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Update for the General Assembly Third Committee

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Third Committee met in New York City between 4 October and 23 November 2016, in the context of the 71st session.¹ During its meetings, the Third Committee negotiated and sent 50 draft resolutions for adoption to the General Assembly plenary, of which 35 were adopted by acclamation while 15 required a vote.² The agenda included an expanding range of topics related to social development; the advancement of women; the fight against discrimination and intolerance; crime prevention and criminal justice; international drug control; and the promotion and protection of human rights, notably the right to self-determination and the rights of children and indigenous peoples.³ The General Assembly Third Committee bases its resolutions and norm setting in the area of human rights and humanitarian, social, and cultural affairs on a plethora of reports, resolutions, and consultations during the 71st session.⁴

Important sources include recent reports by the Secretary-General, briefings by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Special Rapporteurs, and dialogues with the respective UN entities reporting to the Third Committee, particularly the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considering the dire situation of refugees and displaced people.⁵ Furthermore, the Committee discussed matters related to the annual report of the Human Rights Council (HRC), which provoked a lengthy debate at the Third Committee as well as the plenary about the mandate of the newly established Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.⁶ Member States expressed concern over the legal basis for the mandate, as the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” are not specified in international law.⁷ While one group of States advocated for further consultations on the HRC decision, other Member States argued it would set a dangerous precedent of undermining the HRC if the Third Committee started to reconsider adopted HRC decisions. Furthermore, certain Member States asserted that the HRC was singling out particular countries arbitrarily for their alleged human rights violations, claiming there were double standards in the HRC report.⁸ Nonetheless, in the end, the Committee approved a draft resolution reaffirming the HRC report and its recommendations to the international community.⁹

Under agenda item 68, “the promotion and protection of human rights” included a resolution on the human rights treaty body ensuring the implementation of internationally agreed human rights instruments; 16 resolutions advocating for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as best practices to realize and uphold these; three country-specific resolutions; and a resolution on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.¹⁰ The country-specific resolutions dealt with the human rights situations in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Syrian Republic, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹¹ A number of Member States stressed the role of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), arguing that this would be the appropriate mechanism for reporting on country-specific human rights issues and leading any measures promoting human rights through dialogue, civilian

¹ UN General Assembly, *Draft Provisional Programme of Work of the Third Committee*, 2016.

² UN General Assembly, *Status of Action on Draft Proposals*, 2016.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ UN General Assembly, *Related Links*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Provisional List of Special procedure mandate-holders, independent experts, chairperson and SRSGs scheduled to make presentations to the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session*, 2016.

⁵ *Ibid.*; UN DPI, *Addressing Urgent Plight of Refugees Hinges on State Engagement, Determination, High Commissioner Tells Third Committee amid Calls for Burden Sharing*, 2016.

⁶ UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 50 Third Committee Resolutions, as Diverging Views on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Animate Voting (GA/11879)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Intense Debate, Close Voting as Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Digital-age Privacy Take Centre Stage in Third Committee (GA/SHC/4191)*, 2016.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Human Rights Council (A/71/53)*, 2016.

⁹ UN DPI, *Intense Debate, Close Voting as Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Digital-age Privacy Take Centre Stage in Third Committee (GA/SHC/4191)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Human Rights Council (A/71/53)*, 2016.

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Status of Action on Draft Proposals*, 2016.

¹¹ UN DPI, *Third Committee Approves 5 Draft Resolutions on Situations in Syria, Iran, Crimea, Introduces 5 Others Concerning Self-Determination, Enhanced Cooperation (GA/SHC/4188)*, 2016.

protection, and accountability by government authorities.¹² The UPR has been a successful mechanism for reviewing the human rights situations of all Member States and subsequently issuing recommendations to be implemented by the respective Member States.¹³

Among the 50 draft resolutions discussed by the General Assembly Third Committee, one of the relevant topics introduced was the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.¹⁴ Approved without a vote, the draft resolution calls upon Member States “to ensure the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons” and to put an end to discrimination based on age.¹⁵ The Committee stresses that poverty eradication among older persons needs to be a priority for all Member States and that in order to achieve this, they need to provide social protection and inclusion, food and housing, employment, legal capacity, and access to justice. The Committee further urges the implementation of national strategies according to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.¹⁶

In addition, the Third Committee specifically addressed issues pertaining to vulnerable groups such as children and minorities during humanitarian crises.¹⁷ There was an overall consensus between the Special Rapporteur on minority issues and Member States that minorities require special attention during humanitarian crises, as they disproportionately face displacement and discrimination.¹⁸ It was further stressed that the UN system needs to strengthen its measures of gathering and sharing disaggregated data to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches those most in need.¹⁹ In 2017, the international community will face more severe and frequent humanitarian emergencies. It is therefore important that the Committee continue its work towards improving actions towards humanitarian assistance. Going forward, the General Assembly Third Committee will continue to take a leadership role in social, humanitarian, and cultural affairs and work tirelessly towards the fulfilment of the human rights of all people in all Member States across the world.

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This source offers delegates a great overview of all 50 draft resolutions the General Assembly Third Committee has approved during its latest session and submitted to the General Assembly Plenary for adoption. It effectively conveys which topics were more contested by Member States than others. It singles out Member States’ contributions and statements representative of the larger debate at the plenary on the topics at hand. It is a useful resource for starting research on the most recent developments in the Third Committee, providing additional links to each of the agenda items’ reports, including all adopted draft resolutions.

United Nations, General Assembly, Third Committee. (2016). *Documents of the 71st Session* [Website]. Retrieved 29 December 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/71/documentation.shtml>

This website is an essential source for researching all official documentation on the General Assembly Third Committee’s 71st session. It includes all of the reports submitted to the General Assembly Plenary, voting records of all present Member States, as well as a list of the experts from within and outside of the UN system that informed the Committee’s general discussions. Delegates may use this information to judge their country’s position regarding contested agenda

¹² Ibid.

¹³ OHCHR, *Basic facts about the UPR*, 2017.

¹⁴ UN DPI, *Country-specific, Thematic Issues Dominate Meeting, as Third Committee Takes Up Five Texts on Children’s Rights, Other Aspects of Social Development (GA/SHC/4180)*, 2016.

¹⁵ UN DPI, *Third Committee Approves 6 Texts on Extrajudicial Executions, Right to Peace, Mercenary Use, as it Considers Legal Aspects of Basic Freedoms*, 2016.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN DPI, *Country-specific, Thematic Issues Dominate Meeting, as Third Committee Takes Up Five Texts on Children’s Rights, Other Aspects of Social Development (GA/SHC/4180)*, 2016.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.



items and take the list of experts as a starting point for further research on other organizations' work on the respective issues.

United Nations, General Assembly, Third Committee. (2016). *Press Releases* [Website]. Retrieved 29 December 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/pr.shtml>

This website lists all press releases and meetings coverage from the General Assembly Third Committee's 71st session. It will provide delegates with more detailed information on the different debates associated with the various agenda items. Delegates may use this list for more targeted research on certain topics discussed by the Committee over the past few months, as well as to learn about statements that individual Member States have made on these subjects. Statements in favor of or against certain draft resolutions will help delegates identify their country's position on the matter.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, November 15). *Third Committee Approves 5 Draft Resolutions on Situations in Syria, Iran, Crimea, Introduces 5 Others Concerning Self-Determination, Enhanced Cooperation (GA/SHC/4188)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 29 December 2016 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gashc4188.doc.htm>

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, November 18). *Third Committee Approves 6 Texts on Extrajudicial Executions, Right to Peace, Mercenary Use, as it Considers Legal Aspects of Basic Freedoms (GA/SHC/4190)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 29 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gashc4190.doc.htm>

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I. Improving Coordination in Humanitarian Response to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies

Recent Developments

In recent months, the international community has furthered efforts to improve coordination in humanitarian response, including through addressing the topic at the 71st session of the General Assembly.²⁰ 2016 marked the 25th anniversary of General Assembly resolution 46/182 (1991), which established guiding principles for coordination in emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (UN) system.²¹ In a statement delivered on 8 December 2016, Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly, noted that the anniversary unfortunately coincided with “a time of escalating humanitarian emergency and need,” reflected in the UN’s launch of the largest ever humanitarian appeal for \$22.2 billion in 2017.²² Later that day, without a vote, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/127 on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” and resolution 71/128 on “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development.”²³ These resolutions call on Member States to implement the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015), encourage “closer cooperation between national stakeholders and humanitarian and development actors,” and highlight “the importance of enhancing international coordination and cooperation at the global level in disaster management and emergency response.”²⁴

Other entities in the UN system have also continued work in this area. In October 2016, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) hosted an expert workshop in Thailand to facilitate discussion of new approaches to enhancing community engagement and improving coordination in emergency preparedness and humanitarian action.²⁵ In December 2016, OCHA released the 2016 edition of the *World Humanitarian Data and Trends* report and hosted its annual Global Humanitarian Policy Forum, which convened over 100 experts and included a technical workshop on coordination and capacity development.²⁶ During its 140th session in January 2017, the Executive Board of the World Health Organization discussed how to improve internal and external coordination in emergencies with health consequences.²⁷

Advances in technology have continued to “transform” how the world “views and responds to crises,” thereby resulting in new opportunities for coordination in humanitarian response.²⁸ In January 2017, an expert panel hosted by The Guardian highlighted the ways in which technology may improve humanitarian response, including through facilitating data-sharing and collaboration between relief organizations.²⁹ The humanitarian community has increasingly recognized the potential of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, to enhance coordination in humanitarian response through data collection and monitoring.³⁰ On 15 December 2016, the UN Children’s Fund announced the establishment of an air corridor in Malawi to explore the use of drones for humanitarian purposes.³¹ On 3 February 2017 in Brussels, the World Food Programme (WFP) and Belgium hosted the first international

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items for the seventy-first session of the General Assembly (A/71/252)*, 2016, p. 4.

²¹ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*, 1991.

²² UN General Assembly, *Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly, on Agenda item 69: Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance*, 2016.

²³ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/71/127)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development (A/RES/71/128)*, 2016.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/71/127)*, 2016, p. 8; UN General Assembly, *International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development (A/RES/71/128)*, 2016, p. 9.

²⁵ UN OCHA, *Coordinated Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action: Experiences from Asia - Workshop Report*, 2017.

²⁶ UN OCHA, *World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2016*, 2016; UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Policy Forum 2016*, 2016.

²⁷ WHO Executive Board, *Health workforce coordination in emergencies with health consequences: Report by the Secretariat (EB140/10)*, 2017.

²⁸ Larsson, Live Q&A: How can technology improve humanitarian response?, *The Guardian*, 2017.

²⁹ Larsson, How technology can help disaster response, *The Guardian*, 2017.

³⁰ UN WFP, *WFP and Belgium Start Efforts To Deploy Drones In Humanitarian Emergencies*, 2017.

³¹ UN DPI, *UNICEF partners with the Government of Malawi to test first humanitarian drone in Africa*, 2016.

humanitarian UAV coordination workshop, during which WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin observed that “strong partnerships in technology and innovation can foster better, faster, and more coordinated responses.”³² WFP is leading a Belgian-funded initiative to identify effective applications of UAV technology for the benefit of humanitarian response.³³

Outside of the UN system, civil society organizations have continued to spearhead projects relevant to coordination in humanitarian response. In November 2016, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) published a report on themes and recommendations from an earlier meeting of experts in humanitarian coordination.³⁴ The report investigates the roles of governments and civil society in humanitarian coordination, as well as how coordination systems might be designed for greater effectiveness and adaptability.³⁵ At the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in January 2017, representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, and the media met to discuss “new models of public-private collaboration” for the “future of humanitarian response.”³⁶

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This report is the culmination of extensive research and interviews both during and following the 2016 ALNAP meeting in London. ALNAP provide a forum for the sharing of best practices and greater coordination towards the professionalization of humanitarian assistance. This extensive report highlights a great number of relevant topics in relation to the improvement of coordination in humanitarian response both nationally and internationally. Delegates are encouraged to provide particular attention to Sections 9 and 10: the former outlines crucial contexts as to why succeeding recommendations have failed to bring significant change, whilst the latter builds on these with suggestions for future policy options.

Larsson, N. (2017, January 25). How technology can help disaster response. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 14 February 2017 from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jan/25/the-future-of-technology-in-disaster-response>

In January 2017, The Guardian hosted a panel on technology and humanitarian response that convened a number of experts, whose views are summarized in this article. Delegates will find useful examples of best practice as well as broad guidance on the underlying principles of the successful implementation of technology in relation to disaster response. Delegates are encouraged to consider technological advances when discussing policy options for improving coordination in humanitarian response.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development (A/RES/71/128)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.33 and Add.1). Retrieved 11 February 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/128>

This resolution, adopted by the Third Committee at its most recent session, provides delegates with a broad-based overview of recent agreements pertaining to disaster relief coordination. It reiterates the role that Member States must play in the realization of the Sendai Framework and in integrating national policies with international agreements. The resolution allocates significant space to the discussion of internal displacement in relation to both rapid and slow-moving natural disasters and how Member States may develop resilience and response mechanisms. As such, this

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Clarke & Campbell, *Improving Humanitarian Coordination: Themes and recommendations from the ALNAP meeting ‘Working together to improve humanitarian coordination’*, July 2016, 2016.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ World Economic Forum, *The Future of Humanitarian Response: World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2017*, 2017.

resolution is important for delegates to understand the most contemporary discussions on the matter.

United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2016). *World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2016* [Report]. Retrieved 14 February 2017 from: <http://www.unocha.org/datatrends2016/WHDT2016.pdf>

The 2016 edition of this annual report, compiled by OCHA, is an essential resource in quantifying and measuring recent trends across all aspects of humanitarian development and affairs on national, regional, and international levels. Delegates should take particular note of pages 16-20, which provide a concise and effective overview of recent natural disasters. These key facts and statistics should contextualize delegates' discussions on the topic whilst also signposting towards potential opportunities for action.

United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. (2017). *Coordinated Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action: Experiences from Asia - Workshop Report*. Retrieved 14 February 2017 from:

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Workshop%20Report%20Final_Community%20Engagement%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action.pdf

This recent report summarises a number of discussions held at a thematic workshop in Thailand in October 2016. The workshop aimed to share innovative ideas on common service approaches to disaster response and how humanitarian agencies can strengthen community engagement during relief missions. Whilst the report discusses a wide range of pertinent discussions and opportunities for development, delegates are particularly encouraged to read pages 19-20: building upon the research outlined in the Background Guide, this section reflects upon the systemic weaknesses and deficiencies encountered during the Nepalese Earthquake of 2015. This allows delegates to develop not only their understanding of a specific case study, but also a broader sense of the methods and delivery of feedback that takes place following large-scale humanitarian response.

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II. Preventing Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Recent Developments

During its 71st session, the General Assembly Third Committee discussed issues pertaining to discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).³⁷ One particularly contentious debate focused on the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which had been created in June 2016 by Human Rights Council resolution 32/2.³⁸ The legitimacy of the resolution and the mandate of the Independent Expert faced serious concerns and challenges from certain Member States, which sought to defer the creation of the mandate.³⁹ Ultimately, the challenge to the mandate was defeated by a majority of the Third Committee.⁴⁰ The Independent Expert, Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn, gathered a broad base of support for his appointment, as evidenced through open letters from hundreds of civil society organizations from more than 150 Member States.⁴¹

By adopting the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), the international community resolved to “leave no one behind” and build on the progress that had been made through the previous Millennium Development Goals.⁴² On 30 November 2016, the United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched the *Report on the World Social Situation 2016* focusing on “Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development.”⁴³ It addresses matters of social inclusion, while highlighting connections to poverty and work.⁴⁴ Sexual orientation and gender identity are identified as primary reasons for hindered participation and social exclusion.⁴⁵ The report also notes the correlation between discrimination and exclusion on the one hand and negative physical and mental health effects on the other.⁴⁶ Studies have shown that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have a greater risk of experiencing “poor mental health and low well-being when compared with heterosexuals” due to the internalization of stigma that results from “persistent exposure to discrimination.”⁴⁷

On 22 September 2016, the International Social Science Council, together with the Institute of Development Studies and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), published the *World Social Science Report 2016: Challenging Inequalities – Pathways to a Just World*.⁴⁸ The report emphasizes the importance of monitoring and disaggregating data, including on the basis of characteristics such as gender and sexual orientation.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the report draws connections to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 10 on reducing inequalities within and among countries, by prioritizing actions to challenge and overcome knowledge inequalities through research and by focusing on education rooted in social sciences, social perspectives, and social justice.⁵⁰ Adhering to the SDGs, specifically SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education

³⁷ Paletta, *United Nations SOGI Mandate Safeguarded in Face of Hostility*, 2016.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; *LGBT rights | Inter-American Commission Warns of Indefinite Halt to Work of UN Independent Expert as Crucial Vote Looms*, International Service for Human Rights, 2016.

³⁹ Mendelson, *Remarks to the UN General Assembly on Agenda Item 63: Report of the Human Rights Council (As Delivered)*, 2016; *#UNGA71 | Last Minute Attempt to Choke UN Funding for Human Rights*, International Service for Human Rights, 2016; *LGBT rights | UN’s New Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Faces Yet Another Attempt to Halt Work*, International Service for Human Rights, 2016.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ OAS, *IACHR Expresses Concern at the Possible Indefinite Suspension of the Mandate of the UN Independent Expert on SOGI and Calls the States of the Region to Reaffirm their Commitment*, 2016; International Service for Human Rights, *Position Paper Third Committee*, 2016; *LGBTI Rights | General Assembly Rejects Attempt to Halt Work of UN’s New Independent Expert*, International Service for Human Rights, 2016; International Service for Human Rights, *Open Letter to General Assembly*, 2016.

⁴² UN DESA, *2016 Report on the World Social Situation*, 2016.

⁴³ UN DESA, *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development, Report on the World Social Situation 2016*, 2016.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ ISSC, *World Social Science Report*, 2016.

⁴⁹ ISSC et al., *World Social Science Report – 2016 | Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World*, 2016, p. 294.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

to promote lifelong learning for all, UNESCO has recently supported initiatives in education that respond to homophobic and transphobic violence.⁵¹ Since UNESCO's "Out in the open international ministerial meeting" in 2016, a number of Member States put forward a Call for Action by Ministers pertaining to inclusive and equitable education for all and fighting discrimination and violence based on SOGI in the classroom.⁵² As of 12 October 2016, approximately 54 Member States have affirmed their support for the Call for Action by Ministers.⁵³

Annotated Bibliography

International Service for Human Rights. (2016). *Open Letter to General Assembly*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/article/files/joint_sogi_letter_listofsignatories12152016.pdf

In response to the attempt by the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee to defer consideration of the SOGI Independent Expert mandate, as expressed in Human Rights Council resolution 32/2, a joint letter was commissioned and signed by 870 NGOs and CSOs from 157 countries. This resource succinctly communicates the support from a multitude of participants for the HRC's ability and responsibility to carry out its decision to create the SOGI Independent Expert. Furthermore, the open letter provides the accounts of the interested parties towards the concerns of those opposed to the mandate, such as legality and standards. Delegates are encouraged to review this source to help understand the connection between the international system and its membership with civil society and NGOs.

International Service for Human Rights. (2016). *Position Paper Third Committee*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/article/files/position_paper_third_committee.pdf

This source is a position paper letter from a collection of Latin American Member States in response to attempts to suspend the SOGI Independent Expert mandate. This position paper, highlighting the interests of its associated Member States and written to the body of the UN General Assembly, summarizes the issues faced within the Third Committee regarding HRC resolution 32/2. Furthermore, the paper focuses on potential dilemmas with respect to the functions of the HRC with such continued action being presented again within the General Assembly Plenary session. This source provides a brief historical overview of both positive and negative actions being taken within the UN system regarding SOGI, which delegates are encouraged to observe. Moreover, delegates can utilize the additional links, reports, and documents cited within this source as additional materials to stimulate research and understanding on the topic.

International Social Science Council et al. (2016). *World Social Science Report – 2016 | Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World*. Retrieved 23 January 2017 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002458/245825e.pdf>

Referring to the SDGs and the challenges of inequality throughout the world, this report links together social sciences, inequalities, and SOGI through SDG 10's interconnectedness. The impact on social inequality due to SOGI demonstrates a direct correlation with educational standards, poverty levels, and conditions of development. This source effectively demonstrates the intricate and yet powerful impact education can have on economic and development conditions, specifically to SOGI people. Delegates are encouraged to use this report to guide their research and to brainstorm on continued endeavors to build upon progress that has already been made.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2016, November 21). "Deep Concern" At Bid to Block UN Human Rights Expert [Press Release]. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20902&LangID=E>

The efforts to stop Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 32/2 constituted more than just an attempt to stop a resolution. As expressed by the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), challenging the mandate undermines the credibility and authority of the HRC and weakens the human rights system all together. In the history of the HRC and its predecessor,

⁵¹ UNESCO, *What UNESCO does on Homophobic and Transphobic Violence in Education*, 2016.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

the Human Rights Commission, there have been a plethora of mandates addressing new issues. Many were created by consensus, while others were established following a vote. None of them led to an effort to overturn a decision until resolution 32/2. This source is helpful for delegates to learn more about the implications behind inter-agency diplomacy and power within the UN. Additionally, delegates are encouraged to review this source to understand the humanitarian aspect of this topic in addition to interdependency within the UN system.

Organization of American States. (2016, December 17). *IACHR Expresses Concern at the Possible Indefinite Suspension of the Mandate of the United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification and Calls the States of the Region to Reaffirm their Commitment*. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2016/189.asp

This source primarily observes the collective concern of UN American Member States regarding efforts to halt the mandate of the Independent Expert on SOGI. As part of the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) focuses on concerns related to human rights within the Americas. This source effectively demonstrates how regional bodies and organizations uphold human rights, how these entities can advocate for their constituents, and how cooperation and communication is handled between Member States and such organizations. Delegates can clearly see the channels of advocacy and influence between the international and regional levels and how these relate to Member States, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and other parties involved.

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III. Promoting Rights and Strengthening Protections for Older Persons

Recent Developments

Throughout 2016 and into 2017, the international community has continued its efforts to promote the human rights of older persons. In January 2017, the first ever legally binding convention on older persons, the *Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons* (2015), took effect under the Organization of American States.⁵⁴ The United Nations (UN) held an International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) on 1 October 2016.⁵⁵ The theme of 2016's UNIDOP was standing against ageism, which exists in some form in all societies.⁵⁶ In addition to UNIDOP, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 71/164 without a vote on 19 December 2016.⁵⁷ The resolution is a follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.⁵⁸ The resolution aims to implement the outcome document of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (MIPAA) (2002).⁵⁹ The actions within the resolution center on the economic and social rights of older persons, as well as the importance of policy development in line with the MIPAA.⁶⁰

The Human Rights Council (HRC) has continued to influence substantive discussion at the General Assembly through its annual report and Universal Periodic Review mechanism. The HRC adopted resolution 33/5 (2016) on the human rights of older persons without a vote in its 33rd session.⁶¹ The resolution calls for coordination to combat violence and discrimination against older people.⁶² It also touches on the economic and social adversities that older people face.⁶³ This resolution extended the mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons for another three years.⁶⁴ The Independent Expert released a report in July 2016 which outlines the history, recent developments, and suggestions for the future regarding older persons, while also providing an analysis of the MIPAA.⁶⁵ In the report, the Independent Expert articulated that the current international situation regarding older people is riddled with gaps between policy and practice, especially with regard to the implementation of the MIPAA.⁶⁶

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG), established for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons, convened for its seventh session in December 2016.⁶⁷ During this session, the OEWG decided, by consensus, to allow National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to participate in discussions on the work of the OEWG.⁶⁸ This document sets an interesting precedent for future proceedings of the General Assembly, as it is the first-ever agreement to allow NHRIs to participate in the work of a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.⁶⁹ The NHRIs must seek accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and must be in full compliance with the *Paris Principles* (1991) in order to participate in the OEWG's work.⁷⁰ The *Paris Principles*, created in 1991 and adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 48/134, present

⁵⁴ *First Older Persons' Rights Convention Enters into Force in Americas*, International Justice Resource Center, 2016.

⁵⁵ WHO, *International Day of Older Persons 2016*, 2016.

⁵⁶ UN DPI, *International Day of Older Persons 1 October*, 2016.

⁵⁷ UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 50 Third Committee Resolutions, as Diverging Views on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Animate Voting* (GA/11879), 2016.

⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, *Resolutions: 71st session*, 2017.

⁵⁹ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/RES/71/164)*, 2016.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ UN Watch, *Resolutions and Voting Results of the 33rd HRC Session*, 2016.

⁶² UN HRC, *The human rights of older persons (A/HRC/RES/33/5)*, 2016.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ UN DESA, *Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons*, 2017.

⁶⁸ UN DESA, *Chair's summary of the key points of the discussions at the seventh session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing established for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons*, 2016.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, *Modalities of participation of national human rights institutions in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing*, 2016.

guiding principles for the work of NHRIs.⁷¹ Applications for accreditation are circulated by the Secretariat to members of the OEWG for consideration four weeks prior to each session of the OEWG.⁷²

During an OEWG panel discussion, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided insight regarding older persons and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).⁷³ The representative from OHCHR noted that older persons are specifically included in two Sustainable Development Goals: 2 and 11.⁷⁴ The OHCHR representative also highlighted that the approach to the 2030 Agenda is heavily rights-based.⁷⁵ The OEWG briefly discussed the development of a legally binding instrument regarding the human rights of older persons, but the primary discussion of the meeting centered on strengthening existing mechanisms.⁷⁶ Delegations of the OEWG emphasized the need to better implement existing mechanisms and apply action to current policies.⁷⁷ The OEWG developed three clusters to focus on in order to strengthen human rights promotion for older persons: equality and non-discrimination; neglect, violence, and abuse; and autonomy and independence.⁷⁸

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This document covers a myriad of actions taken within the seventh session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. It is a holistic summary of the session. It also gives a good overview of the direction the international community is starting to take with regard to this topic. Delegates should take note of the sub-topics within this summary, which will help delegates form a position on this topic, understand how to apply realistic action to the topic, and become familiar with sub-topics that are agreeable to the entire international community.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, Seventh Session: OHCHR intervention at the panel discussion on the 2030 agenda* [Speech]. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/documents/seventh/OHCHR.pdf>

This statement was given by an OHCHR representative during a panel discussion on the 2030 Agenda. It is an excellent resource for delegates to frame this topic within the Sustainable Development Goals, providing a straightforward framework for older persons within the 2030 Agenda. The statement also puts the perspective of the international human rights community on this topic in simple terms.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/RES/71/164)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/476). Retrieved 24 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/a/res/71/164>

As this is the most recent document from the General Assembly on older persons, delegates should use this resolution as a way to gain an understanding of the international community's contemporary approach to older persons. This resolution was adopted without a vote, meaning all delegations should find the actions within this document to be in line with their position. While the actions in this resolution are fairly standard, it will assist delegates in creating a position around existing agreements.

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (A/RES/48/134)*, 1991.

⁷² UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, *Modalities of participation of national human rights institutions in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing*, 2016.

⁷³ UN DESA, *Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, Seventh Session: OHCHR intervention at the panel discussion on the 2030 Agenda*, 2016.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ UN DESA, *Chair's summary of the key points of the discussions at the seventh session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing established for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons*, 2016.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2016). *The human rights of older persons (A/HRC/RES/33/5)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/33/5>

There are many actions being taken within this resolution that can assist delegates in considering the actions they wish to take while discussing this topic during conference. This resolution extends the mandate of the Independent Expert and lays out the precise responsibilities of this role. This resolution and others from the HRC feed directly into the substantive discussion of the General Assembly and will provide delegates with an excellent framework for how the Independent Expert can be utilized within this topic.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2016). *Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons*. Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/a/hrc/33/44>

This document is essential in understanding the current facts of this topic. It succinctly outlines the difficulties that older persons face and the actions that the international community must take in order to address these difficulties. The report also covers the shortfalls of the international community in a realistic and straightforward way, particularly emphasizing the need for policy development.

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