

# VVPMUNI2019'

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2019 Vishwa Vidyapeeth Model United Nations Conference in Bangalore (VVPMUN•19')!

We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, **SOCHUM**. This year's EB consists of

**Karan Suresh as the Secretary General**

**Shloak Gupta as the Co- President**

**Khushi Pai as the Co-President**

**Sharanya as the Vice-Chair**

**Raiyan Khan as the Chair of the Committee.**

The agenda for this session will be:

**Combating Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance.**

The General Assembly Third Committee, also referred to as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Affairs Committee, is one of the six main committees of the UN General Assembly. The General Assembly Third Committee offers a forum for all 193 Member States to discuss a wide range of topics and to enhance international collaboration. Due to the broad scope and variety of topics of the committee, the topics can often be complex and challenging, which would provide an unique and, yet, a rewarding experience for delegates. In order to accurately simulate the committee, it will be critical for delegates to understand its role and mandate of the committee, as well as its current priorities.

We hope you will find this Background Guide useful as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We highly encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in-depth, as well as relevant regional and international stakeholders' positions regarding the topics.

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## COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

### Introduction

When the United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945, six main bodies were created. These bodies are the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. The GA Third Committee is the main plenary body responsible for overseeing social, humanitarian, and human rights issues. Since its inception through the Charter of the United Nations (1945), topics such as human rights, the advancement of women's rights, and the codification of fundamental freedoms have been a priority of the GA Third Committee. The Third Committee reports to the GA Plenary, which convenes on a regular basis to discuss the draft resolutions written in the GA Main Committees. Through a number of documents, the Third Committee has acquired an increasingly more specific framework through which it can produce more specifically targeted and effective resolutions.

### Governance, Structure, and Membership

The GA Third Committee is presently chaired by Omar Hilale of Morocco, who makes up the Third Committee Bureau along with three vice-chairs and one rapporteur. The committee is governed by the Secretariat, which is made up of the Secretary and his assistants. The Third Committee's Bureau and Secretariat are elected by the GA at least three months prior to the beginning of the next session. This governing system was introduced in the fifty eighth session in order to improve the efficiency of the GA bodies and to streamline its leadership. The GA Third Committee is tasked with the oversight of subsidiary organs; the most prominent one being the Human Rights Council (HRC) which reports to the Third Committee about its current actions and programs. The GA is supported by a number of funds and programs, research and training institutes, and other entities and related organizations. Applicable organizations that can provide substantive support to the Third Committee are the UN Development Programme, the UN Population Fund, the UN Human Settlements Programme, the UN Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The GA, and by extension the Third Committee, grants universal membership to all UN Member States. Since the UN's inception, membership of the GA has grown from 51 members in 1945. The newest member of the UN, and consequently the GA, is South Sudan, which joined in 2011. Today, the membership consists of 193 Member States, each holding one vote. Aside from voting members, there are two entities that received a standing invitation from the UN to act as observer states and consequently do not hold voting rights. These two members are the Holy See and the State of Palestine.

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The UN creates biennial budgets, which means every two years a new budget is set. The current budget for the years of 2016-2017 is \$5.4 billion and includes all general UN operations. Within the budget funds are allocated to the GA as a whole; however, there is no separate budget for the Third Committee. Every Member State of the UN is expected to pay dues to the UN according to its economic capacity. In order to limit any one country's influence within the UN system, individual country contributions are capped at 22% of the total budget.

## Mandate, Functions, and Power

The Third Committee's mandate is laid out in the Charter of the United Nations as "promoting international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields, and assisting the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." The Third Committee largely focuses on issues surrounding human rights and discusses topics related to the empowerment, protection, and treatment of women, children, and refugees; indigenous issues; the right to self-determination; and topics surrounding race issues and racial discrimination. The committee also considers topics such as criminal justice and crime prevention; drug control; and treatment of specific groups such as youth, persons with disabilities, and families. The GA Third Committee is able to write resolutions that will be discussed by the GA Plenary.

There are three main documents aside from the Charter of the United Nations that led to the creation of the Third Committee's operational framework. These documents are the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015). In 2000, the GA adopted the Millennium Declaration in order to emphasize belief and support in the United Nations. This document outlines fundamental values that should shape international relations. These values are freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. These values are applicable to all UN bodies and especially for the GA committees, as sustainable development and the eradication of injustices continue to be the Third Committee's ultimate goals. The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document highlights the three pillars upon which a successful multilateral system can stand: peace and security, development, and human rights. The four areas through which the UN aims to create a more peaceful and cooperative world are development, peace and collective security, human rights, and the strengthening of the UN. Since these four areas largely overlap with the Third Committee's mandate, they help create a specific operational framework for the committee. The third document is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015. All 17 goals that are included in the SDGs apply to the Third Committee and enhance its operational framework, as most of them highlight humanitarian and social needs.

## Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

The SDGs consist of 17 goals that encompass the equitable and continuous development of populations, while ensuring the maintenance of human rights and social progress. The goals can be found in many of the topics of the Third Committee's 70th session. The topics

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on the agenda included the promotion of sustainable development and sustained economic growth, the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of human rights, drug control, combating international terrorism, and crime prevention. During this session, more than half of the sixty draft resolutions that were passed on to the GA Plenary addressed human rights promotion and regional human rights concerns. Many of these resolutions considered topics such as human rights and development in specific countries such as Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Angola. The two most recurring topics that were discussed during the Third Committee's Seventieth session were children's rights and the consequences of armed conflict. During the session the Third Committee put forward a draft resolution titled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children" underlining the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and reaffirming the UN's commitment to the protection of children and the need to implement the convention.

Aside from these topics, the Third Committee has recently considered various draft resolutions regarding social development with a specific focus on social integration, which is summarized in "Social Development: Report of the Third Committee." The elimination of discrimination against

women is a topic that has broadly been discussed in the most recent session, which is outlined in "Advancement of Women: Report of the Third Committee." Through the report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Third Committee also discussed the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees. Finally, the annual report of the HRC is presented in each Third Committee session in order to discuss the HRC's current projects and topics. The presentation of HRC's report rounds out the strong emphasis on the promotion of human rights within the Third Committee. Recent events pertaining to the Third Committee's mandate include the World Humanitarian Summit, which took place in May 2016, and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. The final document of the World Humanitarian Summit, "Standing up for Humanity: Committing to Action," summarized approaches to creating a more humane world. These approaches include the need for strong political leadership, upholding the norms that safeguard humanity, fostering inclusivity, and investing in humanity.

## Conclusion

The GA Third Committee is the main UN body overseeing social, humanitarian, and human rights issues. Through its universal membership, the GA Third Committee is able to create reports and resolutions as holistically as possible. Through the GA's budget, the Third Committee is able to focus on substantive matters that aim to take every Member State's opinion and values into consideration. Over the course of the past two sessions, the GA

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Third Committee primarily discussed the SDGs and human rights issues with a special focus on the rights of the child and human rights in conflict regions. These topics were

underlined by the World Humanitarian Summit, which called for the cooperation and inclusion of all actors in order to foster human rights.

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee (also known as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee or **SOCHUM**) is one of six main committees at the General Assembly of the United Nations. It deals with human rights, humanitarian affairs and social matters.

## ABOUT THE AGENDA

“Lasting peace can only be built on the premise that all people have equal rights and dignity—regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, social or other status.”

### Introduction

When the United Nations (UN) was conceived in 1945, at its core was the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of race. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (1969) defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” In the era of globalization, the world is more aware than ever before of a steady increase in extremist movements and ideologies, both within and transcending domestic borders. The eradication of racism and racial discrimination has been and remains a significant topic within the UN system, and particularly before the General Assembly (GA) Third Committee (SOCHUM). The UN system’s goals encompass several cross-cutting issues, many of which strive for the promotion of fundamental freedoms and derive from discussions of eradicat

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ing racism and racial discrimination. To more efficiently address these concerns and make the world free of racism and racial discrimination, the GA Third Committee plays a proactive role in initiating dialogues, implementing existing frameworks, and engaging different actors in the movement.

## International and Regional Framework

Article I of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) states that fundamental freedoms and human rights must be respected for all people without regard to race, sex, language, or religion. The Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

(1948) was adopted as GA resolution 3/260 on 9 December 1948 as the GA's first human rights treaty. It provided the first formal definition for genocide and made it a crime under international law. Just one day later, the GA adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which itemizes fundamental freedoms and human rights to be protected. In 1963 the GA adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which identifies issues associated with racism and racial discrimination but leaves ambiguities in its definitions of racism and racial discrimination. In comparison, ICERD makes clear that any document proclaiming one race to be better than another is unjustifiable, and that any discriminatory practices based on race or ethnicity are an obstacle to peace. The 177 States Parties to ICERD have agreed to end racial discrimination and promote a collaborative world in which peoples of all races can live peacefully.

## Role of the International System

On 17 December 2015, GA resolution 70/140 was adopted to further the comprehensive implementation and follow up to Durban III and to iterate its significance to the agenda of the GA Third Committee. Also during the 70th session, the GA adopted "Combating Glorification of Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, **Xenophobia\*** and Related Intolerance," which discusses the drastic increase in "racist extremist movements and ideologies," and takes a definitive stance against it while calling upon Member States to educate citizens on the dangers of racism.

The entire UN system collaborates to combat racism and racial discrimination. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), established as an expert committee of the Economic and Social Council, is responsible for supervising the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

\*Xenophobia is discussed in the last point before 'conclusion' under "About the agenda".

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## Current Obstacles

Racism and racial discrimination are issues that ultimately lie within the individual citizens of a state. Differences in social, cultural, and religious norms can make solutions

difficult. Civil society organizations such as IMADR that teach private citizens how to defend themselves under the law can mitigate this, particularly because regulations of international humanitarian law take time to be enacted by each Member State. To actively engage civil society's participation in the movement to end racial discrimination, the "Let's Fight Racism" campaign was launched with a joint effort of the UN Department of Public Information and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), using social media to educate the general public on anti-racism related items with real life stories and providing suggestions for educators to streamline the information in classroom settings.

Addressing racism is particularly challenging in conflict zones. Discriminatory policies, indiscriminate attacks, and unstable governance during and after armed conflicts put lives and freedoms in jeopardy. It also increases the possibility of violations of the rights of minority groups due to lack of rule of law. Another major challenge is that the existing action plans and treaties require cohesive, up-to-date, and effectively monitored international and regional follow-up plans. To address these issues, international agencies, expert working groups, CSOs, and state governments can continuously renew and strengthen public support and contribution through new and existing partnerships. Additionally, international institutions can financially empower regional agencies and CSOs and promote technical cooperation between international agencies and Member States.

## Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries.

It is the fear or hatred of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Xenophobia can involve perceptions of an ingroup toward an outgroup and can manifest itself in suspicion of the activities of others, and a desire to eliminate their presence to secure a presumed purity and may relate to a fear of losing national, ethnic or racial identity.

According to UNESCO, the terms xenophobia and racism often overlap, but differ in how the latter encompasses prejudice based on physical characteristics while the former is generally centered on behaviour based on the notion of a specified people being adverse to the culture or nation.

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Philosopher Cornel West has stated that "racism is an integral element within the very fabric of American culture and society. It is embedded in the country's first collective definition, enunciated in its subsequent laws, and imbued in its dominant way of life."

## Conclusion

Racism and racial discrimination have evolved over time and more work is required for UN policies to do the same. The ideas promoted by the SDGs involve every person's ability to exercise their fundamental freedoms; therefore, implementing the SDGs directly invites action toward the eradication of racism and racial discrimination. While Durban III led to further commitment toward the eradication of racism and racial discrimination, a rise in extremist movements and ideologies is clearly visible. The role of civil society in this endeavour has become continually more apparent. The cooperation of individual persons is paramount to the eradication of racism and racial discrimination and can be encouraged through education and information sharing. With the guidance outlined by the existing international documents and the SDGs, an equal, free, and joyful life for all will be more prominent in the near future from the cohesive collaboration within the international community.

## Further Research

Moving forward, delegates can consider the following questions: In what ways have the issues of racial discrimination grown more complex? What can be done to enhance the existing human rights documents? How could the body utilize the blueprint provided in the SDGs to further advance its agenda? How can the UN effectively work with Member States to protect citizens whose fundamental freedoms are compromised while respecting state sovereignty? What can be done to strengthen the existing partnerships among civil society



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organizations, the UN system, and Member States? How can new partnerships be established and encouraged? In what way can the international community assist and hold Member States accountable to ensure transparency and adherence to international human rights documents?

## How to research?

Research can be done on 2 levels:

- Agenda research
- Country research

Research should be done using authorised sites:

**For Agenda research the delegate is suggested to research from the following sites:**

- ✓ Reuters
- ✓ www.un.org
- ✓ Human Rights watch
  
- ✓ Amnesty International
- ✓ Transparency International
  
- ✓ IMF , World Bank for economic related world issues ICJ(international Court Of Justice) for legal issues
- ✓ Other UN bodies such as WTO , Who etc.

**For country research the delegate can refer to the following:**

1. CIA World fact Book
2. BBC News Country Profile
3. Any nations bilateral relations fact Sheet.

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*Best delegate is also a good site to refer to.*

The delegate can refer to other sites too, but these sites are recommended and the delegate can also be asked for proof on information.

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*We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to your participation at the Conference!*

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**Shloak Gupta, Co-President**

**Khushi Pai, Co-President**

**Karan Suresh, Secretary General**