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Update for the Human Rights Council

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

At various meetings since October, including the 30th regular session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) from 14 September to 2 October 2015, many issues related to the work and mandate of the HRC were discussed, including the rights of indigenous peoples, the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights, and the impact of the world drug problem on human rights.¹ Additionally, attention was also given to a number of country specific situations and crises.²

The 30th regular session of the HRC saw the adoption of 29 resolutions, 15 decisions, and two presidential statements.³ During the session, the Council considered several reports by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) or the Secretary-General that related to the work of the HRC.⁴ Thematically, the reports covered the question of the death penalty, human rights in the administration of justice, the rights of the child, the rights of indigenous people, as well as the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights, among others.⁵ Many of these themes were also present in the adopted resolutions, such as the human rights of indigenous peoples in 30/4 (2015), the question of the death penalty in 30/5 (2015), equal participation in political and public affairs in 30/9 (2015), and human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism in 30/15 (2015).⁶ Both the resolutions on the rights of indigenous peoples and on human rights and violent extremism address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the latter by stressing the role of poverty eradication as a means to counter violent extremism.⁷ The most recent session also included several panel discussions on various thematic issues, including: the annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the HRC; the annual half-day discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples; and a panel discussion on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights, the outcome of which will serve as the HRC's contribution to the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem (UNGASS 2016).⁸

The HRC also directed attention to a variety of country-specific issues and situations, such as the topic of atrocities executed by the terrorist group Boko Haram, and the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims, and other minorities in Myanmar.⁹ Current human rights situations that were also addressed by HRC include the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, which resulted in the adoption of HRC resolution 30/10 (2015), and the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was covered in a panel discussion that resulted in no adopted resolution.¹⁰ Additionally, the HRC convened for its 24th special session on 17 December 2015, which addressed the deteriorating human rights situation in Burundi.¹¹ The Council furthermore adopted a series of resolutions providing technical assistance or support in the field of capacity-building for a number of Member States

¹ UN OHCHR, *30th regular session of the Human Rights Council (14 September to 2 October 2015)*, 2015.

² UN OHCHR, *24th special session of the Human Rights Council on preventing further deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi - 17 December 2015*, 2015; UN HRC *The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/RES/30/10)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Situation of human rights in Yemen (A/HRC/30/L.4/Rev.1)*, 2015.

³ UN OHCHR, *30th regular session of the Human Rights Council (14 September to 2 October 2015): Adopted resolutions, decisions and President's statements*, 2015.

⁴ UN HRC, *Annotations to the agenda for the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council*, 2015, pp. 5-10.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ UN HRC, *Human rights and indigenous peoples (A/HRC/RES/30/4)*, 2015; UN HRC, *The question of the death penalty (A/HRC/RES/30/5)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Equal participation in political and public affairs (A/HRC/RES/30/9)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/RES/30/15)*, 2015.

⁷ UN HRC, *Human rights and indigenous peoples (A/HRC/RES/30/4)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/RES/30/15)*, 2015.

⁸ UN OHCHR, *30th regular session of the Human Rights Council (14 September to 2 October 2015)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Panel discussion on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights*, 2015.

⁹ UN HRC, *Annotations to the agenda for the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council*, 2015, pp. 5-10.

¹⁰ UN OHCHR, *30th regular session of the Human Rights Council (14 September to 2 October 2015)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Annotations to the agenda for the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council*, 2015, p. 14; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Human Rights Council. Thirtieth session (14 September-2 October 2015) (A/70/53/Add.1)*, 2015; UN HRC, *The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/RES/30/10)*, 2015.

¹¹ UN OHCHR, *24th special session of the Human Rights Council on preventing further deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi - 17 December 2015*, 2015.

such as Yemen, the Central African Republic, Somalia, Sudan, Cambodia, and Burundi, in order to enable those Member States to fulfill their human rights obligations.¹² A draft resolution about the human rights situation in Yemen was put on the floor by several Member States, but was ultimately withdrawn before it could be put to a vote; many elements of the draft resolution, however, have been included in the resolution on providing technical assistance for Yemen in the field of human rights.¹³ Furthermore, the HRC Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group convened for the 23rd session of the second UPR review cycle in Geneva from 2 to 13 November 2015.¹⁴ It was the eleventh session of the cycle, reviewing the human rights records of 14 Member States.¹⁵ During the session, the Member States under review presented their efforts with regards to the fulfillment of national human rights obligations and the steps they have taken to implement recommendations from the first review cycle.¹⁶

¹² UN HRC, *Report of the Human Rights Council: Thirtieth session (14 September-2 October 2015) (A/70/53/Add.1)*, 2015.

¹³ UN HRC, *Situation of human rights in Yemen (A/HRC/30/L.4/Rev.1)*, 2015.

¹⁴ UN OHCHR, *Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review Working Group to hold twenty-third session in Geneva from 2 to 13 November 2015*, 2015.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

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United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2015). *Annotations to the agenda for the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/30/1>

This annotated agenda for the 30th session of the Human Rights Council contains the full agenda of the session and also provides detailed background information on every item that was discussed. Delegates are therefore able to gain a deeper understanding about the background and the history of the items discussed. Furthermore, this document also provides insight into the very practical workings of a regular HRC session by highlighting the regular agenda items and the thematic issues brought before the Council before the consideration of any resolution.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2015). *Report of the Human Rights Council: Thirtieth session (14 September-2 October 2015) (A/70/53/Add.1)*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/53/Ad.1>

This report is about the recent work of the Human Rights, and it documents the work and the outcomes of the HRC's 30th session. Specifically, it contains every resolution and decision made during the session in a structured and easily accessible way. Outcomes that touch on the topics debated at NMUN include the resolution on preventing violent extremism, as well as the resolution on equal participation in political affairs, the latter of which discusses persons with disabilities. This document therefore serves as an excellent summary of the substantive outcomes of the latest HRC session and provides a comprehensive overview of the topics covered during the session.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2015). *30th regular session of the Human Rights Council (14 September to 2 October 2015)* [Website]. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session30/Pages/30RegularSession.aspx>

This is the website for the 30th session of the HRC. It gives a short overview of the work and the issues covered during the meeting, and also lists the panel discussions that were conducted during the session. Most importantly, this website serves as the main gateway to all relevant hyperlinks and documentation of the session, not only including links to the resolutions and decisions adopted, but also providing links to all OHCHR and Secretary-General reports that have been considered by the Council.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2015). *Calendar of Meetings and events 2015* [Website]. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/CalendarMeetings2015.aspx>

This website provides a comprehensive overview of all meeting and events that are related to the work of the OHCHR and the HRC. The events and meetings covered include the committee meetings of human rights treaty bodies, Working Groups of Independent Experts, organizational and preparatory meetings of various kinds, and the sessions of the HRC themselves. This is an excellent resource to keep abreast of all current activities and events concerning the UN human rights system and to learn about related processes beyond the HRC.

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I. Effects of Terrorism on the Enjoyment of Human Rights

Recent Developments

Terrorism is both volatile in nature and occurs by definition unpredictably, e.g. the terrorist attacks in Beirut and Paris in November 2015. Because of this, the interplay between human rights and terrorism has been a key priority of the United Nations (UN) system in recent months.¹⁷ Thus, the influence of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights was discussed extensively during the 30th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), which took place in September and October 2015.¹⁸ While there has been increased action on the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights, these actions and policies do not reflect major changes in how the issues have been addressed in the past; instead the HRC, General Assembly (GA), and Security Council (SC) all have focused on strengthening successful past policies and ensuring proper implementation.¹⁹

One of the key documents of the 30th session of the HRC is HRC resolution 30/15 (2015) on human rights and preventing and combating violent extremism.²⁰ Through this resolution, the HRC seeks to increase its promotion of cooperation within and between Member States, as well as address disparities in the field of human rights to prevent the expansion of extremist groups.²¹ The HRC also explains in detail that the lack of human rights is one of the major conditions that leads people to extremism.²² Additionally, the Council discusses the impacts of the terrorist group Boko Haram and calls for increased access to legal recourse and remedies for the victims of violence, especially women and girls.²³

In their recent activity, the SC and GA have worked to reinforce and support the policies of the HRC. In the wake of recent terror attacks in Sousse, Ankara, Sinai, Beirut, and Paris, the Security Council responded with increasing calls for travel, financial, and political restrictions on the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and increased support of national and regional action against terrorist groups.²⁴ By adopting these policies, the Security Council has shown that localized response, including human rights-focused activities, instead of large-scale military response is a possible way to address the challenges of terrorism and its effects on human rights.²⁵ However, in response to the terror attacks, several Member States responded and continue to do so with military action against military strongholds of ISIL, contrary to the recommendations of the Security Council and HRC.²⁶

In December 2015, Ivan Simonovic, Assistant Secretary-General of Human Rights, stated to the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) that the focus of anti-terrorism activity should first center on responding to the needs of civil society and second to move away from the use of force, thus countering military response and removing a driving force towards extremism through the expansion of human rights.²⁷ Simonovic provided four recommendations to the CTC.²⁸ First, Member States should further support the implementation of the Secretary-General's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces.²⁹ Second, he calls for the promotion of civil society responses, including preventing the restrictions of political liberties.³⁰ Third, he stressed the need to increase research on the connection between human rights violations by security forces and recruitment by terrorist groups.³¹

¹⁷ UN DPI, *UN condemns 'despicable' terrorist attacks in Paris*, 2015.

¹⁸ UN HRC, *Annotations to the Agenda for the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/30/1)*, 2015.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ UN HRC, *Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/RES/30/15)*, 2015.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ UN HRC, *Violations and abuses of human rights and atrocities committed by the terrorist group Boko Haram in the countries affected by such acts: Report of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/30/67)*, 2015.

²⁴ UN Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/2249(2015))*, 2015.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ UN DPI, *UN condemns 'despicable' terrorist attacks in Paris*, 2015.

²⁷ UN OHCHR, *Statement by Ivan Simonovic, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to the Counter Terrorism Committee, New York, 10 December 2015*, 2015.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

And finally, he recommends rebalancing the resources devoted to counter terrorism.³² The Secretary-General's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces explains that when providing support to local security forces, security forces and the UN entity interacting must demonstrate transparency, conduct risk assessments, and adhere to international human rights policies.³³ The GA reaffirmed this by highlighting the role of education and focusing on human rights in combating violent extremism, in GA resolution 70/109 (2015).³⁴ Furthermore, the GA has emphasized the connection between promoting tolerance and understanding on a global level, as well as the reduction of terrorism in GA resolution 70/120 (2015).³⁵ The international community must now continue to determine the best way to uphold these recommendations in order to address the threat of terrorism.

³² UN OHCHR, *Statement by Ivan Simonovic, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to the Counter Terrorism Committee, New York, 10 December 2015*, 2015.

³³ UN General Assembly, *Identical letters dated 25 February 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and to the President of the Security Council (A/67/775)*, 2015.

³⁴ UN General Assembly, *A world against violence and violent extremism (A/RES/70/109)*, 2015.

³⁵ UN General Assembly, *Measures to eliminate international terrorism (A/RES/70/120)*, 2015.

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United Nations, General Assembly. (2013). *Identical letters dated 25 February 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and to the President of the Security Council (A/67/775)*.

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This document includes the complete text of the Secretary General's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces. This document explains how the UN system is expected to support the non-UN security forces, especially those combating terrorism. This document supports the need to preserve human rights in any conflict the UN engages in. Delegates will profit from several definitions as well as blueprint techniques to support non-UN security forces. In this policy, the Secretary-General provides a holistic approach that can be implemented into real politics when applied properly.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *A world against violence and violent extremism (A/RES/70/109)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/109>

This resolution reflects the most recent policies, including addressing human rights concerns, established by the United Nations system. Member States reaffirmed their stance on the combat of terrorism and extremism. By doing so, Member States mentioned the role of human rights in combating terrorism, while placing it in the context of system-wide policies and human rights and development. This will help delegates gain a rounded understanding of how Member States plan on addressing the issue of terrorism in the future.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2015). *Human Rights and preventing and countering violent extremism (A/HRC/RES/30/15)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/HRC/30/15>

This resolution established the Human Rights Council's focus on the use of expanding human rights to prevent and mitigate terrorism. This document includes more extensive discussion on the importance of preserving human rights while combating terrorism. This will help delegates understand the most up-to-date policies of the Human Rights Council. Delegates should review this document in order to understand the current status of discussion within the Human Rights Council and to develop further proposals on how to approach the topic at hand.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2015, December 10). *Statement by Ivan Simonovic: Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to the Counter Terrorism Committee, New York, 10 December 2015*. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16894&LangID=E>

This statement from the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights at the Counter Terrorism Committee reflects the United Nations' human rights focus in terms of combating terrorism. This is important to delegates because it reflects the most recent policy recommendations on the topic, including the increased focus on promoting human rights to combat terrorism since the most recent string of terrorist attacks. With this statement, delegates will be able to expand more effectively on the existing policies and better identify where the weaknesses in said policies are.

United Nations, Security Council, 7565th Meeting. (2015). *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/2249(2015))* [Resolution]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from:

[http://undocs.org/S/RES/2249\(2015\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2249(2015))

Since the Security Council is often involved in combatting terrorism and the prevention of terrorist acts, delegates should use this document to better understand how the Security Council is responding to recent terrorist activity. Additionally, reading the resolution will help to develop ideas on how to improve cohesion between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council. Even more so, the resolution helps to better understand the HRC's mandate on the issue. With this resolution, the members of the Security Council reiterate their shift towards a human rights focus and away from a military response focus in the combating of terrorism, and emphasize the need to cooperate with the HRC in its efforts to use human rights as a preventative measure for terrorism.

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II. Human Rights and Climate Change

Recent Developments

From tornadoes in the United States of America, to unusual snowfalls in parts of Mexico and large floods in South America, the end of 2015 saw extreme weather conditions around the globe; these conditions highlight the continued importance of addressing the impact of climate change on communities worldwide.³⁶ More specifically, severe weather continues to affect a number of human rights, including the “rights to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture and development.”³⁷ As 2015 neared its end, country leaders, state, and non-state actors continued to discuss the impact of climate change on human rights in a number of forums.³⁸

From 30 November to 11 December 2015 in Paris, France, world leaders from 195 countries met at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the *United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) to agree on a new response to combating the effects of climate change.³⁹ On 12 December 2015, the *Paris Agreement* was adopted.⁴⁰ This agreement marks the first time that every country in the world has come together and vowed to decrease emissions in order to “strengthen resilience and join in common cause to take common climate action.”⁴¹ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon further noted that the *Paris Agreement* represents “the most significant action [taken] in years to uphold our Charter mandate to ‘save succeeding generations.’”⁴² However, many civil society organizations (CSOs) believe that more specific action must be taken to address the needs of the poor, in relation to the effects of climate change.⁴³ Specifically, Oxfam noted that “the agreement represents a frayed lifeline,” requiring additional aid to be channeled into disaster relief and development projects to safeguard the most vulnerable.⁴⁴

On 26 November 2015, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) submitted a paper on the link between human rights and climate change to the parties of COP21.⁴⁵ This document clearly outlines the human rights that are the most affected by climate change, including the rights to life, health and food, and presents its own recommendations moving forward.⁴⁶ It further notes that each Member State is obligated to respond to the climate crisis, as changes in weather patterns have a lasting effect, both directly and indirectly, on human rights.⁴⁷ As the paper notes, refusal to counter these effects places Member States in direct violation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966).⁴⁸

In November 2015, the World Bank published a report assessing the link between poverty and climate change, stressing that a shift in the way in which development activities currently take place is necessary.⁴⁹ Introducing more “climate-smart” initiatives into development may help keep over 100 million individuals out of poverty.⁵⁰ It further supports the conclusion that poorer individuals, who already face a greater risk when it comes to climate-related shocks, are statistically more at risk of facing food production shortages due to climate change, and usually live in areas where droughts are more prominent.⁵¹ The risk is especially high on the African continent, where food prices may rise by as much as 12% by 2030 and 70% by 2080 due to climate change, which will disproportionately affect

³⁶ UN DPI, *Recent unusual weather worldwide calls for urgent preventive action, UN official warns*, 2015.

³⁷ UN OHCHR, *Human Rights and Climate Change*, 2016.

³⁸ Tenenbaum, *Cautious optimism around climate change*, 2015.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.P)*, 2015; COP21, *More details about the agreement*, 2015.

⁴¹ UNFCCC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change*, 2015.

⁴² UN DPI, *Ban hails Paris climate accord as ‘health insurance policy for the planet,’* 2015.

⁴³ Darby, *COP21: NGOs react to UN Paris climate deal*, 2015.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UN OHCHR, *Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change*, 2015.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Hallegatte et al., *Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty*, 2015.

⁵⁰ The World Bank, *Immediate Push on Climate-Smart Development Can Keep More than 100 Million People Out of Poverty*, 2015; The World Bank, *Scaling Up Climate and Disaster Resilience for the World’s Most Vulnerable*, 2016.

⁵¹ Ibid.

poorer households.⁵² The report also highlights the importance of climate-specific measures to help address these issues, such as newer flood defense systems and climate-resistant crops.⁵³

In December 2015, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) announced a collaborative effort in Sudan to address the significant impact of climate change on crop production, leading to hunger and malnutrition.⁵⁴ This initiative introduces new environmental management strategies to the region, thus aiding Sudan to become more resilient to the effects of environmental changes.⁵⁵ Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced in December 2015 that southern Africa may face the most severe effects of El Niño in 18 years.⁵⁶ This weather cycle will affect crops and livestock, increasing the likelihood of malnutrition amongst the local population.⁵⁷ In East Africa, FAO has announced an increase in the spread of Rift Valley fever, which can be lethal to humans, due to a rise in rainfall caused by El Niño, which in turn increases the presence of mosquitos in the region.⁵⁸ Moreover, at a January 2016 briefing, the UN Under-Secretary-General for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs spoke of the necessity to act in order to mitigate a crisis in food security.⁵⁹ This urgency is due to the presumed effects of El Niño on states in Latin America and the Caribbean, which are particularly vulnerable to its impact.⁶⁰ The World Health Organization (WHO) has encouraged governments to put in place emergency response programs to mitigate the health risks associated with these climate conditions, and further noted that requests for financial support have already reached \$76 million.⁶¹

The subject of climate change, and its effects on human rights around the world, is an important topic for the UN and its Member States, as exemplified by the work produced within the past few months.⁶² Although most of the discussion remains centered on disaster relief and the means to curb emission standards, the topic of the effects of climate change on the world's most vulnerable populations remains at the heart of the discussion.⁶³ Moreover, the important link between climate change and human rights has been highlighted in the Executive Summary for the World Humanitarian Summit, and will therefore be an important element of the summit itself in May of 2016.⁶⁴ The continued work of the international community on this topic and the new projects that will certainly emerge following the *Paris Agreement*, as well as the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit, remain important points of consideration moving forward.⁶⁵

⁵² The World Bank, *Immediate Push on Climate-Smart Development Can Keep More than 100 Million People Out of Poverty*, 2015; The World Bank, *Scaling Up Climate and Disaster Resilience for the World's Most Vulnerable*, 2016.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ UN DPI, *UN agencies collaborate to help Sudan mitigate climate change while combating hunger*, 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ UN DPI, *Impact of El Niño could be worst in 18 years in southern Africa*, 2015.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ UN DPI, *El Niño has put world in 'uncharted territory,' UN relief chief says, urging action now to mitigate impacts*, 2016.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ UN DPI, *El Niño threatens at least 60 million people in high-risk developing countries – UN agency*, 2016.

⁶² UN DPI, *Ban hails Paris climate accord as 'health insurance policy for the planet,' 2015.*

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ World Humanitarian Summit, *Restoring Humanity: Global Voices Calling for Action: Synthesis of the Consultation Process for the World Humanitarian Summit – Executive Summary*, 2015.

⁶⁵ World Humanitarian Summit, *About the World Humanitarian Summit*, 2014; UN DPI, *Ban hails Paris climate accord as 'health insurance policy for the planet,' 2015.*

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Hallegatte, S., et al. (2015). *Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty*. Washington D.C.: World Bank. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22787/9781464806735.pdf>

This report allows delegates to understand the complexities of poverty as it relates to climate change, and the importance of changing the ways in which we view development to include more “climate-smart” development projects. As poverty is the leading cause of hunger and malnutrition, it is vital to understand how to mitigate the effects of climate shocks on more vulnerable populations. This report also highlights policy solutions that have been implemented and may be used as examples for future policy development.

United Nations Conference on Climate Change. (2015). *More details about the agreement* [Website]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/more-details-about-the-agreement/>

This website provides an overview of the most recent climate change conference in Paris. It provides a detailed explanation of the new emission standards and the means of implementation for the global community, as well as noting the reasons why the new standards make this conference so historic. This website is a good starting point in order to understand the current state of affairs as it pertains to climate change, as well as how developing countries will be able to better address climate change in the future.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)* [Draft Outcome Document]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: www.undocs.org/FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1

The Paris Agreement represents the most recent advance in climate change discussion at the international level. Reviewing the document itself will allow delegates to gain a better understanding of how the agreement was drafted and how developing countries have been included in the new provisions. Specifically, this agreement sets a new global target of preventing a rise in temperatures above 2°C. The agreement also highlights the need to limit the use of fossil fuels, and establishes an obligation for industrialized countries to help finance the cost of projects aimed at addressing the impact of climate change within developing countries. It represents an important facet of the discussion on human rights and climate change, and should be consulted to gain a better understanding of the newest measures to be introduced to curb climate change globally.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015, December 12). *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change* [News Article]. Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/finale-cop21/>

This article provides a comprehensive overview of the Paris Agreement. It outlines the essential elements that make up the agreement, and explains why these measures were chosen and how they will impact countries. In particular, it provides a broader understanding of where action can be taken in the future to address both climate change and its effects, including loss and damage due to climate-related disasters. Moreover, a portion of the article is dedicated to explaining how the agreement will help developing countries address climate change, which remains of particular importance as it relates to human rights.

The World Bank. (2016, January 5). *Scaling Up Climate and Disaster Resilience for the World’s Most Vulnerable*. Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/01/05/scaling-up-climate-and-disaster-resilience-for-the-worlds-most-vulnerable>

This article presents an organization that is currently working towards mitigating the effects of climate-related disasters on communities around the world: The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). The article describes the collaborative efforts of over 400 partners in regards to risk management, and draws a direct link between this work and the post-2015 development agenda. This resource will help delegates gain a background on risk management assessment and the broad spectrum of work that is involved in disaster relief. It also provides clear examples of projects that have been implemented following a natural disaster, such as the aftermath of a large cyclone that affected 22 of Vanuatu’s islands. It also explains how new

innovations allow countries to better prepare for disasters and climate-related risks, such as the Safer Schools Program, which helps Member States implement better construction practices for their schools.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, January 22). *El Niño threatens at least 60 million people in high-risk developing countries – UN agency* [News Article]. Retrieved 26 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53066#.VqgEYJOAOk>

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III. The Realization of Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Recent Developments

In recent months, the international community has actively addressed the rights of persons with disabilities, discussing this topic at the 70th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA).⁶⁶ During this session, the importance of establishing disability-inclusive social protections was discussed, and recommendations were issued for Member States on this issue.⁶⁷ Beyond the GA, in September 2015, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) convened to discuss the implementation of Article 14 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006).⁶⁸ The document, *Guidelines on article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities*, which was adopted in September 2015, emphasizes that no persons with disabilities may be deprived of their right to liberty on the basis of impairment.⁶⁹ In addition, detained persons with disabilities must be protected from violence and abuse, such as torture or seclusion and forced treatment in medical facilities.⁷⁰ The CRPD also reviewed state reports on the implementation of the Convention in certain Member States, providing recommendations in the form of “Concluding observations.”⁷¹

The Forum on Disability and Development, held in collaboration between the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat,) took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 to 30 October 2015.⁷² The outcome of this forum was the *Nairobi Recommendations on advancing disability inclusion and accessible urban development*.⁷³ Approximately one billion persons with disabilities worldwide face difficulties in navigating the urban environment due to physical, technical, or institutional barriers.⁷⁴ The recommendations propose that the New Urban Agenda furthers accessibility, particularly in the fields of housing, transportation, and public services, as well as information and communication technologies (ICTs).⁷⁵ Among the recommendations proposed were establishing inclusive building standards and laws to reflect accessible facilities for all and creating integrated, affordable, and cost-effective public transport services that would allow persons with disabilities the right to move freely.⁷⁶

In November 2015, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published an updated version of a report titled *Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities: Promoting Rights in the Global Development Agenda*.⁷⁷ This report presents the most recent information on efforts by Member States to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, and highlights the implementation of successful action plans.⁷⁸ Examples include special training for employment for persons with disabilities on the national scale, and the provision of post-employment support to assist in dealing with co-workers and job adaptation.⁷⁹ In addition, the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) held a session from 18 to 29 January 2016 to evaluate the human rights situation in 14 Member States, as part of their second review cycle.⁸⁰ The recommendations issued for Member States addressed issues such as education, discrimination and access to public services, and supportive infrastructure in schools and workplaces,

⁶⁶ UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 64 Third Committee Texts Covering Issues Including Migrants, Children’s Rights, Human Rights Defenders* (GA/11745), 2015.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ UN CRPD, *Guidelines on article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities*, 2015.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ UN OHCHR, *Treaty bodies Search: Concluding Observations*.

⁷² UN DESA DSPD, *International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2015*, 2015.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ UN DESA DSPD, *Recommendations on advancing disability inclusion and accessible urban development*, 2015.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ ILO, *Decent work for persons with disabilities: Promoting rights in the global development agenda*, 2015, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 69-85, 90-101.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

⁸⁰ UPR Info, *UPR Info*.

among others, thus addressing several of the needs of persons with disabilities.⁸¹ Many recent projects also demonstrate these recommendations and lessons.⁸²

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was celebrated on 3 December 2015 under the theme “Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities.”⁸³ The event included panel discussions, with special focus being placed on the importance of empowering and recognizing the ability of persons with disabilities to participate in public life.⁸⁴ Accordingly, a panel discussion on “Invisible Disabilities” was held at the UN.⁸⁵ The topic under discussion was the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for persons with intellectual, mental, or psychosocial disabilities.⁸⁶ Persons with mental health conditions are often discriminated against, abused, and excluded from their communities.⁸⁷ The rights of persons with invisible disabilities remain to be addressed in the fields of education, social integration, and public awareness.⁸⁸ To address this fully, the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed a high-level international meeting in April 2016 to debate global mental health and to identify points of intervention to provide mental health services.⁸⁹

The rights of persons with disabilities remain a multi-faceted topic that requires significant effort by the international community to be properly addressed.⁹⁰ UN agencies and bodies have focused their attention on issues such as the rights of persons with disabilities in urban areas and the right to proper work.⁹¹ In addition, CRPD continues to review and evaluate the human rights situation for persons with disabilities in Member States.⁹² These efforts pave the way towards the effective inclusion of rights of persons with disabilities in the international community.⁹³

⁸¹ UN UPR Working Group, *Draft report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Namibia*, 2016.

⁸² ILO, *Moving towards disability inclusion: Stories of change*, 2015.

⁸³ UN DESA DSPD, *International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2015*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ World Bank, *Mental Health*, 2015.

⁹⁰ UN DESA DSPD, *International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2015*, 2015.

⁹¹ UN DESA DSPD, *Recommendations on advancing disability inclusion and accessible urban development*, 2015; ILO, *Decent work for persons with disabilities: promoting rights in the global development agenda*, 2015, p. 2.

⁹² UN CRPD, *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2015.

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International Labour Organization. (2015). *Decent work for persons with disabilities: Promoting rights in the global development agenda*. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_430935/lang-en/index.htm

This publication by the ILO gives delegates excellent insight into the international framework governing work for persons with disabilities, and ways to provide work for those with disabilities. It discusses employment options such as competitive employment, sheltered employment, and supported employment, highlighting the successes and failures of these approaches in various Member States. In addition, the report studies a number of measures undertaken by Member States to improve employment for persons with disabilities such as quota systems, training, and legislation, among others.

International Labour Organization. (2015). *Moving towards disability inclusion: Stories of change*. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_423412.pdf

This publication presents successful stories of increasing employability for persons with disabilities in Ethiopia, China, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and Zambia. The PROPEL project described in this document is carried out by the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme and focuses on promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in employment and the workplace. It improves employability, promotes inclusive workplaces, develops the legal framework governing employment of persons with disabilities in Member States, and works to improve the public's perception of the disabled. The results presented can give delegates an idea about the steps that can be carried out by Member States on a national or provincial level to facilitate employment for persons with disabilities.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. (2015). *Recommendations on advancing disability inclusion and accessible urban development*. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/urban_dev_oct2015_recommendations.pdf

This document is the result of the UN DESA Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development, held on the occasion of the 2nd World Cities Day. Co-organized by UN DESA and UN-Habitat, it focuses on cities and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their urban context. It is an excellent resource for delegates in understanding how the needs of disabled persons can be applied to the urban environment, and how they can be integrated into the existing international framework.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (2015). *Guidelines on article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities*. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/GC/GuidelinesArticle14.doc>

This document builds upon article 14 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It focuses particularly on the right of persons with disabilities to liberty and security from violence, and highlights their rights in the case of mistreatment or abuse during periods of detention. These guidelines will give delegates insight into a key international document that addresses issues faced by persons with disabilities throughout their lives.

UPR Info. (n.d.). *UPR Info* [Website]. Retrieved 29 January 2016 from: <http://www.upr-info.org/en>

This website provides documentation on recent sessions held by the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, to evaluate the situation of human rights in Member States scheduled for review. The rights of persons with disabilities are among the issues discussed, and recommendations are issued for Member States. This will inform delegates about the issues that persons with disabilities face in these Member States, as well as the measures taken to address these issues between the first cycle of review, ending in 2011, and the second cycle of the UPR, scheduled to end in 2016.

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United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.) *Treaty bodies Search: Concluding Observations* [Website]. Retrieved 13 February 2016 from: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en

UPR Info. (n.d.). *UPR* [Website]. Retrieved 29 January 2016 from: <http://www.upr-info.org/en>

World Bank. (2015). *Mental Health* [Website]. Retrieved 29 January 2016 from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/brief/mental-health>