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Update for the General Assembly Fourth Committee

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

In November 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) Fourth Committee concluded the main work of its 70th session with discussions about the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA), the comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and other important topics.¹ As challenges to international peace and security grow ever more complex, the Fourth Committee has worked to draw attention to new policy in how peace operations are implemented, address outer space security and sustainability, and allocate appropriate funds for its programs.²

During its recent work, a key focus of discussion for the Fourth Committee was the growing concern over the use of outer space for military purposes.³ Many Member States voiced their concern on this, asking that the Committee, along with the international community, make efforts to sustain peace, security, and disarmament as outer space activities are conducted.⁴ As a result, two resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly on the recommendations of the Fourth Committee: GA resolutions 70/230 on “Matters relating to activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016,” and 70/82 on “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.”⁵ On 22 October 2015, a joint ad hoc meeting was held by the Fourth and First Committees, which dealt with disarmament and international security as it related to the use of outer space; the meeting further outlined where the Committees could cooperate on developing sustainable uses of space.⁶ At the meeting, it was noted that the development of confidence-building measures and implementing transparency would be effective steps to ensure peace and security in outer space.⁷

Other discussions have recently been held on the work of the UN in relation to outer space. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) will be discussing in 2016 the “safety of space operations and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.”⁸ Aspects that COPUOS will be considering include preparations for the 50th anniversary of the first UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50) in 2018 and discussing new strategies to increase the safety of space operations, security, and long-term sustainability of outer space projects.⁹ In addition, at its 70th session, the Fourth Committee approved a draft resolution to bolster existing programs and the budget of the University of Peace as an effort to expand peacebuilding within the scope of outer space activities and research.¹⁰ Lastly, the Fourth Committee approved plans to budget programs to further peaceful uses of outer space in international cooperation by allocating an estimated \$197,800 for 2016-2017.¹¹ Such programs include: the Costa Rica Workshop on Human Space Technology; South Africa Symposium on Basic Space Technology; Kenya Workshop on Space Technology and Applications for Wildlife Management and Protecting Biodiversity; and the Islamic Republic of Iran Workshop on the Use of Space Technology for Dust Storms and Drought Monitoring in the Middle East Region.¹²

¹ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/C.4/70/1)*, 2015; UN DPI, *Fourth Committee Approves Nine Drafts on Israeli-Palestinian Issues as It Concludes Main Part of Seventieth General Assembly Session*, 2015.

² UN DPI, *Modern Conflicts Outpacing Ability of United Nations to Address Them, Warns Deputy-Secretary-General, as Fourth Committee Takes up Peacekeeping*, 2015.

³ UN DPI, *As Fourth, First Committee holds joint Meeting, Speakers Stress Need for Holistic Handling of Outer Space Security, Sustainability*, 2015.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ UN General Assembly, *Resolutions*, 2015.

⁶ UN DPI, *As Fourth, First Committee holds joint Meeting, Speakers Stress Need for Holistic Handling of Outer Space Security, Sustainability*, 2015.

⁷ Di Pippo, *Joint Ad Hoc Meeting of the GA 1st/4th Committee – “Possible Challenges to Space Security and Sustainability”*, 2015.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ UN DPI, *Fourth Committee Approves Draft Resolution Requesting Expanded Services of University for Peace in Conflict Resolution, Peacebuilding*, 2015.

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Matters relating to activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016 (A/RES/70/230)*, 2015.

¹² *Ibid.*

During the 70th session, the Fourth Committee called upon all Member States to provide financial resources to UNWRA so that it may continue its programs through 2016.¹³ Faced with increasing violence in the Middle East region, the expenditure of funds has also increased.¹⁴ One of the key points of contention during the debate on peacekeeping operations was the protection of civilians, where some Member States noted that an overreach of the principle of civilian protection could be viewed as interference with sovereign state affairs.¹⁵ With the increased complexity of special political missions (SPMs) and peace operations, the need to increase financing for SPMs was also recognized by the Fourth Committee.¹⁶ The Fourth Committee also condemned the actions against Palestine and the Gaza Strip and unanimously approved a draft resolution on the “Comprehensive review of special political missions,” calling on the UN Secretary-General to schedule dialogues throughout the year pertaining to special political missions; this was then adopted by the GA as resolution 70/92.¹⁷ In addition, the Fourth Committee concluded the meeting by requesting that a report on SPMs covering accountability, geographical representation, transparency, and effectiveness be prepared by the Secretary-General to be submitted at the 71st session.¹⁸

The Fourth Committee used the 70th session to highlight the links across development and security spectrums with its discussions on the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as noting the on-going humanitarian implications as a result of conflict in the Israel-Palestine region. The session also highlighted the intersections between the different GA Committees in better addressing human security, and the role that the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will play in creating solutions for conflict situations. Over the next year, the intersection between development and security will additionally play a key role as the Fourth Committee and the UN system addresses the comprehensive review of special political missions and peacekeeping operations and other important topics.

¹³ UN General Assembly, *Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/RES/70/85)*, 2015.

¹⁴ UN DPI, *Palestinians remain among Most Marginalized Refugees, Due to Israel’s Occupation, Lack of Predictable Funding, Fourth Committee Told*, 2015.

¹⁵ UN DPI, *Opinions Divided over Protection of Civilians as Fourth Committee Concludes General Debate on Peacekeeping Matters*, 2015.

¹⁶ UN DPI, *Amid Growing Global Instability, Special Political Missions Crucial for the Conflict Prevention, Require Separate Fund, Speakers Tell Fourth Committee*, 2015.

¹⁷ UN DPI, *Fourth Committee Approves Texts Relating to Gibraltar, Special Political Missions as It Concludes Debates on Israeli Practices, Peacekeeping Operations*, 2015.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, October 22). *As Fourth, First Committee Hold Joint Meeting, Speakers Stress Need for Holistic Handling of Outer Space Security, Sustainability* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 28 December 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd589.doc.htm>

This document is particularly important in that it reflects how the Fourth and First Committee have recently collaborated in discussions about space security. Also found in this source are statements by Member States on their respective opinions on outer space security. It is worth noting that some Member States oppose the use of outer space for weapons development since the emphasis is the peaceful use of outer space. In this source, specifics about the joint meeting between both committees are also presented. For instance, discussion on transparency issues and confidence-building measures can strengthen security and ensuring sustainability in space.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, October 30). *Modern Conflicts Outpacing Ability of United Nations to Address Them, Warns Deputy Secretary-General, as Fourth Committee Takes Up Peacekeeping* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 28 December 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd594.doc.htm>

As seen in this meetings coverage, the Fourth Committee had discussions between non-governmental organizations as well as statements and perspectives from Member States. This article is also relevant since it details current challenges to the Fourth Committee in various areas such as peacekeeping, security, and human rights violations. Increasing the role of the United Nations in preventing human rights violations was also discussed in improving peace operations.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/70/13/)*. Retrieved 30 December 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/13/>

In this report, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA goes into great detail about the difficulties his organization has faced in recent years, including the financial crisis UNRWA currently is experiencing. This is an important document since it thoroughly explains the different ways in which the Fourth Committee, in partnership with UNRWA, continues on the ground efforts to support Palestinian refugees. Also found are statistics and facts about the ongoing Occupation of Palestinian Territory.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, November 6). *Amid Growing Global Instability, Special Political Missions Crucial for Conflict Prevention, Require Separate Fund, Speakers Tell Fourth Committee* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 10 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd598.doc.htm>

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, October 22). *As Fourth, First Committee Hold Joint Meeting, Speakers Stress Need for Holistic Handling of Outer Space Security, Sustainability* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 28 December 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd589.doc.htm>

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, October 19). *Fourth Committee Approves Draft Resolution Requesting Expanded Services of University for Peace in Conflict Resolution, Peacebuilding* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 1 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd587.doc.htm>

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, November 17). *Fourth Committee Approves Nine Drafts on Israeli-Palestinian Issues as It Concludes Main Part of Seventieth General Assembly Session* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 13 February 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd603.doc.htm>

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, November 5). *Opinions Divided over Protection of Civilians as Fourth Committee Concludes General Debate on Peacekeeping Matters* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 8 February 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaspd597.doc.htm>

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/RES/70/85)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Fourth Committee (A/70/496). Retrieved 25 December 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/85>

United Nations General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/70/13)*. Retrieved 30 December 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/13>

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Resolutions* [Website]. Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/70/resolutions.shtml>

I. Comprehensive Review of Special Political Missions and the Future of UN Peacekeeping and Peace Operations

Recent Developments

In recent months, the United Nations (UN) and the international community have continued to discuss how special political missions (SPMs) and peacekeeping operations (PKOs) can be equipped to better meet the challenges of today.¹⁹ During the “High-level thematic debate: Maintenance of International Security” held in October 2015, participants discussed regional mechanisms, capacity building, concerted efforts against international terrorism, and modernization in the context of SPMs and PKOs.²⁰ This update will discuss important events of the past months and highlight the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) as an example of successful implementation strategies for SPMs.²¹

During the 70th session of the UN General Assembly (GA), the Fourth Committee reviewed several reports on the topic of SPMs and PKOs and recommended a draft resolution on the “Comprehensive review of special political missions” to the GA Plenary, which was adopted as resolution 70/92 without a vote on 15 December 2015.²² The resolution stresses the importance of SPMs and the necessity of their continued development by encouraging further discussion within the GA.²³ The resolution furthermore recognizes the Secretary-General’s report on “The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations” and the importance of building peace through “political solutions to conflicts.”²⁴ In his report, the Secretary-General focused his action plan on the three pillars of a renewed focus on conflict prevention and mediation, stronger regional-global partnerships, and new ways of planning and conducting UN peace operations that are faster, more responsive, and more accountable to the needs of countries and people in conflict.²⁵

Another question recently under discussion during the 70th session concerns whether SPMs should be funded separately from general UN operations.²⁶ During its debates, the Fifth Committee reiterated recommendations first made in 2011 to separate funding in order to enhance efficiency and transparency while allowing better transfer of resources between SPMs and PKOs.²⁷ This separate budget would also allow the UN system to set aside reserve funds and react to mission challenges more quickly.²⁸

From 28-29 September 2015, the United States of America convened two key summits prior to the opening session of the GA.²⁹ The Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping, which gathered over 50 Member States at the UN, resulted in the pledging of more than 40,000 additional peacekeepers and additional equipment for peace operations.³⁰ Participating governments also declared their commitment to modernizing UN peacekeeping by improving personnel capabilities, closing capacity gaps, and enabling faster deployment to address some of the issues raised by the comprehensive review.³¹ During the Leaders’ Summit to Counter ISIL and Violent Extremism, participants

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Comprehensive review of special political mission (A/RES/70/92)*, 2015.

²⁰ UN President of the General Assembly, *High-Level Thematic Debate of the General Assembly: “Maintenance of International Peace and Security,”* 2015.

²¹ Stearns, *Can Force be Useful in the Absence of a Political Strategy? Lessons from the UN Missions to the DR Congo, Global Peace Operations Review*, 2015.

²² UN General Assembly, *Comprehensive review of special political missions: Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/70/499)*, 2015.

²³ UN General Assembly, *Comprehensive review of special political mission (A/RES/70/92)*, 2015.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *The future of United Nations peace operations: Implementation of the recommendation of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/357)*, 2015.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁶ UN DPI, *Delegates Urge Creation of Separate Account for Special Political Missions as Fifth Committee Considers 2016-2017 Resource Requirements (GA/AB/4174)*, 2015.

²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political mission; Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/340)*, 2011; UN DPI, *Delegates Urge Creation of Separate Account for Special Political Missions as Fifth Committee Considers 2016-2017 Resource Requirements (GA/AB/4174)*, 2015.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Nichols, *Countries pledge 40,000 U.N. peacekeepers at the U.N. summit, Reuters*, 2015; Karlsrud, *UN Peace Operations and Counter-Terrorism – A Bridge too far?*, *Global Peace Operations Review*, 2015.

³⁰ Nichols, *Countries pledge 40,000 U.N. peacekeepers at the U.N. summit, Reuters*, 2015.

³¹ USA White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Declaration of Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping*, 2015.

discussed whether UN peace operations are able to address the challenge of counter-terrorism.³² Importantly, months earlier, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) reported that UN peacekeeping missions “are not suited to engage in military counter-terrorism operations” and elaborated on only limited roles for peacekeeping operations to take “targeted offensive operations.”³³

The relationship between political solutions and military involvement is clearly demonstrated by the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the use of limited targeted offensive operations was recently utilized.³⁴ MONUSCO was successful in its earlier stages when it had a political role as an observation mission involved in the peace process and worked towards protecting the establishment of free elections.³⁵ In recent years, however, the mission has shifted to include the protection of civilians and the dismantling of armed groups; this military focus has not been as successful, except for situations where the mission operated proactively and carried out targeted offensive operations against armed groups.³⁶ This example shows that it is important to consider whether missions should first focus on their political role, but also understand their mandate in a proactive way by taking initiative against threats like armed groups where appropriate.³⁷ For this type of proactive focus that preemptively protects civilians and UN personnel to be utilized, countries must contribute the “requisite capability and political will” to adequately prepare peace operations for such tactical operations.³⁸

As the process of reviewing and modernizing UN peace operations moves forward, it is necessary to renew focus on the political nature of the missions while also making sure that peacekeepers can be deployed quickly where they are needed.³⁹ To that end, delegates should consider how to improve the flexibility of missions in order to make operations more successful and safer, address the increasing and evolving needs of peace operations to ensure technological and troop-level capacities are met, and evaluate new budgetary strategies that could lead to improvements.⁴⁰

³² Karlsrud, *UN Peace Operations and Counter-Terrorism – A Bridge too far?* 2015.

³³ UN General Assembly, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people (A/70/95)*, 2015, p. 45.

³⁴ Stearns, *Can Force be Useful in the Absence of a Political Strategy? Lessons from the UN Missions to the DR Congo*, 2015.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on uniting strengths for peace: politics, partnership and people (A/70/95)*, 2015, p. 45.

³⁹ UN General Assembly, *Overall policy matters pertaining to special political mission: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/400)*, 2015.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendation of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/357)*, 2015.

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This article discusses whether UN peace operations are able to successfully conduct counter-terrorism operations. This question was also part of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which came to the conclusion that UN troops are not suited to undertake military operations in this regard. The article elaborates on this problem and establishes additional challenges that could occur. While the question of fighting terrorism is not answered yet, the article concludes that UN peace operations alone may not be the right tool for this challenge.

Stearns, J. (2015, December 15). Can Force be Useful in the Absence of a Political Strategy? Lessons from the UN Missions to the DR Congo. *Global Peace Operations Review*. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: <http://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/can-force-be-useful-in-the-absence-of-a-political-strategy-lessons-from-the-un-missions-to-the-dr-congo/>

This case study on the mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo highlights different strengths and weaknesses of UN peacekeeping missions. Over 15 years, the mission has developed and fulfilled different peacekeeping tasks. This article's analysis of the mission's varying successes and failures can help delegates understand the areas where peacekeeping missions are most effective and those where there is need for change. Knowing the weaknesses of peacekeeping missions is an important step to be able to make them more effective. It is necessary to keep in mind that this is just one individual case, but it offers significant information regarding different aspects of peacekeeping missions.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Comprehensive review of special political mission (A/RES/70/92)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Fourth Committee (A/70/499). Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/92>

As the most recent resolution reviewing SPMs, this source provides a general understanding of the current work of the General Assembly concerning this issue. While broad in scope, the resolution still underlines the importance of continuing the development process of SPMs and mentions the importance of pursuing political solutions to conflicts. The expressed need for regular dialogue and the requested report of the Secretary-General underlines the necessity for further discussion on the issue. The resolution is a particularly good starting point for further research as it references several current reports that elaborate upon the policies.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendation of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/357)*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/357>

This report of the Secretary-General also follows up on the work of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. The Secretary-General considers the work done by the group as a foundation for modernizing peace operations. The report will help delegates to understand the issues peace operations currently face. It examines steps which need to be taken to make UN peace operations better suited for today's challenges, with emphasis on the importance of political processes for peacekeeping and the role of regional organizations.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Overall policy matters pertaining to special political mission: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/400)*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/400>

This report builds upon the findings of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. The focus on prevention and mediation is mentioned in both documents. This report also highlights the importance of regional offices, regional and subregional organizations, human rights, the role of women, and the need for transparency. In reviewing peace operations, delegates should ensure that they consider the wide range of topics and issues that this report has highlighted to strengthen and improve SPMs and PKOs.

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II. Intensifying Cooperation in Outer Space to Preserve Peace and Security

Recent Developments

During its 70th session, peaceful uses for outer space remained a primary focus of discussion for the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) Fourth Committee, with information sharing and partnerships being the primary objective.⁴¹ The GA Plenary adopted five resolutions during the 70th session that pertain to peaceful uses of outer space: GA resolutions 70/26, 70/27, 70/53, 70/82, and 70/230.⁴² Additional success on this topic came from the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). The Committee's most recent report to the General Assembly, A/70/20, highlights the importance of the work of the Committee, most importantly that the space environment and securing long-term sustainable initiatives in space directly correlate to sustainable development on Earth.⁴³

In its work, the GA reaffirmed its commitment to peace through promoting universal outer space access for all Member States regardless of each state's individual scientific and economic development, as encouraged by GA resolution 70/82 on the "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space."⁴⁴ GA resolution 70/230 on "Matters relating to activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016" was adopted for the purpose of reinstating workshops carried out under the UN Programme on Space Applications in Costa Rica and Kenya, and adding a conference in South Africa to provide basic training on utilizing space technology.⁴⁵ In addition to the discussion on greater access to space technology, the Fourth Committee also discussed preventing the militarization of outer space with continual dialogue and restrictions on weapon installation.⁴⁶ Several Member States strongly believe in the need to update and further define international space law to further the discussion between the First and Fourth Committees and the Conference on Disarmament on the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space.⁴⁷ The dialogue between Member States pertaining to the prevention of militarizing outer space successfully led to the adoption of GA resolution 70/27 on "No first placement of weapons in outer space."⁴⁸ The committee also adopted GA resolution 70/53 on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" to further transparency measures, and included an operative clause to add discussion on disarmament in outer space to the GA's 71st session agenda.⁴⁹

In November 2015, COPUOS released a "Report on the Knowledge Portal of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: Recent Advances," which highlighted the successful additional information added to the UN Platform for Space-based information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) and praised the platform's success in 2015.⁵⁰ UN-SPIDER provided live stream information regarding the natural disasters in Nepal, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Guatemala, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka.⁵¹ This peaceful use of outer space was successful in supporting disaster response efforts by giving live stream data to emergency response teams and keeping the public informed.⁵²

Additional ways information sharing has assisted in the peaceful use of outer space have been observed through public health applications, agricultural development, and access to clean water.⁵³ A recent report by COPUOS published in October 2015 outlined several new initiatives that partner the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs

⁴¹ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items for the seventieth session of the General Assembly (A/70/252)*, 2015.

⁴² UN General Assembly, *Resolutions*, 2015.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/70/20)*, 2015.

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/RES/70/82)*, 2015.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Matters relating to activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016 (A/RES/70/230)*, 2015.

⁴⁶ UN General Assembly, *No first placement of weapons in outer space (A/RES/70/27)*, 2015.

⁴⁷ UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 28 Fourth Committee Texts Covering Issues Including Decolonization, Outer Space, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 2015.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *No first placement of weapons in outer space (A/RES/70/27)*, 2015.

⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (A/RES/70/53)*, 2015.

⁵⁰ UN General Assembly, *Report on the knowledge portal of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response: recent advances (A/AC.105/1101)*, 2015.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ UN General Assembly, *Report on the meeting on the applications of space science and technology for public health organized by the World Health Organization and the Office for Outer Space Affairs (A/AC.105/1099)*, 2015.

(UNOOSA) with the World Health Organization (WHO) to streamline the sharing of information, so as to best assist in public health decision-making.⁵⁴ The technology being utilized by UNOOSA can jointly be used to study and monitor vector-borne disease, control disease outbreaks, and most importantly help identify potential cures and treatments for diseases.⁵⁵ Additionally, WHO outlined to UNOOSA its requests for access to technology, including drafting a World Health Assembly resolution with the purpose of raising awareness about the role of space science, technology and applications for public health.⁵⁶

On 18 December 2015, UNOOSA released a document titled *Space for Agriculture Development and Food Security*, which further details the importance of outer space technology to global food security.⁵⁷ One item of concern is water scarcity; considering that regions without any water management systems produce 45% of global food, outer space technology is important for water conservation practices, especially for food security.⁵⁸ Applying the information retrieved from satellite imaging and sensing data can improve crop yield, reduce costs to farmers, and reduce the environmental impact of farming.⁵⁹ The benefits of outer space technology is not localized to water conservation practices; it additionally helps find groundwater and land not currently being efficiently used.⁶⁰ Granting farmers access to such technology is a continued goal of UNOOSA.⁶¹

The benefits from outer space information and technology have only just been tapped. Further cooperation between Member States is a priority in order to improve upon current policies ranging from public health, agriculture, information sharing, and confidence building. Cooperation in outer space is important while addressing global issues and will lead to a more peaceful world.

⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report on the meeting on the applications of space science and technology for public health organized by the World Health Organization and the Office for Outer Space Affairs (A/AC.105/1099)*, 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ UNOOSA, *Space for Agriculture Development and Food Security*, 2015.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/RES/70/82)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Fourth Committee (A/70/495). Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/82>

The GA worked towards being inclusive during its 70th session, discussing how all Member States regardless of financial and technological contributions can still access space technology. This affords the developing world an opportunity to develop and provide security for themselves on all accords at a quicker pace. Additionally, through the sharing of information, confidence building measures are in place that improve international relationships, while simultaneously reducing the North-South gap. As not all Member States have their own space program, cooperation between Member States is imperative in building peaceful relations.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (A/RES/70/53)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the First Committee (A/70/460). Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/53>

Confidence building measures and actions of transparency are important to improve foreign relationships that transcend to peace. By having measures in place that promote such tools of diplomacy, the global community can reach a safer space that additionally improves communication amongst all Member States of the United Nations. GA resolution 70/53 is a direct policy example of building trustful relations between states through the sharing of information that will provide a baseline that will promote peace. Delegates will need to build trust amongst each other to be able to hold discussions that will lead to a sustainable peaceful relationship in outer space.

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. (2015). *Report on the knowledge portal of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (A/AC.105/1101)*. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/AC.105/1101>

Natural disasters are an ongoing problem for all Member States despite their geopolitical significance and access to technology. To counteract the significance of a natural disaster, having the access to technology that can be utilized to develop a plan of protection is an important resource for any country. The UNOOSA's report highlights the significance of this access and provides additional information that can be used to help all Member States provide a security plan in case of such disaster.

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. (2015). *Report on the meeting on the applications of space science and technology for public health organized by the World Health Organization and the Office for Outer Space Affairs (A/AC.105/1009)*. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/AC.105/1009>

Partnerships between organizations such as between the World Health Organization and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as described in this report show consensus between groups of differing expertise. This partnership reflects the diverseness of separate entities coming together for the common goal of peace. Details of the report of this committee exemplify for delegates the combined efforts of separate organizations to reach international partnerships that promote peaceful resolution.

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. (2015). *Space for Agriculture Development and Food Security* [Report]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from:

http://www.unoosa.org/pdf/publications/Space_for_argicultural_development_and_food_security.pdf

Agriculture development and food security is global issue of concern. Space technology can be applied to the issues of concern of the global community and help solve and prevent further problems from occurring. This document outlines all the agricultural issues that access to space technology can address and offers solutions to such problems. Another key component of this document is information on further sources to consider that additionally discuss the issues addressed. Delegates should use this document as a tool for understanding practical applications of the ideas before the Fourth Committee. This document should be used to not only depict previous successes, but additionally also to determine what further measures can be taken to improve food security through space-based technology.

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III. Improving the Situation of Non-Self-Governing Territories

Recent Developments

In 2016, decolonization remains a fundamental theme of the United Nations (UN). During the 70th session of the General Assembly (GA), the Fourth Committee and its partners deliberated on a spectrum of normative and operational concerns affecting Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs); key agenda items ranged from the financing and implementation of existing frameworks to the sociopolitical situations of individual territories.⁶² The Fourth Committee and GA Plenary adopted resolutions, recommendations, and declarations pursuant to this topic.⁶³ Additionally, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (C-24) adopted its organization of work for 2016 on 24 December 2015.⁶⁴

The Fourth Committee held its annual debate on decolonization questions from 8-15 October 2015.⁶⁵ During introductory speeches, delegates recognized the historic achievements of the C-24 while stressing the need to “intensify international efforts to assist the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in their quest for decolonization.”⁶⁶ Early discussions were dominated by conflicting views over the governance of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and Gibraltar.⁶⁷ Regional groups contributed vital perspectives to other deliberations, with African Union (AU) representatives decrying persistent barriers to the decolonization of Western Sahara.⁶⁸ The formal list of NSGTs recognized by the UN remains unchanged from 2015, but debate participants discussed the interests of additional territories.⁶⁹ Representatives of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States spoke on Puerto Rico, a regular agenda item of the C-24 that was most recently addressed in its decision of 23 June 2014.⁷⁰ The permanent representative of Pakistan also called upon the Fourth Committee to address the situation in Kashmir as part of its decolonization agenda.⁷¹

Building upon recommendations made by the UN Secretary-General and the C-24, the Fourth Committee presented 11 draft resolutions and decisions to the 70th session of the GA Plenary; all drafts were adopted as recommended.⁷² The Plenary adopted a comprehensive draft on the “Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands” as GA resolution 70/102 A-B, upholding the right to self-determination of the peoples in these territories and expressing concern about the limited presence of UN visiting missions.⁷³ The territories of Western Sahara, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Tokelau were recognized with individual resolutions and the Fourth Committee’s draft decision on the “Question of Gibraltar” was adopted.⁷⁴

⁶² UN General Assembly, *Fourth Committee: Seventieth Session*, 2015.

⁶³ UN General Assembly, *Programme: 70th plenary meeting*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Fourth Committee: Seventieth Session*, 2015.

⁶⁴ UN C-24, *Organization of work (A/AC.109/2016/L.2)*, 2015.

⁶⁵ UN General Assembly, *Fourth Committee: Seventieth Session*, 2015.

⁶⁶ UN DPI, *Argentina Enjoys Widespread Support over Question of Falklands (Malvinas) as Fourth Committee Begins Debate on Decolonization Matters (GA/SPD/580)*, 2015.

⁶⁷ Ibid; UN DPI, *Petitioners Raise Issues of Displacement, Marginalization, Ills of Nuclear Testing, as Fourth Committee continues decolonization debates (GA/SPD/581)*, 2015.

⁶⁸ UN DPI, *United Nations Must Shoulder Responsibility to End Colonial Occupations, Demand Speakers in Fourth Committee (GA/SPD/584)*, 2015; Khadad, *After 40 Years, Time to End the Occupation of Western Sahara*, 2015.

⁶⁹ UN DPI, *The United Nations and Decolonization: Non-Self-Governing Territories*, 2015.

⁷⁰ UN DPI, *United Nations Must Shoulder Responsibility to End Colonial Occupations, Demand Speakers in Fourth Committee (GA/SPD/584)*, 2015; UN DPI, *The United Nations and Decolonization: Decisions of the Committee of 24 on Puerto Rico*, 2015; UN C-24, *Special Committee decision of 23 June 2014 concerning Puerto Rico: Report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee, Bashar Ja’afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (A/AC.109/2015/L.13)*, 2015.

⁷¹ *UN agenda incomplete without Kashmir settlement: Pakistan*, The Nation, 2015.

⁷² UN DPI, *Fourth Committee Approves 11 Draft Resolutions as It Concludes General Debate on Decolonization Questions (GA/SPD/585)*, 2015; UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 28 Fourth Committee Texts Covering Issues Including Decolonization, Outer Space, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (GA/11737)*, 2015.

⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/RES/70/102 A-B)*, 2015.

⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *Question of Western Sahara (A/RES/70/98)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Question of New Caledonia (A/RES/70/99)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Question of French Polynesia (A/RES/70/100)*, 2015; UN General

Additional outcomes were adopted by the GA Plenary on 9 December 2015.⁷⁵ GA resolution 70/95 on “Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories” urged administering powers to respect the economic interests of territories under their administration, including advancement towards development goals and access to natural and human resources.⁷⁶ GA resolution 70/103 on the “Dissemination of information on decolonization” emphasized the UN’s role in advancing awareness of resources to promote self-determination and the need to distribute information in all six official UN languages.⁷⁷ GA resolutions 70/94, on “Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations,” 70/96, on the “Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations,” and 70/97, on “Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories,” requested greater engagement and collaboration across specialized agencies and UN organizations to implement shared commitments.⁷⁸ Following budgetary review by the Fifth Committee, the Plenary adopted GA resolution 70/231 of 30 December 2015 on the “Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.”⁷⁹

On 24 December 2015, the C-24 adopted its organization of work for 2016.⁸⁰ In addition to regular reviews of the situations of specific territories and implementation of relevant declarations, the Special Committee will consider the question of Puerto Rico, the compliance of Member States with the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, and the question of sending visiting missions to territories at the recommendation of the GA Plenary.⁸¹ As the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism progresses through 2016, the Fourth Committee and its partners in the UN system will continue to review the situations of individual NGSTs and pursue broader implementation of independence and self-governance.⁸²

Assembly, *Question of Tokelau (A/RES/70/101)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Question of Gibraltar (A/C.4./70/L.5)*, 2015.

⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (A/RES/70/94)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/RES/70/95)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/RES/70/96)*, 2015.

⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/RES/70/95)*, 2015.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Dissemination of information on decolonization (A/RES/70/103)*, 2015.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (A/RES/70/94)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/RES/70/96)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/RES/70/97)*, 2015.

⁷⁹ UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 28 Fourth Committee Texts Covering Issues Including Decolonization, Outer Space, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (GA/11737)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/RES/70/231)*, 2015.

⁸⁰ UN C-24, *Organization of work (A/AC.109/2016/L.2)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2015 (A/70/23)*, 2015, para. 22.

⁸¹ UN C-24, *Organization of work (A/AC.109/2016/L.2)*, 2015.

⁸² *Ibid.*

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This resource represents the meetings coverage of the 9 December 2015 session in which the GA Plenary adopted all but one of the Fourth Committee's draft decisions and resolutions (the last draft resolution was adopted by the GA later in the month). Delegates should review the session outcomes for insight into their Member States' positions, including voting outcomes on drafts, substantive summaries for each item, and reviews of actions taken on draft resolutions. Links to additional documents and resources can also be found under the "background" heading.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/RES/70/231)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Fourth Committee (A/70/505). Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/231>

This resolution represents the most comprehensive document adopted in 2015 on the UN system's work for the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The operative clauses include specific recommendations for implementation at the national, regional, and international levels. As the GA committee responsible for reviewing the recommendations of the Special Committee, Fourth Committee delegates should be familiar with the requested actions presented in clause 8 related to Member State compliance and the question of sending visiting missions to Territories. Also notable is the emphasis in clauses 13-15 on the obligation of Member States to recognize the property rights and interests of people's living in NSGTs, including the right to manage their natural resources.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/RES/70/96)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Fourth Committee (A/70/503). Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/96>

In contrast to GA resolution 70/231, which provides recommendations targeted towards Member States, regional organizations, and local actors, this document addresses the responsibilities and best practices of the United Nations system. Its provisions reflect previous recommendations in reports by the Secretary-General and the Economic and Social Council, in addition to outcome documents adopted by various regional commissions. Issues of sustainable development and access to financial resources are fundamental to this document, with particular focus on the unique vulnerabilities of small island territories. Delegates should review this document closely to understand the specific role of the Fourth Committee in the current United Nations system framework. A thorough review will also enable delegates to identify key partners for new and revised initiatives.

United Nations, General Assembly, Fourth Committee, Seventieth session. (2015). *Fourth Committee: Seventieth Session* [Website]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/ga/fourth/70th-session/programme/>

The online repository of the Fourth Committee's 70th session contains meeting agendas, formal statements by delegates and outside experts, official documents, and webcasts produced during the course of the Fourth Committee's deliberations. Delegates should direct special attention to the meetings of 8-15 October 2015, which comprise the Committee's annual debate on decolonization issues. This resource is particularly valuable for reviewing formal statements made by United Nations delegates in the course of the debate on behalf of Member States and regional groups.

United Nations, Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. (2015). *Organization of work (A/AC.109/2016/L.2)*. Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/AC.109/2016/L.2>

This document, though brief, outlines the program of work for the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24). It offers significant insight into decolonization agenda items that will be directed to the Fourth Committee in 2016. Additionally, delegates will find commentary on select

requests from the most recent GA Plenary decisions and several links to reports, decisions, and resolutions that will help contextualize the recent progress on the topic.

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