

General Assembly Fourth Committee

Recent Developments

In its 67th session, the General Assembly adopted nearly 30 different texts based on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization committee—or the General Assembly Fourth Committee.¹ As per its mandate, the GA Fourth Committee produced draft resolutions and adopted reports on a plethora of topics, including but not limited to: the University for Peace, the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, decisions concerning decolonization, peacekeeping, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Israeli practices in Palestine, outer space, and information governance.²

The GA Fourth Committee produced four draft-resolutions on UNRWA: Assistance to Palestine refugees, Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues—all of which were contained within the GA Fourth's report on the UNRWA.³ The first resolution—adopted with 170 in favor, 1 against, and 8 abstentions—regretted the continued plight of the refugees, specifically that they still required basic health, education and living assistance.⁴ The second resolution, with a similar amount of support, reaffirmed the right of return for Palestinian refugees.⁵ The third resolution, also with similar support, expressed concern with UNRWA's current funding levels and urged all member states and interested independent parties to contribute to UNRWA financially.⁶ The fourth Resolution was also adopted with over 170 votes in favor and encouraged both the Israeli and Palestinian sides to finalize a framework for negotiations of the Middle East Peace Process.⁷

The GA Fourth Committee also considered the report submitted by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli practices.⁸ In this report, delegates highlighted the escalation in settler violence in the occupied territories and a spike in the arrest of Palestinian youth.⁹ The Special Political and Decolonization committee subsequently sent its report to the GA Plenary, entitled the “Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories,” which included another five draft-resolutions that were adopted by the General Assembly Plenary.¹⁰ In the first draft resolution, “Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories,” the committee emphasized the need to end the occupation in the Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, it requested that the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices continue its work until that time.¹¹ The second resolution contained within the report reaffirmed the applicability of international law to the occupation of Palestine, specifically the applicability of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention that refers to the protection of civilians.¹² The last three resolutions adopted from the report, respectively, urged Israel to cease the construction of settlements in East Jerusalem and Syrian Golan, end violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, and, finally, stop changing the character, demographic makeup, or legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan.¹³

¹ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Fourth Committee, 22nd Meeting (AM)*, 2012; UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

² UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

³ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*, 2012, pp. 7, 9, 10, 16.

⁴ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

⁵ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

⁶ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Fourth Committee, 23rd Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

⁷ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

⁸ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Fourth Committee, 20th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

⁹ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Fourth Committee, 20th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

¹⁰ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*, 2012, pp. 8-9.

¹² UN General Assembly, *Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*, 2012, pp. 11-12.

¹³ UN General Assembly, *Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*, 2012, pp. 13-22.

Concerning outer space, the GA Fourth Committee forwarded two reports each containing a draft resolutions on “International Cooperation in The Peaceful Uses Of Outer Space” and “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.”¹⁴ Regarding the agenda item “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space,” the committee called for the ratification and incorporation of the treaties regulating outer space by all the Member States that have not taken these steps.¹⁵ The resolution makes specific and lengthy references to the adoption of the *Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines* and for Member States with space capabilities to ensure that the fruits of space exploration benefit the world’s population by contributing to economic progress, disaster mitigation, and sustainable development.¹⁶ The resolution also officially welcomed and appointed Armenia, Costa Rica, and Jordan to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).¹⁷ On the topic of “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space,” the GA Fourth Committee called upon all Member States, especially those with space capabilities, to actively contribute to the maintenance and continued peaceful of outer space.¹⁸ The resolution went on to reaffirm the primacy of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in addressing this agenda item, and asked that the CD establish a working group on the topic in its 2013 session.¹⁹ Finally, the resolution noted the continued and growing international agreement concerning Transparency and Confidence-building Measures (TCBMs).²⁰

In its report on “Questions Relating to Information,” the GA Fourth Committee sent two draft resolutions and a decision to the GA Plenary, all of which were adopted without a vote.²¹ On the topic of “Information In The Service Of Humanity,” the GA Fourth called on Member States to reduce “existing disparities in information flows at all levels”—especially in developing countries—and to “ensure for journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them.”²² In the resolution on “United Nations public information policies and activities,” the GA Fourth Committee requested that the Secretary General continue to fully implement all applicable recommendations contained within past relevant resolutions concerning the flow of information within the UN system. Additionally, it reaffirmed the importance of the work of the Committee on Information in ensuring the organization and function of UN information policies.²³ Finally, the GA Fourth decided to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 113 to 114 with the appointment of Oman.²⁴

The Committee at the National Model United Nations Conference

The General Assembly Fourth Committee has one of the most diverse mandates of any UN committee, dealing with various subjects, which include decolonization, Palestinian refugees, human rights, peacekeeping, mine action, outer space, public information, atomic radiation and University for Peace.²⁵ As a General Assembly body, the GA Fourth Committee is comprised of all Member States in the UN. It currently has several subcommittees, which include, but are not limited to, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Committee on Information.

Format: The Fourth Committee is a Resolution Writing Committee. The GA 4th prepares resolutions that are then adopted by the General Assembly Plenary.

Voting: In the Committee each member has one vote and it does not allow for special privileges of Member States, such as veto power. All decisions are decided on by majority vote of members present for both procedural and substantive matters.

¹⁴ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 48th Meeting (AM)*, 2012; UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*, 2012, pp. 6-9.

¹⁶ UN General Assembly, *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*, 2012, pp. 6-9.

¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*, 2012, pp. 10.

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space*, 2012, pp. 5.

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space*, 2012, pp. 5.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space*, 2012, pp. 5.

²¹ UNDPI, *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 59th Meeting (AM)*, 2012.

²² UN General Assembly, *Questions relating to information*, 2012, pp. 3.

²³ UN General Assembly, *Questions relating to information*, 2012, pp. 5.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Questions relating to information*, 2012, pp. 18.

²⁵ UN General Assembly Fourth Committee. *Committee Home Page*.

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UN General Assembly. (2012, November 14). *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*. Retrieved January 7, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/422>.

This is the GA Fourth Committee's most recent report on International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, which it submitted this past fall to the General Assembly Plenary. It contains the committee's most recent work on the topic, and as such would be an ideal reference for any delegate attempting to grasp any developments that took place at this fall's meetings. It contains a draft resolution and a draft decision, as referenced above.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 14). *Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space*. Retrieved January 6, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/407>.

This report represents the GA Fourth Committee's most recent conclusions on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which it submitted this past fall to the General Assembly Plenary. Because it contains the committee's most recent work on the topic it would be an ideal reference for any delegate attempting to grasp any developments that took place at this fall's meetings. It contains a draft resolution and a draft decision, as referenced above.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 5). *Questions relating to information*. Retrieved January 9, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/426>.

This report contains the GA Fourth Committee's most recent resolution on the agenda item: Questions relating to information, which it submitted this past fall to the General Assembly Plenary. Because it contains the committee's most recent work on the topic it would be an ideal reference for any delegate attempting to grasp any developments that took place at this fall's meetings. It contains a draft resolution and a draft decision, as referenced above.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 28). *Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*. Retrieved January 5, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/424>.

This is the most recent report compiled by the GA Fourth Committee on the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli practices, which it submitted this past fall to the General Assembly Plenary. It contains the committee's most recent work on the topic, and as such would be an ideal reference for any delegate attempting to grasp any developments that took place at this fall's meetings. It contains five draft resolutions, as referenced above.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 22). *Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East*. Retrieved January 5, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/423>.

This is the recent report by the GA Fourth Committee on UNRWA that it submitted this past fall to the General Assembly Plenary. It contains the committee's most recent work on the topic, and as such would be an ideal reference for any delegate attempting to grasp any developments that took place at this fall's meetings. It contains four draft resolutions, as referenced above.

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United Nations Department of Information. (2012, November 13). *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Fourth Committee, 22nd Meeting (AM)*, 2012. Retrieved January 7, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gaspd523.doc.htm>.

United Nations Department of Information. (2012, November 15). *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Fourth Committee, 23rd Meeting (AM)*, 2012. Retrieved January 7, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gaspd524.doc.htm>.

United Nations Department of Information. (2012, December 3). *Meeting Record of the Sixty-Seventh General Assembly Plenary, 48th Meeting*. Retrieved January 7, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/ga11321.doc.htm>.

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UN General Assembly. (2012, November 14). *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*. Retrieved January 7, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/422>.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 14). *Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space*. Retrieved January 6, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/407>.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 5). *Questions relating to information*. Retrieved January 9, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/426>.

UN General Assembly. (2012, November 28). *Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*. Retrieved January 5, 2012 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/67/424>.

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I. Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Assistance to Palestinian Refugees

Recent Developments

Under the heightened circumstances of the political climate and handling of the ever-evolving struggle for societal autonomy, the current state and struggle between Palestinian refugees and the Israeli Settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territories remains an issue of utmost importance.²⁶ The state of the upward growing five million Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle and Near East in countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and East Jerusalem has shown signs of both further despair and hope for a new frontier on the horizon.²⁷ In the wake of the current Syrian Civil War crisis, more than two hundred and fifty million people have been internally displaced, with more than six hundred and fifty thousand Palestinian refugees being left to seek for aid abroad.²⁸ A refugee camp in Ein el Hilweh, Lebanon, caring normally for over fifty-three thousand registered Palestinian refugees, saw an influx in upward bounds of four thousand Palestinian refugees from Syria as a result of the current Syrian Climate.²⁹ United Nations (UN) Special Coordinator for Lebanon Derek Plumbly visited the camp on 31 January 2013 and commented by saying, “I have seen the difficult conditions in Ein El Hilweh. The plight of refugees arriving from Syria is truly distressing. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has been helping, within available resources... the needs of Palestine refugees displaced from Syria were covered in the appeals discussed in the international donors’ conference in Kuwait yesterday. There is clearly an urgent need for more assistance”.³⁰

Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry reported a drastic increase in proposed Israeli settlements after Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the UN in November.³¹ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that the current status of the Israel-Palestine ordeal is both unsustainable and unacceptable and that now more than ever, in light of the Israeli elections held on 22 January 2013, is the time to resume negotiations and no longer be idle.³² Further, he stressed the need for commitment to negotiate and uphold the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to help resolve the core issues of this problem.³³ However, an independent inquiry on 31 January 2013 set forth by the United Nations, in order to remain in compliance with Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, has demanded that Israel halt all settlement activities without excusal circumstances; the current Israeli activities have been deemed illegal under international law.³⁴ Implementing this halt, however, has proven to be ineffective thus far.

Specifically in regards to efforts conducted by the General Assembly Fourth Committee, the 67th session in 2012 extended a multitude of efforts to alter the course of Israeli settlements and assistance to Palestinian refugees—while their efficacy remains in question.³⁵ Fourth Committee efforts in this session ended with the approval of nine draft resolutions on the UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Israeli practices, another on peacekeeping, and a draft decision on its work, offering a sum of 28 texts to the General Assembly. According to a press release from the General Assembly Fourth Committee, “[GA4 Resolved] would demand that Israel, the occupying Power, cease all practices and actions that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people, including the killing and injury of civilians, the arbitrary detention and imprisonment of civilians and the destruction and confiscation of civilian property... Another of three additional drafts on Israeli practices, concerning Israeli settlements, would have the Assembly reiterate its demand for the cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in all of the Occupied Palestinian

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee, *A/67/331*, 2012.

²⁷ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *Palestine refugees 2012*

²⁸ Sherlock, *2.5 Million displaced in Syria Crisis* 2012

²⁹ United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *Needs of Palestinians fleeing Syria “Urgent”* 2012

³⁰ United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *Needs of Palestinians fleeing Syria “Urgent”* 2012

³¹ United Nations News Centre, *Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process Entering Critical Period* 2013

³² United Nations News Centre, *‘We Cannot Afford a Year Without Tangible Results’* 2013

³³ United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 242* 1967

³⁴ United Nations News Centre, *Independent UN Inquiry Urges Halt to Israeli Settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2013

³⁵ United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee, *Press Release GA/SPD/524*, 2012.

Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.”³⁶ These statements, backed by draft resolutions in the 67th session, echo the sentiments of much of the international community to seek bi-state resolve between Israel and Palestine—especially as these conflicts are worsened by political instability and civil war in neighboring Egypt and Syria.³⁷

Most recently, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon opened the 2013 session of the committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on February 5, 2013. The 348th meeting of this specialized committee was directly apportioned to the General Assembly Fourth Committee, and adopted its programme of work for 2013 beginning with the UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People to be held at FAO Headquarters in Rome at the end of February 2013.³⁸ To echo the regards of the Secretary-General, it is vital that 2013 be a year of decisive and deliberate action in establishing resolve for Israeli settlements in OPT and assistance to millions of Palestinian refugees.³⁹

³⁶ United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee, *Press Release GA/SPD/524*, 2012.

³⁷ United Nations News Centre, *Independent UN Inquiry Urges Halt to Israeli Settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2013.

³⁸ United Nations Palestinian Rights Committee, UNISPAL, *Palestinian Rights Committee Meetings—348th meeting*, 2013.

³⁹ United Nations News Centre, *‘We Cannot Afford a Year Without Tangible Results’* 2013.

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This article is very helpful in understanding how regional turbulence has affected the overall Palestinian refugee situation—especially in regards to turmoil in Syria. More importantly, it helps contextualize how regional unrest in exacerbating tensions between Israel and Palestine. Within the context of UNRWA, this article explains how regional turmoil is worsening the conditions for an increasingly populated refugee population in the region.

United Nation General Assembly Fourth Committee (2012). *Press Release GA/SPD/524*. Retrieved February 3, 2013 from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gaspd524.doc.htm>

This press release published by the GA4 committee details the efforts made during the 67th session in 2012. Within it, details are offered regarding the contents of each of the draft resolutions sent to the General Assembly pertaining to Israeli settlements and assistance to Palestinian refugees. This is a very helpful press release for education on the overall committee specific efforts made to alleviate tension on this subject.

United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee (2012). “*United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.*” A/67/423. Retrieved on February 3, 2013 from <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.nsf/5ba47a5c6cef541b802563e000493b8c/5d121853c010b40a85257ad90054a3c6?OpenDocument>

This document outlines the logistics for the working agency on relief and assistance to the millions who have been displaced as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and related regional unrest. It details the obstacles, challenges, and basis of operations and intervention for those in need of humanitarian assistance. Broken down into an analysis of the multiple draft resolutions on UNRWA, this document should help guide delegates to understanding the working prerogatives of UNRWA.

United Nations Palestinian Rights Committee, UNISPAL (2013). “*Palestinian Rights Committee Meetings—348th meeting.*” Retrieved on February 9, 2013 from <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/mtg.htm>

This link directs to the Palestinian Rights Committee Meetings informational pages, which detail the 2013 programme of action for this particular subject. It outlines dates, times, locations, and subjects for future discussions on UNRWA activities, resources, limitations, and challenges within the framework of plausible responses to Israeli settlements in occupied territories and assistance for Palestinian refugees.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2012). *Palestine Refugees*. Retrieved January 30, 2013, from: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=86>.

This link directs to an overarching synopsis of who the UNRWA is, how and where they operate, and what their main priorities and challenges are. This is a very helpful resource for delegates to understand the current leader in relief agencies in order to better understand its needs, priorities, and challenges—and provide an overall contribution to the relief process for refugees.

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II. Promoting the Peaceful Use of Outer Space and Preventing an Arms Race

Recent Developments

With ongoing developments in modern technology, the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race stays an important and current topic. Therefore, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space was on the agenda at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly Fourth Committee.⁴⁰ Delegates at the Fourth Committee discussed different areas that are part of this topic such as space debris, international treaties concerning the use of outer space as well as disaster management.⁴¹ The General Assembly adopted the Fourth committee resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space without a vote.⁴² The General Assembly, furthermore, on recommendation of the Fourth Committee, adopted the decision to extend the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.⁴³ With 127 votes in favor, one against and three abstentions Armenia, Costa Rica and Jordan became members of this committee.⁴⁴

Another important event was the United Nations International Conference on Space-based Technology for Disaster Management which was held from 7 to 9 November 2012 in Beijing, China. It consisted of six sessions where information on climate change and disaster risk, information resources for disaster risk assessment, space-based information application, risk assessment and mapping, and network building was presented. During this conference there was the possibility for Member States to discuss topics such as drought monitoring, strengthening United Nations Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) technical advisory support, or rapid mapping services during emergencies, in special sessions.

The seventh meeting of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) took place in Beijing, China, from 5 to 9 November 2012.⁴⁵ The focus of the conference was on global navigation satellite systems (GNSS).⁴⁶ The working groups discussed topics concerning the enhancement of the performance of GNSSs as well as compatibility and interoperability.⁴⁷ China and Russia have both recently made strides to expand their own GNSSs.

China opened their own GNSS, Beidou or “Compass,” for use by civilians and hopes to compete with the global positioning system operated by the United States soon.⁴⁸ Currently, “Compass” only provides coverage for China, but expects to have global coverage within 10 years.⁴⁹ Russia also announced its plan to expand its own GNSS, nicknamed “GLONASS,” with the expected launching of 35 satellites in the next seven years.⁵⁰ Peaceful uses of outer space remain in demand by many Member States and more is expected.

These topics and more will be discussed in the upcoming fiftieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This session will be held in Vienna from 11 to 22 February 2013.⁵¹ The provisional agenda lists issues such as space-system-based disaster management support, space debris and recent developments in global navigation satellite systems.⁵² Concerning the topic of disaster management a report on the International Meeting of Crowdsourcing Mapping will be presented to the Scientific and

⁴⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *Fourth Committee Documents*, Documents of the 67th Session, 2013.

⁴¹ United Nations General Assembly, *Fourth Committee Documents*, Draft resolutions and decisions, 2013.

⁴² United Nations General Assembly, *Documents*, Resolutions 67th Session, 2013.

⁴³ United Nations General Assembly, *Documents*, Resolutions 67th Session, 2013.

⁴⁴ United Nations General Assembly, *Documents*, Resolutions 67th Session, 2013.

⁴⁵ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, *United Nations Programme on Space Applications*, Programme's News, 2013.

⁴⁶ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, *United Nations Programme on Space Applications*, Programme's News, 2013.

⁴⁷ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, *United Nations Programme on Space Applications*, Programme's News, 2013.

⁴⁸ UN-SPIDER, *Beidou: China opens Navigation System for Civilian Use*, News, 2013.

⁴⁹ UN-SPIDER, *Beidou: China opens Navigation System for Civilian Use*, News, 2013.

⁵⁰ UN-SPIDER, *Roscosmos: Plans for GLONASS Programme*, News, 2013.

⁵¹ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, *Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, Current/Upcoming Sessions*, 2013.

⁵² United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, *Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, Documents*, 2013.

Technical Subcommittee.⁵³ The meeting was carried out by UN-SPIDER from 3 to 5 December 2012.⁵⁴ One of the topics presented was the role of Crowdsourcing Mapping in cases such as Hurricane Sandy.⁵⁵

However, preventing an arms race in outer space is necessary to allow for the peaceful uses of outer space. Space arms control measures have been controversial and little progress has been made in recent years.⁵⁶ Barriers to progress include the term “space weapon” because it is a very broad term.⁵⁷ However, there are anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons that are designed to shoot down satellites.⁵⁸ Such weapons were developed as well as tested during the Cold War by the USA and USSR.⁵⁹ In 2012, there were talks that China developed a new ASAT weapon, which China wanted to test.⁶⁰ New developments and possible tests in this area underline the importance of space arms control measures and treaties, such as the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, in order to prevent an arms race in outer space.⁶¹

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space is becoming more prevalent every year as more Member States expand their technological capabilities. The Security Council responded to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) missile launch by adopting Resolution 2087.⁶² The Security Council condemned the ballistic missile launch by the DPRK in hopes of maintaining “the freedom of all States to explore and use outer space.”⁶³ Peaceful uses of outer space also have been in the news recently and continue to grow in interest among many Member States.

A meeting among officials from space-faring countries to discuss the European Union's proposed international Code of Conduct for outer space was supposed to take place last October, but has been postponed to 2013.⁶⁴ The future meeting could be hosted by a new space-faring country to signal the opening of the debate to all countries.⁶⁵

Many groups have become active in the prevention of an arms race in outer space and promoting peaceful uses of outer space. The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (Global Network), founded in 1992, was organized to educate and coordinate events that promote awareness around space issues such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space.⁶⁶ The Global Network also organizes the annual Keep Space for Peace Week that took place in October.⁶⁷ Keep Space for Peace Week coordinates activities across the United States and several other countries encouraging a global democratic debate about space exploration and the dangers of space being used for military purposes.⁶⁸

⁵³ UN-SPIDER, *Home*, Updates December 2012, 2013.

⁵⁴ UN-SPIDER, *Home*, Updates December 2012, 2013.

⁵⁵ UN-SPIDER, *Home*, Updates December 2012, 2013.

⁵⁶ López, *Predicting an Arms Race in Space: Problematic Assumptions for Space Arms Control*, 2012, p. 52.

⁵⁷ Mutschler/Venet, *The European Union as an emerging actor in space security?*, 2012, pp.118-124.

⁵⁸ Mutschler/Venet, *The European Union as an emerging actor in space security?*, 2012, pp.118-124.

⁵⁹ Mutschler/Venet, *The European Union as an emerging actor in space security?*, 2012, pp.118-124.

⁶⁰ Gertz, *U.S. Intelligence: China to conduct test of more powerful anti-satellite weapon*, 2012.

⁶¹ United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, *United Nations Treaties and Principles on Space Law*, 2013.

⁶² United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Resolutions*, S/RES/2087, 2013.

⁶³ United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Resolutions*, S/RES/2087, 2013.

⁶⁴ Farnsworth, Timothy, *Space Code Meeting Postponed*, 2013.

⁶⁵ Farnsworth, Timothy, *Space Code Meeting Postponed*, 2013.

⁶⁶ Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, *History of GN*, 2013.

⁶⁷ Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, *Keep Space for Peace Week*, 2012.

⁶⁸ Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, *Keep Space for Peace Week*, 2012.

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Arms Control Association. (2013). Subject Resources. *Space*. Retrieved February 7, 2013 from <http://www.armscontrol.org/subject/25/date>

This web site provides a listing of articles published by the Arms Control Association on any issues regarding outer space. The articles are listed in chronological order with the most recent at the top of the page. New articles are posted as they become available. Articles are archived as far as back as 1997.

López, L. (2012). Predicting an Arms Race in Space: Problematic Assumptions for Space Arms Control. *Astropolitics: The International Journal of Space Politics & Policy*, Volume 10 (Issue 1): pp. 49-67.

This is an interesting article concerning the topic of an arms race in outer space. Although the author presents his own conclusions and concentrates mostly on the effect of U.S. deployment of space weapons, the article provides many facts and different views on the possibility of an arms race and the reaction of different state as well as various opinions on this topic.

Mutschler, M./Venet, C. (2012). The European Union as an emerging actor in space security?. *Space Policy*, Volume 28 (Issue 2): pp. 118-124.

This article is mainly concerned with the European Union and space security but nevertheless gives a good overview on the debate about space security. It distinguishes between the militarization and weaponization of outer space and can be helpful when it comes to the different terms that are used in this context. The article not only provides some definitions or clarifications of some terms but also outlines important events and dates.

Park, Andrew T. (2006). Incremental Steps for Achieving Space Security: The Need for a New Way of Thinking to Enhance the Legal Regime for Space. *Houston Journal of International Law*, Volume 28: 871-910

This journal article provides interesting look at the current state of the Space Security Regime and possible changes in moving forward. Beside a nice brief overview, the author also examines space security in light of the interests of the U.S. as well as a nation's right to self-defense in regards to space.

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. (2013). *Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Current/Upcoming Sessions*. Retrieved January 14, 2013 from <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/COPUOS/stsc/2013/index.html>

Although the fiftieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee will be held in February 2013 this website already provides information such as the provisional agenda or documents for this session. It is a good opportunity to learn about the topics that will be discussed during the upcoming session.

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III. The United Nations and 21st Century Information Governance

Recent Developments

The methods for disseminating information are constantly developing and they are changing how the international community views information governance. Staying ahead of the evolving technologies and discovering newer and better ways to inform and communicate have all become vital quests of the United Nations (UN) in the 21st century. The General Assembly noticed the validity of this topic and incorporated it into the agenda of its 67th session.⁶⁹ The General Assembly Fourth Committee discussed the topic under the agenda item “Questions relating to information.”⁷⁰ The Committee presented two draft resolutions for the General Assembly to consider regarding questions relating to information, resolutions 67/124 A and 67/124 B, both of which were approved without a vote.⁷¹ The matters addressed in these documents ranged from “reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels” and “provide[ing] all possible support and assistance to developing countries and their media” to urging the Department of Public Information to increase its efficiency by “bridging the digital divide, strengthening information services and supporting peacekeeping missions.”⁷² Another crucial aspect of information governance addressed at the meeting was language.⁷³ The Assembly requested the Secretariat be encouraged to provide information in all of the official languages of the UN.⁷⁴

As the 67th session continued, the General Assembly Plenary tackled different issues of information governance and questions relating to information. The Assembly recognized the importance of the development of information dissemination and through resolution 67/195, which was adopted without a vote, “sought to bridge the digital divide through the effective and development-oriented use of information and communications technology.”⁷⁵ The General Assembly Second Committee highlighted this in the “Information and communications technologies for development” report (A/67/434) submitted to the Plenary for discussion, as well as the issue that the majority of the poor did not progress in information and communications technologies as much as necessary.⁷⁶ The report noted that information and communications technologies could potentially combat poverty and promote economic growth for developing and least developed countries.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the report pointed out the gender divide and emphasized the necessity of women’s ability to obtain and utilize information and communications technologies as a means of empowerment.⁷⁸ The documents adopted at the Assembly session covered new ground in information governance and stressed the need for help from the UN and the international community to develop new technologies.

Another recent development was the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT), held from December 3-14, 2012, in Dubai.⁷⁹ The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN Specialized Agency that focuses on information and communication technologies, held this conference.⁸⁰ The purpose of the conference was to evaluate the International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs).⁸¹ The ITRs are a “binding global treaty designed to facilitate international interconnection and interoperability of information and communication services, as well as ensuring their efficiency and widespread public usefulness and availability.”⁸² The treaty’s aim is to promote easy and affordable global access to information.⁸³ The treaty was previously discussed in 1988 in Australia, and there was wide support for the treaty to be modernized to match up with the current technological

⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *Questions relating to information: Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee*, November 5, 2012.

⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Questions relating to information: Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee*, November 5, 2012.

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 59th Meeting*, December 18, 2012.

⁷² UN General Assembly, *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 59th Meeting*, December 18, 2012.

⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 59th Meeting*, December 18, 2012.

⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 59th Meeting*, December 18, 2012.

⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 61st Meeting*, December 21, 2012.

⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 61st Meeting*, December 21, 2012.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for development (A/67/434)*, December 14, 2012.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for development (A/67/434)*, December 14, 2012.

⁷⁹ International Telecommunication Union, *World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12)*, 2013.

⁸⁰ International Telecommunication Union, *Overview*, 2013.

⁸¹ International Telecommunication Union, *WCIT-12: Conference Overview*, 2013.

⁸² International Telecommunication Union, *WCIT-12: Conference Overview*, 2013.

⁸³ International Telecommunication Union, *WCIT-12: Conference Overview*, 2013.

trends.⁸⁴ Despite the overall consensus on needing to update the treaty, there was controversy surrounding some of the proposals. The United States' ambassador to WCIT, Terry Kramer, expressed concern over "proposals that have been suggested that the ITU should enter the internet governance business."⁸⁵ Some of the additional fears included paying to stream data, regulating the internet, utilizing long distance phone regulations as a model for internet rules, overseeing internet data sent to and from countries, along with a multitude of other regulations that stirred up controversy.⁸⁶ Despite all of the concern and debates on the issues, ITU's Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré tried to ease tensions by stating that "in practice, nothing will be adopted without near-unanimity."⁸⁷ There are still a lot of details to flesh out in modernizing the outdated ITRs. As Sally Wentworth's, of the Internet Society, stated, "Technology moves faster than any treaty process ever can."⁸⁸ It is vital for the UN General Assembly, and other related bodies and organizations within the UN system to move with technology and implement changes that will advance information governance to the 21st century.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ International Telecommunication Union, *WCIT-12: Conference Overview*, 2013.

⁸⁵ Kelion, *UN internet regulation treaty talks begin in Dubai*, December 2, 2012.

⁸⁶ Kelion, *UN internet regulation treaty talks begin in Dubai*, December 2, 2012; Crovitz, *The U.N.'s Internet Sneak Attack*, November 25, 2012.

⁸⁷ Menn, *Bitter struggle over Internet regulation to dominate global summit*, November 27, 2012.

⁸⁸ Crovitz, *The U.N.'s Internet Sneak Attack*, November 25, 2012.

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The ITU Web site provides information on the Specialized Agency and its role within the UN in relationship to this topic. The ITU plays a vital role in trying to connect international communities through information and communication technologies. The Web site contains recent information and articles related to this topic and will aid delegates in their research.

International Telecommunication Union. (2013). *WCIT-12: Conference Overview*. Retrieved January 12, 2013, from: <http://www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/overview.aspx>.

The World Conference on International Telecommunications served as a platform for discussing how to bring International Telecommunications Regulations into the 21st Century. This Web site gives a summary of the conference and its goals. This is a good resource for delegates to start with in order to learn more about the conference and how it relates to the topic.

Kelion, L. (2012, December 2). *UN internet regulation treaty talks begin in Dubai*. BBC. Retrieved January 6, 2013, from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20575844>.

The BBC article is one of many to recently come out outlining the discussions that have taken place at the World Conference on International Telecommunication. It provides a brief description of the goals of the conference and details the debates and controversies that have arisen. There has been controversy around several items at the conference, including government regulation of the internet and paying to stream. Articles, such as this, provide delegates with not only a broad knowledge of the debates and controversies, but also regional leader's opinions and goals for the conference.

United Nations General Assembly. (2012, December 18). *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 59th Meeting (GA/11330)*. Retrieved January 13, 2013, from: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2012/ga11330.doc.htm>.

This report outlines the actions taken at the 59th meeting of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. It describes the topics up for discussion in the committee and the resolutions that passed. The report expounds on the resolutions passed that refer to the question on information, including A/67/426. This source is relevant to delegates because it gives a summary of the resolutions and their importance in the field of information governance.

United Nations General Assembly. (2012, December 21). *Sixty-seventh General Assembly Plenary 61st Meeting (GA/11332)*. Retrieved January 13, 2013, from: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2012/ga11332.doc.htm>.

This report further emphasizes additional resolutions pertaining to information and communications technology adopted at the 67th session of the General Assembly. It expounds on different issues related with the topic, including the digital divide and gender roles. This resource will provide delegates with a better understanding of the items related to this topic.

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