

NWMMUN 2010



The Premier Model United Nations Conference in the Northwest

Background Guide:
General Assembly Plenary



Northwest Model United Nations | November 12-14 | Hotel Deca Seattle



August 1, 2010

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2010 Northwest Model United Nations (NWMUN) Conference and the General Assembly Plenary (GA Plenary). We are immensely pleased to present to you the background guide, written by your committee staff, comprised of Director Galen Stocking, Assistant Director Jane Kim and Chair Dominika Ziemczonek. We are very excited to work with you in November and appreciate the hard work and research you are undertaking in preparation for what we are confident will be a great conference!

The topics for this year's General Assembly Plenary are:

I. 10 Years On: Reviewing Progress Made In Reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
II. Economic Measures as a Means of Political and Economic Coercion

Additionally, in a simulation unique to NWMUN, the General Assembly Plenary will conduct Security Council Elections during the final committee session. We have included an overview of this process at the end of the background guide for your reference.

Every participating delegation is required to submit a position paper prior to attending the conference. NWMUN will accept position papers by **Sunday, November 7th at 11:59 pm Pacific time. Please submit all position papers to: positionpapers@nwmun.org**. Please refer to the sample position paper on the NWMUN website for paper requirements and restrictions. Delegates' adherence to these guidelines is crucial, because it not only ensures a well-prepared committee, but is also a key component of the awards process.

We wish each of you the best as you prepare for this conference and committee. We urge you to move beyond the background guide as you learn more about both the Member State you will represent and the topics we will be discussing. Please do not hesitate to direct any questions or concerns toward your Director or the Director-General. We look forward to meeting you at the conference!

Sincerely,

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Committee History of the General Assembly Plenary

The United Nations General Assembly (GA) was established at the creation of the United Nations (UN) as one of the UN's primary organs, and is defined under Article 7 of the *United Nations Charter*.¹ The Assembly is a forum for discussion and policy-making between all 192 Member States.² Decisions are made when the majority of members consent, with most of their resolutions passing by acclamation rather than through a formal vote.³ The General Assembly has six main committees, each having an identical membership to the plenary body; each acts as a forum for discussion of a topical area.⁴ Together, their scope is nearly infinite, covering any and all international issues that fall under the UN Charter; however, the General Assembly's resolutions are not binding for any state and only bear as much weight as the support behind it.⁵

Unlike the Security Council, whose membership is determined according to elections and permanent appointment, the General Assembly is composed of all UN Member States and observers.⁶ Each Member State has exactly one vote, and most questions require a simple majority vote, although there are a few issues, such as Security Council elections and recommendations on international peace and security, that require a two-thirds majority.⁷ Because all UN Member States are also General Assembly members, the size of the Assembly has grown with that of the United Nations, from 51 at the time the United Nations was created to 192 when Montenegro joined the United Nations in 2006.⁸ Although the General Assembly meets regularly throughout the year, each September the Assembly begins a new year of debate by convening a session featuring heads of state and other high-level officials during a series of meetings termed "General Debate."

The *United Nations Charter* grants a number of powers and responsibilities to the General Assembly. These include developing recommendations to promote international peace and security, and referring any related issues to the Security Council; initiating studies on the best means of encouraging international cooperation and the promotion of human rights and freedoms; budget approval; annual report and subsidiary organ report consideration; and election or appointment of non-permanent members of the Security Council, subsidiary organs, and the Secretary-General.⁹ Due to the wide range of these tasks, the Assembly has created a number of subsidiary organs that deal exclusively with a specific area of discussion, including the six Main Committees. The First Committee deals exclusively with disarmament and other international security issues; the Second Committee covers financial and economic questions; the Third Committee is concerned with social and humanitarian issues; the Fourth Committee with decolonization and other political issues; the Fifth Committee with the UN budget and

¹ United Nations, *United Nations Charter*, 1945, Art. 7, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

² United Nations, General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>.

³ Ziring, et al, *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics*. 3rd Edition. Singapore: Thomson Learning. 2000, p. 38.

⁴ United Nations, General Assembly, *Main Committees*, <http://www.un.org/ga/maincommittees.shtml>.

⁴ Lawrence Ziring, et al. *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics*. 3rd Edition. Singapore: Thomson Learning. 2000, pp. 38-45.

⁶ United Nations, *United Nations Charter*, 1945, Art. 9 & 23, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

⁷ *Ibid*, Art. 18.

⁸ United Nations, *Growth in United Nations membership, 1945-present*, <http://www.un.org/en/members/growth.shtml>.

⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>; United Nations, *United Nations Charter*, 1945, Arts. 9-22, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

other administrative issues; the Sixth Committee deals with questions of international law.¹⁰ Each of these committees submits its work to the General Assembly Plenary for approval.¹¹

The General Assembly has also created several more focused committees and commissions. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, established by Resolution 34/180 and expanded by Resolution 51/68, deals with any issues relating to gender discrimination, as defined by the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.¹² Similarly, the Assembly also created the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to deal with discrimination issues relating to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child to oversee implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹³ Although much of the work of these committees is conducted between the committee and Member States and therefore resides outside of the day-to-day operations of the General Assembly, these committees regularly submit reports on their activity and recommendations for the future to the General Assembly. Over the past six decades, the General Assembly has created more than 50 such committees, commissions, and working groups.¹⁴

Work of the General Assembly

As the primary decision-making forum of the United Nations, the General Assembly has been involved in several significant developments in international law and human rights. The first such development came in 1948, when the Assembly approved the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*, which serves as the foundational document in establishing and promoting human rights worldwide.¹⁵ The Assembly has built upon the UDHR significantly in the years since, particularly through the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as subsequent treaties and conventions like the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).¹⁶

Recognizing that several Member States were lagging in numerous development indicators, the Assembly in 2000 adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration.¹⁷ This Declaration reaffirmed the core values of the United Nations to include the “collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity” for all humanity.¹⁸ These fundamental principles include freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility.¹⁹ The Millennium Declaration led directly to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight poverty eradication and development goals and indicators that world leaders pledged to meet by 2015.²⁰ These goals are: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a Global Partnership for Development.²¹ According to the

¹⁰ United Nations, General Assembly, *Main Committees*, <http://www.un.org/ga/maincommittees.shtml>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United Nations, General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979, <http://www.un-documents.net/a34r180.htm>.

¹³ United Nations, General Assembly, *Main Committees*, <http://www.un.org/ga/maincommittees.shtml>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ United Nations. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

¹⁶ Fasulo, Linda. *An Insider's Guide to the UN*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 2009, p. 16-17.

¹⁷ United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

¹⁸ Ibid, Art. 1.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations, *Millennium Development Goals: Background*, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

²¹ United Nations Development Programme, *What are the Millennium Development Goals?*, <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which oversees much of the effort, many of the goals are within reach, but sub-Saharan Africa still lags behind the rest of the world.²² The first five-year review of these Goals was conducted at the 2005 World Summit, and the second will be held from 20-22 September 2010.²³

The General Assembly has addressed other crucial issues in recent sessions. At the 2005 World Summit, the Assembly considered *In Larger Freedom*, the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on UN Reform.²⁴ This was followed in 2006 by *Investing in the United Nations*, which enumerated a number of management reforms.²⁵ The Security Council remained prominent on the Assembly's agenda through 2009's 64th Session.²⁶ At that session, the General Assembly also renewed engagement on issues including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, peace and security, and international cooperation.²⁷ Most recently, the Assembly unanimously created a single body, known as UN Women, to oversee and coordinate the implementation of practices relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.²⁸

Current Session

The 65th session of the General Assembly will open on September 14, 2010 with Ambassador Joseph Deiss of Switzerland in the role of President.²⁹ Mr. Deiss was elected on 11th June 2010 in conjunction with the 21 Vice Presidents of the GA, to form the Bureau of the General Assembly.³⁰ The preliminary agenda includes topics such as Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, a Review of the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, a Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, and Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), as well as a wide range of discussion topics relating to the advancement of women, the promotion of human rights and international peace, humanitarian assistance, justice and international law, disarmament, and drug control and terrorism.³¹

Membership

All members of the United Nations are represented in the General Assembly. Therefore, there are 192 Member States of the General Assembly Plenary. Additionally, two delegations are recognized as permanent observers, with non-voting membership in the General Assembly: the Holy See and Palestine.³²

²² United Nations Development Programme, *How can we track MDG progress?*, <http://www.undp.org/mdg/progress.shtml>.

²³ United Nations, General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*, <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>.

²⁴ United Nations, *UN Reform Highlights Since 1997-2006*, <http://www.un.org/reform/highlights.shtml>.

²⁵ United Nations, General Assembly, *Investing in the United Nations: Secretary-General's Report (A/60/692)*, 2006, <http://www.un.org/reform/investinginun/investing-in-un.shtml>.

²⁶ China Daily, *General Assembly opens 64th session*, 2009, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2009-09/16/content_8693713.htm.

²⁷ United Nations News Centre, *Assembly president heralds 'new era of engagement' as debate wraps up*, 2009, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32356>.

²⁸ Reuters, *U.N. creates new body on women, gender equality*, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6614E220100702>.

²⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, *65th Session*, <http://www.un.org/ga/65/index.shtml>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ United Nations, General Assembly, *Preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly (A/56/50)*, 2010, pp. 2-16, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/50.

³² United Nations. *Permanent Observers*. <http://www.un.org/en/members/nonmembers.shtml>.

I. 10 Years On: Reviewing Progress Made in Reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established within the Millennium Declaration which was adopted during the 55th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) in 2000.³³ The MDGs call for the accomplishment of eight key objectives that center around different facets of development from poverty reduction and universal education to improved health care.³⁴ The deadline for achieving the MDGs has been set for 2015, and with only five years left, it is important that the international community evaluate the progress that has been made thus far and draw up a comprehensive plan to achieve all eight goals within the remaining time. Though progress has been made in all eight areas, the current rate at which the international community is working to address these issues will not facilitate the achievement of these goals by the 2015 deadline.³⁵

The Millennium Development Goals emerged as a direct response to widespread poverty and underdevelopment, especially in areas that are crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty in the developing world including primary education, gender equality and healthcare. The stated purpose behind the Millennium Declaration was to ensure that globalization be utilized as a positive and widely beneficial force driven by collective action and a sense of global citizenship.³⁶ The eight goals are based upon values that are seen as “essential to international relations in the twenty-first century,” such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility.³⁷

Though there has been marked progress made in all eight areas, it has not been distributed equally across the goals, nor across regions and countries. This discrepancy is demonstrated by examining the issues of poverty alleviation. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty worldwide has decreased substantially worldwide, though no place more dramatically than in East and Southern Asia, and this success sets a strong basis on which to work towards other MDGs.³⁸ Though this is a crucial goal that directly influences all other MDGs, the success of poverty alleviation in Asia has not been shared by regions such as sub-Saharan Africa.³⁹ The regionally-concentrated success of poverty reduction may account for the unequal success in other MDGs. Goal six, on HIV/AIDS and malaria reduction, has not seen the same attention and success as other MDGs, either in South East Asia or in Sub-Saharan Africa where these two health concerns are especially critical.⁴⁰

Since the Millennium Development Goals were first introduced in 2000, there have been a number of reports and high-level summits meant to evaluate progress and develop new strategies to make the goals achievable by the 2015 deadline. At the September 2008 meeting, there was celebration of success stories

³³ United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

³⁴ United Nations, *Millennium Development Goal Indicators: Official UN Site for MDG Indicators*, <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/>.

³⁵ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, 2008, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf>.

³⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*, 2009, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Report_2009_ENG.pdf.

³⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *MDGs in Asia Pacific*, <http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/node/12>.

⁴⁰ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *Goal 6 – Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*, 2005, <http://www.uneca.org/mdgs/goal6.asp>.

as well as requests for more resources and support to aid developing countries in meeting these goals.⁴¹ Success in many of these areas lent confidence to the international community that the goals were within reach, but disasters, wars and a global economic downturn have stalled more recent progress on many of these fronts.⁴² The 2009 report on the MDGs recognizes the halt in progress and calls on the international community for earnest and generous support of these goals in order to reach the MDGs by the 2015 deadline.⁴³

International Framework

The central document guiding all progress behind the MDGs is the Millennium Declaration, though many prior resolutions and treaties have outlined the goals set out in the declaration.⁴⁴ The MDGs strive to secure the rights and liberties of all people, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁴⁵ Specifically, Article 25 of the Declaration affirms the right of every person to achieve a standard of living that supports their wellness and the wellness of their family, including adequate food, shelter and medical care.⁴⁶ This article also draws attention to the special health care needs of mothers and children, and their right to access this care. Article 25 of the Declaration on human rights lays out inalienable rights that form the basis of half of the eight MDGs.⁴⁷ Article 26 of the Declaration draws attention to another Millennium Development Goal: the right to free primary education.⁴⁸ Education is enshrined in UDHR and the MDGs because of its widespread impacts on poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and improved health for those educated as well as for their families.⁴⁹

The MDGs are also supported by the Declaration on the Right of Development (DRD), which stipulates that all human beings are responsible for ensuring development. This reaffirms the collective responsibility for achieving the MDGs.⁵⁰ The DRD addresses many of the same tenets found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically regarding the necessity of access to education, health care, food and shelter.⁵¹ The DRD also draws attention to the importance of addressing all facets of development concurrently, to achieve comprehensive development and encourage the use of these successes as catalysts for achieving other development goals.⁵²

Resolution 55/162, “Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit,” reaffirms the GA’s commitment to the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and calls for a change in the status quo through concrete, demonstrable action that facilitates the attainment of these goals.⁵³ This resolution explicitly calls upon various committees and state actors for funding, collaboration and active

⁴¹ United Nations, *High-level Event at UN Headquarters in New York on 25 September 2008*, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/>.

⁴² United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*, 2009, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Report_2009_ENG.pdf.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

⁴⁵ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ United Nations, *United Nations Millennium Development Goals*, n.d, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>.

⁴⁸ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

⁴⁹ Bruns, Barbara, et al, *Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015: A Chance of Every Child.*, 2003, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1089739404514/achieving_efa_full.pdf.

⁵⁰ General Assembly, United Nations, *General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Development (A/RES/41/128)*, 1986, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm>.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Art. 8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Art. 9.

⁵³ General Assembly, United Nations, *General Assembly Resolution on the Follow-up to the Outcome of the Millennium Summit (A/RES/55/162)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/RES/55/162>.

engagement, embodying the action and attention necessary to successfully attain the MDGs.⁵⁴ The Charter of the United Nations stipulates that the UN is responsible for “[maintaining] international peace and security” and promoting the “respect for the principle of equal rights.”⁵⁵ It is with these goals in mind that the member States of the United Nations must continue engaging and collaborating with the international community to work towards the achievement of the MDGs.

Gender Equality

The Millennium Development Goals are heavily intertwined; success in achieving each goal is contingent on success in achieving each of the other goals. One of the most wide-reaching goals is Goal Three, on gender equality and women’s empowerment, as the current lack of gender equality is partially responsible for shortfalls in achieving the other MDGs. Women make up an overwhelming amount of unpaid laborers and workers in the informal sector, which makes them more vulnerable to market fluctuations without social protection.⁵⁶ Similarly, women are less likely to achieve formal education than men in many parts of the world, which perpetuates the cycle of unequal opportunities and poverty for women.⁵⁷ The achievement of environmental sustainability is another MDG that may contribute to greater gender equality, as women are often forced to forgo education and employment opportunities to transport drinking water when it is not readily available.⁵⁸ In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the international community must recognize the vital importance gender equality plays in attaining all eight of the MDGs and allocate the necessary resources to use gender equality as a catalyst for meeting the goals.

UN System Involvement

The Millennium Declaration recognizes the crucial impact the strengths and weakness of the UN system have on the successful achievement of the MDGs. As part of this recognition, the Millennium Declaration calls for adjustment of the UN system to increase the efficiency with which the MDGs are addressed and achieved.⁵⁹ The General Assembly, which adopted the Millennium Declaration, must be re-established as the central UN organ for deliberation and multilateral action to incorporate the voices and support of all UN members in decision-making.⁶⁰ The Economic and Social Council is intended to aid the General Assembly in implementing the MDGs by fulfilling its Charter-defined role in supporting universal human rights and freedoms.⁶¹ Security Council reform should also be pursued in support of the MDGs, to ensure that development is recognized as a critical component in ensuring global human security.⁶² Though these structural reforms have not yet been realized, it is crucial that the UN continues to endeavor towards these adjustments to ensure a comprehensive, unified, and system-wide approach to reaching the MDGs.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is an agency within the UN that is wholly focused around economic and social development. Of the eight MDGs, UNDP pays special attention to poverty

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 1, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

⁵⁶ United Nations Development Fund for Women, *MDGs & Gender – Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger*, 2009, <http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/mdgsGender.html>.

⁵⁷ United Nations Development Fund for Women, *The Unfinished Agenda: Balance Sheet of Progress and Backlogs on Gender Equality*, http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MDGsAndGenderEquality_2_UnfinishedAgenda.pdf.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

⁶² United Nations, General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

reduction, environmental sustainability, and the treatment and reduction of HIV/AIDS.⁶³ UNDP publishes an annual Human Development Report, which is often used in measurements and reports of MDG progress and general trends in development.⁶⁴ UNDP recognizes the international and local dimensions of each goal and takes a multi-pronged approach; the UNDP works with other UN bodies as well as local organizations and NGOs to address local challenges, while maintaining its commitment to the overall MDG development strategy.⁶⁵ In addition to this work, the UNDP engages in capacity-building to help countries successfully analyze and evaluate their progress and amend programs accordingly.⁶⁶

The World Health Organization (WHO) is heavily involved in developments and programs concerning health-related MDGs, specifically on improving child and maternal health, and combating malaria and HIV/AIDS. The WHO has pre-qualified hundreds of new medicines to address malaria, tuberculosis, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, and there has been a 35% increase in available testing and counseling services for those with HIV/AIDS since 2000.⁶⁷ The WHO measures this progress through annual reports and fact sheets that take into account regional differences, past progress and the 2015 MDG deadline.⁶⁸ The WHO also advocates for revolutionizing aspects of the current health care framework, as is evidenced by the WHO's push for more generic drugs, which would increase access to essential medicines in developing countries.⁶⁹

Success in poverty reduction in Asia

In examining recent progress in attaining the MDGs, current trends of poverty reduction in Asia support the assertion that Asia is on track to achieving the goal of halving extreme poverty by the 2015 deadline.⁷⁰ By 2004, extreme poverty had been reduced by nearly half compared to 1990 levels.⁷¹ Though this data suggests that Asia will be on target on its poverty reduction goals by 2015, the decrease does not account for wide regional disparities. A substantial part of this decrease in poverty may be attributed to the rapid poverty reduction and increase in average incomes experienced in China.⁷² China has reduced extreme poverty from 33% to 10%, surpassing its MDG commitment far ahead of the 2015 deadline.⁷³ Though very significant due to its large population, China's large decrease in poverty rates skews percentages and effectively hides the lack of success in poverty reduction by other Asian countries, including many in Central Asia.⁷⁴

Despite the successes in some Asian countries, it is crucial to adapt poverty alleviation strategies to achieve more equal growth between countries. The recent financial crisis is of special concern, as it risks

⁶³ United Nations Development Programme, *About UNDP: A world of development experience*, <http://www.undp.org/about/>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ United Nations Development Programme, *What are the Millennium Development Goals?*, <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtm>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ World Health Organization, *20 Ways the World Health Organization Helps Countries Reach the Millennium Development Goals*, 2010, http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/20ways_mdgs_20100517_en.pdf.

⁶⁸ World Health Organization, *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*, http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/en/.

⁶⁹ World Health Organization, *20 Ways the World Health Organization Helps Countries Reach the Millennium Development Goals*, 2010, http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/20ways_mdgs_20100517_en.pdf.

⁷⁰ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *MDGs in Asia Pacific*, <http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/node/12>.

⁷¹ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *A Future Within Reach 2008: Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*, 2008, <http://www.unescap.org/publications/detail.asp?id=1283>.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

destabilizing or even undoing recent progress in poverty alleviation across Asia.⁷⁵ In addition to national stimulus packages, governments must continue multilateral financial cooperation and invest more resources in alleviating poverty.⁷⁶ In support of this initiative, it is crucial that Asian countries take a multi-pronged approach to financial stability and implement grassroots economic initiatives that account for local issues, with special support for traditionally marginalized groups.⁷⁷ The crisis has also highlighted the need for greater social security measures, to protect vulnerable individuals in the event of another financial emergency.⁷⁸

Challenges in Combating HIV/AIDS and Malaria

In sub-Saharan Africa, education and HIV/AIDS prevention programs have helped decrease the amount of people who have contracted HIV annually.⁷⁹ Despite this success, the overall number of those currently living with HIV/AIDS increased over the same period, and further reductions are difficult to predict.⁸⁰ Similarly, there has been an increase in available anti-retroviral drugs, but the increasing number of those living with HIV/AIDS leaves the current increase in drug availability inadequate to meet the increase in demand.⁸¹ The shortfall in HIV/AIDS drug treatments must be addressed locally, through cooperation between national governments and pharmaceutical companies to increase the availability of these drugs in the public sector.⁸²

One of the barriers to combating the incidence of malaria is the lack of infrastructure necessary to carry out comprehensive prevention and treatment programs. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa do not have the infrastructure to efficiently run malaria prevention campaigns, withholding progress on decreasing malaria infection rates.⁸³ Specifically, poorly-ventilated buildings and lack of proper drainage and sanitation decrease the effectiveness of current prevention methods and continue to facilitate mosquito reproduction and prevalence.⁸⁴ As malaria is especially dangerous in young children and pregnant women, it is essential that increased resources be devoted to preventing malaria infection in these and other vulnerable groups, and improving access and distribution of malarial treatments.⁸⁵

One of the central challenges in achieving MDG six is in addressing multiple health concerns together, specifically HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. In a person who is HIV-positive, malaria may accelerate the progression towards AIDS and HIV/AIDS has a similarly negative impact on the malaria virus.⁸⁶ In light of this connection, organizations and government bodies focused on health issues must coordinate their efforts and streamline both testing and treatment to include multiple diseases simultaneously.

⁷⁵ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an Era of Global Uncertainty: Asia-Pacific Regional Report 2009/10*, 2010, <http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/regional-report-2009-10>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ United Nations Development Programme, *Asia and the Pacific: Poverty Reduction*, <http://www.undp.org/asia/poverty.html>.

⁷⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in an Era of Global Uncertainty: Asia-Pacific Regional Report 2009/10*, 2010, <http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/regional-report-2009-10>.

⁷⁹ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, 2008, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf>.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *MDGs in Africa: Goal 6 – Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease*, <http://www.uneca.org/mdgs/goal6.asp>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ World Health Organization, *MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases*, http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/diseases/en/index.html.

⁸⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, *Health: Malaria*, http://www.unicef.org/health/index_malaria.html.

Challenges in Achieving Universal Primary Education

Access to primary education for children has improved worldwide since 1990, but many developing countries will not achieve primary education for all children by the 2015 target date.⁸⁷ Even in countries that have abolished school fees for primary school, many children from lower-income households are held back from school; many are young girls.⁸⁸ Enrollment rates are even lower for the rural poor.⁸⁹ Increasing education-directed aid to the recommended 11 billion USD per year would increase both the quality and accessibility of primary education worldwide.⁹⁰

Though enrollment rates are the central indicator for this MDG, the quality of education must be assessed and improved upon as well. Universal primary education is anticipated to lead to higher secondary school enrollment worldwide, but many children are still in primary school well into their teenage years and cannot afford to pursue secondary education at an older age.⁹¹ The quality of primary education is also heavily contingent on the skill of teachers, but recent data shows that a shortage of qualified teachers may prove an insurmountable obstacle to full primary school enrollment.⁹² In order to facilitate universal primary school enrollment, more resources need to be invested in teachers' salaries and education, as well as classroom resources.

Civil and transnational conflicts are also threatening both the quality and availability of primary education. The majority of refugee and internally displaced children are not receiving primary education, and ongoing conflicts may rob multiple generations of formal education. As female children are less likely than their male counterparts to attend school in times of conflict or emergency, it is essential that specific resources be dedicated to closing this educational gender gap.⁹³ Providing a high-quality primary education to children in conflict zones will require greater coordination and dialogue between UN bodies.

Conclusion

With only five years left until the MDG deadline established by the Millennium Declaration, it is essential that the General Assembly, in cooperation with other UN organs, evaluates the progress made over the last ten years to facilitate further progress towards these goals. The recent global financial crisis has stalled progress and many states have shifted their attention and resources to national issues.⁹⁴ Member States must reaffirm their commitment to achieving the MDGs and support international cooperation with renewed vigor. Current trends show that poverty reduction goals overall may be met, but those countries that have fallen behind in this area must be given special support to avoid the creation of greater economic inequality.⁹⁵ The empowerment of women must be pursued with intensity and renewed commitment by member states and UN bodies if gender equality is to act as a catalyst for the success in

⁸⁷ United Nations, *Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education*, 2008, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/newsroom/Goal%20%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, 2008, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf>.

⁹² International Labour Organization, *Decent Work and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education*, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/pardev/download/mdg/mdg2.pdf>.

⁹³ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, 2008, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf>.

⁹⁴ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, 2010, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20.pdf>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

other MDGs. As stated in General Assembly Resolution 55/162 on the Millennium Summit, if they are to be realized, the international community must move beyond rhetoric and act on their prior commitments for the betterment and security of humanity.⁹⁶

Questions to Consider

- Improved data and monitoring tools are crucial for devising appropriate policies and interventions needed to achieve the MDGs. How can monitoring and data collection be strengthened in order to provide an accurate picture of progress and guide future efforts?
- How can a gender lens be better used across all MDGs through the development of specific strategies for tackling challenges faced by girls and women? How can priorities within each MDG be refocused to reflect gender equality and women's empowerment?
- How can implementation of the MDGs be accelerated, and what strategies are currently in place to scale-up successful programs?
- Currently there is no accountability framework between developed and developing countries, or between Governments and their citizens, to ensure the MDG commitments are met. What system can be developed that will consolidate global commitments, develop timelines, will be results-oriented, and hold countries accountable?
- How can the UN system better improve its coherence and effectiveness in order to support the MDGs? Particularly in the area of fostering partnerships, whether public or private, and supporting capacity-building initiatives?

⁹⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/665), 2010, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/64/665.

II. Economic Measures as a Means of Economic and Political Coercion

Introduction

Using economic measures in order to shape the behavior of States has consistently been an important tool for the United Nations (UN), continuing to remain a topic on the General Assembly agenda for more than forty years since the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 25/2625 (1970), the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This Declaration states that “Member States have the duty to refrain from “military, political, economic or any other form of coercion aimed against the political independence or territorial integrity of any State.”⁹⁷ While this resolution does not outlaw multilateral economic measures by the UN, it attempts to protect the State’s sovereign right to make economic, political, commercial and social decisions within their territory. In essence, the resolution explicitly discourages Member States from taking unilateral action for the purpose of coercing another Member State. For example, the removal of humanitarian aid is an economic measure comprising economic and political coercion, and can often have devastating effects on developing countries and their resources.⁹⁸ Economic measures such as the removal of humanitarian aid, embargoes, freezing of assets and trade restrictions are strongly discouraged by the United Nations through several General Assembly resolutions, including 40/185 (1985) and 46/210 (1991).⁹⁹

International Legal Framework

Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council can enact measures, such as sanctions, to maintain or restore international peace and security. However, it is the duty of the General Assembly to open and discuss subjects of concern, and present them to the Security Council.

Chapter IV in the UN Charter elaborates on the functions and powers of the General Assembly.¹⁰⁰ Although only the Security Council has the power to implement sanctions, Article 11 states that the General Assembly is authorized to discuss any questions related to international peace, and recommend actions on those questions to the Security Council. The General Assembly is also allowed to “initiate studies and make recommendations” for the purpose of “promoting political cooperation in the international community” and “encouraging progressive development of international law and codification.”¹⁰¹ Once the Security Council begins discussing the topic, recommendations can only be made when the Security Council requests them from the General Assembly.¹⁰² As a result, the studies and recommendations of the General Assembly can affect multilateral action mandated by the United Nations, while General Assembly resolutions are capable only of reprimanding and discouraging unilateral economic coercion.

Historical Background on the Use of Sanctions

⁹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (A/RES/2625)*, 1970, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3dda1f104.html>.

⁹⁸ Bruderlein, *Coping with the Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions: An OCHA Perspective*, 1998, http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/sanctions.html.

⁹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly, *Economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (A/RES/46/210)*, 1991, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r210.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. IV, Art. 11, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Art. 13.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Art. 12.

Although sanctions have a long history, international sanctions of a multilateral scope did not become common until the 1990s, when they seemed to present the organization with an efficient way of pressuring specific States that threatened international peace and security. Between 1945 and 1990 sanctions were only put into effect twice: a trade embargo on South Rhodesia's all-white minority government in 1966, and an arms embargo against South Africa's apartheid regime in 1977.¹⁰³ The 1990s, however, saw the use of sanctions sixteen times, earning it the nickname "the sanctions decade."¹⁰⁴ These sanctions were placed on Iraq, Yugoslavia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liberia, Haiti, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Rwanda, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.¹⁰⁵ Most of these sanctions were arms embargoes, aimed to prevent specific regimes from gaining access to an unlimited number of arms. However, some of these target groups were able to use natural resources, such as their diamonds and oil, in order to illicitly win contracts and gain access to weapons despite the embargo; this was most notably the situation of UNITA in Angola.¹⁰⁶

Initially, the economic sanction was viewed simply as a non-invasive mechanism where the party was prevented from interacting with other Member States in certain ways, as exemplified by the sanctions placed on Iraq in 1990 when it invaded Kuwait.¹⁰⁷ All foreign financial activities were barred, which was when the UN realized that those hit hardest by the sanctions were often civilians who were denied access to food, medicine, and jobs. The economic sanctions, air embargo, and arms embargo affected every sector of the Iraqi economy. Seeing the toll of the sanctions on the Iraqi people, the Security Council created the Oil-for-Food program in 1995, and it became implemented in 1997.¹⁰⁸ At first, the Oil-for-Food program allowed the Iraqi government to sell 2 billion USD worth of oil every six months, with two-thirds of that amount to be used to meet Iraq's humanitarian needs.¹⁰⁹ In 1998, the limit on the level of Iraqi oil exports under the program was raised to 5.26 billion USD every six months, again with two-thirds of the oil proceeds earmarked to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. In December 1999, the Security Council removed the ceiling on Iraqi oil exports altogether.¹¹⁰ When the Oil-for-Food program ended in 2003, some 28 billion USD worth of humanitarian supplies and equipment had been delivered to Iraq under the program, including 1.6 billion USD worth of oil industry spare parts and equipment, and an addition 10 billion USD worth of supplies were in the production and delivery pipeline.¹¹¹ While the United Nations fulfilled the goal of avoiding a humanitarian disaster, the question of whether it was appropriate to use food as a political tool became a controversial issue, especially because the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had in 1999 strongly discouraged the use of essential goods as a tool for political coercion.¹¹²

This realization paved the way to what are now known as "smart sanctions," which are focused on targeting the political elite and are designed to avoid devastating to the State's economy.¹¹³ Smart sanctions in effect "target and penalize" the political elite that direct the State's decisions via arms embargoes, financial sanctions, restrictions on luxury goods, and travel restrictions.¹¹⁴ The United

¹⁰³ Tostensen, et al, *Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?*, World Politics, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 380.

¹⁰⁴ Tostensen, et al, *Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?*, World Politics, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 374.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, Department of Political Affairs, *The Experience of the United Nations in Administering Arms Embargoes and Travel Sanctions*, 1999, www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/sanctions/background.doc.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Global Policy Forum, *Sanctions against Iraq*, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/iraq/previous-issues-and-debate-on-iraq/sanctions-against-iraq.html>.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations, Office of the Iraq Programme Oil-for-Food, *Home page*, <http://www.un.org/Depts/oip/>.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² United Nations, Commission on Human Rights, *Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (E/CN.4/RES/2003/1)*, 2003, [http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.RES.2003.17.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.RES.2003.17.En?Opendocument).

¹¹³ United Nations, Department of Political Affairs, *The Experience of the United Nations in Administering Arms Embargoes and Travel Sanctions*, 1999, www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/sanctions/background.doc.

¹¹⁴ Tostensen, et al, *Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?*, World Politics, Vol. 54, No. 3, 2002, p. 373.

Nations Sanctions Secretariat's conclusion at an Expert Seminar in 1999 detailed that it was more difficult for Member States to question the legitimacy of targeted sanctions, allowing sanctions the support from Member States and regional organizations needed to implement them fully.¹¹⁵ When implemented with a comprehensive diplomatic strategy, the Secretariat believes that smart sanctions have appropriate and coercive pressure, "to isolate and help contain ruling elites, whilst denying them any prospect of manipulating the civilian population into blaming the hardships they may encounter on the sanctions imposed by the Security Council."¹¹⁶

UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon has responded to critiques of sanctions that "we should welcome the evolution of sanctions that has taken place: where once they were an often blunt and unfocused instrument, today they have become a more precise tool."¹¹⁷ Indeed, UN sanctions have become more progressive throughout the years in considering unintended consequences and humanitarian impact.¹¹⁸ Currently, the countries that have been targeted for sanctions are Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan.¹¹⁹

Case Study: Republic of Cuba

In 1960, the United States proscribed a commercial, economic, and financial embargo on the Republic of Cuba after the Cuban government nationalized the properties of U.S. citizens and corporations in 1959.¹²⁰ Cuba is a provocative case study because it exemplifies the impact of unilateral coercion along with the response from the international community. Amnesty International has published a report highlighting the negative impact of the U.S. embargo on Cuba's most vulnerable socio-economic groups, citing several cases where Cuban citizens did not have access to proper medicines and health technologies because of the embargo.¹²¹

The United Nations General Assembly has condemned U.S. sanctions on Cuba, citing the past fifty years as an example of the detrimental effects of unilateral economic embargoes on the unity of international politics, and passing such a resolution once a year for the past eighteen years.¹²² On October 28, 2009, 187 countries voted for the United States to end its embargo on Cuba, after reports from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) noted that Cuba's inability to "import nutritional products for consumption at schools, hospitals, and day care centres" contributed to a high prevalence of iron deficiency anemia.¹²³ In 2007, 37.5% of Cuban children under the age of three suffered from anemia, according to data collected by the United Nations.¹²⁴ The United States, Israel, and Palau opposed the resolution, while the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands abstained from voting. Children's health was put at further risk by a decision from U.S. syringe suppliers, who canceled an order of three million disposable syringes made in 2007 by UNICEF's Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization when they discovered that the units were for the purpose of implementing a new program in Cuba.¹²⁵

¹¹⁵ United Nations, Department of Political Affairs, *The Experience of the United Nations in Administering Arms Embargoes and Travel Sanctions*, 1999, www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/sanctions/background.doc.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ United Nations Secretary-General, *Speech to the Symposium on Enhancing the Implementation of Security Council Sanctions*, 2007, http://www.angel-invest.us/apps/news/infocus/speeches/search_full.asp?statID=81.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Amnesty International, *The US Embargo Against Cuba: Its impact on economic and social rights*, 2009, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/uploads/amr250072009eng.pdf>.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

In response, U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice spoke before the General Assembly, stating that the U.S. was the largest supplier of food and the fifth largest trading partner to Cuba, and emphasized that the purpose of the embargo was to pressure the government into allowing Cuban citizens to “enjoy political, social, and economic freedoms” as well as acquiescence in permitting entrance to UN rapporteurs on human rights and torture.¹²⁶

Case Study: Islamic Republic of Iran

In 1998, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyed Mohammad Hadi Nejad Hosseinian, stated that, “Various forms of economic coercive measures and actions have been imposed against 79 foreign countries, in particular developing countries, between 1979 and 1992, and from 1993 to 1996, unilateral sanctions have been imposed no fewer than 61 times against 35 countries.” After pointing out that “statistics indicate [...] recourse to such measures and actions has been on the rise in terms of number and intensified in severity,” the ambassador condemned such actions as unlawful and “dangerous.”¹²⁷

Ever since February 2003, when the Iranian government revealed its uranium enrichment program at Natanz, Iran’s nuclear program has been a source of controversy for the international community.¹²⁸ Despite Iran reiterating its intention to use nuclear energy solely in a peaceful manner for energy creation, the lack of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) throughout the years have resulted in great concern from the Security Council.¹²⁹ In response, the Iranian government has denounced the “double standards” that “powerful countries impose on the weak,” and stated that Iran is complying with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).¹³⁰

In 2010, the UN tightened sanctions on Iran after the representatives from both the United States and the European Union declared their intentions to interpret already existing sanctions frameworks as strictly as possible.¹³¹ In June of 2010, the Security Council leveled a new series of targeted sanctions onto Iran, prohibiting military purchases as well as foreign financial transactions carried out by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which controls the nuclear program.¹³² The current Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has stated that “there is ample evidence that sanctions have enormous potential to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security when used not as an end in themselves but in support of a holistic conflict resolution approach that includes prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding,” emphasizing the importance of persuasion over punishment.

Impact of Coercive Economic Measures on Human Rights

The Declaration on the Right to Development, General Assembly Resolution 41/128 (1986), articulates the importance of international cooperation in respecting the “the right [of developing countries] to freely

¹²⁶ Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations, *Ambassador Rice’s Remarks on U.N. Resolution on Cuba*, 2009, <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091029103753eaifas0.5596735.html>.

¹²⁷ Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, *Statement by H.E. Seyed Mohammad Hadi Nejad Hosseinian Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Before the Plenary of the 53rd Session of the General Assembly under item 51 of the Agenda: “Elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion”*, 1998, <http://www.un.int/iran/statements/generalassembly/session53/3.html>

¹²⁸ Global Policy Forum, *UN Sanctions Against Iran*, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/iran.html>.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ MacFarquhar, U.N. Approves New Sanctions to Deter Iran, 2010, p.A1, <http://community.nytimes.com/comments/www.nytimes.com/2010/06/10/world/middleeast/10sanctions.html>.

¹³² *Ibid.*

determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development,” and reiterates the call for “more rapid development” in developing countries.¹³³

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that “unilateral coercive measures continue to be promulgated and implemented, with all their negative implications, for the social-humanitarian activities and economic and social development of developing countries” by individual Member States.¹³⁴ Furthermore, in resolution 1999/21, the Commission reaffirmed that essential goods, such as food and medicines, should not be used as a tool for political coercion, and in resolution 2003/17, declared that “under no circumstances should people be deprived of their own means of subsistence and development,” especially in developing States.¹³⁵ As the Oil-for-Food program and U.S. embargo on Cuba have illustrated, economic sanctions calculated to coerce political compulsion have often resulted in civilian casualties and hindered economic, political, and social development.

Conclusion

For the past four decades, the international community has, with overwhelming consensus, established that the use of economic measures to pressure nations politically or economically is not compatible with the spirit of global peace and unity.¹³⁶ Since 1970, the General Assembly has passed over thirty resolutions on this topic, each emphasizing the need for unified action in times of crisis, freedom of trade and navigation, and the regrettable nature of coercive economic measures in violating the principles of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. One notable difficulty with the international framework in taking far-reaching action against certain governments is that the Security Council, which is not representative of the General Assembly, is the only body that is authorized to legitimize collective sanctions.¹³⁷ Hence it becomes more important than ever for the General Assembly to reach consensus, and inform the Security Council that the Assembly views sanctions as either necessary or inappropriate.

Despite significant progress, three critical issues remain in the discussion of economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion. First, the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes economic coercion results in difficulty for the United Nations in identifying the difference between making natural economic decisions and engaging in unilateral and coercive behavior. Many scholars have argued for decades that diplomacy in itself is a form of political coercion, leading to the question of how the United Nations can possibly agree on a definition of economic coercion.¹³⁸ Second, what is the difference between economic coercion and a Member State’s sovereign right to conduct its trade relationships with another country as it sees fit?¹³⁹ Lastly, what happens in situations like the 1986 U.S. sanction against South Africa, where such unilateral sanctions are representative of the values that the UN endorses? The sanctions were designed to coerce the government of South Africa to establish a timetable for the end of apartheid policy and racial segregation, while “[respecting] the principle of equal justice under law for citizens of all races.”¹⁴⁰ Although the sanctions were not endorsed by the Security Council,

¹³³ United Nations, General Assembly, *Declaration on the Rights to Development (A/RES/41/128)*, 1986, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm>.

¹³⁴ United Nations, Commission on Human Rights, *Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (E/CN.4/RES/2003/1)*, 2003, [http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.RES.2003.17.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.RES.2003.17.En?OpenDocument).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, *Economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (A/RES/46/210)*, 1991, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r210.htm>.

¹³⁷ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. IV, Art. 12, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

¹³⁸ Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, *Homepage*, <http://www.aalco.int/node>.

¹³⁹ Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations, *Ambassador Rice’s Remarks on U.N. Resolution on Cuba*, 2009, <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091029103753eaifas0.5596735.html>.

¹⁴⁰ United States of America, *Sanctions Against South Africa*, <http://usinfo.org/docs/democracy/56.htm>.

they upheld the values of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, specifically that all people are “born free and equal in dignity and rights,” without distinctions based on race.¹⁴¹

Questions to Consider

- Do unilateral sanctions victimize the population of the affected at large, and can they ever be effective in creating positive change?
- Can economic measures taken by more developed countries victimize and remove the responsibility from governments of targeted states for their actions which led to the sanctions?
- Do sanctions, whether they are unilateral or multilateral, strengthen targeted groups by creating lucrative illicit markets in times of conflict? Or do they have the power to shape the behavior of such targeted groups in a positive manner? If so, how can the international community mitigate the negative effects of sanctions on the populations of targeted countries?

¹⁴¹ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1946, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

III. Security Council Elections

Please note – this is not a topic that will be considered during the session, but rather an overview of the process that will occur at the end of the conference within the General Assembly Plenary.

Introduction

In contrast to the General Assembly, in which all Member States hold equal voting rights and membership, the Security Council is a much smaller institution consisting of five permanent members and ten rotating seats allocated by geography and elected by direct vote of the General Assembly.¹⁴² In the 2010 NWMUN General Assembly Plenary, delegates will participate in a Security Council election.

Election Rules and Process

The Security Council was established with the United States, United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.), France and the Republic of China serving as permanent members.¹⁴³ Each has retained their membership, with the Russian Federation succeeding the U.S.S.R. upon the latter's dissolution and the People's Republic of China, with GA/RES/2758 of 1971, being recognized as "China" rather than the Republic of China, which had been confined to control over Taiwan.¹⁴⁴ Permanent members, known as the P5, each have veto rights over any resolutions placed before the body.¹⁴⁵

Non-permanent member positions are allocated by geography, with United Nations regional blocs used as the nominating unit. GA/RES/1991 determined that five member states are to come from Africa and Asia, one from Eastern Europe, two from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two from Western Europe and Other States.¹⁴⁶ Since that time, Africa and Asia's seats have been distributed such that Africa holds three seats and Asia two.¹⁴⁷

Member States seeking election to the Security Council must submit their intent to the General Assembly for election to the Council. Members are elected from each regional group through a formal ballot cast by the General Assembly body, though often a consensus will be reached within the region before the election, allowing a single State to submit their application for membership without competition.¹⁴⁸ A two-thirds majority is required for the seat.¹⁴⁹ Contentious elections, accordingly, can require several rounds of voting to produce a clear winner, which may be an alternate, compromise candidate, such as the 1979 election of a Latin American Member, which went to 155 rounds before Mexico was elected as a compromise candidate.¹⁵⁰ Non-permanent members are elected to two-year terms; these terms are

¹⁴² United Nations, Security Council, *Membership in 2009*, <http://www.un.org/sc/members.asp>.

¹⁴³ United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. V, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

¹⁴⁴ Lewis, *End of the Soviet Union; 3 Western Powers Favor Russian Takeover of Soviet U.N. Seat*, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/12/24/world/end-soviet-union-3-western-powers-favor-russian-takeover-soviet-un-seat.html>; United Nations, General Assembly, *Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations (A/RES/2758/XXVI)*, 1971, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/26/ares26.htm>.

¹⁴⁵ *Supra*, note 2.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, *Question of Equitable Representation on the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/991/XVIII)*, 1963, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/18/ares18.htm>.

¹⁴⁷ *Supra*, note 1.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Elections, *Security Council*, <http://www.unelections.org/?q=node/33>.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Security Council Report, *Special Research Report No. 2: UN Security Council Elections 2008*, 2008, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.gKWLeMTIsG/b.4464545/k.3006/Special_Research_Report_No_2brUN_Security_Council_Elections_2008br29_August_2008.htm.

staggered so that only half the seats are elected each year.¹⁵¹ Some groupings have special agreements regarding these elections.

Africa

Africa has a detailed process for its 3 seats. Seat 1 rotates between North African States and Central African States every two years, Seat 2 is always occupied by a West African State, and Seat 3 rotates between East African and South African States every two years. As a result, if Seat 1 is held by a North African state such as Libya one term, the following term all North African States are ineligible and the seat can only be held by a Central African state.¹⁵² The African Union strives toward uncontested elections, with the intent of ensuring each State has the opportunity to serve on the Security Council.¹⁵³

Asia

There is no established process for electing Member States to the Asia seat. The only complication arises when ensuring that Arab states are accorded representation on the Council. In order to ensure a continuous Arab voice, Asia and Africa take turns sending an Arab State to the Council. Accordingly, during one term, an African seat will be occupied by a North African Arab state, and in the following term, Asia will elect a non-African Arab State.¹⁵⁴

Eastern Europe

There is no established process for electing Member States to the Eastern Europe seat.¹⁵⁵

Latin American and Caribbean

There is no established process for electing Member States to the Latin America seat. The Latin American group includes all Western Hemisphere States with the exception of the United States and Canada.¹⁵⁶

Western Europe and Other States

There is no established process for electing Member States to the Western Europe seat. The Western Europe seat includes Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and (for purposes of Security Council elections) Israel, and initially included several British Commonwealth States until they joined their regional groupings.¹⁵⁷

2009 Election (2010-2011 Term)

On October 15, 2009, the General Assembly elected five members to the Security Council: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon, and Nigeria.¹⁵⁸ No regions had more than one candidate

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ United Nations News Centre, *Next five non-permanent members of Security Council chosen*, 2009, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32562>.

nominated by their regional group to the General Assembly.¹⁵⁹ Bosnia and Herzegovina had never served on the Security Council previously, while Lebanon had not held a seat since 1954.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Reuters, *Bosnia, Lebanon to join Security Council*, 2009,

http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2009/10/16/bosnia_and_lebanon_win_un_security_council_seats/.

¹⁶⁰ *Supra*, note 17.