, not acknowledging land ownership, cultural marginalization, or violation of basic human rights.[82] Even though some progress has been made in having indigenous persons' voices heard through both domestic and international channels, the need to maintain indigenous rights remain pressing.[83]

International and Regional Framework

The *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights* (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1948, and is the foundational document outlining the basic human rights to which all persons are entitled to.[84] While there are no specific mentions to indigenous populations, the preamble and subsequent articles emphasize that these rights apply to all human beings.[85] In particular, Article 2 states that all persons are entitled to all rights and freedoms within the UDHR; Article 15 states that all people have the right to a nationality; and Article 17 states that all people have the right to property, including that no one can be arbitrarily removed from their property.[86] Adopted in 1957 by the ILO, the

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[76] Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions & UN OHCHR, *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions*, 2013.

[77] United Nations, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1982/2/Add.6)*, 1987.

[78] Ibid., p. 29.

[79] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*, 2007.

[80] Ibid.; UN DESA, *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Education*, 2017, p. 3.

[81] Cultural Survival, *The Issues*, 2018; Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions & UN OHCHR, *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions*, 2013.

[82] Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions & UN OHCHR, *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions*, 2013.

[83] Ibid.

[84] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

Convention 107 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations was the primary foundational document providing for the protection of and integration mechanisms for indigenous peoples; however it only focused on integrating indigenous peoples into existing groups, rather than recognizing them as their own distinct group of people.[87] In 1966, the General Assembly adopted two guiding framework documents on human rights: the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural* Rights (ICESCR), which both focused on self-determination, and outlined the rights granted to all peoples.[88] *Convention 169* on *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples* (1989) further replaced Convention 107 to ensure protection mechanisms were in place to reduce marginalization against indigenous peoples.[89] Convention 169 recognized the rights of indigenous peoples, outlining that indigenous peoples were entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity, as well as establishing specific rights of indigenous peoples such as cultural preservation and language.[90]

Following discussions within the Human Rights Council (HRC), the General Assembly officially adopted the UNDRIP as the first document to fully outline the rights of indigenous peoples.[91] While UNDRIP focuses on reaffirming many of the rights outlined in other documents such as the *Charter of the United Nations* (1941), ICCPR, and ICESCR, it also establishes additional rights, such as the right to not be forced into assimilation, the right to language and cultural preservation, the rights to indigenous people's own forms of education and media, and protection of their land and resources.[92] Culture is also determined as a right throughout UNDRIP and as a key aspect of indigenous identity, and is specifically noted in Articles 8, 11, 14, 15, and 31.[93] In 2010, the UN General Assembly established the "World Conference on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," which was held in 2014 to further advance the ideals set forth in UNDRIP.[94] The conference reaffirmed the international community's commitment to UNDRIP and the rights of indigenous peoples, including placing specific importance on the rights of marginalized peoples within indigenous groups, as well as health, education, and the role of women and youth in indigenous leadership.[95] As an outcome of the World Conference, it was recommended that the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) be created to further achieve UNDRIP.[96] To further support the relationship between indigenous rights and the environment, the *Paris Agreement was* adopted in 2016 as a global convention working to reduce the effects of climate change, as part of the larger *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (1992).[97] The *Paris Agreement* specifically highlighted importance of indigenous rights and the importance of indigenous peoples' knowledge in adapting to and reducing the effects of climate change.[98]

Role of the International System

The General Assembly Third Committee continues to highlight the importance of indigenous rights and issues including reiterating the importance of UNDRIP, and emphasizing the significance of culture, language, and indigenous livelihoods.[99] The General Assembly has previously discussed indigenous issues more generally, however in 1992, specific discussion on the issue gained significant traction when

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[87] ILO, *Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention (C107)*, 1957.
[88] UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.
[89] ILO, *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C169)*, 1989.
[90] Ibid.
[91] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*, 2007.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] UN General Assembly, *Indigenous Issues (A/RES/65/198)*, 2010.
[95] UN General Assembly*, Outcome document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/69/2)*, 2014.
[96] UN ECOSOC, *System-wide Action Plan for Ensuring a Coherent Approach to Achieving the Ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (E/C.19/2016/5)*, 2016.
[97] COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2016.
[98] Ibid.
[99] UN General Assembly, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/C.3/73/L.24/Rev.1)*, 2018.

the "International Decade on the World's Indigenous Peoples" (1995-2004) was established.[100] The decade saw the growth of funding for indigenous activities, human rights protections, and integration of indigenous issues within the UN system.[101] The decade also saw the creation of programs within the UN system that promote indigenous activities and rights, and also identified that additional in-country work needs to be conducted to improve the rights of indigenous peoples.[102] In 2016, the General Assembly discussed the high-level event to occur at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly on the ten-year anniversary of UNDRIP, the creation of "The International Year of Indigenous Languages" in 2019, and partnerships with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other UN organizations in mitigating the prevalence of suicide amongst indigenous youth.[103] During the seventy-third session, the General Assembly discussed inclusion of indigenous rights when integrating the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), and increased action required on preventing and eliminating violence against indigenous peoples, specifically marginalized groups.[104]

Reporting to the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), is a high-level advisory body established in 2000 that deals with indigenous issues on "economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights issues" by providing advice and recommendations, raising awareness, and promoting UNDRIP, as it relates to indigenous issues.[105] In past sessions, the UNPFII has discussed recommendations on climate change (2008), indigenous culture and identity (2010), good governance as it relates to UNDRIP (2014), and collective land rights (2018).[106] Created by the HRC in 2007, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples works directly with indigenous peoples, civil society, intergovernmental organization, and academia, to provide expertise and guidance on the rights of indigenous peoples.[107] At the twelfth session of the Expert Mechanism in 2019, discussions took place regarding recognition, repatriation and reconciliation, migration, and indigenous women in power.[108]

Reporting to the Human Rights Council, Commission on Human Rights, and the General Assembly, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, the current Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples works to establish ways for indigenous peoples to overcome obstacles for protection of their rights, review alleged violations of indigenous rights, provide recommendations on improving indigenous rights, and coordinate with other relevant indigenous bodies, while simultaneously working in collaboration with the UNPFII.[109] Outside of the UN framework, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs works to empower indigenous populations as well as give input into the development of the UNPFII and support related NGOs.[110] These include the Center for World Indigenous Studies, which has been responsible for helping draft 27 laws and regulations, and the World Rainforest Movement, which works to protect the rights of indigenous peoples whose traditional lands are forested.[111]

Preserving Cultural Rights and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible Cultural Heritage

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[100] UN DESA, *UN General Assembly Resolutions and Discussion on Indigenous peoples*, 2019.
[101] UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Preliminary Review by the Coordinator of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People on the Activities of the United Nations System in Relation to the Decade* (E/2004/82), 2004.
[102] Ibid.
[103] UN General Assembly, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/71/481)*, 2016.
[104] UN General Assembly, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/73/156)*, 2019.
[105] UN DESA, *Permanent Forum*, 2019.
[106] Ibid.
[107] UN OHCHR, *Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2019.
[108] UN OHCHR, *Twelfth session of the Expert Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2019.
[109] UN OHCHR, *Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2019; UN OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2019; UN OHCHR, *Annual Reports*, 2019.
[110] IWGIA, *About Us*.
[111] CWIS, *What we do*, 2019; WRM, *About WRM*.

Due to the ongoing lack of inclusion of indigenous peoples in global decision-making processes, indigenous peoples' ability to preserve traditional teachings or languages is greatly diminished.[112] For indigenous peoples, traditional knowledge is an important aspect of cultural heritage, and the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and knowledge often goes unprotected.[113] For many indigenous peoples, ICH can refer to the unwritten values, traditions, or beliefs of the community; and ICH is often handed down orally through multi-generational teachings.[114] In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* which outlined methods of safeguarding at the national and international level.[115] In the convention on ICH, it was agreed that ICH should not be fixed, but rather promoted through transmission and communication of knowledge and teachings.[116] While inventories or records of ICH are useful initial actions to protect ICH, it emphasized that those communities who have ICH must be involved in that preservation process as they have the final determination on what is part of their cultural heritage.[117] Oral transmission, performing arts, or social events are some categorizations of communicating ICH, but ICH can also be communicated in other ways such as cultural healing techniques practiced by the Vimbuza in Malawi, or the legal protection of sacred land for the Kankurang initiation rite of the Manding people of Senegal and the Gambia.[118]

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Language
With almost 7000 indigenous languages in existence globally, the promotion of indigenous languages is a key cultural right, as it allows for the preservation of traditional knowledge and can be a tool for indigenous reconciliation and decision-making processes.[119] 2019 was declared by the General Assembly as the "Year of Indigenous Languages," which aims to promote the importance of indigenous languages as well as highlight the loss of indigenous languages and the lack of existing protection.[120] The "Centrality of Indigenous Peoples" is a key theme of the 2019 *Year of Indigenous Languages Action Plan*, which emphasized that indigenous people must be included in any efforts to promote or improve traditional language, knowledge, and culture.[121] The Action Plan includes five intervention areas: improving reconciliation, understanding, and cooperation; knowledge sharing of best practices for indigenous languages; integration of indigenous languages into national policies and frameworks; empowerment; and to increase the value of culture and language.[122]

Related to the "Year of Indigenous Languages," the theme of the 2019 UNPFII was "Traditional Knowledge: Generation, Transmission and Protection," and traditional knowledge was emphasized as key in the contexts of sustainable development and biological diversity, climate change, education, health care and medicine, food sovereignty, and traditional livelihoods.[123] As outlined in the first installment of the *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* (2009) report, indigenous traditional knowledge has identified that modern development has worsened relationships between humans and the natural environment.[124] The importance of traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and climate change was also emphasized during the 2019 UN Climate Summit, in which three commitments of indigenous peoples were outlined: the creation of plans to protect biological diversity; develop climate change policies that protect indigenous land and resources; and implement a rights-based approach for the development of renewable energy.[125]

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[112] UN DESA, *Culture*, 2019.
[113] UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Secretariat on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge** (E/C.19/2007/10)*, 2007, p. 3.
[114] Ibid.
[115] UNESCO, *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2018.
[116] Ibid.
[117] UNESCO, *What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?*, p. 10.
[118] UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage Domains*, pp. 8 & 10.
[119] UNESCO, *The Role of the Language*, 2018.
[120] UN General Assembly, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/71/178)*, 2016.
[121] UN ECOSOC, *Action Plan for Organizing the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (E/C.19/2018/8)*, 2018.
[122] UN ECOSOC, *Traditional Knowledge: Generation, Transmission, and Protection (E/C.19/2019/5)*, 2019, pp. 9-12.
[123] Ibid.
[124] UN DESA, *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, 2009, p. 44.
[125] Indigenous Climate Action, *World Indigenous Peoples Present Climate at UNSG Climate Action Summit*, 2019.

Tuntiak Katan, who on behalf of the NGO Indigenous Climate Action, stated that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified that indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge systems can contribute to meeting the goals outlined in the *Paris Agreement* by having indigenous peoples commit to protecting biodiverse culture, develop climate related actions that protect their rights, and a rights-based approach and access to renewable energy.[126]

Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights

Indigenous Self-Determination
Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination confirms their ability to have control over their land, natural resources, or environment, as well as effects on health, social issues, and education.[127] Indigenous peoples regard self-determination as a fundamental and inherent right and as a prerequisite for the full achievement of human rights.[128] However, many indigenous peoples who experience multi-generational trauma from past colonial practices such as residential schools, cultural repression, and assimilation often experience challenges like marginalization, low quality education, and poverty, which impact indigenous peoples ability to achieve full self-determination.[129] As outlined in the 2009 *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* report, these challenges can lead to various systemic social challenges such as increased rates of high-risk behaviors, which inhibit their ability to achieve self-determination or social advancement.[130] In recent years, various indigenous actors have worked to increase indigenous representation politically for example in the New Zealand Parliament, which has dedicated specific seats for the Maori peoples, based on the population eligible for voting.[131] Further, Burundi has assigned six seats for the Batwa peoples in their National Assembly and Senate; and the Parliament of India designated seats for indigenous tribes as stated in the Indian Constitution.[132]

Gender Equality for Indigenous Peoples
While indigenous women are entitled to the same rights as men under international human rights standards, indigenous women continue to face additional obstacles towards equality.[133] Additionally, indigenous women are recognized as playing a key role in improving, maintaining, preserving, and passing down cultural knowledge and language.[134] The UN Commission on the Status of Women identified the importance of respecting traditional knowledge of indigenous women, including their rights and contributions to social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental advancement and protection.[135] However, because indigenous women often deal with multiple levels of discrimination, they face disproportionate levels of poverty, health issues, reduced educational opportunities, and hindered economic prosperity.[136] Indigenous women also continue to face marginalization and violence, and adequate laws protecting the traditional knowledge that women possess are lacking, which impacts the ability for multi-generational knowledge transmission.[137]

The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dubravka Šimonović, stated that indigenous women in Canada, for example, face a multitude of systemic challenges of poverty and marginalization, and that existing social protection measures are not sufficient for indigenous peoples, particularly

[126] Indigenous Climate Action, *World Indigenous Peoples Present Climate at UNSG Climate Action Summit*, 2019.
[127] UNDG, *United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*, 2008.
[128] UN DESA, *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, 2009, pp. 192-193.
[129] Ibid., p. 148.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and UNOHCR, *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions*, 2013, p. 23.
[132] Ibid.
[133] UNDG, *United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*, 2008. p. 2.
[134] UN ECOSOC, *Interactive Dialogue on the Focus Area: Empowerment of Indigenous Women*, 2017.
[135] UN CSW, *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*, 2019, p. 13.
[136] UNDG, *United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*, 2008. p. 22.
[137] Quebec Native Women Inc., *The Role of Indigenous Women in the Protection of Traditional Knowledge*.

indigenous women.[138] In the *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2015), the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples identified that overall challenges for meeting indigenous women's rights globally included existing monitoring systems being ineffective, lack of data, progressive economic policies, and social stigma to be some of the largest contributing factors.[139] The recent federal report on *Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada* (2018) identified various factors for increasing potential risk rates for indigenous women including poverty and insecurity, education, employment, and access to justice.[140] According to the report, the systemic effects of poverty on indigenous women can then include mental health concerns, addictions, or food insecurity.[141] Regarding human security, the report called for increased governmental involvement to ensure all indigenous peoples have access to adequate social and economic needs, and to provide increased services for indigenous women.[142] Of the reports many recommendations, most can be summarized into understanding the root causes for the disproportionate violence, which include increased programming to address violence and law reform, as well as understanding failures of the justice system which include increased information sharing or improved protection for marginalized peoples.[143]

Conclusion

The General Assembly Third Committee plays a critical role in ensuring the issues of indigenous marginalization are addressed, and indigenous rights continue to be met.[144] Culture, language, and traditional knowledge are just a few of the important rights indigenous people are entitled to as outlined in UNDRIP.[145] With tools like UNPFII, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and UNDRIP, there are increasing avenues available for discussing and reaffirming the rights of indigenous peoples.[146]

Further Research

When researching this topic further, delegates should be guided by the following questions: How can the rights of indigenous peoples be further implemented and achieved within Member States? How can the voices and opinions of indigenous peoples be better represented at the local, national, and regional levels? How can indigenous peoples better preserve their culture within non-indigenous political and social systems? Through which methods can traditional knowledge such as language and cultural practices continue to be preserved? What can be better done to achieve indigenous human rights? How can women and youth play a larger role in ensuring the achievement of indigenous rights? How can the UN support the rights and political representation of indigenous women?

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[138] UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences*, 2018, p. 14.
[139] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, *Victoria Tauli Corpuz*, 2015, pp. 17-19.
[140] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Volume 1b*, 2019, pp. 141-160.
[141] Ibid., p. 142.
[142] Ibid., pp. 181-182.
[143] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Master List of Report Recommendations Organized By Theme and Colour-Coded by Jurisdiction*, 2019.
[144] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues (Third Committee)*, 2019; UN DESA, *Permanent Forum*, 2019.
[145] UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*, 2007.
[146] UN DESA, *Indigenous Peoples at the UN*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *UNDRIP (A/RES/61/295)*, 2007.

Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from:
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/UNDRIPManualForNHRIs.pdf

> *This manual provides an in-depth overview on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including a historical review overview of the challenges and rights of indigenous peoples. The manual aims to identify the importance of indigenous rights, provides an overview of UNDRIP including its implementation, and how human rights institutions work with indigenous peoples and their rights. Delegates will find this report particularly beneficial as it provides an excellent thematic overview of the challenges indigenous people face in terms of the achievement of indigenous rights.*

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2009). *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples.* Retrieved 26 September 2019 from:
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf

> *This document is the first of four reports outlining different aspects of indigenous peoples – education, health, and implementing UNDRIP. The first volume talks about some of the various challenges indigenous peoples face, including marginalization, discrimination, and poverty among others. This document provides a good understanding of the role of indigenous self-determination, which will be a key concept for delegates to comprehend throughout their research. The document is split into different thematic areas, addressing poverty and well-being, culture, environment, education, health, human rights, and emerging issues for indigenous peoples.*

United Nations Development Group. (2008). *United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from:
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/UNDG_guidelines_EN.pdf

> *This document outlines various policies and frameworks for implementing indigenous rights and perspectives that promote human rights for indigenous peoples. This report also provides a practical understanding to the challenges indigenous peoples face, as well as how to integrate an indigenous perspective into framework development. Delegates will find Section III particularly valuable as it provides specific examples on how to better incorporate an Indigenous perspective into framework and program development.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-first session. (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295).* Retrieved 22 July 2019 from:
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

> *This declaration provides an excellent opportunity for delegates to understand exactly which rights are guaranteed for indigenous peoples. This document is the culmination of years of work to internationally recognize the rights of indigenous peoples. Some important examples that the declaration defines include the right to self-determination, having the right to a nationality, and to not be forced into assimilation. This resolution will be particularly important for delegates as they work to research the advancement of the rights of indigenous peoples.*

United Nations, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. (1987). *Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from:
https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/publications/2014/09/martinez-cobo-study/

> *Often known as the Martínez Cobo Study, this report provides an in-depth overview of some of the main factors that affect Indigenous people's rights, and the challenges they face. This document is of particular importance as it is one of the most widely cited studies on indigenous rights, including a widely used definition on indigenous peoples. Delegates will find this document particularly important when looking to understand the progress that has been made on indigenous rights, specific areas of importance for indigenous rights, as well as a variety of recommendations on improving the rights of indigenous peoples.*

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Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2019). *Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* Retrieved 24 August 2019 from: https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/ipeoples/emrip/pages/emripindex.aspx

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II. Empowering Conflict-Affected Children and Youth

Introduction

With more than 50 ongoing armed conflicts worldwide, 420 million children currently live in conflict-affected areas, representing over 20% of the global youth population.[147] The United Nations (UN) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1990) defines a child as "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier."[148] Children and adolescents are vulnerable by nature, and in the case of conflict, young people are even more critically vulnerable than others.[149] Children and youth tend to be the main civilian casualties of armed conflict, and are further vulnerable because they are under the age of legal independence.[150] The UN General Assembly acknowledged a significant increase in the globally reported violations of children's rights from 15,500 in 2016, to 21,000 in 2017.[151] These grave violations can include recruitment and use of children in conflict; killing and maiming of children; rape and sexual violence, particularly of girl children; attacks on schools and hospitals; abduction of children; and denial of humanitarian access.[152]

While there is no single definition of "conflict," the UN Global Compact broadly determines that conflict areas are those experiencing high levels of armed violence, and political or social instability; where there are serious concerns about abuses of human rights and political and civil liberties; and where there is violent conflict, including interstate and civil war.[153] Two billion people are affected by the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict, including extreme poverty, displacement, and lack of education and employment opportunities.[154] As estimated by the World Bank Group, due to fragility, conflict or violence 46% of these people are estimated to be subjected to extreme poverty by 2030.[155]

The UN, supported by the international community, has put in substantial effort to develop the global standards on protecting children in armed conflict, supporting reintegration programs, and conducting activities to mainstream children's rights.[156] However, with the increasing number of violations of human rights in areas of conflict, there is clearly still a need to further empower and support conflict-affected children and youth.[157] Supporting these high-risk youth will require the UN, governments, adults, children, civil society, businesses, and all other stakeholders to conduct comprehensive and nuanced support projects with the ultimate goal of youth empowerment.[158]

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural* Rights (ICESCR) (1966), and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

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[147] UN General Assembly & UN Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/865-S/2018/465)*, 2018, p. 2; Save the Children, *Stop the War on Children*, 2019, p. 9.

[148] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

[149] Peacebuilding Initiative, *Empowerment: Children & Youth: Children, Youth & Peacebuilding Processes*, 2008.

[150] ICRC, *Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence*, 2011, p. 9.

[151] UN General Assembly & UN Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/865-S/2018/465)*, 2018, p. 2.

[152] UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *20 Years to Better Protect Children Affected by Conflict*, 2017.

[153] UN Global Compact, *Doing Business While Advancing Development and Peace*, 2010.

[154] ICRC, *Global Trends of War and their Humanitarian Impacts*, 2018.

[155] The World Bank, *Fragility, Conflict & Violence*, 2019.

[156] UN HRC, *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/HRC/40/49)*, 2018, pp. 1-5.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid.

(ICCPR) (1966) laid the foundation for the global protection of the rights of children and youth.[159] Article 25 of the UDHR recognized that children are vulnerable persons who should be subjected to special care and specific rights, while Article 10 of ICESCR proclaimed that children and young people should be protected from economic and social exploitation to participate fully in their communities.[160] ICCPR also provides a framework of administrative, judicial, and legislative measures for protecting the rights and dignity of each individual, including children.[161] Specifically, Article 24 of ICCPR states that children should not be discriminated against based on race, color, gender, or national origin, and should enjoy the right to protection, which is particularly relevant in conflict-affected areas.[162]

In 1965, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples*.[163] It introduced six principles on empowerment of youth, including human rights, education, dignity, cultural exchanges, role of youth organizations, and the family.[164] This document became the first legal instrument on mainstreaming the empowerment of young people worldwide, and provides a key piece to the framework for children's rights globally.[165]

The CRC continues to provide the key framework on children's rights internationally.[166] According to the CRC, empowering children includes learning about human rights through education (Articles 28 and 29), creating conditions for children to be able to express their views freely (Articles 12 and 13) and engaging into social and political life of their communities (Article 15).[167] Since armed conflicts often interrupt activities of social institutions, cause displacement of people and undermine the state protection system of human rights, violence against children and youth is increasing.[168] Articles 38 and 39 of CRC refer to children in armed conflicts and require states to promote physical and psychological recovery of conflict-affected children.[169] The CRC launched the process of enhancing the environment and the social setting of the affected population.[170] Currently 196 countries are party to the treaty, including every Member State of the UN, except the United States, and four observer parties, making it a powerful document ensuring children's rights.[171]

Additional documents further support the work of the CRC, including the UN *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict* (1972), which recognized women and children as the most vulnerable members of the population and noted that they must be subject to specific protection in times of armed conflict.[172] Additionally, provisions in the *First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions* (1977) enshrined the global framework to prevent children from taking a direct part

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[159] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

[160] UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

[161] UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

[162] Ibid.

[163] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989; UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (A/RES/2037 (XX))*, 1965.

[164] UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (A/RES/2037 (XX))*, 1965.

[165] Ibid.

[166] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

[172] UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (A/RES/3318 (XXIX))*, 1974.

in hostilities.[173] Article 77 of this Protocol proclaims that in conflict areas children should be respected and protected from violence, and should not be recruited into armed forces.[174] Article 78 further prevents international displacement of children by prohibiting the evacuation of children to foreign countries by people that do not share the same nationality as them.[175]

To establish the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/127 (2015), which created the current global framework for development, peace and security, and human rights.[176] The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established in the 2030 Agenda, are 17 goals to ensure global economic prosperity and equality.[177] The 2030 Agenda reiterated several key issues of importance to children and youth, including emphasizing access to services and opportunities to improve capacity building skills, employability and entrepreneurial development of the young population.[178] In particular, SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) aim to address issues related to the lack of education and employment of disadvantaged societies, ensure availability of social infrastructure in the conflict areas, and increase the voice of children and youth within their communities.[179]

More recent key framework documents establishing children's rights include the *Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labor, Forced Labor and Youth Employment*, which was adopted at the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labor in 2017, and first called upon the international community to conduct research on child labor and forced labor in the context of armed conflict, emphasizing high-risk sectors and support capacity building measures.[180] The Declaration also encourages Member States to strengthen activities to eradicate child labor in crisis situations arising from conflicts.[181]

Role of the International System

Within the UN system, the General Assembly Third Committee shapes global policies on human rights, social issues, and humanitarian affairs, and specifically supports the efforts of Member States in protecting and empowering conflict-affected children and youth.[182] Since 2015, each UN General Assembly Third Committee session included items devoted to the rights of the child, empowerment of youth, protection of victims of armed conflicts, and rights of the girl child.[183] In its most recent resolution 73/155 (2018) on the "Rights of the Child," the General Assembly expressed deep concern that as a result of armed conflicts in many parts of the world, the status of the rights of children and youth remains critical.[184] It also calls upon Member States to respect and promote the right of girls and boys; to involve children, including children with disabilities, in decision-making processes; and to support children's organizations and child-led initiatives.[185]

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[173] ICRC, *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)*, 1977.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] UN General Assembly, *Policies and Programmes Involving Youth (A/RES/70/127)*, 2015, pp. 3-5.
[177] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 13.
[178] UN General Assembly, *Policies and Programmes Involving Youth (A/RES/70/127)*, 2015, pp. 3-5.
[179] Zerrougui, Harnessing the Potential of Boys and Girls to Fulfil the Promise of the Sustainable Development Goals, *UN Chronicle*, 2015.
[180] IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, *Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Youth Employment*, 2017.
[181] Ibid.
[182] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee)*, 2019.
[183] Ibid.
[184] UN General Assembly, *Rights of the Child (A/RES/73/155)*, 2019, pp. 1-3.
[185] Ibid.

The first practical guidelines for Member States to ensure the rights of young people and enhance their role in society was introduced by the UN General Assembly in 1995, when its resolution 50/81 adopted the "World Programme of Action for Youth" (WPAY).[186] WPAY recommended Member States to work within the framework of fifteen youth priority areas, such as education, employment, women empowerment, participation, and intergenerational issues in armed conflict.[187] Priorities set in the WPAY impacted national plans, priorities and laws, as well as contributed to the development of the multi-level mechanisms for consultation, mainstreaming, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the national initiatives.[188] The Programme contributed to the system of communication and cooperation between national, regional and international actors on the empowerment of youth.[189]

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, whose current mandate holder is Virginia Gamba, plays a key role in promoting the protection of children affected by armed conflict and ensuring accountability of Member States.[190] In the *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children* (2018), the Special Representative outlined key aspects of ensuring the rights of children in armed conflict, highlighting the importance of having children considered in transitional justice, the creation of country task forces, and conflict resolution and peacebuilding.[191] The Special Representative also discussed the need to continue protecting children under the auspices of international humanitarian law, preventing the unnecessary detainment of children who have been co-opted into working for non-state actors or militias, and ensuring that the rights of children support progress towards the SDGs.[192]

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) sets out best practices to support Member States in developing their reintegration programs for children and youth following armed conflict.[193] These programs involve psychosocial support, and education and training for the conflict-affected young people.[194] Reintegration programs contribute to breaking the cycle of violence, reducing risk of recruitment of children and youth to the armed forces, and increasing resilience of communities.[195] For instance, UNICEF implements the "Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction Programme in nine countries of Latin America and the Caribbean."[196] This program aims to enhance community participation, public awareness and school-based initiatives for conflict-affected children and youth.[197] Activities of UNICEF in conflict-affected areas encompass, among others, carrying out development of life skills programs for adolescents and establishing mediation centers for positive parenting and peaceful conflict resolution.[198]

Relatedly, in 2016 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the "Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace," which focuses on addressing challenges faced by

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[186] UN General Assembly, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/50/81)*, 1996, pp. 4-6.

[187] Ibid.

[188] UN DESA, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, 2010.

[189] Ibid.

[190] UN General Assembly, *Rights of the Child (A/RES/51/77)*, 1997, p. 7.

[191] UN HRC, *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/HRC/40/49)*, 2018, pp. 11-13.

[192] Ibid.

[193] UN General Assembly & UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907–S/2019/509)*, 2019, p. 4.

[194] UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Global Coalition for the Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers*, 2019; United Nations Children's Fund, *Annual Report*, 2018.

[195] UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Global Coalition for the Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers*, 2019.

[196] UNICEF, *A Familiar Face, Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents*, 2017, p. 70; United Nations Children's Fund, *Annual Report*, 2018.

[197] UNICEF, *A Familiar Face, Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents*, 2017, p. 70.

[198] UNICEF, *Annual Results Report on Child Protection*, 2017, p. 39.

young people worldwide by improving capacities to enhance youth empowerment at different levels.[199] The Programme contributed to the implementation of the "UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017 'Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future'" (2013) by providing recommendations for the strategic engagement of young people and relevant actors in promoting youth empowerment globally.[200] The Strategy encourages supporting capacity development of youth organizations, engaging youth-related questions in all spheres of development planning, and supporting national youth policy development and implementation activities.[201]

The work of the UN is also supported at the regional level, where regional organizations such as the European Union and the African Union (AU), among others, can help set norms and standards for protecting the rights of children and youth.[202] For example, in the 1990 *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* adopted by the AU, Articles 7-11 established a regional framework on ensuring their freedom of expression and association, freedom of thought, protection of privacy and the right to education, while the Article 22 contains provisions on protecting children in armed conflicts.[203]

Supporting the work of the UN and regional bodies, there are many civil society organizations advocating for the empowerment of children and youth, including Search for Common Ground (SFCG).[204] The work of SFCG is funded by a number of foundations, business corporations, governments, and UN bodies, such as UNICEF, the World Bank, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the International Organization for Migration.[205] SFCG then implements programs by using the media, policy, education, and action-focused programming to enable children and youth to transform their communities and be recognized as peacemakers.[206]

Empowering Children and Youth in Post-Conflict Decision-Making

One of the main challenges impacting conflict-affected children and youth is the lack of political autonomy and civil empowerment.[207] As stated in the 2018 *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children*, in addition to social and gender disparity between youth, many children and youth feel disempowered over their post-conflict future.[208] The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child also specifies that many adults do not consider children as human rights defenders and do not believe in their capacities, which creates one of the fundamental obstacles to the empowerment of children and youth.[209] Additionally, in many societies, children and youth are not allowed to speak politically or vote, as they are still viewed as legal

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[199] UNDP, *Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development & Peace*, 2016, p. 1.

[200] UNDP, *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 32.

[201] Ibid.

[202] UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *Working with Member States*, 2019.

[203] African Union, *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*, 1990.

[204] SFCG, *About Us*, 2019.

[205] SFCG, *International Partners*, 2019.

[206] SFCG, *About Us*, 2019.

[207] Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, *Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding*, 2015; World Vision International, *Leading the Way: Guidance on the Participation of Children & Young People in Global Engagements*, 2017.

[208] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children (A/73/278)*, 2018, p. 2.

[209] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Report on Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders*, 2018; UN HRC, *Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, 2017.

minors, which can lead to less investment in political processes and post-conflict rebuilding.[210] For this reason, states will often prioritize child protection frameworks, over child empowerment programs.[211]

However, civil society studies from organizations such as the Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, have noted that empowering children and youth provides an opportunity to express their influence on political and social decisions that impact them, learn new skills, and develop a closer connection to their community, and it gives them increased autonomy by being involved in decision-making.[212] Empowered children are also more likely to have the ability to respond appropriately to risks by becoming active citizens, and support positive change towards a violence-free environment through stopping cycles of violence.[213] Additionally, when children belong to peer-led local organizations such as those at school, religious and cultural organizations, or community groups, they are more likely to build awareness of the risks of violence, and increase their ability to provide peer-support to others at risk.[214] Such organizations have the ability to conduct training on child rights, sexuality and reproductive health education, communication and negotiation skills, and gender equity.[215] However, the application of programming and policy for children's empowerment can also be expanded to include training and opportunities for political and civic life at all levels, including electoral activities, participation in government and non-governmental decision-making, building skills and capacities for governing and carrying out civil service functions, participation in village child protection committees to prevent and respond to violence; government accountability and information.[216]

Some national laws and policies have been adapted to align with the CRC and UN recommendations on children's empowerment. [217] For instance, Nepal, who is recovering from armed conflict, adopted legal and policy frameworks in 2011 that support the participation of disadvantaged children and youth, and their representation in decision-making processes concerning them.[218] Nepal's *Child Friendly Local Governance National Strategy* (2010) contains indicators ensuring children aged 12 to 18 years participate in the decision-making processes of local bodies through the development of institutional participation mechanisms, such as child club networks.[219] In addition, the *National Youth Policy* (2010) in Nepal covers women, men, and third gender persons aged between 16 and 40 years, and establishes a full range of rights, including the right to livelihood, education, health, family welfare, employment, and social security, and to participation, empowerment, and leadership opportunities.[220] While policies such as these, and the work of bodies such as the Tunisian Youth Leadership Council, represent excellent progress towards empowering youth, some parents, community members, or local government officials remain unaware of relevant laws and policies, while there can also be insufficient implementation and

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[210] Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, *Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding*, 2015; World Vision International, *Leading the Way: Guidance on the Participation of Children & Young People in Global Engagements*, 2017.

[211] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children (A/73/278)*, 2018, p. 2; UN HRC, *Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, 2017; World Vision International, *Leading the Way: Guidance on the Participation of Children & Young People in Global Engagements*, 2017.

[212] Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, *Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding*, 2015; Commissioner for Children Tasmania, *Involving Children in Decision Making*, 2015, p. 5.

[213] Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, *Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding*, 2015, p. 122.

[214] Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, *Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding*, 2015.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid., p. 122.

[217] Dharel & Srestha, Child Friendly Local Governance in Nepal: Practices, Learning and Opportunities, *World Vision International*, 2018, p. 5.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Nepal Law Commission, *National Youth Policy*, 2010.

monitoring of laws and policies due to the weak political process, especially at the local levels and where conflict has further weakened existing infrastructure.[221]

Improving Employment Opportunities for Conflict-Affected Children and Youth

Since the impact of armed conflict and violence on children and youth can include a wide range of psychological consequences, the reintegration of conflict-affected children and youth into society is an important stage of supporting these vulnerable groups.[222] Often in armed conflict, children's educational pathways are also interrupted, preventing them from participation in social interactions and opportunities for personal development.[223] Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have noted that in conflict-affected societies, less than 1% of displaced youth have access to tertiary education, while young populations living in conflict-affected areas face increased difficulty with acquiring necessary personal and professional skills.[224] Additionally, in conflict-affected areas the lack of employment opportunities for youth may become a reason or catalyst for a new round of violence.[225] For instance, thousands of unemployed urban youth contributed to the continued upheaval in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which has been in the process of recovering from conflict since 2006.[226]

Programs such as UNDP's and the Department of Political Affairs' "Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (2013 – 2015)" have been highly effective in mitigating some of the long-term impacts of reskilling a reintegrating youth population.[227] Having determined youth employment as a means of conflict prevention, the program focused on enhancing government capacities in generating youth employment, improving livelihoods, supporting contribution of youth in creating social enterprises, and expanding financial services to youth.[228] Within the program, Youth Results Group provided critical input to governments, contributed to the National Youth Strategy, and facilitated the process of raising awareness on youth issues in Timor-Leste.[229]

As another example of work being done to support reintegrating children and youth to employment post-conflict, in partnership with the ING Group, a Europe-based global bank, UNICEF launched the "Power for Youth" project.[230] This project aims to empower young people by providing them with the skills and tools they need to support them becoming future leaders, entrepreneurs, and participants in society.[231] Participating children and youth worked to improve their critical thinking, collaboration, and leadership skills to create a social change.[232] The main focus of this project was to help adolescents develop into problem-solvers, peacebuilders, and decision-makers in a variety of fields.[233] Additionally, UNICEF and the Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation supported the Government of Colombia in creating a multi-purpose fund providing child and youth groups and organizations with crucial support to develop sustainable and income generating projects in the post-conflict period.[234]

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[221] Ibid.
[222] Dudenhoefer, Understanding the Recruitment of Child Soldiers in Africa, *African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes*, 2016.
[223] Educate a Child, *Conflict-affected Situations, Insecurity and Instability*, 2012.
[224] Ibid.
[225] UNDP, *Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Work in Asia Pacific,* 2016, pp. 58-59.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] ING, *ING and UNICEF*, 2019.
[231] UNICEF, *Annual Report on Private Fundraising and Partnerships*, 2016.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding, *Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding*, 2015, p. 122.

Conclusion

As armed conflict continues to negatively impact already vulnerable children and youth, the UN has established a comprehensive framework to protect these populations and to support Member States in adhering to international human rights standards.[235] The lack of empowered children and youth has continued to be one of the major obstacles to building sustainable peace and helping societies holistically recover from armed conflict.[236] Ways to increase the participation of conflict-affected children and youth have been widely discussed within the UN system, and the General Assembly Third Committee leads the international discourse on various approaches achieving rights of children and youth.[237] However, given the progress that still needs to be achieved, the international community continues to look to the General Assembly Third Committee to lead the conversation on, among other issues, opportunities of increasing employment opportunities, and expanding the participation of children and youth in the decision-making process.[238]

Further Research

In their research, delegates should look at how the General Assembly Third Committee can increase the participation of children and youth in activities related to peace processes, social and political aspects of their communities, and contributing to the sustainable peace and development. Delegates may consider ways of improving international legal instruments and measures to raise awareness on the rights of the conflict-affected children and youth, including: What is the role of adults in involving children in youth into the decision-making processes in the conflict-affected countries? How can the General Assembly Third Committee foster collaboration among Member States, international and regional organizations, the private sector, and civil society to increase the participation of children and youth in decision-making processes? What best practices of empowering conflict-affected children and youth can be shared among the various actors? How can children and youth be politically empowered and actively involved in post-conflict processes? How do other disparities, such as gender, ability, or cultural background, impact children's access to existing post-conflict resources, and how can these disparities be mitigated through best practices?

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Children's Fund. (2018). *Annual Report.* Retrieved 22 July 2019 from: https://www.unicef.org/media/55486/file/UNICEF-annual-report-2018%20revised%201.pdf
> *This report provides an analysis of the activities of UNICEF and establishes three goal areas: ensuring protection of children from violence and exploitation; gender equality; and global humanitarian action. Delegates are particularly invited to examine SDG 3, which describes some important aspects of empowering children, such as strengthening justice systems and global commitments on the topic. The report also illustrates examples of ongoing partnerships between UNICEF, governments, and the private sector on protecting the rights of the child, which might be useful in understanding how to move forward on the issue.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-third session. (2018). *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children (A/73/278)*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from: https://undocs.org/A/73/278
> *The report gives an overview of the activities conducted by the Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the progress achieved in advancing the UN's children and armed conflict agenda. It discusses recent trends, major*

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[235] UN General Assembly & UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/865-S/2018/465), 2018, p. 2.

[236] ICRC, *Global Trends of war and their Humanitarian Impacts*, 2018.

[237] UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee)*, 2019.

[238] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children (A/73/278)*, 2018.

challenges, and achievements in protecting the rights of the child. The report also covers numerous aspects of the representative's mandate, including dialogue with regional organizations, civil society actors, and parties to conflict. In their research, it would be helpful for delegates to take into account the relevant conclusions, priorities, and recommendations outlined by this report.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-second session & Security Council, Seventy-third year. (2018). *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/865-S/2018/465)*. Retrieved 1 October 2019 from: https://undocs.org/s/2018/465
This report describes the current situation of children and armed conflict, emphasizing efforts made by the international community since 2017. The document will be useful for analyzing effectiveness of the UN's response in preventing violations against children in the regional context. Delegates are advised to explore recommendations of the Secretary-General on strengthening global partnerships in promoting rights of children in armed conflict. It would also be helpful for delegates to understand which regions are marked with the highest risk of violence against children, as well as those states with significant progress left to achieve in protecting children.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Thirty-fourth session. (2016). *Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/34/44&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC
This report outlines key aspects of ensuring the rights of children in armed conflict, including addressing violations against children, the impact of conflict on girls, and reoccurring challenges related to the grave violations against children. Delegates are recommended to use this resource to understand the existing cooperation mechanisms between global and regional actors on protecting the rights of children, as well as to consider the Special Representative's key recommendations on working with UN human rights mechanisms and regional organizations. Additionally, this resource will be helpful for delegates to learn about the current status of girls in armed conflict to find case studies on Afghanistan, Sudan, Colombia and Cuba, and Somalia.

United Nations, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2016). *20 Years to Better Protect Children Affected by Conflict*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from: https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Twenty-Years-of-Work-Updated-Booklet_web.pdf
This report gives a comprehensive overview of the most significant international projects and legal instruments launched by the UN on protecting children affected by conflict since 1996. This document will help delegates in understanding the complex approaches to protecting the rights of the child in armed conflict, as well as the relationship between various actors on this topic. This publication also lists major achievements on improving the status of children in the world and provides insights of the key actors involved in this process globally. Importantly, the report also sets priorities for the international community for the third decade of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate.

World Vision International. (2017). *Leading the Way: Guidance on the Participation of Children & Young People in Global Engagements*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from: https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WV-Leading-the-Way-2017-04-11.pdf
This document is designed to recommend a basic system for child participation in global initiatives. It outlines formats for engaging children and young people in national or global events as well as actions and procedures for the participation of children and young people in global engagements. The guidelines also draw attention to the most important steps of preparing potential participants and supporting children's involvement in the planning process. Delegates may utilize this publication as a useful example of guidelines and national action plans for empowering children post-conflict.

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III. Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Introduction

The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006) defines persons with disabilities as those "who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."[239] Persons with disabilities make up about 15% of the world's population, more than one billion people.[240] This makes them the largest minority in the world, and the number is expected to increase due to the aging of global populations and increases in chronic health conditions.[241]

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) guarantees all human rights and freedoms to all human beings.[242] However, persons with disabilities are still disproportionately affected by poverty and violence since they often do not have equal access to education, health care services, employment, and other everyday life activities, and experience lower standards of living than persons without disabilities.[243] The CRPD specifically guarantees persons with disabilities all human rights and inherent dignity, and requires States parties to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.[244]

The Third Committee works to strengthen disability-inclusive social policies and promote accessibility for persons with disabilities, for example to health care, information, and communication technology.[245] The Human Rights Council (HRC) supports the Third Committee's work by establishing the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014.[246] The Special Rapporteur, one of the central United Nations (UN) entities for the rights of persons with disabilities, addresses the barriers and challenges faced by these persons in its regular reports, and works towards strengthening the rights of persons with disabilities in all parts of the world.[247] The Special Rapporteur recognizes that persons with disabilities are excluded from and cannot participate effectively in development processes due to many societal barriers, including legislative and physical barriers.[248] In disaster situations, the situation of persons with disabilities is even worse as the risk of being isolated or discriminated is much higher.[249] In order to assess the situation of persons with disabilities and the progress on the implementation of the CRPD, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes the importance of monitoring and data.[250]

However, there is a lack of reliable, comparable, high-quality data that provide insights into, for example, the need for assistance and support services, and social and physical barriers faced by persons with

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[239] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006, p. 4.
[240] WHO & World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, p. 29.
[241] WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, p. 2;
      Priddy, Disability and Armed Conflict, *The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human*
      Rights, 2019, p. 13.
[242] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.
[243] UN General Assembly, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/73/142)*, 2018; WHO
      & World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, p. 10.
[244] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.
[245] UN General Assembly, *Social Development: Report of the Third Committee (A/73/581)*, 2018.
[246] UN HRC, *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/HRC/RES/26/20)*, 2014; UN HRC,
      Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/HRC/RES/35/6), 2017.
[247] UN OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Introduction*, 2019.
[248] UN General Assembly, *Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Report by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of*
      Persons with Disabilities (A/71/314), 2019.
[249] Priddy, Disability and Armed Conflict, *The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human*
      Rights, 2019, pp. 11-12.
[250] UN General Assembly, *Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Report by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of*
      Persons with Disabilities (A/71/314), 2019.

disabilities.[251] Especially in disaster situations, data on the accessibility of aid and information help to ensure the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.[252] The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) emphasizes that the mechanisms of data collection need to be strengthened to leave no one behind and to implement effective Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies.[253]

International and Regional Framework

The UDHR (1948) protects the rights of all persons and enshrines in Article 1 that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."[254] Article 2 of the UDHR states that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms, and that no distinction is made based on age, sex, or any other kind of status.[255] To emphasize the need to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and promote their well-being, the General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons* (1975).[256] Its Article 4 specifically highlights that persons with disabilities "have the same civil and political rights as other human beings."[257] The General Assembly adopted with resolution 37/52 on the "World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons" (WPA) (1982) a global strategy on promoting the prevention of disability, rehabilitation, and the equalization of opportunities.[258] The WPA demonstrates that the UN system no longer sees persons with disabilities as "objects" in need of care and as burdens to their families, but as "subjects" with rights and dignity.[259]

The protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is enshrined in the CRPD and its *Optional Protocol* from 2006.[260] The core of the CRPD form eight principles, including the respect for inherent dignity, and the full and effective participation and inclusion in society.[261] The CRPD highlights the importance of accessibility to the physical, economic, and social environment, and requires States parties to take measures to ensure accessibility.[262] States parties are also required to collect appropriate data and statistics on disability so that effective policies can be designed and implemented, and the rights of persons with disabilities can be guaranteed.[263] In situations of risk, the CRPD obliges States parties to take the necessary measures to guarantee the safety and protection of persons with disabilities.[264]

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) recognizes the need to promote human rights for all, and foster inclusive, peaceful societies.[265] The overarching principle to leave no one behind aims at building a better future for all while reducing inequalities and poverty, especially for minority groups like persons with disabilities.[266] Agenda 2030 further recognizes the need to take further measures to protect and promote vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, and to strengthen support in humanitarian crises, including disaster situations.[267]

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[251] UN General Assembly, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/73/142)*, 2018, p. 5; WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, pp. 15 and 22.

[252] UNISDR, *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019.

[253] Washington Group on Disability Statistics, *Report of Ability of Countries to Disaggregate SDG Indicators by Disability*, 2018, p. 1.

[254] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

[255] Ibid.

[256] UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (A/RES/3447 (XXX))*, 1975.

[257] Ibid.

[258] UN General Assembly, *World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/RES/37/52)*, 1982.

[259] UN DESA, *Backgrounder: Disability Treaty Closes a Gap in Protecting Human Rights*, *2008*.

[260] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

[261] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[262] Ibid., p. 4.

[263] Ibid., p. 19.

[264] Ibid., p. 9.

[265] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

[266] Ibid.

[267] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 7.

On a regional level, the European Commission introduced the *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020* (2010) with a focus on eliminating social and administrative barriers to the full participation of persons with disabilities, and support data collection through special surveys.[268] The full and equal participation of persons with disabilities is an essential part of the European Union's policy framework, which aims to create a barrier-free Europe with sustainable, inclusive growth.[269] The strategy also makes a business case for accessible products and services as there is a growing demand especially from aging consumers.[270] The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted the *Protocol to the African Union Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa* (2018) requiring States parties to ensure that persons with disabilities are guaranteed all human rights and freedoms on the African continent.[271] The Protocol addresses issues specific to Africa, for example systemic discrimination, and includes ten core principles, which are informed by the core principles of the CRPD.[272]

Role of the International System

The General Assembly Third Committee helped initiate the process of adopting the CRPD by establishing an Ad-Hoc Committee for a comprehensive international convention to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in its resolution 56/168 (2002).[273] The Third Committee highlighted that persons with disabilities have the right to development and needed to be given special attention.[274] Until the CRPD was adopted, the Third Committee continuously reported on the progress of the Ad-Hoc Committee and encouraged Member States to contribute to the work of the committee with the end of creating an international convention to guarantee the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.[275]

The progress that has been made by Member States, the UN system, and other relevant stakeholders in adopting and implementing the CRPD is acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 73/142 on "Inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities" (2018).[276] Strengthening and ratifying the CRPD is encouraged by the Third Committee so that inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities is made possible.[277] The work of the Third Committee is supported by regular reports from the HRC on the progress that has been made on implementing the CRPD.[278] The HRC further contributes to the work of the Third Committee with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities who addresses the barriers to equal participation for persons with disabilities.[279] The Special Rapporteur's mandate includes developing a dialogue with Member States, UN agencies, other actors, and persons with disabilities in order to promote best practices, to make recommendations on improving the

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[268] European Commission, *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe*, 2010.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid., p. 4.

[271] African Commission on Human and People's Rights, *Protocol to the African Union Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa*, 2018.

[272] Ibid.

[273] UN General Assembly, *Comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (A/RES/56/168)*, 2001.

[274] Ibid.

[275] Ibid.

[276] UN General Assembly, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/73/142)*, 2018.

[277] UN General Assembly, *Social Development: Report by the Third Committee (A/69/480)*, 2014.

[278] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Human Rights Council (A/67/53)*, 2012.

[279] UN HRC, *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/HRC/RES/26/20)*, 2014; UN OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Introduction*, 2019.

implementation of the CRPD, and to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.[280] The Special Rapporteur publishes and presents annual reports to the General Assembly.[281]

The UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization pursues the implementation of the Agenda 2030 through cooperation in education, sciences, and culture.[282] This includes supporting the work of the General Assembly Third Committee by presenting reports with a focus on women, girls, and children with disabilities.[283] Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) is dedicated to improving the well-being, health, and functioning of persons with disabilities, and works on rehabilitation, assistive technology, and data on disability.[284] In 2015, WHO published the *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021* focusing on improving health care access, which can be limited due to the costs of treatment or inaccessible buildings.[285]

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) is an umbrella organization that brings together organizations of persons with disabilities in global and regional networks.[286] The IDA contributes expert knowledge in the Third Committee of the General Assembly to make the language of resolutions disability-inclusive.[287] The alliance published the introductory toolkit *The 2030 Agenda: The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities*, which shows how persons with disabilities can influence the implementation of the Agenda 2030, for example by forming regional collaborations.[288] The introductory toolkit also highlights that persons with disabilities shall be included into all DRR programs and that data needs to be collected to measure the progress on implementing the 2030 Agenda and the CRPD.[289]

Disaster Risk Reduction and Persons with Disabilites

DRR aims to reduce the damage and risks caused by disasters through systematically analyzing and reducing the causal factors of disasters.[290] The CRPD obliges States parties to undertake all necessary measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, especially during disasters like floods, droughts, earthquakes, and cyclones.[291] In the event of a disaster, essential infrastructure and services might be destroyed, resulting in persons with disabilities potentially facing extreme difficulties escaping the disaster area or even being left behind entirely.[292] The Third Committee recognizes that persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the impact of disasters, and with it the possible need for specific protection and safety measures.[293]

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[280] UN OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Introduction*, 2019.

[281] UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/74/186)*, 2019; UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/HRC/40/54)*, 2019, p. 7.

[282] UNESCO, *UNESCO in Brief, Mission and Mandate*, 2019.

[283] UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *The United Nations General Assembly discusses literacy and education for democracy*, 2018.

[284] WHO, *Disability*, 2019; WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, p. 2.

[285] WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, p. 3 & p. 15.

[286] International Disability Alliance, *Who We Are*.

[287] International Disability Alliance, *UN General Assembly*.

[288] International Disability Alliance, *The 2030 Agenda: The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, Introductory Toolkit*, 2016.

[289] Ibid.

[290] UNISDR, *What is Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019.

[291] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2006, p. 9; UNISDR, *What is Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019.

[292] UN Security Council, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Report by the Secretary-General (S/2019/373)*, 2019, p. 11.

[293] UN General Assembly, *Social Development: Report of the Third Committee (A/73/581)*, 2018, p. 27.

Accessibility is one of the key principles of the CRPD and of DRR in order to leave no one behind.[294] Still ensuring accessibility to aid and information is one of the main challenges in implementing the CRPD in disaster situations as protection mechanisms like early warning systems and evacuation procedures, including providing means of transportation and emergency information, are mostly inaccessible to persons with disabilities.[295] The Third Committee urges Member States to implement policies and programs that specifically include persons with disabilities in humanitarian response plans and programs so that the CRPD can be fully implemented.[296] The Third Committee further supports the exchange of information, best practices, and tools between Member States, UN entities, and other stakeholders so that the specific needs and challenges faced by persons with disabilities are included in DRR measures.[297]

Data and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Statistics and data collection are an integral part of implementing the CRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[298] Reliable, comparable data gives the basis to understand and improve the situation of persons with disabilities as it provides for more effective measures and use of resources.[299] The *Disability and Development Report* (2018) by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs stresses that data on disability is available based on the work of the WG.[300] It was established by the UN Statistical Commission to address the need for comparable, high-quality data on a global level.[301]

In its *Report of Ability of Countries to Disaggregate SDG Indicators by Disability* (2016), the WG states that only 39 countries provided data because national surveys often do not include disability-related questions.[302] Persons with disabilities are often invisible in national and international statistics as they are not included in trials and research.[303] Also, the availability of national statistics varies to a great extent due to the unavailability of financial support, educational standards, and training.[304] This can lead to persons with disabilities not receiving the care they need.[305]

The WG developed a set of standardized questions that can be included in national surveys.[306] The *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021* (2015) further illustrates possibilities to improve data collection and availability, for example by providing technical support and assisting in the development of standardized methodologies and data collection mechanisms.[307]

The continuing lack of data is recognized as a concern by the General Assembly in resolution 73/142.[308] As a result, the General Assembly has requested the UN system to provide assistance in collecting data

[294] UN General Assembly, *Social Development: Report of the Third Committee (A/73/581)*, 2018; *Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*, 2019, pp. 1-2.
[295] Priddy, Disability and Armed Conflict, *The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights*, 2019, pp. 12-13; WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, p. 6.
[296] UN General Assembly, *Social Development: Report of the Third Committee (A/73/581)*, 2018.
[297] Ibid., p. 30.
[298] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 12; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2006, p. 19.
[299] WHO & World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, pp. 80 and 119.
[300] UN DESA, *Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018.
[301] Washington Group on Disability Statistics, *Washington Group on Disability Statistics*, 2019.
[302] Washington Group on Disability Statistics, *Report of Ability of Countries to Disaggregate SDG Indicators by Disability*, 2018, p. 1; WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, p. 22.
[303] WHO & World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, p. 80.
[304] Ibid., p. 110.
[305] WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, p. 15.
[306] World Bank, *Disability Inclusion and Accountability Framework*, 2018, p. 8.
[307] WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015.
[308] UN General Assembly, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/73/142)*, 2018, p. 5.

and asks for support by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to regularly include data on disability in its publications.[309] The Third Committee encourages Member States and the UN system to include disability into official statistics and data collection tools and provide the information in regular reports so that progress can be monitored.[310]

Conclusion

Despite the progress made in implementing the CRPD, some challenges remain regarding its full implementation, for example in respect to the availability and quantity of data and the inclusion of persons with disabilities into DRR policies and programs.[311] The CRPD has made clear that persons with disabilities have rights and freedoms, and that these cannot be limited arbitrarily or unlawfully.[312] The international community has the opportunity to promote the implementation of the CRPD by closing the data gap and by including persons with disabilities in DRR policies and programs.[313] The Sustainable Development Goals Summit at the end of September 2019 was one opportunity to evaluate progress that has been made so far and to include the rights of persons with disabilities.[314] In the 74th session of the General Assembly, the global situation of persons with disabilities and their social development has been considered.[315] This will provide further insight into the progress of implementing the CRPD.

Further Research

Delegates should address how the Third Committee can contribute to strengthening the rights of persons with disabilities and the implementation of the CRPD. How can social and physical barriers be removed and persons with disabilities be included in decision- and policy-making? Which factors can be identified that hinder the establishment of a global standard for collecting data on disability? What kind of instruments and guidelines are in place to include persons with disability into measures of DRR? What can the UN do to further implement the CRPD?

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> *This report is a primary source regarding the connection between the SDGs and the rights of persons with disabilities. It first gives an overview of the history of the rights of persons with disabilities and then goes into details regarding all 17 SDGs, the connection to these rights, the current situation, and possible measures to be taken. Additionally, the report contains many figures and key data regarding the situation of persons with disabilities. For delegates, the report is very helpful as it gives very detailed information, and not only serves as a starting point but as a guiding document.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-first session. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*. Retrieved 20 July 2019 from: https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/106
> *The CRPD is the central document for this topic. In order for delegates to know about the possibilities, limits, as well as possible courses of action to pursue in the General Assembly Third Committee, the CRPD serves as a starting point. Key definitions and*

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[309] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[310] UN General Assembly, *Social Development: Report of the Third Committee (A/73/581)*, 2018, p. 32.

[311] UN General Assembly, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/73/142)*, 2018, p. 5; WHO, *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*, 2015, pp. 15 and 22.

[312] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

[313] *Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*, 2019.

[314] UN DGC, *About the General Assembly*.

[315] UN General Assembly, *Agenda of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the General Assembly (A74/251)*, 2019.

topic-specific and topic-sensitive language are provided in the CRPD. It also serves as a good point of entry into the topic as it discusses the central aspects of the rights of persons with disabilities and implementation mechanisms.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Fortieth session. (2019). *Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/HRC/40/54)*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from: https://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/54

This report is published annually with a yearly-specific thematic focus. The focus in this report is on the right to liberty and security, and it shows which activities were undertaken by the Special Rapporteur in 2018 and what can be done to improve the situation of persons with disabilities. Since the report is published annually with varying focal points, delegates can get a detailed overview on the different aspects of the CRPD and the Special Rapporteur's efforts. This helps delegates to know more about the different rights in the CRPD and to gain insight into how they can be tackled.

United Nations, Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2019). *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Retrieved 27 October 2019 from:
https://gar.unisdr.org/sites/default/files/reports/2019-05/full_gar_report.pdf

This is an up-to-date publication on DRR on a global level. The first part provides the background on the evolution of DRR and how the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (2015), the current DRR framework on a global level, is linked to the 2030 Agenda. Chapter 5 of Part I names the four key challenges to change in the perception of disaster and risk: mindset, political, technological, and resource challenges. Part II then goes into detail about progress made in implementing the Sendai Framework and reviews efforts made by Member States such as disaster loss databases and the development of national disaster-related statistics. Concrete challenges on national level, for example the quality, accessibility, and application of data, are described. Each part provides conclusions and recommendations so that the most important aspects can be reviewed at a glance. This report is a fundamental publication for the topic of DRR and provides delegates with insight into the global and national challenges of promoting DRR.

World Health Organization. (2015). *WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disability*. Retrieved 25 August 2019 from:
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/199544/9789241509619_eng.pdf?sequence=1

This action plan provides a global roadmap on improving the health of persons with disabilities in line with the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda. The action plan sets out three clear objectives: to remove barriers and improve access to health care services and programs, to strengthen and extend rehabilitation, habilitation, assistive technology, assistance and support services, and community-based rehabilitation, and to strengthen the collection of relevant and internationally comparable data on disability and support research on disability and related services. Recommendations on how these objectives can be achieved are also provided. A comprehensive list of actions and proposals on how to measure their accomplishment accompanies every objective. These detailed lists serve as an interesting source to find possible solutions to strengthening the implementation of the CRPD.

World Health Organization & World Bank. (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Retrieved 16 July 2019 from: https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/

The World Report on Disability *by WHO and the World Bank is the most comprehensive report on disability on a global scale. It describes the definition and dimensions of disability and gives an overview of the global situation. It provides detail about different facets of disability, including general health care, rehabilitation, assistance, and support. For every section, recommendations are provided, such as on how to tackle resource and policy barriers. This source is very useful since it describes all aspects of disability in detail. The report serves both as a starting point but also as a useful resource at later*

stages during preparation or at conference as it provides very detailed information and statistics.

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