



NMUN · DC

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE

## BACKGROUND GUIDE 2011

Secretary-General: Jennifer Spalding; Under-Secretary-General: Michael Gaspar  
Director: Cyril Philip; Assistant Director: Carrie Ann Starnes



NMUN · DC  
NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS  
nmun.org

## Official Welcome

On behalf of the 2011 National Model United Nations-DC Conference team, especially your committee staff, Cyril Philip and Carrie Ann Starnes Ortiz, we would like to welcome you to the General Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee. Everyone at NMUN-DC has worked diligently throughout the year to prepare for this conference, and we sincerely hope that you will conclude the weekend at the conference with a greater appreciation for global politics.

Model UN provides an excellent environment for delegates to learn and improve important life skills and academic knowledge. To begin, we have prepared this background guide to help you start your research in your country's policies and to understand the committee topics. During the conference, the intimate nature of this committee will ensure that you will rely not only on your knowledge but also your tact, oration and negotiation skills to fulfill your country's positions.

We are privileged to play a role in your educational experience here at NMUN-DC and look forward to working with all of you.

### History of the General Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee

Chapter IV, Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations established the subsidiary organs of the larger body by stating, “[t]he General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.” The agenda items of the General Assembly are assigned to each of these organs. All subsidiary committees thus established by the General Assembly submit reports and proposals to the plenary body for approval. Economic and financial topics before The General Assembly Plenary are addressed by the General Assembly Second Committee, The Economic and Financial Committee.

The main purview of the Second Committee regards economic and financial questions and it is sometimes referred to as ECOFIN. However, the committee often considers a broader objective, as matters such as the situation of special groups, least developed countries (LDCs) as well as the sovereignty of nations and peoples in occupied territories in the Middle East are frequently discussed by this body. During the 63rd Session for example, the Second Committee was tasked with addressing the “[p]ermanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources”

The General Assembly Second Committee encourages the Member States of the United Nations to focus on reducing the development gap, particularly regarding access to information and technology, by utilizing and efficiently implementing existing programs and initiatives. This tactic is perhaps one of the most important strategies to approaching agenda items: what has been done to combat the problem or issue? How well has it been implemented and what can be done moving forward? It is with this idea that the delegates of the General Assembly Second Committee contextualize the agenda items of each session.

#### I. Increasing Access to Technology in the Least Developed Countries

- What role can the United Nations, international bodies, transnational corporations, and other institutions play in the transferring and diffusion of technologies in Least Developed Countries?
- What are the critical areas of technological need for Least Developed Countries?
- What role does technology play in helping Least Developed Countries move forward on a path towards sustainable development in step with global principles on climate change?

Technological progress is critical for the economic development of Least Developed Countries, and while some developing countries have made significant progress throughout the last two decades, the gap between rich and poor countries remains wide. Developing countries employ only a quarter of the level of technology in developed countries, and the differences in research and development remains huge.

Closing this gap is a primary condition to put Least Developed Countries on a path of sustainable development and towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. For much of the Least Developed Countries, technological progress entails the adoption and adaptation from technologies already utilized abroad rather than creating primary domestic technologies. The transfer and diffusion of these technologies is critical to building domestic technological capabilities. The role of governments, NGOs, transnational corporations, and the United Nations is crucial in supporting this process. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, “in order to attain growth, the developing countries and those with economies in transition need to mobilize investment-both domestic and foreign- as well as modern technologies, so as to expand their productive assets and increase their core competencies and competitiveness.”

However, technology and investment flows still lag behind current needs. This is largely due to government failures and lack of institutional capacity. Speaking directly to these issues, on 12 March 2010, the General Assembly passed Resolution A/RES/64/212 recognizing “the vital role that science and technology, including environmentally sound technologies, can play in development and in facilitating efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve food security, fight diseases, improve education, protect the environment, accelerate the pace of economic diversification and transformation and improve productivity and competitiveness.” Accordingly, a recent briefing released by Global Access to Technology for Development identified five key areas in order to increase access to technology in developing countries: (1) identifying market failures; (2) coordinating diverse partners in technological transfer and diffusion, including research institutions, NGOs, international aid agencies, individual entrepreneurs, and companies of all sizes; (3) fostering roles for both public and private sectors for innovation, research, and development; (4) fostering access to financing; and (5) the integration of end-users in the product development process.

Primary areas of need for technological access in Least Developed Countries include Information and Communication Technology (ICT), renewable energies, and agricultural technologies. On 2 February 2011, The General Assembly passed resolution A/RES/64/41 stressing the “need to harness potential of information and communications technologies to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development goals, and sustainable economic growth.” Regarding agricultural technology, the General Assembly passed resolution A/RES/64/197 on Agricultural Technology and Development in order to reaffirm a commitment by the body to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, “recognizing the beneficial impact that the adoption of agricultural technologies can have for the achievement of these goals, including for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, empowering women and ensuring environmental sustainability.” The same resolution underlines the importance of collaboration, sharing of information, and the dissemination of agricultural technology and research, as well as consultation, in fostering sustainable development in LDCs.

Moreover, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is and will remain a primary means for developing countries to promote technological progress, due to the limited role of the private sector and the domestic public sectors in R&D. The United Nations has done much to stress the need for FDI in facilitating development and reducing both debt and poverty in the developing world, however, obvious deficiency persist.

One promising avenue for increasing access to technology in Least Developed Countries is through transnational corporations (TNC). Increasing interaction between TNCs and domestic firms in developing countries “can result in higher rates of knowledge and technology diffusion, thanks to a number of mechanisms, such as imitation, increased competition, backwards and forwards linkages, training, and human resources mobility.” TNCs are key components in developing and transferring technologies, and enabling leadership by governments in collaborating with TNCs is critical.

However, it is important for LDCs to operate within the parameters of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS agreement), as building trust between governments, foreign firms, and domestic actors is critical in promoting long-term and sustainable technological development in LDCs. Leadership needs in this area include improving intellectual property rights protection, identifying and targeting proper companies and technologies, providing the facilities to

best administer technological transfer, and providing government support in the form of consulting, training, and fiscal incentives for further technological development.

Most recently, the 65<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Second Committee stressed the importance of universal access to technologies, specifically and most critically Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as pertaining to development. As ICTs increasingly drive development in sectors of business, healthcare, education, etc., it is imperative that access to these technologies continues to proliferate. The General Assembly called on upgrading the quality and quantity of telecommunications infrastructures in developing countries, while boosting access to and investment in innovation and technological development. Marked improvement in this area is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and towards achieving the target set by world leaders at the World Summit on Information Technology—“ensuring access for more than half the world’s people by 2015.” For LDCs, cooperation for increasing access to technology is critical for industrialized development and is vitally important as a means to combat poverty. In this regard, the international community must boost cooperation for research, technology, and training to foster a capacity for technological access and its use.

Finally, the issue of climate change looms large for LDCs in strengthening development programs. Increasing access to more energy efficient and greener technologies is absolutely critical. In order to abide by the principles laid out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, LDCs must have access to the technologies that will put them on a sustainable path in step with those economies they hope to replicate. Accordingly, the United Nations Economic and Social Council released a report on 2 March 2001 calling for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation, and capacity building in order to promote sustainable development; however, much work remains to be done in order to assist LDCs develop in accordance to modern standards.

As reaffirmed in A/RES/64/212, there is much progress to be made in order to bring LDCs fully into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to take their place with the developed world. Complicated issues have and will arise, not limited to those needs to: “strengthen and enhance existing mechanisms and to support initiatives for research and development, including through voluntary partnerships between the public and private sectors, [and] to address the special needs of developing countries in the areas of health, agriculture, conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and environmental management, energy, forestry and the impact of climate change.”

## **II. Addressing Issues of Corruption in Afghanistan**

- How has the current situation developed? What previous actions have taken place to reduce corruption? Has certain actions been more effective than others in combating corruption? What NGOs or UN Bodies have been involved in the effort to decrease corruption in Afghanistan? How effective have they been?
- What are underlying causes of corruption in Afghanistan? Can these causes be fixed as a method to reduce corruption? How does corruption prevent growth in Afghanistan? What should be the appropriate donor response to corruption? Are joint-responses the most effective means of combatting corruption?

Afghanistan has continually experienced changes in power and a war environment for most of the past 20 years. There are long-term issues including insecurity and disputed legitimacy of its own rulers which have stifled its development. However, an enduring problem within all of the issues present is corruption within government. This corruption has trickled down into other areas of development for Afghanistan and plays a major role in keeping the region unstable and losing opportunities for foreign investment.

Corruption at home results in concern abroad and jeopardizes external cooperation and assistance. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a critical component of stable growth for developing States, including Afghanistan. However, FDI can be reduced when a government appears unreliable or illegitimate. It also discourages FDI from States which have ratified the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions or businesses in the United States operating under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. In Afghanistan, allegations of corruption and lack of

internal security combine to limit severely opportunities to attract international business or promote domestic investment.

Official development assistance represents approximately \$3.0 billion to Afghanistan's economy, which is close to half of the legitimate economy of the country. Afghanistan is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world today. Due to donor fears of corruption, as much as two-thirds of the aid is funneled through external organizations, not through the government. However, even external budget assistance has been criticized as not being good value for the money and vulnerable to corruption itself. Obviously one of the largest drivers of this systemic corruption is the size of the Afghan drug market, estimated at almost one-third of the national economy. Persistent domestic conflict, the drug trade, and market instability often lead government officials to feel as though they have a short time horizon on which to make any financial gain. Thus, aid, investment, and governance often yield to corrupt practices.

Despite strong condemnation by high ranking Afghan officials and external States, little action has taken place to reduce the corruption threat. Many initiatives run by the internal government have been perceived as ineffective "window dressing" of the problem. In 2004, Afghanistan signed the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); however, the UN and the United States supported and attained a softer benchmark for ratification. Donor pressure has only recently occurred and put more pressure on the government to enact more concrete reforms measures. Many donors have previously taken the bilateral route with the Afghan government, directly negotiating for decreased corruption for their specific aid. NATO States have also pressed bilaterally both privately and publicly for the Afghan Government to undertake anti-corruption measures. There have been only limited "joint responses" by donors to corruption in Afghanistan and the Afghan Government has aggressively denied the extent of the corruption charges. The path ahead will depend on donors, donor governments, and the Afghan Government coming to terms with measures and terms that produce real results.

### **III. Achieving the First Millennium Development Goal: The Eradication of Poverty & Hunger**

- What is the current progress made towards achieving the MDG 1? What programs have been established so far and how have these programs fared in reaching the goal? What are the main drivers which have helped achieve success or failure towards the goal?
- Why is it important to achieve MDG 1? Is there a better way to end poverty and hunger which have not been covered by current action? What is the best course of action to end poverty and hunger? How can the interrelation between hunger and poverty be used to achieve MDG 1?

The first Millennium Development Goal is to Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger. There are two main targets highlighted within the goal. The first target is to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day. The second target is to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Poverty and hunger are interrelated in a cause and effect manner. Poor and hungry people suffer not only given their condition but also face political, social and economic exclusion and have little access to infrastructure for health and education.

Halving hunger is not an easy task but as noted by several agencies it should be a several-pronged approach which attacks hunger, disease, and poverty simultaneously. Although there is no one cause of hunger worldwide, multiple causes stand out as key contributors to hunger. One is lack of education and malnutrition for women. In many countries, women and girls eat last and get least in the household. Their critical role in sustaining families and improving conditions are undermined in the process. Disease also plays a role, since several diseases can prevent individuals from properly absorbing food into their system. Parasites are also prevalent in hunger-prone areas in which they compete with the individual for the nutrition. Of course, extreme poverty itself limits food options, food production, and access to improved nutritional information. Natural disasters, climate change, and political instability further exacerbate the problems. In addition the recent spike in food prices has only complicated the matter for the poorest of the poor.

According to the World Food Program:

There are 925 million undernourished people in the world today. That means one in seven people do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life. Hunger and malnutrition are in fact the number one risk to the health worldwide — greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Among the key causes of hunger are natural disasters, conflict, poverty, poor agricultural infrastructure and over-exploitation of the environment. Recently, financial and economic crises have pushed more people into hunger. Hunger does not only weigh on the individual. It also imposes a crushing economic burden on the developing world. Economists estimate that every child whose physical and mental development is stunted by hunger and malnutrition stands to lose 5-10 percent in lifetime earnings. Whereas good progress was made in reducing chronic hunger in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, hunger has been slowly but steadily rising for the past decade.

It is clear that governments, the private sector, NGOs, and individuals of good will need a much greater effort to achieve the MDG1 in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Annotated Bibliography

### *History of the General Assembly 2nd Committee*

United Nations. (1945). *Charter of the United Nations*. Retrieved August 19, 2011, from <<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>>

*This document establishes the position and function of each organ of the United Nations. Two specific chapters may be of particular use to delegates. The first is Chapter III which establishes the organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly. Chapter IV then outlines the purpose and procedure for the body. Article 22 specifically states that the General Assembly may further establish subsidiary organs to enhance the procurement of its goals.*

United Nations. (2008). *UN General Assembly 65<sup>th</sup> Session-Second Committee*. Retrieved August <19, 2011, from <http://www.un.org/ga/second/index.shtml>>

*This page gives an overview of the General Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> (Economic and Financial). It briefly states the general purview of the body and gives a brief account of the proceedings from the previous session. It also provides a summary of the current proceedings in the committee this session. This is the page that will be updated at the end of each session. It is the most helpful citation for seeing the purpose and progression of the most recent previous sessions and current session. Although short, it was very informative and even included mention of the level of consensus reached in each session.*

United Nations, Latest News. (n.d.), *United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development*, Retrieved August 24, 2011 from <<http://www.un.org/ga/econcrisissummit/>>

*For delegates looking into the United Nations response to the international financial crisis this page might be a helpful starting point. The page gives brief information on the June 2009 conference which discussed the impact of the crisis on developing states in particular. The page also alludes to the December 2008 conference where the mandate for the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development was made.*

United Nations General Assembly. (n.d.). *Main Committees*. Retrieved August 14, 2011, from <<http://www.un.org/ga/maincommittees.shtml>>

*The Main Committees tab provides a list of the six main committees established as subsidiary organs by the General Assembly. A description of the issue areas of each is also included. Separate from the main committees, but also included on this page are links to the Credentials Committee examines and reports to the General Assembly the credentials of representatives of Member States, and the General Committee that meets frequently during each session to monitor the throughout each session to review the progress of the General Assembly and its committee.*

United Nations, Economic and Financial UN General Assembly 63<sup>rd</sup> Session - Second Committee. *Reports to the Plenary*. Retrieved August 20, 2011 from <<http://www.un.org/ga/second/63/reports.shtml>>

*This is a database for all of the reports the General Assembly Second Committee reports submitted to the Plenary for suggested adoption. The link entitled "A/63/411" will provide a document that provides a suggested resolution to the General Assembly Plenary regarding information communication technologies. It will be helpful in directing delegates toward what initiatives are already in place and which need to be addressed. See pages five through eight.*

### *1. Increasing Access to Technology in the Least Developed Countries*

United Nations General Assembly. (2010, October 21). *General Assembly EF/3288 Speakers in Second Committee Underline Need for Urgent Steps to Reverse Deepening Poverty Worldwide as Millennium Goals Deadline Looms*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gaef3288.doc.htm>

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2010, December 8). *Foreign Direct Investment, the Transfer and Diffusion of Technology, and Sustainable Development*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/524/59/PDF/G1052459.pdf?OpenElement>

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2011, March 24). *Report of the Expert Meeting on the Contribution of Foreign Direct Investment to the Transfer and Diffusion of Technology and Know-how for Sustainable Development in Developing Countries, Especially Least Developed Countries*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G11/505/14/PDF/G1150514.pdf?OpenElement>

United Nations General Assembly (2010, October 26). *Speakers in Second Committee, Discussing Information and Communications Technology for Development, Stress Importance of Universal Access to Broadband Connectivity*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gaef3290.doc.htm>

Boettiger, Sara and Alvarez, Sarah (2011, September 1). *Getting Better Technologies to the Poor: A Landscape of Commercialization Challenges and Opportunities*, PIPRA, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.infodev.org/en/Publication.904.html>

United Nations General Assembly (2010, October 5). *Rich Nations Pressed to Shoulder 'Historic Responsibility' of Helping Poor Countries Bridge Development Gaps, as Second Committee Continues Debate*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/gaef3279.doc.htm>

United Nations General Assembly. (2011, February 2). *Resolution 65/141 Information and Communications Technologies for Development*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/521/00/PDF/N1052100.pdf?OpenElement>

United Nations Industrial and Development Organization (2011, September 9). *Investment and Technology Promotion* Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://www.unido.org/index.php?id=018264>

United Nations General Assembly (2010, March 12). *Science and Technology for Development*, Retrieved September 9, 2011 from <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/474/55/PDF/N0947455.pdf?OpenElement>

## **II. Addressing Issues of Corruption in Afghanistan**

Cuervo-Cazurra, Alvaro. (Nov. 2006). Who Cares about Corruption?. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37 (6): 807-822.

*Cuervo-Cazurra examines the impact of corruption on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through analysis of the status of the home country and the donor country. He concludes that although FDI is reduced by corrupt environments it also enables corrupt States to invest as well which leads to an increase of the problem to begin with. This will provide delegates with an introduction to FDI and corruption and the relationship between these two issues.*

Maley, William. (Jan/Feb. 2011). Afghanistan in 2010. *Asian Survey*, 51 (1): 85-96.

*Maley provides a great introduction into the situation overall in Afghanistan including but not limited to corruption. Delegates can use this document as a refresher into the situation in Afghanistan as it has developed over the past decade. The article provides a great deal of statistics of the Afghan condition and can be leveraged for further research.*

OECD.(2009). *Working towards common donor responses to corruption Joint donor responses vis-à-vis corruption in Afghanistan: Myth or reality?*.OECD DAC Network on Governance – Anti-Corruption Task Team

*This publication by the OECD DAC Network on Governance – Anti-Corruption Task Team provides a key primer into the situation regarding corruption in Afghanistan. Delegates can refer to this as a start to their research as it touches several of the main problems that have caused the level of corruption in Afghanistan. The report concludes with a discussion on the importance of joint donor responses to corruption.*

United Nations General Assembly. (2007, January 24). *Resolution 61/18 The situation in Afghanistan*. Retrieved August 5, 2011 from [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/61/18&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/61/18&Lang=E)

*This resolution comprises of the UN's main concerns with Afghanistan and references corruption in several key areas as a significant concern. Operative clause 26 directly addresses corruption by asking the government to establish efforts which will fight against corruption. Operative clause 42 addresses international involvement in fighting corruption. This is a resolution which should be referenced by delegates in their research*

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC). (2011). *AFG/R86 - Strengthening anti-corruption measures in Afghanistan*. Retrieved August 5, 2011 from <http://www.unodc.org/afghanistan/en/Projects/R86.html>

*This factsheet provides a recent update on anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan. This source should be used a starting point for further research on the topic and reference several active programs in Afghanistan which delegates can look into for further information. It also provides details on existing funding arrangements for projects.*

### **III.Achieving the First Millennium Development Goal: The Eradication of Poverty & Hunger**

United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger. (2005). *Halving hunger: it can be done*. Retrieved August 5, 2011 from <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Hunger-lowres-complete.pdf>

*This report is a great introduction to efforts and the underlying causes of MDG 1. A great start to research for delegates and a very comprehensive guidebook. The report highlights seven distinct recommendations towards combating hunger which can be implemented.*

Kahn, AR. (Mar/Jun. 2005). *Employment and Millennium Development Goals: Analytics of the Linkage*. *The Bangladesh Development Studies*,31 (1/2): 1-24.

*Kahn provides an analysis of the effect of employment growth initiatives on achieving the MDGs. The paper looks at specific strategies which can be implemented to stimulate growth in employment the theoretical effect this would have on achieving certain MDGs including MDG 1. The analysis is mainly achieved through analysis of four case studies including Armenia, Ehtiopia, Cambodia and Mongolia.*

Adams, William M, RosAveling, Dan Brockington, et al. (Nov.12, 2004). *Biodiversity Conservation and the Eradication of Poverty*. *Science*,306 (5699): 1146-1149.

*Science takes a closer look at the link between biodiversity and eradicating poverty. It analyzes intergrated strategies which combat both issues which can be leveraged by delegates in their own research. Although conservation is not typically thought of in relation to poverty, this guide can help connect the two and provides an interesting analysis.*

Sumit, Roy. (Aug, 1997). *Structural Change and Poverty: Some Conceptual and Policy Issues*. *Economic and Political Weekly*,32 (33/34): 2117-2135.

*Roy takes a close look at the effect of globalization on poverty. This is a thoughtful analysis which can provide clues as to how a growing and interconnected economy has had on the poor people of the world and brings to light several key observations and conclusions. The paper analyzes the*

*effect of a freer market on poverty and how it can effectively help assuage poverty through policy action.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2011). *Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*. Retrieved August 5, 2011 from <http://www.undp.org/mdg/goal1.shtml>

*This is the UNDP website for the Millennium Development Goals. This website is a key gateway towards additional research for delegates into MDG 1. The website provides links to several supporting documents which are essential for understanding the topic including current UNDP action into MDG 1.*