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GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY
BACKGROUND GUIDE 2015

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NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE association™

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2015 National Model United Nations Conference in Olomouc, Czech Republic (NMUN•Europe)! We would like to especially welcome you to the General Assembly Plenary (GA). We hope that this conference will be an enriching and educational experience.

The GA Director is Miriam Müller, and the Assistant Director is Jan Smid. Miriam has a Master Degree in Political Science from the University of Bonn. Currently she is working in Bamberg, Germany, for a Green Energy Company. She started with NMUN in 2006 when she attended NMUN•NY as a member of the delegation of the University of Bonn. Since then she went on working for NMUN•NY in various positions until she served as Secretary-General for NMUN•NY in 2013. Jan is studying in Olomouc at Palacký University where he returned to after a year in Istanbul. He is in his third year in his Bachelor of Political Science and European Studies. After he is done he would like to continue to study international relations in Olomouc and study abroad in England. He has attended NMUN•NY 2015 as a member of the delegation of the Palacký University and is continuing his commitment to NMUN as Assistant Director for the General Assembly at NMUN•Europe in the Czech Republic.

The topics under discussion for the GA are:

    I.   International Cooperation Against Terrorism
    II.   Achieving Sustainable Development with Environmental Protection

The General Assembly Plenary committee plays a unique role in the UN System as it ultimately functions as the primary decision-making body for the United Nations where all Member States are granted equal voice. We hope that as a delegate in this committee for NMUN•Europe you will take full advantage of the opportunity to discuss pressing and timely topics that relate to the whole of the UN's work and gain from the experience an appreciation for diplomacy and negotiation.

This Background Guide is a helpful resource to utilize as you begin your research on the topics for the GA. It will introduce you to important issues related to these topics through the individual sections, Annotated Bibliography, and Bibliography, and we encourage you to use these resources as a starting point. However, please note that this Background Guide should only be one part of your research; we encourage you to think deeply about and research the different issues related to these topics and on your Member State's policies and about innovative solutions that can help address these topics throughout the world. Prior to the conference, each delegation will submit a position paper based on their preparation (due 1 November). Please also take note of the NMUN policies on the website and in the Delegate Preparation Guide regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct/dress code/sexual harassment, awards philosophy/evaluation method, etc. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory.

The NMUN Rules of Procedure are available to download from the NMUN website. This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. It is thus an essential instrument in preparing for the conference, and a reference during committee

Please let us know if we can assist with any questions as you prepare for participation in the GA this fall. Our Deputy-Secretary-General, Thera Watson, is also an available resource on substantive staff; she can be reached at thera@nmun.org

Thank you in advance for your preparation for the upcoming conference, and we look forward to seeing you at NMUN•Europe 2015!

Sincerely,

Miriam Müller, *Director*
Jan Smid, *Assistant Director*

Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) is one of the six principal organs of the UN established by the Charter of the United Nations (1946).[1] The GA is divided into six Main Committees, and each has a specific purpose.[2] Each of the Main Committees reports their work to the GA Plenary, which as a principal organ, does not report to any other organ but requests and receives reports, including from the Secretary-General.[3]

Functions and Powers

According to Article 10 of the UN Charter, the GA has the right to "discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter ... and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters."[4] Therefore, the General Assembly can discuss any issue of concern to the international community with the exception of those under active consideration by the Security Council and may make recommendations to UN Member States, the Security Council, or both.[5]

The decisions in the GA are taken by simple majority votes; only decisions on important questions, for example those on admission of new members, require a two-thirds majority.[6] The decisions of the GA are legally non-binding recommendations. However, some documents adopted by the General Assembly convey a strong political message. Seventy to 80% of all resolutions are passed by acclamation, which is considered a stronger affirmation than taking a vote on it.[7] Acclamation means that all Member States agree on the text of the resolution in question; because no vote is taken, these resolutions are also considered "adopted without a vote." The only binding decisions taken by the GA are on internal matters of the UN: internal governance, budgetary, and membership issues.[8]

Beyond those functions, the GA also has a mandate to contribute to the progressive development of international law and its codification.[9] Through the International Law Commission, an expert body that reports directly to the Plenary Assembly, as well as through its Sixth Committee, the GA develops draft texts of multilateral treaties and conventions, which remain only recommendations until they are signed and ratified by a sufficient number of states so that they can enter into force.[10] Some of the most significant documents adopted by the GA are the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, which is a non-binding resolution, and the two *Covenants* on Civil and Political and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966.

Committees and Subsidiary Organs

The General Assembly established six Main Committees which prepare draft resolutions and decisions for the plenary sessions in their respective field of work: the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee); the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee); the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (Third Committee); the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee); the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee); and the Legal Committee (Sixth Committee). These committees discuss the topics in their field and aim to harmonize the various approaches by the Member States.[11]

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[1] *Charter of the United Nations, 1945, Art. 7.*
[2] Smith, *Politics and Process at the United Nations*, p. 143
[3] United Nations General Assembly, Functions and Powers of the General Assembly, 2013.
[4] Charter of the United Nations, 1945, Art. 10.
[5] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, United Nations Handbook, 2012, p.11.
[6] Smith, *Politics and Process at the United Nations*, p. 149.
[7] Peterson, *The General Assembly*, 2006, p. 72.
[8] Smith, *Politics and Process at the United Nations*, p. 151.
[9] *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, art. 13 (1) (a).
[10] Smith, *Politics and Process at the United Nations*, p. 151.
[11] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook*, 2012, p. 23.

All Member States of the UN are represented in all of the six Main Committees. The Main Committees each submit a separate report to the GA plenary on the issues considered by them and containing the draft resolutions and decisions which are being recommended.[12] The General Assembly Plenary then has an opportunity to address the texts that are submitted to it and may alter the text. Only matters adopted by the Plenary are considered official resolutions by the UN General Assembly.[13] While it does not happen very often, the General Assembly Plenary may also decide to deal with an issue without prior reference to a committee.14[14] For example, at the latest General Assembly Plenary meeting, a total of 63 resolutions were adopted without prior negotiation in a main committee.[15]

In addition, the General Assembly has created more than 30 subsidiary bodies including expert committees: permanent structures like the Committee on the Relations with the Host Country, ad hoc bodies dealing with finite issues such as the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and others designed to address specific substantive issues, like the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and others assisting in administration of the UN.[16] The set-up of this high number of subsidiary bodies has made the decision-making of the UN and the General Assembly more complex but it also provides for more issues to be addressed.[17]

Special Sessions and Emergency Special Sessions

According to Article 20 of the UN Charter, the GA can also meet in "special sessions as occasion may require."[18] So far, 28 special sessions have taken place and dealt with issues such as HIV/AIDS in 2001 and Population and Development in 1999.[19] These special sessions can be convened by the Secretary-General within 15 days of such a request by the GA, the Security Council, or any Member State with the support of the majority of UN Members.[20] Since the Uniting for Peace resolution was adopted in 1950, the GA can also meet in an emergency special session to be held within 24 hours of a request by the Security Council or, in the case of a deadlocked SC through use of the veto, a request by a majority of UN members.[21] The Uniting for Peace resolution was adopted to halt the ongoing violence on the Korean peninsula.[22] Vis-à-vis the Security Council, this resolution "permits the Assembly to do much of what the Council was authorized to do under Chapter VII of the Charter."[23] Under Uniting for Peace, the General Assembly may however only assume the powers of the Security Council and act should there be a "lack of unanimity of the permanent members" and the Council "fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security."[24]

Annotated Bibliography

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> *This handbook, published annually by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, provides an excellent overview of the UN System, outlining the essential functions of the myriad of bodies that exist within the system. A beginning point for any research that is conducted about the*

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[12] Dag Hammarskjöld Library at Uppsala University, Main Committees, 2013.
[13] Smith, Politics and Process at the United Nations, p. 161.
[14] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, United Nations Handbook, 2012, p. 23.
[15] United Nations General Assembly, 67th session – resolutions, 2013.
[16] Smith, Politics and Process at the United Nations, p. 161.
[17] Smith, Politics and Process at the United Nations, p. 161.
[18] Charter of the United Nations, Art. 20.
[19] United Nations General Assembly, Special Sessions, 2013
[20] Smith, Politics and Process at the United Nations, p. 154.
[21] United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 377A(V), 3 November 1950.
[22] Tomuschat, Uniting for Peace General Assembly resolution 377 (V), 2008.
[23] Woolsey, The "Uniting for Peace" Resolution of the United Nations, January 1951, p. 129.
[24] United Nations General Assembly, "Resolution 377(V) on Uniting for peace", 3 November 1950.

Peterson, M. (2006). *The UN General Assembly*. New York, NY: Routledge.

This book provides vast background on the history and the processes of the General Assembly. The detailed description of the functions and powers of the General Assembly helps delegates to gain an understanding of the General Assembly's mandate and its possibilities of policy-making. The author also puts forward a critical assessment of the GA and its role in the 21st century.

United Nations General Assembly. (2013). *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*. Retrieved May 10, 2013, from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/background.shtml.

This Web site is the main gateway to the work of the General Assembly. Delegates will find a wide array of information on the main powers of the General Assembly. In addition, this Web site contains links to several landmark documents that were adopted by the General Assembly, including the 2000 Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Delegates should acquaint themselves with these documents, as they contain some of the most important commitments made by the international community and some underlying values and principles that continue to inform the work of the General Assembly.

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http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45177#.UeUf2BYa38M.

Woolsey, L. H. (1951, January). "The 'Uniting for Peace' Resolution of the United Nations." American Journal of International Law, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp. 129-137.

I. International Cooperation Against Terrorism

"Only through strong political will, and by implementation and delivery, can we realize our hopes of a world free of terrorism (...). This requires multi-national efforts that go beyond traditional and localized approaches. No nation, acting alone, no matter how powerful it is, can prevent every threat from being carried out."[25] – Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th General Assembly

Introduction

Terrorism violates inherent values of the *Charter of the United Nations*, such as respect for human rights, rule of law, protection of civilians, tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Terrorism "flourishes in environments of despair, humiliation, poverty, political oppression, extremism and human rights abuse; it also flourishes in contexts of regional conflict and foreign occupation; and it profits from weak State capacity to maintain law and order."[26]

For these reasons countering international terrorism has taken priority on the agenda of the United Nations (UN) since 1960s although the history of combating terrorism dates back to the 1930s. Since this time progress has been made and the UN has produced eighteen universal instruments to counter international terrorism.[27] The latest important milestone was achieved by the General Assembly in 2006 when the resolution A/RES/60/288 and an annexed Plan of Action were adopted, in which the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was introduced. This was the first time that "all member states have agreed to a common strategic approach to fight terrorism"[28] in order to adopt "a unique instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism."[29]

Despite the progress we live in a world, where terrorism is one of the biggest threats to international peace and security. Almost every week some kind of terrorist attack or an attempted attack takes place somewhere in the world. Terrorism does not pose a threat only for states, but particularly for individuals. Most victims of terrorist attacks are nonmilitary, unarmed and innocent people. To exemplify the situation: 9 814 terrorist attacks were committed and approximately 17 958 people were killed in terrorist activities. Although terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon, nowadays 82% of all death from terrorist attacks occurred in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Syria.[30]

The definition of terrorism has been continuously changing and no consent has been reached. In 1994, the General Assembly on its forty-ninth session enacted the *Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism*, where terrorism was defined as "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them"[31] and about ten years later in 2004 the *High-Level Panel of independent experts on Threats, Challenges and Change* defined terrorism as "any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the *Geneva Conventions* and Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its

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[25] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, General Assembly Action to Counter Terrorism, 2015.

[26] UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, A more secure world: Our Shared responsibility, 2015.

[27] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, International Legal instruments, 2015.

[28] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2015.

[29] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, Global Counter-terrorism Strategy, 2007.

[30] Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index, 2015.

[31] UN General Assembly, Measures to eliminate international terrorism (A/RES/49/60), 1994.

nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act." [32]

Role of the UN System

International terrorism is not explicitly mentioned and defined in any article of the *Charter of the United Nations*. However, the terrorist activities violate with the basic principles of Chapter I of the *Charter of the United Nations*, such as respect for human rights, tolerance or protection of civilians. [33] The Security Council in one of its resolutions related to terrorism reaffirmed that "terrorism in all forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed and further reaffirming the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the *Charter of the United Nations*, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts".[34] The UN system, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and about 23 funds, agencies and programs, has addressed the issue of terrorism since the 1960s, but the turning point in the overall counter-terrorism effort of the UN was reached by the Security Council in 2001 by establishing the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate (CTED).[35] Although combating terrorism primarily rests on shoulders of member states the UN provides special assistance with their counter-terrorism efforts through departments, programs and specialized agencies. Furthermore, the UN plays an important role in facilitating and promoting coordination and coherence in the implementation of the anti-terrorist instruments on the national, regional and international levels. The most important actors within the UN system related to terrorism are the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which provides countries with assistance on counter-terrorism legislation; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which addresses developmental and governance issues in a broad context of counter-terrorism; the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which focuses on nuclear terrorism; the World Health Organization (WHO) focusing on bio-terrorism; the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which address the issue of the security of commercial aviation, ships and port facilities. [36]

Security Council

The Security Council is active in countering terrorism through resolutions and by establishing several subsidiary bodies in the structure of the UN. The Security Council has established four counter-terrorism related committees since 1999. The first one was 1267 Committee, established by resolution 1267, which represent the sanction regime targeted on individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida.[37] In association with this regime the Consolidated List of terrorist organizations and related individuals and entities was created. Since its creation the List has been amended. As a reaction to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington D.C., the Security Council established the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) by its Resolution 1373. The Security Council called upon member states to "implement a number of measures intended to enhance their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities"[38] and "to become parties, as soon as possible, to the relevant international counter-terrorism legal instruments."[39] The Security Council also focuses on issues related to terrorism such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, the Security Council established the 1540 Committee with resolution 1540 in 2004. The resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter affirms that "the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and

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[32] UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, A more secure world: Our Shared responsibility, 2015.

[33] Charter of the United Nations, 1945, Chapter I.

[34] UN Security Council, Resolution 2133 (S/RES/2133), 2014.

[35] United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, The Role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate in the International Counter-Terrorism Effort, 2006.

[36] United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, The Role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate in the International Counter-Terrorism Effort, 2006

[37] UN Security Council, 1267 Committee, 2015.

[38] UN Security Council, Counter-Terrorism Committee, Home, 2015.

[39] UN Security Council, Counter-Terrorism Committee, Home, 2015.

security"[40]and obliges member states "to refrain from supporting by any means non-State actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems."[41] The Secretary-General also stresses the importance of controlling the supply of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological materials as a primary goal to prevent the threat of terrorism.[42] In 2004 the Security Council adopted resolution 1566, establishing the 1566 Working Group calling on member states "to take action against groups and organizations engaged in terrorist activities that were not subject to the 1267 Committee's review" and "to recommend practical measures against such individuals and groups, as well as to explore the possibility of setting up a compensation fund for victims of terrorism."[43]

General Assembly
Every Member State fights terrorism by itself, but to suppress terrorism worldwide it is more important to cooperate among states through the General Assembly. In 2006, Member States agreed in the General Assembly on a collective approach against terrorism by adopting resolution A/RES/60/288 which created new and so far the most effective United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In general, the Assembly has focused on basic issues related to terrorism, such as prevention, elimination and funding as well as protection of human rights in areas affected by terrorist attacks.

The General Assembly has been focusing on terrorism as an international problem since 1972. The General Assembly adopted two counter-terrorism related conventions: The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons* and the *International Convention against the Taking of Hostages*. In the 1980's the effort to suppress terrorism continued, but not so enthusiastically. In 1994 the General Assembly redirected its attention to the issue of terrorism through the *Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism*. Later, in 1996, an *Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism* was established by a supplement to this declaration. Since the adoption of this declaration the Assembly has addressed the terrorism agenda consistently and considerable progress has been made in the elaboration of international counter-terrorism instruments. [44] Member States throughout the General Assembly have already completed the procedure methods, covering specific types of terrorist activities - bombings, funding and nuclear threats by the *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings*, the *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* and the *International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism*. In 2006 the General Assembly concretely reaffirmed and enhanced its role in countering terrorism by adopting the resolution A/RES/60/288 and creating the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and an annexed plan of action, based on which the Assembly monitors implementation, reviews and biannually updates the strategy. [45] The Assembly, by this resolution, endorsed the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) to enhance coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism efforts of the UN system. [46]

The latest report of the General Assembly on the Global Counter-terrorism strategy highlights the progress made in recent years, but also underscores the necessity to continue developing international and regional implementation of the Strategy in the future. The Assembly emphasizes the need to promote worldwide solidarity in support of the victims of terrorism and highlights the role of member states in suppressing terrorism by international cooperation.[47]

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)

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[40] UN Security Council, 1540 Committee, *Home,* 2015.

[41] UN Security Council, 1540 Committee, *Home,* 2015.

[42] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/762),* 2012.

[43] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Counter-terrorism and related bodies,* 2015.

[44] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *General Assembly Action to Counter Terrorism*, 2015.

[45] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *General Assembly Action to Counter Terrorism*, 2015.

[46] UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, *Home*, 2015.

[47] UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, *Home*, 2015.

Up to the September 11, 2001 the UN facilitated assistance on technical support to member states was limited and states seeking operational support for counter-terrorism activities had no alternative but to seek bilateral cooperation.[48] There was a need to create a framework to coordinate anti-terrorist activities among UN agencies as well as all member states. Therefore the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate (CTCED) was established. In 2005, the Secretary-General established the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in order to "ensure overall coordination and coherence among at least two dozen entities throughout the UN system involved in counter-terrorism efforts."[49] As mentioned above, the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy lies on member states, but CTITF should "provide necessary policy support, spread knowledge of the Strategy among member states and, if is necessary expedite delivery of technical assistance."[50] The Task Force consists of 34 international entities and organizes its work through Working Groups and counter-terrorism related projects in areas where cooperation among the UN system can add value for the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. For example the UNs' military and police structures participate in UNs' peacekeeping operations, and provide a more secure environment in conflict zones, whereby they help to limit opportunities for terrorist groups to recruit and to conduct operations in the regions.[51] Moreover, cooperation with a number of regional and sub-regional organizations is in the progress of development, such as the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).[52]

International Legal Instruments

Since 1963 fourteen universal legal counter-terrorism instruments and four amendments have been adopted within the UN System. The UN, its special agencies, IAEA, IMO, and Member States have cooperated in order to create this framework. Anti-terrorism instruments focus on the suppression of terrorism in all its forms and activities related to terrorism, which support terrorism or financing terrorism. Other issues are punishment of crimes committed by terrorists and protection of human rights. Guiding principles for counter-terrorism measures are as follows: 1) criminalization of terrorist offences, making them punishable by law and calling for prosecution or extradition of the perpetrators; 2) the need to eliminate legislation which establishes exceptions to such criminalization on political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or similar grounds; 3) a strong call for Member States to take action to prevent terrorist acts; and 4) emphasis on the need for Member States to cooperate, exchange information and provide each other with the greatest measure of assistance in connection with the prevention, investigation and prosecution of terrorist acts. Currently, there are 40 instruments, 18 universal and 22 regional, pertaining to the subject of international terrorism.[53] Most of these instruments are in force and provide "a legal framework for multilateral actions against terrorism and criminalize specific acts of terrorism, including hijacking, hostage-taking, terrorist bombings, financing of terrorism and nuclear terrorism. They are complemented by resolutions of the General Assembly (49/60, 51/210 and 60/288) and of the Security Council (1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 1540 (2004), 1566 (2004) and 1624 (2005))."[54]

Anti-terrorist instruments are adopted within other international organizations cooperating with the UN. In Europe the main actors are the European Union (EU) and Council of Europe, in Africa it is the African Union (AU), in Asia the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In other parts of the world many organizations combat terrorism as well e.g. the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS), League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Cooperation Council for the Arab

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[48] UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A more secure world: Our Shared responsibility,* 2015.

[49] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,* 2008.

[50] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,* 2008.

[51] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,* 2008.

[52] UN Security Council, Counter-Terrorism Committee, *Resources*, 2012.

[53] UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, *International Counter-Terrorism instruments,* 2006.

[54] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,* 2008.

States of the Gulf, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).[55] Some of these organizations, such as ICAO, IMO or INTERPOL provide specialized assistance to states and offer training courses and workshops. [56]

Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

In 2003 the Secretary-General established *The United Nations' High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* to analyze threats and challenges to international peace and security. [57] The report of the Panel recalled the concerns of terrorism and affirmed that "thread that runs through all such concerns is the imperative to develop a global strategy of fighting terrorism that addresses root causes and strengthens responsible States and the rule of law and fundamental human rights."[58] The basis for the new global and comprehensive framework was reached at the World Summit in 2005, where member states firstly agreed on a clear and unqualified condemnation of terrorism.[59] Secretary-General Kofi Annan supported the outcome document of this Summit and released his Report - *Uniting against Terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy.*[60] Based on this report the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/60/288 and confirmed the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Previous anti-terrorist framework was extended and member states pledged to participate on this Strategy and implement its provisions as soon as possible.

The Secretary-General in its *Report to General Assembly on implementation of the Strategy* stresses some of the most important measures and recommendations inherent in the Strategy associated with basic principles of the UN. The Strategy recognizes that the peaceful resolution of conflicts would contribute to the strengthening of global efforts against terrorism and therefore called for the UN to provide greater support in areas of prevention and mediation.[61] The Strategy also asks for the promotion of dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations, cultures and religious as the most important premise for international peace. Moreover, the Strategy condemns suffering of people affected by terrorism and calls for states to promote and protect the rights of victims of terrorist acts and to build international solidarity with them. There are four main pillars in the Strategy: 1) measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; 2) measures to prevent and combat terrorism; 3) measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the UN system in that regard; 4) measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.[62] The strategy also clearly affirms that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. [63]

The unique comprehensiveness of this Strategy, which involves prevention, funding and punishment of terrorist attacks, denounces all kinds of terrorism from bio-terrorism to cyberterrorism, and reaffirms the protection of victims, demonstrates how terrorism affects every aspect of society and highlights the need of concerted and coordinated efforts to command a more effective fight against terrorism.[64] To support the implementation of the Strategy the UN cooperates with a number of international entities, such as The Global Counter-terrorism Forum, which is the platform for sharing experience and know-how among states "to reduce the vulnerability of people everywhere to terrorism by effectively preventing, combating, and prosecuting terrorist acts and countering incitement and recruitment to terrorism."[65]

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[55] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General* (A/67/162) 2012.

[56] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General* (A/67/162) 2012.

[57] Global Policy Forum, *High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Changes,* 2015.

[58] UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A more secure world: Our Shared responsibility,* 2015.

[59] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Background,* 2015.

[60] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Statements made by the Secretary-General on Terrorism,* 2015.

[61] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General* (A/66/762) 2012.

[62] UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, 2015.

[63] UN Action to Counter Terrorism, *Global Counter-terrorism Strategy,* 2007.

[64] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary General (A/66/762),* 2012.

[65] Global Counter-terrorism Forum, 2015.

Conclusion

Countering terrorism has taken priority on the agenda of the UN for more than 50 years and about 23 UN departments, funds and programs as well as several international and regional entities participate on counter-terrorism efforts. Until now, 14 international instruments and a number of conventions to combat terrorism were adopted on the ground of the UN. However, many states are not part of these conventions. The latest milestone in combating terrorism was the adoption of the resolution A/RES/60/288 and the creation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The complexity of the Strategy indicates how terrorism affects all aspects of live and why the debate on terrorism became one of the most difficult agenda items within the UN. Terrorist organizations profit from a weak capacity of states to maintain law and order, therefore it is important to focus on the terrorism in its origin and help states to build capacities to suppress first signs of terrorist activities. One of the main challenges for the UN is to promote the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and to encourage the states to join it as well as to provide technical assistance to states, which seek help to fight terrorism. The greatest advantage of the international community is mutual cooperation and a collective approach which terrorists can never achieve.

Further Research

Given the challenges described above the delegates should consider what actions Member States should take to prevent terrorist acts and they should focus on the need of cooperation among Member States to exchange information and provide assistance to each other in connection with prevention, investigation and prosecution of terrorist acts. Also delegates should debate about how to mobilize Member States to participate on all conventions and to take counter-terrorism actions. In regards to the existence of several anti-terrorist organizations and regional structures, delegations should provide an idea how the UN can use and enhance cooperation with these organizations and structures. What terrorist organization or entity should be added or removed from the Consolidated List? How should the UN help victims of terrorism?

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> *The Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is the outcome of work of a panel of sixteen eminent and experienced people, drawn from different parts of the world, who assess current threats to international peace and security, evaluate existing policies and institutions, and recommend ways of strengthening the United Nations system to provide collective security for the twenty-first century. This report was published in 2004 but nowadays offer a good overview of terrorist threats as well.*

Institute for Economics and Peace. (2014). Global Terrorism Index 2014: Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism. Retrieved 15 July 2015 from: http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report%202014_0.pdf.
> *The Global Terrorism Index 2014 is the report of Institute for Economics and Peace which analyzes trends and risks of terrorism in 2014. Moreover, the report analyzes case studies of the main terrorist groups. Delegates can find important information and latest factual data about international terrorism in this report.*

United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism. (2015). [Website]. Retrieved 11 July 2015 from: http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/.
> *The United Nations Action to Counter Terrorism webpage contains important information about UNs' counter-terrorism efforts as well as overview of declarations, resolutions, reports and statement related to terrorism. Delegates should start their research on this website to understand basic relations among actors related to terrorist agenda within the UN system.*

United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (2015). [Website]. Retrieved 12 July 2015 from: http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/ctitf/index.shtml.

The United Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force website offer information about work of UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) which connecting main actors of the UN system in counter-terrorism efforts. Delegates can find information about work of working groups within CTITF and latest news on Counter-Terrorism on this website.

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> *The resolution A/RES/68/119 adopted by General Assembly on 16 December 2013 on measures to eliminate international terrorism is the latest resolution on this topic adopted by General Assembly. Delegates can find the latest overview of anti-terrorist measures in this document.*

United Nations, General Assembly, (2013). Technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to counter-terrorism (A/RES/68/178) [Resolution]. Retrieved 13 July 2015 from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/187.
> *The resolution A/RES/68/178 adopted by General Assembly on 18 December 2013 on technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to counter-terrorism is the latest resolution of General Assembly in this field. Delegates can find information about UNs' efforts to assist member states with implementing anti-terrorist measures in this document.*

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> *The resolution A/RES/66/282 adopted by General Assembly on 29 June 2012 is the latest review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Delegates can find the latest update of Counter-Terrorism efforts in this document.*

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> *The resolution A/RES/66/171 adopted by General Assembly on 19 December 2012 on Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism is the latest resolution related to human rights and fundamental freedom within the counter-terrorism agenda adopted by General Assembly. Delegates should take into account this document if they focus on human rights and terrorism.*

United Nations, General Assembly, (2011). Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (A/RES/66/50) [Resolution]. Retrieved 14 July 2015 from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/50.
> *The resolution A/RES/66/50 adopted by General Assembly on 2 December 2011 on Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is the latest resolution related to acquiring of WMD by terrorists adopted by General Assembly. Delegates should take into account this document if they focus on WMD and terrorism.*

United Nations, General Assembly, (2006). The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288) [Resolution]. Retrieved 15 July 2015 from: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/504/88/PDF/N0550488.pdf?OpenElement.
> *The resolution A/RES/60/288 adopted by General Assembly on 8 September 2006 which established new comprehensive framework for fighting terrorism - the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is one of the main documents in Counter-Terrorism efforts. Delegates should meet this document to understand the latest activities of the UN in counter-terrorism.*

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II. Achieving Sustainable Development with Environmental Protection

"Climate change is the defining challenge of our time. It affects us all, but it does not affect us all equally. We have a profound responsibility to protect and assist the world's poorest and most vulnerable people and to pass on to future generations a planet that is thriving and healthy."[66]

Introduction

The global environmental movement; begun centuries ago in response to the side effects of industrialization.[67] As universal concern about the healthy and sustainable use of the planet grew, so did the need to develop a strategy to address these concerns.[68] The development of the theoretical framework for sustainable development occurred between 1972 and 1992 mainly through a series of international conferences and initiatives.[69] Building upon the successes and the momentum from the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972 and the 1980 World Conservation Strategy, a Commission was created to address growing concerns over the "accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development."[70] Four years later, this Commission would produce the Brundtland Report, which provided an alarming diagnosis of the state of the environment.[71] The Brundtland Report also named Our Common Future (A/42/427), created by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and submitted to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA), defined the concept of sustainable development for the first time.[72] "In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations."[73]

Sustainable Development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[74] Sustainable development is the key term and guiding principle for long-term global development and therefore sets economic growth in relation to social development with regards to the preservation of our environmental resources and the world's ecosystem.[75] In order to approach the broad issue of sustainable development and its many facets and challenges arising since the term combines the different aspects of development three pillars of sustainable development were defined. The three pillars of sustainable development are: economic development, social development and environmental protection.[76] In order to achieve global sustainable development and to preserve our world for our children progress needs to be made in all three pillars.[77] The pillars are considered as interdependent and mutually reinforcing aspects of sustainable development.[78]

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[66] Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, at Paris Climate Summit, 2015, July 21.
[67] United Nations Global Issues, Environment.
[68] United Nations Global Issues, Environment.
[69] John Drexhage and Deborah Murphy, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012, September 2010.
[70] John Drexhage and Deborah Murphy, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012, September 2010.
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[72] UN General Assembly, *Our Common Future* (A/RES/42/187), 1987.
[73] UN General Assembly, *Our Common Future* (A/RES/42/187), Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development, 1987, p. 43.
[74] UN General Assembly, *Our Common Future* (A/RES/42/187), Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development
[75] UN General Assembly, *Our Common Future* (A/RES/42/187), Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development, 1987, p.30.
[76] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011; p. 6.
[77] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011; p. 6.
[78] UN General Assembly, *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,* World Summit of Sustainable Development, 2002.

The environment has become a prominent, but complex and multi-dimensional policy agenda for states and international community.[79] There has been a growing realization among the global community and multilateral institutions that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environment issues.[80] In addition the concept of viewing an environmental crisis, a development crisis, and an energy crisis as separate issues has begun to dissolve".[81] Recent research indicate that many forms of development have a negative effect on the surrounding environment and erode resources, and over time environmental degradation can undermine economic development.[82] The prevalence of poverty can be seen as major cause and effect of global environmental problems.[83] Over the past few decades, life-threatening environmental concerns have begun to surface in the developing world.[84]

Environmental Protection

The third pillar of sustainable development asks for environmental protection on a global and national level.[85] Environmental protection stands for the protection of the environment on individual, organizational or governmental levels for the benefit of the natural environment and humans.[86] It refers to any activity that maintains or restores the quality of environmental media through preventing the emission of pollutants or reducing the presence of polluting substances in environmental media.[87] Environmental protection leads to changes in characteristics of goods and services, changes in consumption patterns, changes in production techniques, treatment or disposal of residuals in separate environmental protection facilities, recycling, and prevention of degradation of the landscape and ecosystems.[88]

Environmental degradation, first categorized as a problem only for rich nations because it was linked as a side effect of industrial wealth, has become a survival issue for developing nations.[89] Most notably environmental degradation is no longer seen as a problem for just the rich nations, because many of the poorest nations find themselves trapped in the downward spiral of ecological and economic decline.[90] This downward spiral of poverty and environmental degradation has proven to be detrimental on the success of global sustainable development.[91] In particular, the Brundtland Report found it to be a waste of human resources because of the relationship between poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation.[92] In particular, the Brundtland Report found it to be a waste of human resources because of the relationship between poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation.[93] In addition, some degradation trends threaten to radically alter the planet as well as the lives of many humans and animal species.[94] Recent estimates state that approximately 6 million hectares of productive dryland turns into worthless desert.[95] Dryland degradation sends not only environmental refugees the millions across national borders, but it also perpetuates poverty among the most vulnerable populations.[96] It can be argued that traditional development strategies and policy coordination mechanisms have not adequately taken account the importance of social development, resource

[79] M.A.O. Aluko, Sustainable Development, Environmental Degradation and the Entrenchment of Poverty in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, J. Hum. Ecol., 15(1): 63-68 (2004).
[80] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future
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[95] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
[96] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.

conservation that includes environmental protection as an essential element of long-term development.[97] Therefore a new era of economic growth is needed, driven by policies that are both forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable.[98] Such growth is absolutely essential to relieve the great poverty that is deepening in much of the developing world.[99]

Without protecting and preserving our environment development cannot be sustainable. The United Nations is working to solve environmental problems on a global level to reduce environmental losses that are depleting our natural capital on which growth and human survival are based. These environmental problems are for example the ozone layer depletion, toxic waste, loss of forests and species, and air and water pollution.[100] Environmental protection and preserving our natural capital is fundamental to human wellbeing, underpinning the global economy.[101] The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines different components of natural capital such as land, minerals and fossil fuels, solar energy, water, living organisms, and the services provided by the interactions of these elements in ecological systems.[102]

International Framework

With the first conference in Stockholm in 1972, the United Nations started a series of conferences that brought together heads of states to address the topic of economic development and environmental degradation.[103]
The UN Conference in the Human Environment in 1972 led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other multilateral environmental agreements.[104] Although the term of sustainable development was not yet defined and used, the *Stockholm Declaration* already recognized the responsibility of present generations to preserve the environment and natural resources for future generations.[105] The *Stockholm Declaration* contains 19 principles that represent an environmental manifesto addressing issues such as "man-made harm in many regions of the earth: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the man-made environment, particularly in the living and working environment."[106]

In 1992, more than a hundred heads of state gathered in Rio de Janeiro for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also called the "Earth Summit".[107] The attendance of over one hundred heads of states, more than ever before at an international conference, shows the significance that sustainable development had already gained by that time.[108] The Rio Declaration, a political declaration of principles on environment and development, and the Agenda 21, a 40-chapter framework for implementing sustainable development, are the two main documents agreed on at the "Earth Summit"[109].

The climate and biological diversity conventions that were outcome-documents from this conference set standards and had an impact on a global level for the first time.[110] These were a declaration on Forest Principles and the UN

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[97] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
[98] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
[99] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
[100] United Nations, 60 Ways the United Nations Makes a Difference,.
[101] UNEP, Towards a global map of natural capital: key ecosystem assets, UNEP 2014, p. 6.
[102] UNEP, Towards a global map of natural capital: key ecosystem assets, UNEP 2014, p. 6.
[103] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Inter-governmental process.
[104] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011, p. 6.
[105] United Nations, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972,
[106] United Nations, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, Stockholm 1972,
[107] United Nations, *UN Conference on Environment and Development*, 1992.
[108] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011, p. 6.
[109] UN Office for Legal Affairs, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 14 June 1992.
[110] French, H., The Role of the United Nations in Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Democratic Global

Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.[111] The conference also established the UN Commission on Sustainable Development to monitor and promote the implementation of the outcomes from Rio.[112] During the past years more than 200 conventions focusing on the environment were debated and decided.[113] Those agreements include bilateral as well as multilateral, binding and non-binding agreements that cover a wide range of environmental topics.[114]

10 years after the Rio Summit the world leaders gathered at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) in Johannesburg. The outcome document with its annex the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)* created a road map for action to achieve sustainable development especially through multilateral means.[115] The *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* recognized that "the global environment continues to suffer. Loss of biodiversity continues, fish stocks continue to be depleted, desertification claims more and more fertile land, the adverse effects of climate change are already evident, natural disasters are more frequent and more devastating, and developing countries more vulnerable, and air, water and marine pollution continue to rob millions of a decent life."[116] Ten years later, the heads of states met again at a Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), which is also known as Rio+20, to give new impulses on the international efforts to achieve sustainable development. The outcome-document, *The Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288), reiterated and renewed the prior documents on achieving sustainable development and calling for environmental protection, addressing issues such as the loss of biodiversity, renewable energy, water pollution and scarcity, and climate change.[117]

In 2000 the General Assembly unanimously adopted the *Millennium Declaration* (A/RES/55/2) which contained a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century.[118] The Millennium Summit also agreed on a set of goals for the new millennium, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).[119] The eight Millennium Development Goals addressed specific issues related to development and named targets that were supposed to be reached until 2015 which contained a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international agenda for the twenty-first century.[120] Goal Number 7 is the only one directly focusing on the environment by setting the goal to ensure environmental sustainability and including two sub-targets directly focusing on environmental protection. Sub-target A calls on Member States to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources, and sub-target B to reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.[121] Two years before the timeline of the MGDs ended, the President of the UN General Assembly hosted a special event to follow up on efforts made towards achieving MDGs, where Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented his report entitled "A Life of Dignity for All". In the outcome document world leaders renewed their commitment to meet the MDG's targets and agreed to hold a high-level Summit in September 2015 to adopt a new set of Goals building on the achievements of the MDGs. The MDG Review Report in 2015 shows some success in targeting environmental degradation. Since 1990 about 98% of ozone-depleting substances were eliminated and the ozone layer is expected to recover by the middle of this century and in many regions terrestrial and maritime protected areas have increased.[122] However, global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by over 50 % since 1990, about 5.2 million hectares of forests were lost in 2010 and

Governance, p. 7.

[111] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011, p. 6.

[112] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011, p. 6.

[113] French, H., The Role of the United Nations in Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Democratic Global Governance, p. 5.

[114] Hannah Stoddart, A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance, Stakeholder Forum, Commonwealth Secretariat, July 2011, p. 7.

[115] United Nations, Plan of Implementation of the World Summit in Sustainable Development, 2002.

[116] United Nations, Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

[117] UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288), 2012.

[118] UN General Assembly, United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2), 2000.

[119] United Nations, Millennium Development Goals, 2000.

[120] United Nations, Millennium Development Goals, 2000. .

[121] United Nations, Millennium Development Goals, 2000.

[122] United Nations, Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015, p. 7.

species are declining overall in number and distribution.[123]

Role of the UN System

In 1945, when the United Nations was founded, the importance of sustainable development and the protection of the environment were not considered as part of the work and obligations of the United Nations.[124] Therefore, the Charter of the United Nations does not include the word environment.[125] But during the last decades environmental protection has become an increasingly important focus of activities for the United Nations.[126]

General Assembly (GA)

The role of the General Assembly has been shown in all the outcome documents of the many conferences on sustainable development described above. Further on, the General Assembly has established organs that are part of the United Nations System such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
UNEP was created by the General Assembly after the Stockholm Conference in 1972 to lead and coordinate the efforts of the United Nations protection the global environment.[127] Its current priorities are environmental aspects of disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances, resource efficiency, and climate change. UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. UNEP work encompasses: assessing global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends, developing international and national environmental instruments, and strengthening institutions for the wise management of the environment.[128]

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
The CSD was created by the GA after the Rio conference in 1992 to ensure an effective follow-up of the conference. The Commission has promoted and supported the sustainable development agenda throughout the United Nations System working with a multi-year work programme consisting of review and policy years. At the Rio +20 Conference in 2012 the Member States agreed to establish a high level political forum that will subsequently replace the Commission on Sustainable Development.[129]

Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)
The DSD provides leadership in promoting and coordinating implementation of the sustainable development agenda of the United Nations and its work translates into five core functions: (1) Support to UN intergovernmental processes on sustainable development; (2) Analysis and policy development; (3) Capacity development at the country level; (4) Inter-agency coordination; and (5) Knowledge management, communication and outreach.[130]

Conclusion

The General Assembly has initiated many sustainable development initiates that include a focus on environmental protection which

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[123] United Nations, Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015, p.8.
[124] French, H., The Role of the United Nations in Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Democratic Global Governance, p. 4.
[125] Charter of the United Nations.
[126] French, H., The Role of the United Nations in Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Democratic Global Governance, p. 5.
[127] United Nations Global Issues, Environment.
[128] UNEP, About.
[129] United Nations, Commission on Sustainable Development.
[130] United Nations, Division for Sustainable Development, Mission Statement.

have affected the lives of millions throughout the world.[131] Most recently the Millennium Declaration (2000), the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, and the post-2015 development agenda reflect a growing commitment of Member States to attain specific goals while protecting our common environment.[132] The environmental difficulties that confront us today are not new, we have only begun to understand and accept their influence on long-term sustainable development goals.[133] Over the years policy flaws such as governments' failing to ensure that development policies do not degrade the environment and holding those responsible who implement policies that degrade the environment have hindered sustainable development.[134] Today, we need to be equally concerned about the ways in which environmental degradation can dampen or reverse economic development as we are about achieving sustainable development.[135] Policies that only emphasize increased production can no longer be the acceptable standard.[136]

Further Research
Given the complexities described above delegates should consider what actions Member States should take to implement transparent, successful development plans that include measures to adequately address protecting the environment? Also delegates should be prepared to discuss the needs for international cooperation, including capacity-building, information-sharing, and technology transfer and how to utilize the tools to bridge the gap between current sustainable development initiatives and future frameworks. How can Member States work together to enhance global resource efficiency and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation? What else should the UN do specifically within the GA to not only incorporate environmental protection in sustainable development agendas but ensure that these measures and protocols are being upheld?

Annotated Bibliography

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> *This paper, gives some essential background on the work of the United Nation Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability. It provides information on the evolution in the thinking and practice on sustainable development. It provides details on the origins of sustainable development, and then analyses the progress that has been made in sustainable development since the Brundtland report was published and the Rio Summit held over twenty years ago. This paper tries to discover why the success of sustainable development has been less than expected and also provides some thoughts on how to move forward.*

Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future; Retrieved 19 June 2015 from http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf.
> *This landmark document was the result of thorough analysis of submissions and expert testimony from senior government representatives, scientists and experts, research institutes held at public hearings throughout the world. The Brundtland Commission Report recognized that human resource development in the form of poverty reduction, gender equity, and wealth redistribution was crucial to formulating strategies for environmental conservation. The Report also offers recommendations for a sustainable course of development for the global community. However, the Report was unable to identify. Our Common Future and the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development laid the groundwork for the convening of the 1992Earth Summit and the adoption of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and to the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development.*

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[131] General Assembly of the United Nations, Functions and Powers.
[132] General Assembly of the United Nations, Functions and Powers.
[133] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
[134] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
[135] Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future.
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http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/A%20Pocket%20Guide%20to%20Sustainable%20Development%20Governance.pdf

> *This guide was written in response to address the perceived 'knowledge gap' on the history and dynamics of global governance for sustainable development. This comprehensive guide provides crucial background information on key issues in global sustainable development governance. The guide discusses key concepts that are at the core of Sustainable Development Governance, which most have been used to develop most past and present policies. The guide also outlines the main global institutions that play a role in the development and implementation of sustainable development policy. Finally, this guide provides some analysis of proposals that have been put forward with the aim of reforming global governance to aid sustainable development.*

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