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GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE



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BACKGROUND GUIDE 2009

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Official Welcome

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of Heidi Schneble, Umair Hameed, and the excellent staff that make up the 2009 National Model United Nations-DC Conference, we would like to officially welcome you to the General Assembly Third Committee. Throughout the year, the staff of the General Assembly (GA) Third Committee has worked diligently to provide you with the best preparation material for your participation in this committee. It is our sincere hope that our discussion questions and resources will aid you with the groundwork for a successful GA Third Committee session.

This year, the GA Third Committee will be focusing on the ongoing efforts of the United Nations (UN) to create an environment for current and future generations which is free of violence and conflict and is instead focused on peace and opportunity for all members of the international community. The year 2000 initiated a new effort to establish a "Culture of Peace" which partners with existing UN frameworks, such as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), in order to cultivate dialogue and understanding among different cultures. In an era of rapid globalization that has witnessed a mixing of different cultures, religions, and ethnicities it is important that there exists a dialogue of understanding to create a culture of peace and prevent the violence, conflict, and discord that currently affects, for example, the States of Central Asia. As we prepare to close the first decade of the 21st century, it is our hope that you keep these themes in mind as you prepare for this year's conference. We wish you all the best and we look forward to working with you in making the GA Third Committee an outstanding educational experience.

History of the General Assembly Third Committee

The Charter of the United Nations established the General Assembly as a forum for multilateral negotiation in 1945, the first of the main organs of the UN System. Acting as the legislative branch of the UN, the GA meets in formal session every fall at the UN headquarters in New York City. The GA is a forum consisting of all (currently 192) Member States in which each, no matter what its size or population, has an equal vote. The GA is often regarded as the most important of the six principal organs. In order to exercise its powers as prescribed by the Charter, the General Assembly and its subsidiary committees can discuss any topic as long as they are non-binding towards any Member State.

Some noteworthy assembly actions have been the passing of A/RES/3379, *Zionism is Racism*, which determined that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination (A/RES/3379 would ultimately be revoked by A/RES/46/86 on December 16, 1991); A/RES/55/2, *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, which set forth what is known as *The Millennium Development Goals* (MDG's); A/RES/377, *Uniting for Peace*, which states that if the UN Security Council (SC) fails to exercise its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security the General Assembly can and should take up the matter itself and urge Member States to consider collective action; and A/RES/810, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which proclaimed "inherent dignity" and "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family," in which Chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights, former U.S. First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt helped to draft and pass, stating that "it may well become the international Magna Carta for all men everywhere."

The Third Committee, also known as the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (SOCHUM), was created during the first session of the General Assembly. The functions of the General Assembly Third Committee include:

- Human Rights issues;
- The advancement of women and protection of children;
- Indigenous issues and treatment of refugees;
- Promotion of fundamental freedoms and the right to self-determination; and
- Social Development.

During the 63rd and most recent session of the General Assembly, SOCHUM contributed numerous resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary committee, most of which concern human rights. Some of these resolutions include A/RES/63/149, *Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa*, urging African Member States to

assist refugees and displaced persons with greater resolve. A second resolution, A/RES/63/242, *Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action*, requests Member States to quickly ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to implement the Durban Declaration to combat racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination.

I. Establishing a Culture of Peace in Central Asia

- What tools can UN Member States provide to the Central Asian States to help in the establishment of a culture of peace? How will the current global economic crisis affect the dialogue of peace development between States where this concept is already strained such as Pakistan and India?
- What efforts can the UN employ in conjunction with the international community to stem social strain and conflict in Central Asia caused by the financial crisis and economic slowdown?

The United Nations System grew out of a determination by the international community, as stated in the preamble of the UN Charter, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.” As such, the UN strives to create a “culture of peace” which is defined as “a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations.” UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13, *Culture of Peace*, and A/RES/53/243, *Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace*, discuss the necessary actions that must be taken in order to establish a culture of peace. These include:

- Foster a culture of peace through education;
- Promote sustainable and economic development;
- Promote respect for all human rights;
- Ensure equality between women and men;
- Foster democratic participation;
- Advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity;
- Support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge; and
- Promote international peace and security.

In 2007, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is responsible for the implementation of activities related to the UN’s Decade of Peace, made a set of recommendations to continue efforts at peace. These recommendations include increasing education efforts that teach cultural and religious tolerance, ensuring communication and technological access for the free flow of information and ideas as well as urging the media at all level to support the global campaign for a culture of peace as well as a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples.

While work must be done in many regions to establish a “culture of peace,” Central Asia needs significant attention by the UN. Central Asia has been burdened by the aftermath of the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union saw the birth of many new States that had to transition into an independent State while globalization and economic interdependence swept through the international community. Many of these States have struggled with the economic, political, and social challenges that often confront a fledgling State. In addition, many of the States house remnants of the Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal. These issues have created an environment where conflict can grow and peace can be stifled. The UNGA Third Committee must work diligently to foster peace. The States that constitute Central Asia include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and India.

II. Post-Violence Reintegration of Ethnic Minorities

- As we reintegrate ethnic minorities back into their respective societies, as a method of peacebuilding, while understanding the difficulties that may lie from these post-conflict driven areas, we recognize that many hard feelings still exist between the various ethnicities and sub-cultures. What can SOCHUM do to overcome these difficulties and ensure a sustainable living environment with peace and harmony?
- What kind of difficulties will ethnic minorities face during reintegration? Different conflicts have resulted in different geopolitical arrangements. For example, while the Hutu and Tutsi live amongst each other in Rwanda, each ethnic group in the Balkans now lives in different sub national territories. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each model, and should the Assembly favor one over the other in terms of reintegration?

Ethnic minorities will face psychological, economic, and social hardships as they reintegrate into a post-violence society. The psychological aspect will be the biggest burden, as both groups have to reconcile with each other in the aftermath of the conflict to move forward. Several tools are available to assist in the socio-economic reintegration; microfinance could be a useful means to rebuild economic strength. The fact that two different outcomes have appeared in post-violence countries means that there is no standardized solution towards reintegration. The Assembly will have to consider the scope of the violence and the cause of the conflict to ensure that the reintegration of the ethnic minorities will be successful.

Since the beginning of the Iraq War and the removal of Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq, ethnic minorities such as the Kurds are hopeful of their right of self-being. Consisting of approximately no more than 20% of Iraq's population, the Kurds, once oppressed in Iraq, are being reintegrated into society and given the right to self-govern their respectful territories. However, the nation of Kurdistan rests upon three individual countries that include Iran and Turkey, which pose a problem to the peaceful reintegration of the Kurdish people in Iraq. For leaders of Iran and Turkey, the Kurds pose a threat, as their rights fulfilled in Iraq might bring international pressure upon Iran and Turkey to do the same. The Middle East is conflict-ridden area where there are several ethnic minorities just like the Kurds, who, due to intractable conflicts, cannot peacefully live amongst one another.

It is stated that civil war's end, but they usually restart in some form or another. In the article, *Policies for building post-conflict peace*, the authors state that, "globally, within the first ten years of the end of a conflict, 31% of them have resumed." Some conflicts are even more apt to regenerate than the global average; in Africa, less than half of re-established peaceful periods last ten years. By using history as a lesson while applying theoretical frameworks to newly developed data sets of conflict, it can be seen that the high prevalence of peace collapse in the Middle East and Africa is not inevitable. To date, policies on the part of both the international community and post-conflict governments have been highly inefficient. Thus with better policies and regional cooperation, the risk of peace collapse and failure of reintegration of minorities after racial conflicts and civil wars, can be radically reduced.

III. Preventing Illicit Drugs to our Global Youth

- What role can the international community play in reducing the supply & demand of illicit drugs?
- How do the national drug strategies for the Member State you are representing work within the existing framework of the UN and their efforts such as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are more than 185 million illicit drug users globally. While illicit drug use affects all age groups, it continues to be a growing problem among youth. Illicit drug use affects those in both developed and developing countries with more than twenty five percent of the youth population in North America and Western Europe using illicit drugs at least once. For youth, illicit drug use can be a method of coping with violence, neglect, unemployment, and sexual abuse. Recent actions by the UN to address these issues include the *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding*

between Peoples (1965); *International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace* (1985); and *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond* (1995). Today's youth face a wide range of challenges that can prevent their ability for a successful and peaceful adulthood. These include a reduction in financial resources from the State; social, economic and political inequalities; discrimination against young women; youth unemployment; educational inequalities; and inequality in healthcare.

One of the major issues continuing to face the global youth is the availability of illicit drugs. The UN has attempted to address this issue through the creation of such programs as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as well as the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. Many have claimed that there has been success in containing illicit drugs. However, despite these steps the availability and use of illicit drugs by the global youth continues to be a major problem. On March 11, 2009, during a meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia, Libertina Amathila, warned that "our youth is wasting away as a result of drug abuse. Sustainable development and the security and stability of many countries are affected." The international community is currently involved in a major economic crisis, which has had a highly negative effect for the global youth, the opportunity for employment, and educational opportunities, as well as seeing a reduction in States' resources. These effects of the global recession, thus, have in many ways exacerbated the global youth's dependence on illicit drugs. As delegates, please review strategies that Member States can participate in to reduce these dependence. It is also recommended that delegates review the *2009 World Drug Report* created by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes as it gives a comprehensive review of statistics regarding the production, usage, and trafficking of illicit drugs. In addition, this year's report for the first time has a section devoted to youth and illicit drugs. This section is important as data and analysis regarding youth's use of illicit drugs has often been sporadic and lacking detailed analysis.

Annotated Bibliography

History of the General Assembly Third Committee

Bloom, R. & Vriens, L. (2008, September 19). *The role of the UN General Assembly*. Retrieved July 27, 2009, from Council on Foreign Relations Web site: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/13490/>.
In this article, the author provides a brief introduction to the role of the UN General Assembly. She goes into further detail by explaining the assembly's functions, how it is regulated and embodied. This article also states some significant events that have occurred within the GA.

Moore, J. J. & Pubantz, J. (2006). *The new United Nations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
This book has an in-depth discussion about the history of the United Nations, from its origins to what it has evolved to now. The authors of this book go further by including the UN Charter itself and the explanation of major committees within the UN body as well as subsidiary bodies. The information included in this book will help the researcher in getting a better understanding of how the UN functions with specific examples.

United Nations. General Assembly. (2008, September 15). *Third Committee*. Retrieved July 10, 2009, from United Nations Web site: <http://www.un.org/ga/third/index.shtml>.
This Web site provided by the United Nations gives a great summary about the importance of the GA Third Committee. The page focuses on the committee's main goals and responsibilities along with a few achievements. This brief summary provides the researcher some great insight on the committees point of view and is an excellent place to begin.

I. Establishing a Culture of Peace in Central Asia

Niyazov, S. (2004). "Strategic partnership in the ideals of peace and humanism". *UN Chronicle Online Edition*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/issue2/0204p62.asp>.

In this article, the president of Turkmenistan references several historical periods and the efforts that it took during these times to create an environment of peace and humanism. He specifically chronicles the events of the Turkmen people following their independence in 1991. Niyazov highlights specific examples for success of his countries developing society including a national consciousness and economic development.

United Nations General Assembly (2008). *Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia (A/63/63)*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/474/57/PDF/N0847457.pdf>.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's saw the creation of several fledgling States in Central Asia. These States were faced with many political, social, and economic issues both within and outside their new borders. Among these issues were how to deal with the remnants of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal. This resolution focuses on this issue by calling for a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia.

United Nations General Assembly. (2007, June 28). *International decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world, 2001-2010: Note by the Secretary-General, (A/62/97)*. Retrieved July 28, 2009, from

http://portal.unesco.org/en/files/41026/11936572091English_Version.pdf/English+Version.pdf.

This report developed by UNESCO is an important resources for delegates. Taking into consideration the annual report regarding progress of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, it describes in detail the activities underway in the UN as well as recommendations for greater success.

United Nations General Assembly. (n.d.). *International decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world, 2001-2010, (A/63/113)*. Retrieved July 28, 2009, from http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sum_decade.htm.

During the first decade of the 21st century and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, the UN and UNESCO continues its efforts at reaching the actions laid out in A/RES/53/243. These efforts include Member States to place greater emphasis on peace building by educating in the activities necessary to achieve this goal.

United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (n.d.). *Manifest 2000*. Retrieved July 29, 2009, from <http://www.unac.org/peacecp/manifesto.html>.

When the UN declared the year 2000 as the International Year for a Culture of Peace, a group of Nobel Peace Laureates created the Manifesto 2000 which was pledged to help establish a culture of peace. The goal of the pledge was to receive 100 million signatures which could be presented to the GA in September 2000. The main points of the Manifesto echo respect and understanding and the rejection of violence which are key components to the establishment of a culture of peace.

II. Post-Violence Reintegration of Ethnic Minorities

Bigombe, B., Collier, P., & Sambanis, N. (2000). "Policies for building post-conflict peace." *Journal of African Economies*. Retrieved July 11, 2009, from Oxford Journals Database: <http://jae.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/9/3/323>.

In this article from the Oxford Journals, the authors provide a step-by-step process of policy-making in conflict erupted areas. This brief article gives some great in sight to the researcher about the theoretical frameworks used in applying concepts for peacebuilding. It is stated in this article that the international community must get involved with regional peacekeeping to ensure a serene living environment.

Bureau of the Preparatory Committee. (2009). "World conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance." *The Durban Review Conference*. Geneva: United Nations Publications.

The Durban review was a conference that was called under the mandate of United Nations General Assembly resolution 61/149 with a mandate to review the implementation of the The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action from the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance which took place in Durban, South Africa. The objectives of the conference were: to review progress and assess implementation of The Durban Declaration and

Programme of Action, assess the effectiveness of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms, promote the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and identify and share good practices achieved in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

Fischer, M. (2004). *Recovering from violent conflict: Regeneration and reintegration as elements of peacebuilding*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management.

Reintegrating back into post conflict driven areas is a great challenge for many ethnicities and nations to maintain. This article does a wonderful job in giving an introduction to the many problems the world has been challenged by. The author, Fischer, discusses the certain key terms, challenges of reintegration, and some methods and good practices in order to achieve this.

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. (2001). *The Responsibility to Protect*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

The Responsibility to Protect is a concept developed by the international community, which relates to a state's responsibilities towards its population and to the international community's responsibility in case a state fails to fulfill its responsibilities. An important aim of this concept is to provide a legal and ethical basis for humanitarian intervention, in the case where there is a state that is unwilling or unable to prevent or stop genocide, massive killings, and other massive human rights violations.

Park, B. (2004). *Iraq's Kurds and Turkey: Challenges for US policy*. Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute.

In this article from the Strategic Studies Institute, the author begins by discussing how the U.S. went through extensive planning in order to achieve a sustainable peace in Germany after WWII. The article goes further by discussing what methods are necessary to achieve such sustainable peace in the 21st century with regards to post war torn Iraq. The article also compares certain military challenges that exist today from how they were during WWII to give the readers a better understanding.

III. Preventing Illicit Drugs to our Global Youth

Economic and Social Council. (2009). *Commission on narcotic drugs: Report on Fifty-Second Session*. Retrieved August 1, 2009 from <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/V09/825/56/PDF/V0982556.pdf>.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs was established by the UN as the entity responsible for information about illicit drugs. The committee reporting to the Economic and Social Council presented its annual report in March 2009. This report is important to delegates as it contains the resolutions presented to ECOSOC by the CND.

United Nations. (2003). Chapter 6: Youth and Drugs. *World Youth Report*, (148-187). Retrieved June 25, 2009, from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/ch06.pdf>.

This annual report analyzes current statistical data regarding the supply and demand of illicit drug use regarding global youth. By doing this, it allows for an examination of specific trends that can be used for comparison and further study. It also allows for discussion on the best types of drug reduction models that can be used by Member States and the International Community.

United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime. (2009). "Prevention of Drug Use". Retrieved August 1, 2009 from <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/index.html>.

The prevention of drugs use is a high priority for the UN drug entities, especially among the youth. According to this section, an important part of preventing drug use among the youth is through education. The UN through this article show how it has been working together with the Global Youth Network against Drug Abuse and the Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse in order to better educate youth.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2009). *World report 2009*. Retrieved August 1, 2009 from http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2009/WDR2009_eng_web.pdf.

Every year, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime releases a comprehensive report on the global use of illicit drugs. This report includes information on production, trafficking, and use. The importance of this document is that this is the first time the report has a special section on illicit drugs and the global youth.

United Nations Programme on Youth. (2008). *United Nations World Programme of action for youth*. Retrieved June 26, 2009, from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay_15_issues_text.pdf.
In this document, the UN pays specific attention to youth in the 21st century. The UN stresses the vital role that youth play in society while examining the challenges that youth face today. These challenges include a variety of social, economic and political issues among them illicit drug use and the proposals put forth by the UN.