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General Assembly Third Committee Background Guide 2022

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2022 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly Third Committee (GA3). This year's staff are: Directors Kelsea Gillespie (Conference A) and Davina Basse (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Nour Abd Eldayem (Conference A) and Alisa Riechmann (Conference B). Kelsea holds a B.A. in English from Concordia University of Edmonton and is pursuing a joint J.D./M.A. at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University with a focus in international law. Davina Basse has a Master's Degree in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, with research focused on NATO-EU security relations. This is her sixth year on staff. Nour Abd Eldayem graduated from the American University in Cairo with a BSc. in Computer Science. She currently works as a cybersecurity consultant. Alisa Riechmann has a Master's Degree in International Security from Sciences Po Paris and recently started her second degree in History. This is her second year on staff.

The topics under discussion for the General Assembly Third Committee are:

1. Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive Access to Education
2. The Right to Privacy in a Digital Age

The General Assembly Third Committee is one of the six Main Committees of the UN General Assembly and is formally referred as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Affairs Committee because of its role in establishing wholesome deliberation on such global issues. It is currently the world's largest and most prominent forum for international human rights norm creation. The General Assembly Third Committee oversees global discussion amongst all its Member States through facilitation of substantive discussion forums, and the recommendation of draft resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary. In the General Assembly Third Committee, delegates will have the opportunity to address multi-faceted global issues and tackle some of the international community's most pressing human rights issues.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2022 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the General Assembly (GA) Department, Tobias Dietrich (Conference A) and Maxwell Lacey (Conference B), at usg.ga@nmun.org

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

Sincerely,

Conference A

Kelsea Gillespie, Director
Nour Abd Eldayem, Assistant Director

Conference B

Davina Basse, Director
Alisa Riechmann, Assistant Director

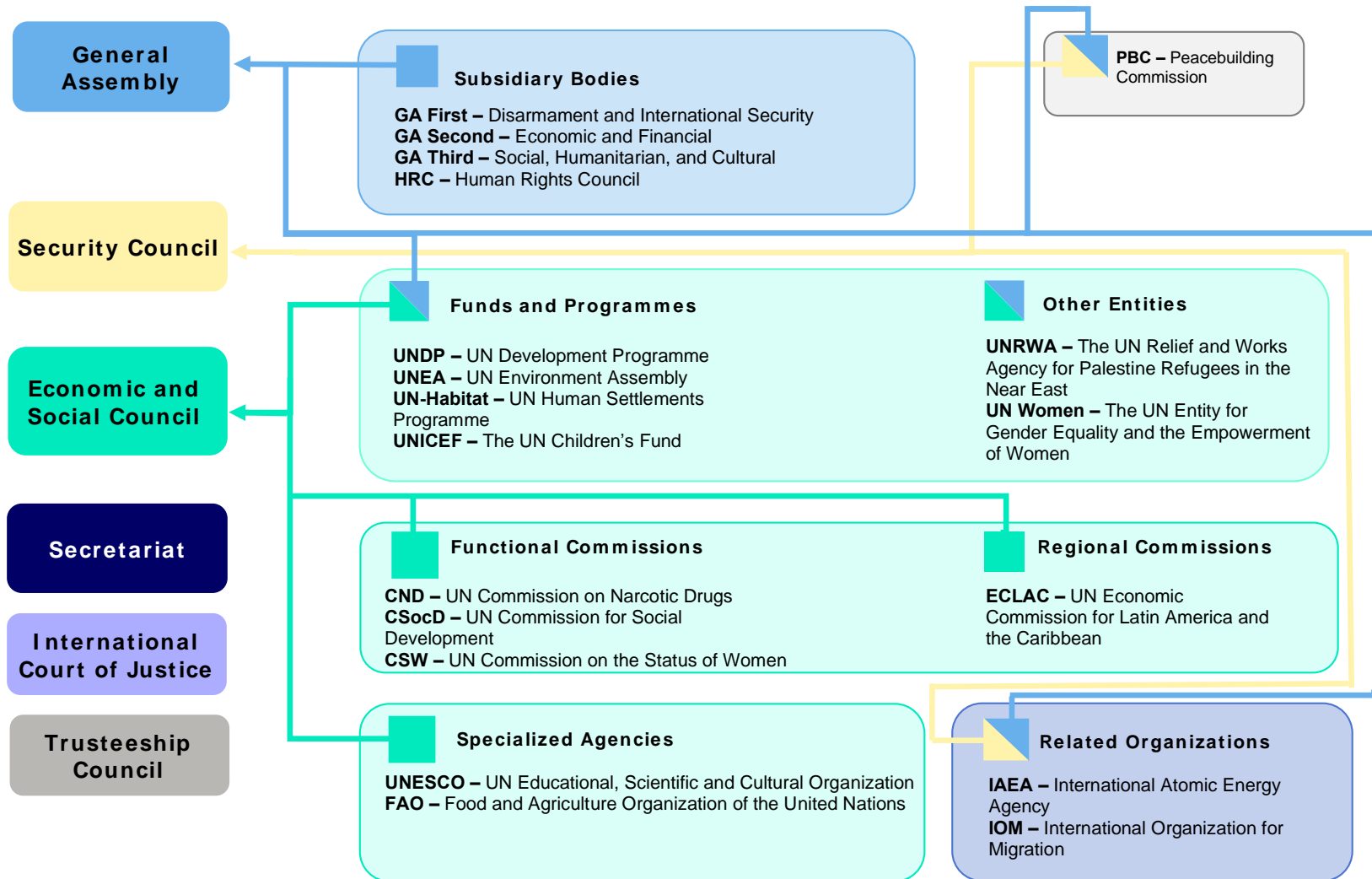


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

Following the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) was formed, and with it the General Assembly, one of the six principal organs established under the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).¹ The broad substantive scope of the General Assembly's mandate led the General Assembly to allocate its work to six committees, each focusing on a specific thematic area.² The General Assembly Third Committee is mandated with discussing all matters related to social, humanitarian, and cultural affairs.³ Over time, this mandate has expanded, making it the primary forum for all human rights issues.⁴ Currently, more than 50% of the resolutions adopted by the committee are submitted under the human rights agenda.⁵ This makes it the world's largest and most prominent forum for international human rights norm creation, deliberating topics such as the rights of indigenous peoples, assisting conflict-affected children and youth, and the implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006).⁶ Moreover, more than 90% of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to human rights and labor standards, underlining the importance of General Assembly Third Committee in ensuring international progress.⁷

Governance, Structure, and Membership

In accordance with the *Charter of the United Nations*, the General Assembly is comprised of 193 Member States, as well as the two Observer States, the Holy See and the State of Palestine.⁸ All Member States and Observers of the General Assembly can attend sessions of the Third Committee.⁹ The work of the committee is additionally supported by non-governmental and intergovernmental observers, such as the European Union (EU) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹⁰ The Third Committee meets annually for eight weeks from October to November to discuss agenda items that were allocated by the General Assembly Plenary in September, under the Third Committee's mandate.¹¹ The Secretary-General produces reports for the corresponding agenda items to inform the committee, and is at the Committee's disposal to answer questions in an allotted time for clarification.¹²

¹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 55-60; UN General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*.

² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; UN General Assembly, *Main Committees*.

³ UN General Assembly, *Third Committee*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006; UN HRC, *Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council (A/HRC/RES/5/1)*, 2007; UN HRC, *Review of the Work and Functioning of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/RES/16/21)*, 2011; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

⁷ Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Lessons Learned and Next Steps*, 2018, p. 9.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Member States*.

⁹ International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 7.

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *List of non-Member States, entities and organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly (A/INF/75/3)*, 2020.

¹¹ International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, pp. 7, 11; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

¹² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 37-38, 65.

Each annual session of the Third Committee begins directly with the substantive debate, as there is no General Debate beforehand.¹³ The customary workflow for each item consists of an interactive dialogue between the Member States and experts, who submit reports and answer questions.¹⁴ The Third Committee then recommends draft resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary committee, which adopts draft resolutions through a simple majority vote.¹⁵ In the General Assembly Plenary, documents addressing agenda items that are considered important questions, such as items relating to peace and security, the budget, or new members, require a two-thirds majority to pass and these important questions are considered by the Plenary and not the main committees.¹⁶ On each agenda item, the Third Committee can adopt resolutions and decisions by simple majority, although approximately 70% of its resolutions were adopted by consensus between the 60th and 70th session.¹⁷ It also issues reports to the General Assembly Plenary about its work and recommendations on its decision-making.¹⁸ In December, all documents are presented to the Plenary for adoption either through a vote or by consensus, as recommended in the committee's report.¹⁹ Customarily, the Plenary follows the recommendations and mirrors the form of adoption of the Third Committee; therefore a decision adopted by consensus in the Committee is adopted by consensus in the Plenary, and similarly for adoption by vote.²⁰

The Third Committee has a Secretariat comprised of the Secretary of the Committee Mr. Ziad Mahmassani, a Deputy Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, and three Assistants.²¹ Each year ahead of the session, the committee elects a Bureau with a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur.²² The Bureau of the committee assists with opening and closing each meeting, managing the discussions, pronouncing decisions, assisting with drafts and documents, and ensuring compliance with the rules of procedure.²³ The Bureau of the 76th session (2021) consists of Chairperson Mohamed Siad Doualeh from Djibouti; Vice-Chairs Hanne Carlé from Belgium, Devita Abraham from Trinidad and Tobago, and Joongil Shin from the Republic of Korea; and Rapporteur Maria-Iuliana Niculae from Romania.²⁴

Given the large scope of the committee, various experts, special rapporteurs, working groups, regional organizations, and UN entities, such as the UN Volunteers program, are encouraged to participate in an interactive dialogue with the committee and assist in policy implementation.²⁵ The UN Secretariat assists the Third Committee by delivering substantive and logistical support.²⁶ The Office of the United Nations

¹³ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 74.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38, p. 62.

¹⁶ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 18; UN General Assembly, *About the General Assembly*, 2019; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 37-38, 62.

¹⁷ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 30.

¹⁸ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 37-38, p. 62, 68.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁰ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 68.

²¹ UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Secretariat*.

²² International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 12.

²³ UN General Assembly, *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.18*)*, p. 30-31.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Bureau of the 76th Session*, 2021.

²⁵ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 73-74; UN General Assembly, *Organization of the Work of the Third Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/76/L.1)*, 2021; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 15.

²⁶ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011.

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) contribute to the committee's work as the UN focal point for human rights bodies, reports, and other publications.²⁷ Furthermore, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), established in 2006 by General Assembly resolution 60/251, provides an annual report to the Third Committee on its own recent sessions and discussions.²⁸ Independent Experts, Special Rapporteurs, and Working Groups that compile reports and advise the HRC also engage in interactive dialogues with the committee.²⁹

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the UN has suspended most physical meetings in the UN building, including the meetings of the General Assembly Third Committee.³⁰ Instead of hosting an in-person discussion of each agenda item, the General Assembly Third Committee will hold a single in-person General Debate for its 76th session in 2021.³¹ To offset the reduced opportunity for in-person debate, Member States are invited to submit written statements addressing individual agenda items.³²

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The Third Committee derives its mandate from a variety of UN documents.³³ Articles 10 to 17 of the *Charter of the United Nations* are the principal guidelines for the substance and scope of all General Assembly committees, whereas Articles 23, 61, 86, and 97 provide the Third Committee with its mandate and the agenda items allocated to it.³⁴ In regard to the committee's work in the field of human rights, Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* speaks of the promotion of human rights, and has been said to be the foundation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).³⁵ The Third Committee used the UDHR as the groundwork to adopt additional and more specific international human rights instruments, chief among them the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966).³⁶ These documents, along with the two optional protocols to the ICCPR make up what is known as the *International Bill of Human Rights* and guide the work of the committee.³⁷

The SDGs guide the work of the committee, as they relate to the Third Committee's central mandate.³⁸ The SDGs are strongly linked to human rights, such as SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). SDG 4 relates to the protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation, and SDG 16 focuses on the right to access to justice, which impacts matters of

²⁷ UN OHCHR, *Human Rights – New York: Mainstreaming Human Rights*, 2019; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, pp. 75; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 10.

²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Human Rights Council (A/72/53)*, 2017; International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 19.

²⁹ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, p. 65.

³⁰ Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations, *COVID-19: The UN is adapting its working methods*, 2020.

³¹ UN General Assembly, *Organization of the Work of the Third Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/76/L.1)*, 2021.

³² Ibid.

³³ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 10-17.

³⁴ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 10-17, 23, 61, 86, 97.

³⁵ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 1; UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

³⁶ UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

³⁷ UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1966; UN OHCHR, *Universal Human Rights Instruments*, 2021.

³⁸ UNRIC, *UNRIC Library Backgrounder: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 2019.

criminal justice.³⁹ These are all issue areas in which the Third Committee engages.⁴⁰ The General Assembly is also highly engaged in the implementation of the SDGs, as it arranges the annual United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), together with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁴¹ The HLPF consists of ministers or heads of state or government of Member States, and serves as the main United Nations platform to follow-up on and review the 2030 Agenda.⁴²

The Third Committee does not focus on operative tasks, but on policy recommendations and norm-setting, and primarily works through the initiation of studies and the creation of nonbinding recommendations.⁴³ Studies are then carried out by relevant bodies, like OHCHR and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).⁴⁴ Its work is of normative nature as it does not carry out operations, field work, or the tasks called for in its resolutions.⁴⁵ Policy recommendations are primarily delegated to the various agencies and offices of the UN Secretariat.⁴⁶ For example, for the Third Committee's 75th session's agenda item on refugees, returnees, and displaced persons, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had prepared a report for Committee and the Secretary-General submitted a report on Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa.⁴⁷ The Third Committee can also call for conferences to highlight certain issues, with a notable recurring example being the World Conferences on Women in 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1995, originating from the Third Committee resolution 3276 (XXIX) in 1974.⁴⁸ Additionally, the Third Committee examines the reports of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.⁴⁹ The Special Procedures are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise from a thematic or country-specific perspective.⁵⁰ For example, in its 74th session, the Third Committee heard from the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, who raised special concern about the killing of activists and journalists, such as the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and urged the UN to put in place independent accountability mechanisms to stop such killings.⁵¹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

The Third Committee conducted its 75th session in October and November 2020, which was chaired by Hungary.⁵² The committee adopted a total of 51 draft resolutions and decisions, all of which were presented to the General Assembly Plenary.⁵³ Out of these 51 draft resolutions, 32 were adopted by consensus and 19 passed by a simple majority vote.⁵⁴ The agenda of the 75th session included social development; advancement of women; report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees, and displaced person, and humanitarian questions; report of the HRC;

³⁹ UN OHCHR, *Summary Table on the Linkages Between the SDGs and Relevant International Human Rights Instruments*.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Third Committee*.

⁴¹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*.

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *Organization of the work of the Third Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/72/L.1)*, 2017.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly*.

⁴⁶ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011, p. 65; UN OHCHR, *Human Rights – New York: Mainstreaming Human Rights*, 2019.

⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, *Documents per Agenda Item – 75th session*, 2019.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Conference of the International Women's Year (XXIX) (A/RES/29/3276)*, 1974; UN Women, *World Conferences on Women*, 2019.

⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *Third Committee*.

⁵⁰ OHCHR, *Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council*, 2020.

⁵¹ UN DGC, *Amid Rising Nationalism, Global Leaders Call for Unity to Tackle Climate Emergency, Poverty, Extremism, at Opening of Seventy-Fourth General Assembly Session*, 2020.

⁵² UN General Assembly, *Third Committee*.

⁵³ UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *List of proposals contained in the reports of the Third Committee for consideration by the General Assembly: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/75/INF/1)*, 2020.

⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *List of proposals contained in the reports of the Third Committee for consideration by the General Assembly: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/75/INF/1)*, 2020.

promotion and protection of the rights of children; rights of indigenous peoples; elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance; right of peoples to self-determination; promotion and protection of human rights; crime prevention and criminal justice; countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes; international drug control; revitalization of the work of the General Assembly; and programme planning.⁵⁵ For the 76th session, the proposed agenda is similar in terms of overarching topics; however, each session focuses on different aspects of these overarching topics.⁵⁶ In addition to receiving reports from various UN bodies, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Third Committee in its 76th session will discuss social development; advancement of women; promotion and protection of the rights of children; the rights of indigenous peoples; the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; right of peoples to self-determination; promotion and protection of human rights; crime prevention and criminal justice; countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes; international drug control; and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.⁵⁷

During the 75th session, the COVID-19 pandemic played a major role in discussions and impacted the various topics the Third Committee discussed.⁵⁸ As the 75th session of the General Assembly Third Committee progressed, topics under the purview of the Third Committee, such as tackling poverty and promoting social development, the rights of indigenous peoples, and addressing social inequities, have all been severely impacted by the pandemic.⁵⁹ Moreover, inequities that existed before the start of the pandemic have been exacerbated by the outbreak of COVID-19, often undoing progress that had previously been achieved by actions taken by the Third Committee and its reporting UN bodies.⁶⁰

A contentious and widely debated topic during the 75th session of the General Assembly Third Committee was the right to privacy and the use of personal data.⁶¹ During recent years, the use and tracking of personal data has increased significantly, raising questions surrounding the right to privacy and the protection of personal information.⁶² During the COVID-19 pandemic, this trend has only accelerated due to large aspects of people's lives moving online.⁶³ The Third Committee discussed this topic and tackled the issue from numerous fronts, including the right to privacy as well as the impact of crime and criminal organizations in using and abusing the wealth of personal information collected on a regular basis.⁶⁴ The Third Committee produced deliverables tackling different aspects of this topic in General Assembly draft resolutions 75/L.8 titled "Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, Third Committee, *List of proposals contained in the reports of the Third Committee for consideration by the General Assembly: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.3/75/INF/1)*, 2020.

⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly: Report of the Third Committee (A/75/482)*, 2020.

⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *Organization of the seventy-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items*, 2021.

⁵⁸ UN DGC, *Third Committee Opens Session with Calls for Solidarity in Efforts to Stem Vast Social Development Impact of COVID-19 (GA/SHC/4286)*, 2020.

⁵⁹ UN DGC, *Third Committee Opens Session with Calls for Solidarity in Efforts to Stem Vast Social Development Impact of COVID-19 (GA/SHC/4286)*, 2020; UN DGC, *Pandemic That 'Knows No Borders' Pushed Millions into Poverty, Delegates Stress, as Third Committee Concludes Social Development Debate amid Calls for Unity (GA/SHC/4290)*, 2020; UN DGC, *Pandemic Dealt 'Profound Blows' to Human Rights Worldwide, High Commissioner Warns Third Committee, amid Calls for People-Centred Policies, Unbiased Response (GA/SHC/4294)*, 2020; UN DGC, *COVID-19 Could Push up to 175 Million People into Extreme Poverty, Expert Warns Third Committee, amid Calls for Repairing Entrenched Social Inequities (GA/SHC/4299)*, 2020; UN DGC, *For World's 80 Million Displaced, International Aid 'Life-Saving', Head of Refugee Agency Tells Third Committee, as COVID-19 Presents Biggest Crisis in Its History (GA/SHC/4308)*, 2020.

⁶⁰ UN DGC, *COVID-19 Could Push up to 175 Million People into Extreme Poverty, Expert Warns Third Committee, amid Calls for Repairing Entrenched Social Inequities (GA/SHC/4299)*, 2020.

⁶¹ UN DGC, *Third Committee Delegates Debate Acceptable Limits to Privacy Rights, Personal Data Use During Pandemic, as Expert Warns Against 'Omni-Present' Surveillance (GA/SHC/4305)*, 2020.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity” (2020) and 75/L.40 on “The right to privacy in the digital age” (2020).⁶⁵

As a majority of debates under the Third Committee mandate center on human rights issues, the means of best addressing these issues in the UN system has become a prominent topic of debate within the Third Committee.⁶⁶ As part of this ongoing debate, Member States have been working to determine whether resolutions on the human rights situation within single Member States are sufficient to result in an international human rights response.⁶⁷ During the 75th session, five country-specific resolutions were adopted despite the opposition of some Member States, which reject country-specific mandates as inherently politicized.⁶⁸ Concern about a duplication of efforts within the system can also be traced back to HRC being established as a subsidiary organ instead of a main body, leading to some debate on which forum is the most appropriate space for these discussions.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, in addition to country-specific topics, the Third Committee also discussed and considered other topics brought forth by HRC, such as proclaiming the International Day for People of African Descent.⁷⁰ Beginning in 2021, August 31 will be the International Day for People of African Descent “to promote greater recognition and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies.”⁷¹ HRC, a UN entity that reports to the General Assembly Third Committee, adopted a resolution titled “Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers” (A/HRC/RES/43/1) on 19 June 2020.⁷² Following HRC’s adoption of the resolution, it was included in the HRC’s annual report to the General Assembly Third Committee, who then proclaimed the International Day for People of African Descent as per HRC’s recommendation.⁷³

Conclusion

The Third Committee continues to play a central role in the UN as it provides an overarching forum of discussion for a wide variety of social, humanitarian, and cultural issues and acts as the largest representative body for human right and humanitarian norms.⁷⁴ Particularly within the context of the

⁶⁵ UN General Assembly Third Committee, *Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (A/C.3/75/L.8)*, 2020; UN General Assembly Third Committee, *The right to privacy in the digital age (A/C.3/75/L.40)*, 2020.

⁶⁶ Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017.

⁶⁷ International Service for Human Rights, *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*, 2017, p. 21; Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017.

⁶⁸ UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (A/RES/75/190)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/RES/75/191)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine (A/RES/75/192)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/RES/75/193)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar (A/RES/75/238)*, 2020.

⁶⁹ Universal Rights Group, *Sibling Rivalry? Measuring and Understanding the Uneasy Relationship Between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA*, 2017.

⁷⁰ UN DGC, *General Assembly Adopts 48 Third Committee Resolutions, Proclaims International Day for People of African Descent, Covering Broad Themes of Human Rights*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *International Day for People of African Descent (A/RES/75/170)*, 2020.

⁷¹ UN DGC, *General Assembly Adopts 48 Third Committee Resolutions, Proclaims International Day for People of African Descent, Covering Broad Themes of Human Rights*, 2020.

⁷² HRC, *Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers (A/HRC/RES/43/1)*, 2020.

⁷³ UN DGC, *General Assembly Adopts 48 Third Committee Resolutions, Proclaims International Day for People of African Descent, Covering Broad Themes of Human Rights*, 2020.

⁷⁴ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

achievement of the SDGs, the Third Committee's work continues to be integral to improving human rights situations around the world.⁷⁵ The General Assembly Third Committee's 76th session reflects the importance of human rights agenda items for the committee.⁷⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on all aspects of human life will likely run through the discussions of nearly all agenda items, including the rights of children, indigenous people, crime prevention and criminal justice, and international drug control.⁷⁷

Annotated Bibliography

International Service for Human Rights. (2017). *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs*. Retrieved 19 September 2021 from: https://ishr.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ishr_3rd_com_handbook_eng_web.pdf

The non-governmental organization International Service for Human Rights published this detailed guide to help non-governmental organizations navigate the General Assembly Third Committee. The guide includes an overview of what the General Assembly Third Committee does and how it fits into the larger United Nations system, recent activities of the Third Committee and its members, how a draft resolution in the Third Committee is created, how non-governmental organizations can play a role in the Committee, and other miscellaneous and helpful information. Delegates will find this guide useful as it outlines the processes of the Third Committee and how non-governmental organization can play a role.

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. (2017). *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. Retrieved 19 September 2021 from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-new-york/en/documents/UN_GA_Final.pdf

The Permanent Mission to the United Nations of Switzerland regularly publishes this updated handbook as introductory guidance material for the General Assembly. The handbook is an ideal starting point to understand the General Assembly, gain an overview of its processes, and organizational structure. It gives succinctly summaries and provides context to better understand the functioning of the General Assembly and its committees. Furthermore, delegates should consult this source to not only better understand the General Assembly in its entirety but also to gain more information on the existing rules of procedure, structure of resolutions, and workflow to help familiarizing themselves with the formal structures of the body's work.

United Nations, General Assembly. (n.d.). *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee)*. Retrieved 19 September 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>

This website provides a concise and high-level overview of the General Assembly Third Committee and what issues it is mandated to discuss. Albeit short, this website succinctly positions the Committee within the larger General Assembly environment and highlights recent trends within the Committee. Moreover, this website is a good introductory resource for accessing more detailed aspects about the Committee, which delegates will find useful in better understanding the activities, purpose, and history of the General Assembly Third Committee.

United Nations, General Assembly. (n.d.). *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee): Reports to the Plenary*. Retrieved 19 September 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/75/reports.shtml>

⁷⁵ Damplo, *Report on the 73rd Session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly*, 2018.

⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Organization of the seventy-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items*, 2021.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Organization of the seventy-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items*, 2021.

This website contains a list of the reports the Third Committee presented to the General Assembly Plenary during the 75th General Assembly session. The reports that are presented to the General Assembly Plenary discuss the current thematic work of the Third Committee, and the list itself also denotes the prioritization of some agenda items over others. Moreover, every session, the Third Committee publishes a list of the reports it presented to the Plenary during that session, allowing delegates to identify trends within the Third Committee and better understand the history and evolution of recurring agenda items.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2021). *Universal Human Rights Instruments*. Retrieved 19 September 2021 from:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/universalhumanrightsinstruments.aspx>

This website from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provides a good overview of the most important human rights instruments and the bodies that monitor them. It not only cites source regarding human rights in general, but also includes international documents sorted by topic areas, for example the rights of child, rights of persons with disabilities, and the prevention of discrimination. It provides delegates with a comprehensive overview to begin researching the international human rights regime, its fundamentals and specific topic areas.

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1. Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive Access to Education

Introduction

Access to education was first established as a human right under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) in 1948.⁷⁸ Since then, education has been understood as an integral contributor to economic growth and social development, by providing tools that enable economically- and socially-disadvantaged people to rise out of poverty and engage fully in society.⁷⁹ Access to education is also a primary objective under the 2030 Agenda and is articulated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.”⁸⁰ Education, however, does not simply refer to primary or secondary education.⁸¹ Instead, the United Nations (UN) recognizes the concept of “lifelong learning” as the guiding principle for international educational policies.⁸²

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, access to education had improved, particularly for global primary education, with the net attendance rate peaking at 87% in 2019 worldwide.⁸³ Since 2000, the number of children, adolescents, and youth who have no access to education has fallen steadily, although out-of-school figures have stagnated in recent years.⁸⁴ In 2018, 258.4 million children, adolescents, and youth were out of school.⁸⁵ Progress on improving literacy stalled in recent years, with some 773 million adults, the majority of them women, remaining illiterate in 2018.⁸⁶ Educational resources and opportunities are still unequally distributed worldwide, varying especially by age group.⁸⁷ Moreover, out-of-school-rates in the world’s poorest and richest countries differs immensely, with only 6% of secondary school-aged children out of school in high-income countries, compared to a 59% out-of-school rate in lower-income countries.⁸⁸ The concept of “equitable and inclusive education” therefore refers to the equal distribution of educational resources and opportunities within an education system, which may be hindered by discrimination based on various categories such as gender, remoteness, wealth, ethnicity, and displacement.⁸⁹ Equitable and inclusive education requires that peers have the opportunity to be educated together and receive the same quality of education, regardless of identity or circumstance.⁹⁰

Conflict also often exacerbates unequal access to education, as refugee children are more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children.⁹¹ Currently, only 50% of refugee children have access to primary education, while non-refugee children have an access rate of more than 90%.⁹² Gender gaps in education also continue to impact women and girls regarding access, learning achievements, and continuation in education, with less girls being enrolled in school than boys, and women ultimately having lower rates of literacy.⁹³ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 1.5 billion learners have had their education affected,

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

⁷⁹ UNESCO, *What you Need to Know about the Right to Education*, 2020.

⁸⁰ UN DESA, *Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for all and Promote Lifelong Learning*, 2021.

⁸¹ UN General Assembly, *Right to education: Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/358)*, 2016, p. 8.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸³ UNICEF, *Primary Education*, 2021.

⁸⁴ UNESCO, *New methodology shows that 258 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school*, 2019, p. 1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸⁶ UN DESA, *Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for all and Promote Lifelong Learning*, 2021; UN General Assembly, *Literacy for Life, Work, Lifelong Learning and Education for Democracy: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/188)*, 2020.

⁸⁷ UNESCO, *New methodology shows that 258 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school*, 2019, p. 1.

⁸⁸ UNESCO, *One in every five children, adolescents and youth is out of school worldwide*, 2018.

⁸⁹ UN, General Assembly, *Right to education: Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/358)*, 2016, p. 4; UNESCO, *Inclusion and Education: All means all, Global Education Monitoring Report*, 2021, p. 6.

⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Right to education: Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/358)*, 2016, p. 4.

⁹¹ UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, 2017, pp. 2-5.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

⁹³ UNESCO, *New Methodology Shows that 258 million Children, Adolescents and Youth are out of School*, 2019.

particularly by school and university closures.⁹⁴ While remote education programs have been implemented, already existing disparities regarding access to education have been intensified by the pandemic.⁹⁵ About 40% of Member States with the lowest income have neglected education and gender inequality in response to the pandemic.⁹⁶ Moreover, the education disruption has effects beyond education, affecting, for example, the provision of essential services to both children and their communities.⁹⁷

International and Regional Framework

The UDHR (1948) codified education as a fundamental right for every individual, ranging from elementary education to technical, professional, and higher education.⁹⁸ In 1960, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, encompassing the idea that education is a fundamental right and inscribing an obligation for Member States to combat discrimination of all kinds in schools.⁹⁹ A number of international treaties and resolutions on education were adopted in 1966, including the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.¹⁰⁰ Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant outline the human right to education, including the accessibility of primary, secondary, and higher education, and establish that primary education should be compulsory and free.¹⁰¹ The *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1966) enshrines the right to equitable education without differentiation due to race, color, national, or ethnic origin.¹⁰² The importance of promoting equitable opportunities for women, particularly regarding education, is also highlighted by the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979).¹⁰³ Moreover, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) ratifies that every child has a right to education in order to enable all children to develop to their fullest possible potential.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) aims to ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities in the general education system, something that is regularly discussed and furthered in sessions of the Third Committee.¹⁰⁵

The international community expanded its commitment to education in 2015 with the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰⁶ The SDGs are a call for action for developed and developing states alike to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet by the year 2030.¹⁰⁷ SDG 4 (quality education) specifically states that education provisions ought to be inclusive and equitable, and promotes learning opportunities for every person during their lifetime.¹⁰⁸ SDG 4 is essential for the achievement of sustainable development and serves as a foundation to achieve all of the other SDGs.¹⁰⁹ SDG 4 has targets and indicators to measure progress, including targets for equitable access to free,

⁹⁴ UNICEF, *Education and COVID-19*, 2020; UNESCO & Global Education Coalition, *Responding to COVID-19 and beyond: The Global Education Coalition in Action*, 2020, p. 5.

⁹⁵ UNICEF, *Education and COVID-19*, 2020; UNESCO & Global Education Coalition, *Responding to COVID-19 and beyond: The Global Education Coalition in Action*, 2020, p. 5.

⁹⁶ UN Sustainable Development Group, *Education during COVID-19 and beyond*, 2020, p. 8.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217A (III))*, 1948.

⁹⁹ UNESCO, *UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education*, 2021.

¹⁰⁰ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1996.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee education in crisis*, 2017, pp. 3-5.

¹⁰² UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/RES/2106 (XX))*, 1965, arts. 5 and 7.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

¹⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006, art. 24; UN General Assembly, *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/187)*, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ UN Foundation, *Sustainable Development Goals*.

¹⁰⁸ UN DESA, *Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for all and Promote Lifelong Learning*, 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Right to Education Initiative, *Education 2030*, 2021.

quality primary and secondary education for all girls and boys (target 4.1).¹¹⁰ Other targets aim to eliminate gender disparity in access to education, as well as for persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.¹¹¹ The *Incheon Declaration* (2015), adopted at the World Education Forum, established the international community's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Education 2030, by aiming to ensure basic education for all by 2030.¹¹² Identifying the importance of education as a main driver of development, the *Incheon Declaration* is a framework for action for the implementation of SDG 4 and outlines possible practices at the national, regional, and global level.¹¹³

The Third Committee has addressed education in recent resolutions, including resolution 74/223 on "Education for sustainable development" (2020) in which the Committee reaffirms the centrality of education to implementing the 2030 Agenda, and further calls upon the international community to provide inclusive and equitable education at all levels leaving no one behind.¹¹⁴ Adopted during the same session, General Assembly resolution 74/275 declared 9 September the "International Day to Protect Education from Attack" to draw attention to the importance of ensuring safe learning environments in humanitarian emergencies.¹¹⁵

Role of the International System

The General Assembly Third Committee has focused on the right to education since the adoption of the UDHR.¹¹⁶ Generally, the Third Committee can make recommendations to Member States on education, initiate studies, and promote the development of international social, political, economic, and legal norms.¹¹⁷ Recently, the Third Committee has focused on "education for democracy," which encourages Member States to develop programs aimed at the promotion of democratic values.¹¹⁸ The Third Committee also focuses on disarmament and non-proliferation education through long-term programs of education and training, particularly targeting youth.¹¹⁹

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the specialized UN agency for matters related to education, science, and culture, and is the only UN agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education.¹²⁰ While it is a specialized agency, the General Assembly and other UN bodies may request special reports, studies, or information from UNESCO, and UNESCO is entitled to send representatives to meetings of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly, and vice versa.¹²¹ UNESCO promotes collaboration amongst Member States, works directly with UN organs and other stakeholders, and sets global standards on topics of education.¹²² Moreover, UNESCO leads the Global Education 2030 Agenda through SDG 4 and via the Education 2030 *Incheon Declaration* (2015) and Framework for Action.¹²³ Its global database, the Observatory on the Right to

¹¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 17.

¹¹¹ Global Partnership for Education, *17 ways education influences the sustainable development goals*, 2015.

¹¹² World Education Forum, *Incheon Declaration – Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all*, 2015.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/74/223)*, 2020.

¹¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *International Day to Protect Education from Attack (A/RES/74/275)*, 2020.

¹¹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948, art. 26.

¹¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *About the General Assembly*.

¹¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Education for democracy (A/RES/73/134)*, 2018.

¹¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/RES/73/59)*, 2018.

¹²⁰ UNESCO, *Education Transforms Lives*.

¹²¹ UNESCO, *Agreement between the United Nations and UNESCO*, 1946, p. 179.

¹²² UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 1945, Arts. X-XI.

¹²³ UNESCO, *Education Transforms Lives*.

Education, provides country-level data regarding Member States' laws, decrees, and educational programs regarding access to education.¹²⁴

As the UN agency which provides humanitarian and developmental aid to children, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) supports quality education for every child, particularly for those in vulnerable situations.¹²⁵ UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories and builds partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, and the private sector.¹²⁶ Since the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF has been working to make digital learning an essential service by connecting children and adolescents with digital solutions such as Giga, which aims to provide the necessary infrastructure to connect every school to the internet.¹²⁷ While UNESCO's mandate covers all aspects of education and UNICEF's focus is on children in vulnerable situations, the agencies often work together; for example, both agencies collaborated during the development of a Recovery Supplement to the Framework on reopening schools after the COVID-19 pandemic, which offers key resources to schools.¹²⁸

Appointed first by the Commission on Human Rights in 1998 and since 2006 by the Human Rights Council (HRC), the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education works with governments and other stakeholders to gather and exchanges information and make recommendations to governments.¹²⁹ The Special Rapporteur reports annually to HRC and the General Assembly and engages in country visits to gain an in-depth understanding on the status of the right to education in all Member States.¹³⁰

Other UN entities that contribute to the advancement of education include the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.¹³¹ New challenges to ensure access to education have emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³² The closure of schools has exacerbated pre-existing disparities in access to education, particularly affecting the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults.¹³³ In response, UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition, a multi-sector platform for collaboration and exchange.¹³⁴ In its latest report from March 2021, the Global Education Coalition highlighted a variety of approaches to ensure equitable solutions and universal access to education.¹³⁵

Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) or the European Union (EU) also play a role in securing equitable and inclusive education for all by setting norms and standards for the right to education within their respective regions.¹³⁶ These organizations coordinate action amongst their Member States regarding educational systems, as seen in the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training.¹³⁷ The EU is working towards creating a "European Education Area" by 2025 that promotes lifelong learning and skills development while maintaining inclusive and equitable access to post-secondary education and skills training for all EU citizens.¹³⁸ The AU has adopted the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25), which aims to build a qualitative system of education in Africa in line with the 2030 Agenda and SDG 4.¹³⁹ CESA 16-25 is guided by a set of

¹²⁴ UNESCO, *Observatory on the Right to Education*, 2018.

¹²⁵ UNICEF, *About UNICEF*.

¹²⁶ UNICEF, *For Every Child, Results*.

¹²⁷ UNICEF, *Education; Giga, About*.

¹²⁸ UNESCO et al., *Framework for Reopening Schools Supplement: From Reopening to Recovery – Key Resources*, 2021.

¹²⁹ OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education*, 2021.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ UNHCR, *Education*; UN SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, *Who we are*.

¹³² UN Sustainable Development Group, *Education during COVID-19 and beyond*, 2020.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³⁴ UNESCO & Global Education Coalition, *Supporting Learning Recovery one year into COVID-19*, 2021.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ European Commission, *European policy cooperation (ET 2020 framework)*; AU, *Education*.

¹³⁷ European Commission, *European policy cooperation (ET 2020 framework)*.

¹³⁸ European Commission, *European Education Area*.

¹³⁹ AU, *Education*.

principles that emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and equitable access to education and recognize that educational systems are at the heart of sustainable and regional development.¹⁴⁰

Refugees and Internally Displaced Students

Approximately 82.4 million people have been displaced due to discrimination, war, and violence worldwide.¹⁴¹ Refugees and displaced persons are disproportionately affected by a lack of access to education; from the six million children recognized as refugees by the UNHCR, only 2.3 million are enrolled in school.¹⁴² The foundation for securing a future livelihood is often compromised without access to primary education.¹⁴³ Currently, only 22% of refugee adolescents attend secondary school in comparison with 84% of non-refugee adolescents.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, refugees and displaced persons have an increased risk of being denied educational opportunities during their childhood.¹⁴⁵ This disparity has been worsened by COVID-19, which may cause a “pandemic of poverty” by reversing enrollment numbers in school, university, and vocational training.¹⁴⁶ As the internet and technical equipment is harder to access within refugee communities, a large number of refugee children have been unable to access remote learning opportunities as schools have had to transition to online and distance learning.¹⁴⁷ Particularly for refugee girls, the post-pandemic forecast looks dire; according to the estimation of the Malala Fund, half of all refugee girls in school will not return when in-person school starts again.¹⁴⁸

In response to the broader worldwide shift towards digital platforms for educational delivery, programs such as UNHCR’s and Vodafone Foundation’s Instant Network Schools (INS) have been able to connect students to digital educational resources and the internet, which has improved the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁴⁹ Currently, there are 36 INSs operating across eight refugee camps, benefitting over 86,500 students and 1,000 teachers.¹⁵⁰ INS technology has been particularly useful in cushioning the negative effects of the pandemic on education by helping refugee families to learn remotely during lockdown.¹⁵¹ Radio Gargaar in Kenya is another project that has been effective in mitigating some of the obstacles to refugee education.¹⁵² Teachers have been using Radio Gargaar, a community radio station, to broadcast their classes to their primary and secondary school students.¹⁵³

Gender Equality in Education

Empowering women and girls has been recognized as essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda, as highlighted in SDG 5 (gender equality).¹⁵⁴ Improved female education has been strongly connected with economic, health, and social benefits for society as a whole.¹⁵⁵ Better educated women build stronger communities and contribute to overall economic stability.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, gender gaps in education access, achievement and continuation still exist, with less girls being enrolled in school and women

¹⁴⁰ AU, *Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)*, 2016.

¹⁴¹ UNHCR, *Refugee Statistics*, 2021.

¹⁴² UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, 2016, pp. 2-5.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁶ UNHCR, *Coming Together for Refugee Education*, 2020, pp. 4-5; UNHRC, *Right to Education: Impact of the Coronavirus Disease Crisis on the Right to Education – Concerns, Challenges and Opportunities, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (A/HRC/44/39)*, 2020.

¹⁴⁷ Lasko, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Refugee Education*, 2021.

¹⁴⁸ UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, 2016, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ Vodafone, *Instant Network Schools*.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Vodafone, *How Vodafone Foundation continues to support refugee education*, 2020.

¹⁵² UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, 2016, p. 27.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁵⁴ UN DESA, *Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls*, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ UNESCO, *Inclusion and Education: All means all, Global Education Monitoring Report*, 2021, p. 312.

¹⁵⁶ The World Bank, *Girls’ education*, 2017.

having less literacy skills in comparison to men worldwide.¹⁵⁷ One of the major frameworks for achieving gender equality is the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995).¹⁵⁸ For its 25th anniversary in 2020, Member States adopted a Political Declaration, welcoming the progress made but also noting the challenges which remain regarding gender equality.¹⁵⁹ Strengthening efforts in women's and girl's education was one of the renewed commitments made by the international community.¹⁶⁰

Reducing schooling costs and increasing supply can help improve education access for girls.¹⁶¹ Gender equality in education, however, goes beyond school enrollment.¹⁶² Long distances to travel to school increases the risk that young women and girls may experience gender-based violence.¹⁶³ Girls who marry at a young age are more likely to drop out of school, are more likely to have children earlier than their peers, and are at increased risk of violence.¹⁶⁴ In some places, there is a lack of safe learning environments and inadequate infrastructure for girls to participate in the classroom fully.¹⁶⁵ The latter is, among other factors, important for menstrual hygiene management.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, biases and discrimination towards women and girls are often present in the classroom and endemic in some educational institutions.¹⁶⁷ Sustainable change can only be achieved by creating safe and high-quality learning environments with adequate infrastructure to support boys and girls alike.¹⁶⁸

COVID-19 and its socio-economic impacts have also adversely affected progress towards gender equality in education.¹⁶⁹ While prolonged school closures and limited access to remote learning opportunities affect both genders, drop-out rates of female students will likely increase due to the pandemic and girls will not return to school.¹⁷⁰ During the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, school closures were associated with an increase in teenage pregnancies.¹⁷¹ Pregnant girls are often discouraged to return to school and face stigma, which leads to higher rates of dropout.¹⁷² Moreover, during school closures, many girls face increased domestic responsibilities, which subsequently reduces their time available to study and engage in schooling.¹⁷³

Conclusion

Significant progress has been made by the international community on ensuring equitable and inclusive access to all in recent years, particularly regarding primary education and literacy rates.¹⁷⁴ However, vulnerable populations continue to lack access to education as well as educational opportunities at all levels.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, COVID-19 has exacerbated existing challenges and may reverse successes that

¹⁵⁷ UNESCO, *New methodology shows that 258 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school*, 2019.

¹⁵⁸ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, 2014.

¹⁵⁹ UN Women, *Political Declaration, On the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, 2020, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ UNESCO, *Inclusion and Education: All means all, Global Education Monitoring Report*, 2021, p. 312.

¹⁶² UNESCO, *Education and gender equality*.

¹⁶³ The World Bank, *Girls' education*, 2017.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ The World Bank, *Girls' education*, 2017.

¹⁶⁶ World Bank & Global Water Security & Sanitation Partnership, *Menstrual Health and Hygiene Resource Package: Tools and Resources for Task Teams*, 2021, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶⁷ UNESCO, *From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019-2025*, 2019, p. 6.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ UN DESA, *Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls*, 2021.

¹⁷⁰ The World Bank, *Girls' education*, 2021.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for all and Promote Lifelong Learning*, 2021.

¹⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Right to Education*, 2020, p. 4.

have been achieved in promoting inclusive and equitable access to education.¹⁷⁶ The Third Committee can play a valuable role in mitigating these inequalities and continuing to prioritize this important issue.¹⁷⁷

Further Research

Moving forward with their research, delegates should consider the following questions: How can the international community coordinate more effectively to ensure access to education for displaced persons? How can education be made available and equitable for people living in conflict areas? How can Member States increase access to lifelong learning opportunities, particularly for vulnerable groups? How can the COVID-19 pandemic be used as an opportunity to work toward more inclusive and equitable education? What role can Member States with high levels of education attendance play in supporting Member States whose educational infrastructure has been threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic? How can women and girls continued unequal access to education be mitigated by 2030?

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2020). *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*. Retrieved 8 August 2021: <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion>

The Global Education Monitoring Report assesses the progress towards SDG 4 and its targets on education, as well as other education-related targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report specifically addresses inclusion in education, and discusses the impact of various factors, including lack of teacher support, data gaps, inappropriate infrastructure, lack of political will, and inconsistent policies. Delegates will find this source useful because it contains extensive information on the challenges to achieving inclusive and equitable access to education and provides concrete examples of successful policy initiatives.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *Inclusive Development for and with Persons with Disabilities: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/187)*. Retrieved 26 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/75/187>

The Secretary-General's report outlines the current situation of persons with disabilities, including regarding access to education and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their education. The report emphasizes quality education and lifelong learning as key tools to fight poverty for persons with disabilities. Delegates will find this source useful to developing an understanding of some of the various issues students with disabilities face, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also discusses challenges for persons with disabilities and proposes several policy recommendations, including recommendations regarding educational system improvements.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *Literacy for Life, Work, Lifelong Learning and Education for Democracy: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/188)*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/75/188>

This report, authored by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, examines global progress made in improving literacy as an essential part of the right to education for both young people and adults. It includes examples of responses to the COVID-19 crisis and outlines progress made by Member States on the national, regional, and global level regarding literacy and education. This resource is particularly useful as it addresses different aspects of literacy as a key indicator for education and lifelong learning and provides recommendations for Member States and development partners.

¹⁷⁶ UNICEF, *Education and COVID-19*, 2020; UNESCO & Global Education Coalition, *Responding to COVID-19 and beyond: The Global Education Coalition in Action*, 2020, p. 5.

¹⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Right to education: Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/358)*, 2016, p. 8.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (n.d.). *Education*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/education.html>

As a starting point for delegates to begin their research, this webpage on education by the UNHCR provides an overview of the main aims of education to rebuild lives for refugees and displaced persons. This website contains information on recent initiatives and programs, as well as multimedia resources and news releases. The webpage also lists recent publications and external links on education for refugees, addressing cross-cutting issues like COVID-19 and gender equality. Delegates will find this a useful resource for researching equitable and inclusive access to education for refugees and internally displaced people.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Forty-fourth session. (2020). *Right to Education: Impact of the Coronavirus Disease Crisis on the Right to Education – Concerns, Challenges and Opportunities, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (A/HRC/44/39)*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/39>

COVID-19 has had a detrimental effect on access to quality education worldwide. This report by the Special Rapporteur analyzes how COVID-19 has impacted education from a human rights perspective. It also makes recommendations for how to build more resilient education systems in the future, which are inclusive of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Delegates will find this source useful in researching the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the right to education.

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2. The Right to Privacy in a Digital Age

Introduction

The right to privacy was established as a fundamental human right in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) in 1948.¹⁷⁸ Technology has both assisted and hindered the achievement of the right to privacy, and has introduced its own unique challenges.¹⁷⁹ With the rise in information and communications technology (ICT), the introduction of new and emerging technologies, and a now unprecedented ability to create, collect, and analyze huge amounts of data, the question of how to promote and protect the right to privacy in the international sphere has been redefined.¹⁸⁰ For instance, one of the major challenges newly facing the international community is the rise in cybercriminal enterprises launching attacks on targets all around the globe.¹⁸¹ The attacks on both public and private targets can lead to the leakage of sensitive data about millions of individuals, and large-scale right to privacy violations.¹⁸² ICTs have also enabled many state actors to misuse and abuse new technologies to launch mass surveillance campaigns both against other states and their own citizens.¹⁸³ To address these and other concerns related to the right to privacy in the digital context, the General Assembly Third Committee has spearheaded international discussions and efforts to safeguard this fundamental right.¹⁸⁴

Direct threats to the right to privacy can also be amplified due to the disproportionate enactment of protection measures at the domestic level.¹⁸⁵ According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2020), even though 128 states have adopted data protection legislation, adoption rates globally are not consistent.¹⁸⁶ For example, 96% of European states have adopted data protection and privacy legislation, while only 45% of least developed states have enacted data protection and privacy legislation.¹⁸⁷ Although several privacy tools and technologies, such as anonymity protection technologies, have been developed, not all people have equal access to these tools and technologies, leaving them more vulnerable to attacks.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, new and emerging technologies can be used to track and extrapolate sensitive data about users online to launch targeted misinformation and disinformation campaigns, which can leave marginalized groups vulnerable to hate speech and, potentially, physical harm.¹⁸⁹ Given the potential for serious impacts from violation of the right to privacy and broad nature of the topic, the General Assembly Third Committee continues to discuss this topic as a part of its agenda, and encourages all relevant stakeholders to consider how best to protect the right to privacy in a digital context globally.¹⁹⁰

International and Regional Framework

The right to privacy was enshrined as a fundamental human right in the UDHR (1948).¹⁹¹ Article 12 reads “[n]o one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence,

¹⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/39/29)*, 2018.

¹⁸⁰ UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Strategy on New Technologies*, 2018.

¹⁸¹ UNODC, *Cybercrime*, 2021.

¹⁸² UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

¹⁸³ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/68/167)*, 2014.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ UNCTAD, *Data Protection and Privacy Legislation Worldwide*, 2020.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye (A/HRC/29/32)*, 2015.

¹⁸⁹ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression on Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression (A/HRC/47/25)*, 2021.

¹⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

¹⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.¹⁹² The UDHR also served as the foundation for the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966).¹⁹³ Article 17 of the ICCPR reiterates that every individual should be protected against wrongful interference in their private lives, underscoring the legal nature of the right.¹⁹⁴

Several international conventions further reaffirm the right to privacy, such as the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1989), and the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (CMW) (1990), all of which underscore the significance of the right to privacy for several vulnerable groups beyond what is outlined in the UDHR and ICCPR.¹⁹⁵ Article 22 and 31 of the CRPD protect the right to privacy of persons with disabilities, focusing especially on the protection of personal and medical information.¹⁹⁶ Articles 16 and 40 of the CRC highlight the child's legal right to privacy, including during any penal law matters and proceedings.¹⁹⁷ As outlined in Article 14 of the CMW, migrant workers and their families also enjoy legal protection against any infringements on their right to privacy.¹⁹⁸ More recently, the *2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) has highlighted how the right to privacy intertwines with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more precisely SDG 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development), under which ethical handling of data is emphasized.¹⁹⁹ Further, the *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework* (2019), businesses have a responsibility to respect and preserve human rights in their dealings, and states are obligated to both respect human rights and defend them from violations by any third parties, including businesses operating in a state's jurisdiction.²⁰⁰

The right to privacy in the digital age was first addressed by the General Assembly Third Committee in 2014, followed by the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 68/167 on "The Right to Privacy in the Digital age" (2014).²⁰¹ In this resolution, the Third Committee addressed the protection of the right to privacy in the digital context, calling into question the validity and legality of mass surveillance as a national security measure, and proposed the creation of a monitoring mechanism to ensure the transparency and accountability in Member States' collection of personal data, which has not yet been actioned by the United Nations (UN) or its Member States.²⁰² Since 2013, the General Assembly Third Committee has highlighted the importance of ensuring the right to privacy in the digital age through the adoption of several resolutions, the most recent of which is General Assembly resolution 75/176 in 2020, on the same topic.²⁰³

¹⁹² UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁹³ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No.2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, 1996.

¹⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

¹⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006; UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*, 1990; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

¹⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006

¹⁹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

¹⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*, 1990.

¹⁹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

²⁰⁰ UN HRC, *Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights, Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework: Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises, John Ruggie (A/HRC/17/31)*, 2011.

²⁰¹ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/68/167)*, 2014.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

Role of the International System

Since 2013, the General Assembly Third Committee's focus on this topic has expanded, covering several subtopics that fall under the right to privacy, including children's rights, cybercrime, and the use of emerging technologies, all of which are core considerations for protecting the right to privacy in the digital age.²⁰⁴ Initially, in General Assembly resolutions 68/167 (2013) and 69/166 (2015) on "The Right to Privacy in the Digital age," the General Assembly Third Committee primarily focused on the Member States' role in the protection of the right to privacy in the digital age by promoting the adoption of legislation and adequate oversight mechanisms to both prevent and remedy violations.²⁰⁵ In General Assembly resolution 71/199 (2017) on the topic, the Third Committee considered the role of businesses by calling on them to adhere to their responsibilities in accordance with the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework.²⁰⁶

In addition to passing resolutions, the General Assembly Third Committee also collaborates with several other UN bodies to coordinate the work on the matter.²⁰⁷ Recently, the General Assembly Third Committee requested that the Human Rights Council (HRC) remain actively seized on the matter of protecting the right to privacy in the digital age.²⁰⁸ The HRC has adopted several resolutions on the topic, the most recent of which highlights the effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on the state of privacy globally.²⁰⁹ The HRC also works in conjunction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare and host expert workshops and seminars on the right to privacy.²¹⁰ Through its work with the General Assembly Third Committee and HRC, the OHCHR has produced several reports pertaining to the right to privacy, such as the report titled *Impact of new Technologies on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Assemblies, Including Peaceful Protests* (2020), which sheds light on the overlap between protection of the right to privacy and other rights including the right to peaceful assembly.²¹¹ The International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a specialized UN agency with areas of work related to privacy protection, has also produced research on the effect of new and emerging technologies on the enjoyment of the right to privacy and the condition of state-level legislation on privacy, security, and cybercrime.²¹²

The HRC also established a Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy in 2015, with a mandate to research the right to privacy, including in the digital context.²¹³ Since the mandate was first established, the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy has produced several key reports, including *Security and Surveillance, Health Data, and Business Enterprises use of Personal Data* (2020), which discusses the effect of technology on the enjoyment of the right to privacy and outlines the state of gender equality in

²⁰⁴ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

²⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/68/167)*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/69/166)*, 2015.

²⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/71/199)*, 2017; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/73/179)*, 2018; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

²⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/68/167)*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/69/166)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/71/199)*, 2017; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/73/179)*, 2018; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

²⁰⁸ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

²⁰⁹ UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/HRC/RES/42/15)*, 2019; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/HRC/RES/37/2)*, 2018.

²¹⁰ OHCHR, *Expert Workshop on the Right to Privacy in the Digital age*, 2018; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/HRC/RES/42/15)*, 2019.

²¹¹ UN HRC, *Impact of new Technologies on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Assemblies, Including Peaceful Protests (A/HRC/44/24)*, 2020; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/39/29)*, 2018; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/27/37)*, 2014.

²¹² ITU, *Research on Legislation in Data Privacy, Security and the Prevention of Cybercrime*, 2006.

²¹³ OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy*, 2021.

promoting the right to privacy.²¹⁴ The work of other Special Rapporteurs has examined the right to privacy and its overlap with other human rights issues, including racism, terrorism, and freedom of expression.²¹⁵ An example of this intersection is demonstrated in the *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism* (2009), which warns against the harms of policies that prioritize the fight against terrorism over the protection of the right to privacy.²¹⁶

Other international efforts to address the right to privacy include several high-level conferences to discuss the effects of technology on the enjoyment of the right to privacy.²¹⁷ The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/183 (2002) and under the leadership of the ITU, published the *Declaration of Principles: Building the Information Society*, in which governments are encouraged to strengthen digital security measures to ensure the privacy and protection of consumers.²¹⁸ The High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, convened in 2018 by the UN Secretary-General, inspired the 2020 UN Secretary-General's *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*, which outlined eight key areas of action.²¹⁹ Of the eight areas of action, areas five and six, "Ensuring the Protection of Human Rights in The Digital Era" and "Supporting Global Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence (AI)," address the importance of preserving human rights in a digital context and ensuring that AI is used ethically and without infringement on the rights of individuals.²²⁰

Several regional organizations have also spearheaded efforts to promote and protect the right to privacy within their territory.²²¹ The European Union (EU) has recognized the need for measures to ensure the protection of the EU citizens' right to privacy, and has subsequently adopted the *General Data Protection Regulation* (2016) framework.²²² The framework protects the data of EU citizens both within and outside of the EU by addressing the issues of consent, processing of personal data, and penalties in cases where protection of personal data has been violated.²²³ Through the *Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection* (2014), more succinctly known as the Malabo Convention, African Union (AU) Member States are encouraged to protect critical infrastructure against cyberattacks and protect personal data of their citizens.²²⁴ As of June 2020, only 8 out of 55 states have ratified the Malabo Convention.²²⁵ Similarly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has adopted the *Framework on Personal Data Protection* (2016), which highlights the importance of cooperation amongst Member States in efforts to promote and preserve the flow of information regionally and globally.²²⁶

²¹⁴ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy (A/HRC/43/52)*, 2020; UN HRC, *Artificial Intelligence and Privacy, and Children's Privacy: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy (A/HRC/46/37)*, 2021; UN HRC, *Right to Privacy: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy (A/HRC/40/63)*, 2019.

²¹⁵ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism (A/HRC/13/37)*, 2009; UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression on Surveillance and Human Rights (A/HRC/41/35)*, 2019; UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression on Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression (A/HRC/47/25)*, 2021.

²¹⁶ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism (A/HRC/13/37)*, 2009.

²¹⁷ WSIS, *Declaration of Principles: Building the Information Society*, 2005; NETmundial, *NETmundial: the Beginning of a Process*, 2014.

²¹⁸ WSIS, *Declaration of Principles: Building the Information Society*, 2005.

²¹⁹ UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*, 2020.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ GDPR.EU, *Complete Guide to GDPR Compliance*, 2016.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ GDPR.EU, *Complete Guide to GDPR Compliance*, 2016; AU, *Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection*, 2014; ASEAN, *Framework on Personal Data Protection*, 2016.

²²⁴ AU, *Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection*, 2014.

²²⁵ AU, *List of Countries which Have Signed, Ratified/Acceded to the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection*, 2020.

²²⁶ ASEAN, *Framework on Personal Data Protection*, 2016.

In a cross-regional effort to further ensure the right to privacy for their respective nationals, the EU, Switzerland, and United States of America have adopted the *EU-US* and *Swiss-US Privacy Shield Frameworks* (2017), which assist businesses in complying with data protection measures in cases of transatlantic commerce.²²⁷ Since 2020, both the *EU-US* and *Swiss-US Privacy Shield Frameworks* have been declared inadequate by the Court of Justice of the European Union, but parties are still obliged to uphold their commitments under the frameworks in the meantime.²²⁸

Civil society organizations, such as Citizen Lab, Amnesty International, and Privacy International, have also been active in promoting and protecting the right to privacy in the digital age.²²⁹ Citizen Lab is an interdisciplinary laboratory that explores the intersection of technology with human rights, with several focuses including the privacy controls statuses of popular applications used online.²³⁰ Since its founding in 1990, Privacy International has been working on the promotion and protection of the right to privacy globally, especially relating to the repercussions of surveillance on the right to privacy in the digital age.²³¹

Misuse and Abuse of New and Emerging Technologies

As discussed, new and emerging technologies have given individuals, governments, and the UN tools to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and ensure the compliance with the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), the UDHR, and international law more generally.²³² However, new and emerging technologies also provide opportunities for malicious actors, including states, private companies, and organizations to inflict more damage to human rights through unlawful surveillance and cyberattacks, targeting individuals' sensitive data.²³³ An example of this phenomenon is the use of surveillance software by local law enforcement to investigate and prevent criminal activity.²³⁴ In 2019, it was found that Exodus, a surveillance ware developed by a video surveillance company called eSurv, was used to gain access to information on users' phones.²³⁵ The software was distributed through fake websites and the Google Play Store as an imitation of Italian and Turkmenistani mobile carrier support applications, and is currently suspected of being used for state surveillance.²³⁶ After users downloaded the application, their contacts, audio recordings, photos and videos, GPS locations, and device information were left exposed.²³⁷

A more recent case has involved Pegasus software.²³⁸ Between 2016 and 2018, Citizen Lab, in coordination with Lookout, conducted a scan of the use of Niv, Shalev and Omri (NSO) Group's Pegasus spyware globally, concluding that Pegasus software has been used to track individuals in 45 countries, several of which are considered to actively engage in transnational surveillance.²³⁹ The software works by exploiting an undisclosed flaw in a devices' operating system, which in turn allows Pegasus users to gain unrestricted access to any targeted device without the knowledge of the device owner.²⁴⁰ Instead of being used to track criminal suspects, it was uncovered that many of the targets were journalists, human rights

²²⁷ International Trade Association, U.S. Department of Commerce, *Privacy Shield Program Overview*.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Citizen Lab, *About Citizen Lab*; Privacy International, *History*.

²³⁰ Citizen Lab, *About Citizen Lab*.

²³¹ Privacy International, *History*.

²³² UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Strategy on New Technologies*, 2018.

²³³ UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*, 2020; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/39/29)*, 2018.

²³⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Unchecked Spyware Industry Enables Abuses*, 2021.

²³⁵ Security Without Borders, *Exodus: New Android Spyware Made in Italy*, 2019.

²³⁶ Bauer, Lookout Discovers Phishing Sites Distributing new iOS and Android Surveillanceware, *Lookout*, 2019.

²³⁷ Bauer, Lookout Discovers Phishing Sites Distributing new iOS and Android Surveillanceware, *Lookout*, 2019.

²³⁸ Forbidden Stories, *About the Pegasus Project*.

²³⁹ Marczak et al., Hide and Seek: Tracking NSO Group's Pegasus Spyware to Operations in 45 Countries, *The Citizen Lab*, 2018.

²⁴⁰ Lookout, *Targeted iOS Spyware: What you Need to Know to Protect Your Organization from Pegasus and Trident*, 2021.

activists, politicians, opposition leaders, and lawyers.²⁴¹ Amnesty International's Security Lab published the *Forensic Methodology Report (2021)*, in which they described that “widespread, persistent and ongoing unlawful surveillance and human rights abuses” were the result of the use of the Pegasus software.²⁴² Furthermore, according to Human Rights Watch, Pegasus software was used to target the then-fiancée of Saudi Arabian journalist and dissident Jamal Khashoggi both before and after his murder by Saudi operatives due to his criticism of the Saudi government.²⁴³

Considering these revelations regarding the NSO Group's Pegasus software and the issue of unlawful surveillance more generally, on 19 July 2021, Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, released a statement cautioning against the unlawful use of surveillance technology by states and highlighted the responsibilities of companies that produce surveillance technology to respect human rights.²⁴⁴ Although corporations such as NSO Group may have been well-intentioned in developing their surveillance technologies, major violations of the right to privacy continue to occur because of their technologies.²⁴⁵ Surveillance, in all its forms, continues to be one of the major impediments to the full enjoyment of the right to privacy in the digital context.²⁴⁶ Effective regulation of the use of surveillance software globally is still needed to protect the right to privacy in the digital age.²⁴⁷

Disproportionate Enjoyment of the Right to Privacy

Despite the vast potential offered by new and emerging technologies, many dangers risk exacerbating the disproportionate access to technology globally, also known as the digital divide, and with it the enjoyment of the right to privacy, particularly given the shift towards online services during the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁴⁸ These challenges include disproportionate access to privacy tools, as well as the spread of misinformation and disinformation targeting marginalized groups that seeks to encroach on their right to privacy.²⁴⁹

Many business and governmental entities offer tools that allow users to protect their anonymity and their data online such as encryption, which renders data unreadable to anyone except intended recipients, and anonymity, which is used to mask an individuals' identity online.²⁵⁰ Both encryption and anonymity tools allow users to share private information securely, without interception by potentially malicious actors.²⁵¹ Nevertheless, these tools are not equally available globally due to both disproportionate levels of

²⁴¹ Lookout, *Targeted iOS Spyware: What you Need to Know to Protect Your Organization from Pegasus and Trident*, 2021.

²⁴² Shia, *Forensic Methodology Report: How to catch NSO Group's Pegasus*, *Amnesty International*, 2021.

²⁴³ Human Rights Watch, *Unchecked Spyware Industry Enables Abuses*, 2021.

²⁴⁴ OHCHR, *Use of Spyware to Surveil Journalists and Human Rights Defenders: Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet*, 2021.

²⁴⁵ NSO Group, *Governance*; Nexa Technologies, *Solutions*, 2021; Marczak et al., *Hide and Seek: Tracking NSO Group's Pegasus Spyware to Operations in 45 Countries*, *The Citizen Lab*, 2018; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/39/29)*, 2018.

²⁴⁶ UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/HRC/RES/42/15)*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

²⁴⁷ OHCHR, *Use of Spyware to Surveil Journalists and Human Rights Defenders: Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet*, 2021.

²⁴⁸ UN DGC, *With Almost Half of World's Population Still Offline, Digital Divide Risks Becoming 'New Face of Inequality'*, *Deputy Secretary-General Warns General Assembly (DSG/SM/1579)*, 2021.

²⁴⁹ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye (A/HRC/29/32)*, 2015; UN HRC, *Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Irene Khan (A/HRC/47/25)*, 2021.

²⁵⁰ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye (A/HRC/29/32)*, 2015.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

knowledge regarding these tools and disproportionate access.²⁵² According to research published by Data & Society, vulnerable groups are less likely to have access to the adequate tools to protect themselves online.²⁵³ As outlined in the first report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, without adequate access to privacy tools, members of vulnerable groups may face harassment, hate speech, and physical attacks.²⁵⁴ General Assembly resolution 75/176 on “The Right to Privacy in the Digital age” (2021) calls for the promotion of education encompassing digital and technical skills; however, as highlighted by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, the digital divide continues to be a major challenge affecting equal protection of the right to privacy globally.²⁵⁵

Although technologies such as AI are being increasingly used to make decision-making fairer and more efficient, challenges prevail, such as automation of discriminatory decision-making or “algorithmic discrimination,” and the prevalence of disinformation and misinformation campaigns.²⁵⁶ AI software programmed using previous decisions that were biased leaves room for programs to repeat patterns of bias found in historical data.²⁵⁷ For example, although it is possible for individuals to withhold disclosing information such as gender, AI can extrapolate such data during its decision-making flow, leading to violations of individuals’ decisions on the data they wish keep private.²⁵⁸ Between 2014 and 2017, Amazon used an AI-powered automated hiring tool, which was ultimately found to exhibit gender bias.²⁵⁹ The tool inadvertently penalized CVs that indicated the applicant attended a women’s colleges or played on a women’s sports team, and rewarded CVs with verbs used, on average, more frequently by men, which could undermine the potential use of an AI-powered hiring tool in helping an organization eliminate gender bias in hiring and ultimately reveal personal information about an applicant without consent.²⁶⁰ A similar issue was uncovered in the use of AI to decide on credit limits for Apple Card users.²⁶¹ In 2019, a local investigation was launched to identify whether automatic credit limits were indeed discriminatory against women, and although there was no deliberate attempt to discriminate in the credit limits assigned to individuals of different genders, it was found that the programmers may have perpetuated gender bias that was evident in previous decision-making process.²⁶² Without proper oversight, the use of AI by businesses and Member States can potentially threaten individuals’ right to privacy and other intersecting human rights.²⁶³

²⁵² Madden, Privacy, Security and Digital Inequality: How Technology Experiences and Resources Vary by Socioeconomic Status, Race and Ethnicity, *Data & Society Research Institute*, 2017; UN DGC, *With Almost Half of World’s Population Still Offline, Digital Divide Risks Becoming ‘New Face of Inequality’*, Deputy Secretary-General Warns General Assembly (DSG/SM/1579), 2021; OHCHR, *Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression: Encryption and Anonymity Follow-up Report*, 2018.

²⁵³ Madden, Privacy, Security and Digital Inequality: How Technology Experiences and Resources Vary by Socioeconomic Status, Race and Ethnicity, *Data & Society Research Institute*, 2017.

²⁵⁴ UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression*, David Kaye (A/HRC/29/32), 2015.

²⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020; UN DGC, *With Almost Half of World’s Population Still Offline, Digital Divide Risks Becoming ‘New Face of Inequality’*, Deputy Secretary-General Warns General Assembly (DSG/SM/1579), 2021.

²⁵⁶ UN DGC, *Bias, Racism and Lies: Facing up to the Unwanted Consequences of AI*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020; OHCHR, *Expert Seminar on Artificial Intelligence and the Right to Privacy, 27-28 May 2020*, 2020.

²⁵⁷ OHCHR, *UN Committee Issues Recommendations to Combat Racial Profiling*, 2020.

²⁵⁸ UN HRC, *Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression*, Irene Khan (A/HRC/47/25), 2021.

²⁵⁹ Goodman, Why Amazon’s Automated Hiring Tool Discriminated Against Women, *American Civil Liberties Union*, 2018; Schulte, AI-assisted Recruitment is Biased. Here’s how to Make it fair, *World Economic Forum*, 2019.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ New York State Department of Financial Services, *DFS Issues Findings on the Apple Card and its Underwriter Goldman Sachs Bank*, 2021.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ OHCHR, *Expert Seminar on Artificial Intelligence and the Right to Privacy, 27-28 May 2020*, 2020.

Conclusion

With the increased utilization of ICTs, the protection of the right to privacy in the digital age has become both more critical and more complicated.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, with protecting privacy rights in the digital age closely linked to the achievement of other human rights such as the right to freedom of speech, the General Assembly Third Committee has noted that it becomes more urgent to address the persistent violations to the right to privacy.²⁶⁵ The international community has collectively achieved progress in developing international norms and standards related to the right to privacy in a digital context, including through General Assembly resolutions, the work of HRC, and the OHCHR.²⁶⁶ Civil society has also contributed to the discussion by publishing work outlining major gaps in the enjoyment of the right to privacy globally.²⁶⁷ The utilization of new and emerging technologies can sometimes provide new mechanisms to protect the right to privacy in a digital context.²⁶⁸ Nonetheless, major impediments to the full enjoyment of the right to privacy still exist, such as unlawful surveillance by states and private actors, lack of regulation and oversight on surveillance technologies, data theft, disproportionate access to privacy and anonymity tools, and (inadvertently) discriminatory AI.²⁶⁹

Further Research

Delegates should consider the following questions: In what ways do emerging technologies affect the enjoyment of the right to privacy in the digital age? How has COVID-19 helped or hindered progress in protecting individuals' right to privacy globally? What other measures can Member States take to ensure protection or retrieval of personal data when violations to an individual's right to privacy occurs? How accountable should companies be for how their users interact with their platforms or use their technologies? And furthermore, how can the root causes of algorithmic discrimination be mitigated?

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2020). *Data Protection and Privacy Legislation Worldwide*. Retrieved 28 June 2021 from: <https://unctad.org/page/data-protection-and-privacy-legislation-worldwide>

Through this interactive map, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development depicts the current state of domestic-level adoption of Data Protection and Privacy Legislation worldwide. The map highlights that out of 194 states, only 128 states have adopted data protection legislation. Rates in Africa are lower than average, with only 55% of states having adopted relevant legislation. The map shows comparable rates for the adoption of cybercrime laws, with 154 states having enacted cybercrime-related legislation. Delegates will find this source particularly useful while researching the disproportionate adoption of data protection legislation globally and the Member State they are representing.

²⁶⁴ UN DGC, *With Almost Half of World's Population Still Offline, Digital Divide Risks Becoming 'New Face of Inequality', Deputy Secretary-General Warns General Assembly (DSG/SM/1579)*, 2021.

²⁶⁵ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020.

²⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/RES/75/176)*, 2020; UN HRC, *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/HRC/RES/42/15)*, 2019; OHCHR, *Expert Workshop on the Right to Privacy in the Digital age, 19-20 February 2018*, 2018.

²⁶⁷ Citizen Lab, *About Citizen Lab*; Privacy International, *History*; Data & Society, *About*; Amnesty International, *Amnesty Tech*, 2021; Access Now, *About Us*, 2021.

²⁶⁸ UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Strategy on New Technologies*, 2018.

²⁶⁹ UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*, 2020; OHCHR, *Use of Spyware to Surveil Journalists and Human Rights Defenders: Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet*, 2021; UN DGC, *Bias, Racism and Lies: Facing up to the Unwanted Consequences of AI*, 2020.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *The Right to Privacy in the Digital age (A/RES/75/176)*. Adopted on the report of the Third Committee (A/75/478/Add.2). Retrieved 28 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/75/176>

In its recent seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly addressed the right to privacy in the digital age with a focus on measures that can be taken by both Member States and businesses. The resolution highlights several outstanding obstacles hindering the promotion and protection of the right to privacy in the digital age globally, including the unlawfulness of surveillance on a mass scale and the importance of putting in place safeguards to ensure that data is collected, stored, and accessed lawfully and in a way that minimizes any negative human rights impacts. Notably, this resolution does not seek the creation of an independent body to monitor and oversee to ensure transparency and accountability in Member States' surveillance activities.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Twenty-ninth session. (2015). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye (A/HRC/29/32)*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/29/32>

This report discusses some of the major issues pertaining to the implementation and provision of encryption and anonymity tools in digital communications. It highlights the link between privacy and the right to freedom of expression and opinion through encryption and evaluates the prevalent restrictions on the use of encryption and anonymity globally. Delegates will find this source helpful in understanding more about encryption, anonymity, and how they contribute to the protection of the right to privacy, as well as some of the hinderances to full achievement of this goal.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Thirty-ninth session. (2018). *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/39/29)*. Retrieved 28 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/39/29>

The High Commissioner on Human Rights has studied the promotion and protection of the right to privacy in the digital age in the context of emerging data-intensive practices, particularly by businesses. In this report, the High Commissioner recommends the creation of an independent authority to oversee and monitor the data protection measures by Member States and businesses to ensure compliance with international law pertinent to the right to privacy. Moreover, the report calls for the creation and enforcement of remediation protocols to ensure that individuals are protected against any violations of their right to privacy. Delegates will find the report useful because it outlines several activities undertaken by states and businesses that hinders the promotion and protection of human rights, especially in the context of increased reliance on data by the stakeholders and suggests concrete action at the international level that has not yet been fully implemented.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Forty-second session. (2019). *The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age (A/HRC/RES/42/15)*. Retrieved 28 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/42/15>

In this resolution, the HRC outlines several recommendations pertinent to the promotion and protection of the right to privacy in the digital age, most notably the importance of mitigating the adverse effect of new technologies, including cases where AI is used for surveillance and facial recognition. The resolution also calls upon Member States to ensure that the right to privacy is not violated during counterterrorism efforts and activities to combat violent extremism. Finally, the resolution requests that the High Commissioner for Human Rights hold an expert seminar to discuss the effect of AI on the enjoyment of the right to privacy in the digital age. Delegates will find that this resolution highlights the intersection between the right to privacy and national security and outlines how the work of the HRC complements the work of the General Assembly Third Committee.

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