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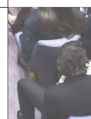
General Assemblies

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Topic 1
Discussing representation in
the United Nations



October 5-6, 2026



Committee
General Assembly Plenary

Georgia Tech
Model United Nations

Bridging technology and diplomacy.



Georgia Tech
Model United Nations

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#GTMUN2026



Letter from the Secretary General



Esteemed delegates,

My name is Henry Bui, your Secretary General for the 2026 edition of the Georgia Tech Model United Nations Conference, also lovingly known as GTMUN. As your Secretary General, I would like to give you all a warm welcome as you begin your journey this conference cycle.

Every year at GTMUN, we see hundreds of you delegates spend hours speaking about your ideas, deliberating with others about the efficacy of solutions, and collaborating with compatriots to draft extensive resolutions. It is always impressive to see each delegate's ability to tackle these very significant issues affecting the real world today, proposing novel solutions, creatively applying international policy, and synthesizing resolutions that solve these urgent questions comprehensively and on a global scale.

I am especially excited to see everything you all will achieve this October. With over 1,000 delegates attending, this will be the largest GTMUN to date, and with it, we are bringing you 18 diverse committees to further test your abilities. Each committee has been carefully crafted to open unique perspectives and to allow each delegate to apply their skills in possibly new, unique ways. I hope that in the midst of being lost in deep research rabbit holes and hours of debate in each session, you all are satisfactorily challenged and that you all leave with joy and excitement in the work you accomplish.

Outside of the Scheller building where you will debate for two days, you will find that many of the skills you have used will be applicable to other aspects of your professional career: your ability to speak publicly, to improvise and adapt, and to act diplomatically. As a computer science student and teaching assistant, I have found that my experience in Model UN has been some of my most valuable. It has taught me to be confident in what I say, and it has taught me how to work with people with all different kinds of backgrounds and perspectives. One of our core values at Georgia Tech is that we thrive on diversity, and that is something that shines strongly at GTMUN.

As you prepare for committee, I want you to remember the most important thing you should get out of GTMUN—even more important than demonstrating your abilities or honing your skills for your professional career—is having fun. Not every speech has to be perfect, and not every unmoderated caucus has to go your way! Take the opportunity to try eccentric things in your speeches and diplomatic approach, and take the opportunity to meet new people. Do not forget that you are surrounded by many others who have similar goals, aspirations, and interests as you do! You might find a future close friend. Though competing is quite fulfilling (and the prospect of awarding is exciting), it can also be very stressful, so it is critical to find joy in what you are doing.

Once again, we, the GTMUN Secretariat, are excited to see everything you will achieve.

Good luck & have fun,

Henry Bui

Secretary General of GTMUN 2026



What is a *Position Paper*?

A position paper is a paper which describes how a country intends to address the topics of the committee, detailing tangible solutions to committee issues and connection to the country's policies. A position paper should contain details for each topic that will be addressed by the committee.

Formatting Requirements

- 12-point font, double spaces Times New Roman
- 1-2 pages per topic (excluding Works Cited page)
- A Works Cited page with citations in MLA format
- Files submitted in .pdf format with title "GTMUN26_COMMITTEE_COUNTRY.pdf"
- e.g., "GTMUN26_DISEC_Germany.pdf" or "GTMUN26_UNEP_United_States.pdf"

Start Each Topic Page With

- Committee: [Name of committee]
- Delegation: [Name of delegation]
- Topic: [Topic name/decription]

Position Paper Rubric

In order to be eligible for awards, delegates must submit a position paper and receive a score of at least 12/20 (for single-topic committees) or 24/40 (for double-topic committees). Refer to the next page for the exact scoring guidelines.

Our AI Policy

Delegates are expected to be drafting documents during the span of the conference using their own thoughts and ideas. As such, GTMUN **does not permit** plagiarism, pre-writing, or the use of generative AI during conferences.

- Plagiarism is the act of using another individual's work or writing and passing it as one's own without proper citation or credit. This includes writing from other delegates in the committee or from online sources.
- Pre-writing is the act of writing material for in-conference documents (e.g., working papers, draft resolutions, crisis directives) ahead of the conference. While doing prior research and bringing research notes is permitted (and encouraged), these notes should not contain text that is intended to be directly copied and pasted into a document. Suspicion of pre-writing is subject to the chair's discretion.
- Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini) cannot be used to partially or wholly write a conference document. GTMUN recognizes the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence engines as a tool for research. Though discouraged, GTMUN accepts the use of such tools to locate resources and brainstorm starting solutions. However, generative AI must not be used to generate content for the conference, such as in-conference documents and position papers. GTMUN encourages the development of creative, unique solutions in committee and knows delegates are more than capable of producing such ideas without relying on generative AI.

Delegates that violate the writing policy will face consequences that may include disqualification from awards.

	Great (5)	Good (4)	Adequate (3)	Poor (1)
Background	- Detailed description of the topic (including dates and stakeholders) - Several facts and statistics - Discusses many relevant UN documents and resolutions	- Basic description of topic (including some dates and stakeholders) - Some facts and statistics - Discusses some relevant UN documents and resolutions	- Minimal description of topic (with no or few dates and stakeholders) - Few facts and statistics - Misses some key relevant UN documents and resolutions	- Unclear or incorrect description of topic - Incorrect or missing facts or statistics - No mention of relevant UN documents and resolutions
Policy	- Country's detailed history with issue - Detailed present position (or a strongly-defended inferred position) of country - Several references to statements from appropriate officials or documents - Several facts and statistics	- Country's basic history with issue - Present position (or reasonable inferred position) of country - Some references to statements from appropriate officials or documents - Some facts and statistics	- Sparsely describes country's history with issue - Present position (or basic inferred position) of country - Few references to statements from appropriate officials and documents - Few facts and statistics	- Incorrect or missing description of country's history with issue - Incorrect present position (or unreasonably inferred position) of country - No references to statements from appropriate officials and documents - Incorrect or missing facts and statistics
Solutions	- Detailed personal objectives - Proposes well-supported potential solutions - Identifies delegates to work with and provides strong reasoning for selections - Actionable, reasonable solutions which are within the scope of the committee	- Expresses personal objectives - Proposes reasonable potential solutions - Identifies delegates to work with and provides reasonable justification for selections - Actionable solutions within the scope of committee	- States personal objective - Proposes potential solutions - Identifies delegates to work with - Actionable solutions	- No proposed goals or plans - No potential collaborators mentioned - Implausible or missing actionable solutions
Mechanics	- No grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors - Numerous and diverse citations from appropriate sources	- Few grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors - Citations from appropriate sources	- Some grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes - One or two citations from inappropriate sources	- Many grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes - No citations from appropriate sources

Introduction to Committee

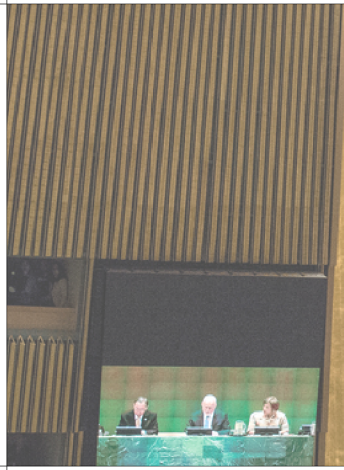
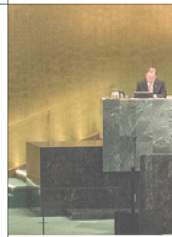
Following the global devastation of World War II, the United Nations was formed in 1945 as nations sought a diplomatic approach to prevent global conflict and rebuild cooperation among states. With 193 member states, the United Nations seeks to maintain international peace and security, working on issues such as protecting human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, supporting sustainable development, and upholding international law. It brings countries together to deal with issues that cross national borders, such as conflict, poverty, and climate-related challenges. As the main deliberative body of the UN, the General Assembly gives each member state a voice and vote on international issues within its mandate.

The United Nations establishes six organs, including the aforementioned General Assembly (GA), the Security Council (UNSC), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Secretariat. Each UN organ serves a different purpose, but works together to address global challenges through decision making, policy coordination, and program execution. Among them, the Security Council is responsible for investigating conflicts, recommending solutions, and taking actions such as sanctions or military measures. However, despite its major influence, this power is not shared equally among all member states. The GA Plenary will examine this gap between formal equality and actual influence, focusing on state representation, regional inequalities, and the growing role of non-state actors in shaping UN decisions.

Disclaimer

Model United Nations provides an opportunity for delegates to engage diplomatically with topics of global importance and explore possibilities for conflict resolution in a meaningful way. Many of the topics at hand may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter. We ask delegates to be respectful and professional when engaging with their committee and communicating with fellow delegates and GTMUN Conference staff. The content warning below is meant to warn you of potentially controversial topics that are present in the content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of the committee (e.g. debate, speeches, directives), so that you can prepare yourself before reading this background guide and participating in the committee. At GTMUN, we take equity violations very seriously and require delegates to fully comply with our equity guidelines. Failure to do so will result in an immediate disqualification from awards, and you may be asked to leave the conference. Please remain respectful in committee, and avoid overgeneralizations as well as take into account individual differences and contexts during your speeches. If you have any questions regarding our

equity guidelines, we encourage you to contact one of our staff members. If, because of this committee's content warning, you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to our staff via email at gtmunconference@gmail.com.



Topic

**Discussing representation
in the United Nations**

Key Terms and Acronyms

Member State	Countries admitted to the United Nations. There are currently 193
Non-Member Observer State	A status granted to state and intergovernmental organizations allowing them to participate in the activities of the General Assembly
UN Security Council	A 15-member council serving as the United Nations' primary body for addressing international threats. Membership is structured as follows: • Permanent Five members with veto power • Ten elected members that serve two-year, non-consecutive terms with no veto power
Permanent Five (P5)	Nations that hold a permanent seat on the Security Council and are granted veto power by the UN Charter; China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States
Veto Power	A negative vote by a P5 member on behalf of any decision or resolution will result in it not passing; also known as "right to veto"
Group of 7 (G7)	An informal group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and the United States that meets annually to discuss transnational policy issues
Group of 77 (G77)	Formed in June 1964, the G77 originally encompassed 77 developing nations across LAC, Africa, and Asia. It now has 134 members working together to address challenges in international development

LAC	Latin America & the Caribbean
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN Credentials Committee	A nine member body that reports to the UN on the credentials of state representatives
Non-State Actor	Entities that operate independently of official governments twitch the ability to influence political, economic, and social spheres; Examples include NGOs, multinational corporations, and paramilitary groups
Nongovernmental Organization (NGO)	Non-profit organizations that operate at the local, national, or international scale independently of government control; Primarily concerned with addressing social, humanitarian, and economic issues
Consultative Status	Granted by recommendation from the Committee on NGOs; Allows NGOs to work with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies to work with UN member states to accomplish common goals
Stateless Peoples	Individuals not recognized as citizens by any nation, often lacking access to healthcare, education, and formal employment

Introduction to Topic

Representation in the United Nations refers to how member states, groups, and other actors are included in global decision-making. The UN is based on the idea that all countries should be represented equally, especially in the General Assembly, where each member state has one vote. This gives all member states a chance to speak on international issues. This issue primarily involves member states, regional groups, and non-state actors within the UN system, where decisions are made across different bodies such as the General Assembly and the Security Council.

However, in reality, representation in the UN is much more complicated. While all countries can participate, not all parts of the system have the same level of power. For example, the United Nations Security Council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security and can make binding decisions, while most other bodies largely make recommendations. This gap reflects a central conflict in the UN system, where equal representation does not always lead to equal decision-making power.

Regional differences also play a role in shaping representation. Some parts of the world may have less influence, even if they include many member states, because they have limited representation in key decision-making bodies like the Security Council and fewer opportunities to participate in final decisions. At the same time, representation at the state level does not always reflect the experiences of all people, especially when marginalized communities like ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, or those without formal citizenship, are not fully included in international discussions. This shows that governments may not always represent everyone in their population in the same way. Beyond states, non-state actors such as NGOs and youth groups are becoming more involved in UN processes. Many of these groups can join discussions and share their views, but they do not have formal decision-making power. As global challenges become increasingly complex, there is increasing attention on how to make participation in global governance more inclusive.

History

During its early years, the United Nations used resolutions to address threats to global peace and stability. Resolution 169 (1961), passed during the Congo Crisis, exemplifies one such case (United Nations Security Council, n.d.). The newly independent Congo faced political fragmentation, secessionist violence, and foreign interference, and the Security Council called for arms restrictions, member state support for the central government, and the removal of foreign military personnel and mercenaries. This resolution is often cited as one of the first major cases of UN involvement in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. This shows that even at

an early stage, the UN was already dealing with both security concerns and state authority at the same time. As global challenges changed over time, the role of UN resolutions also expanded.

Resolution 1325 in 2000 recognized the importance of women in peacebuilding, emphasizing the necessity of their participation in conflict prevention and decision-making. Resolution 1674 shifted the focus toward protecting civilians during armed conflict, clarifying that parties should follow international humanitarian law, avoid targeting civilians, and ensure access to humanitarian aid, all while affirming that states and the international community jointly share responsibility for protecting vulnerable populations. Together, these resolutions reflect a shift in UN attention toward the human impact of conflict and show how the role of UN resolutions has continued to expand to meet new types of conflicts and global concerns.

At the same time, even though the General Assembly is a space where all member states can participate equally, since every country still has one vote, this does not always mean they have the same level of influence. Some parts of the UN system, like the United Nations Security Council, have much more decision-making power than the General Assembly. Because of this, there is a clear gap between having a voice and actually having influence, which is why representation has become such an important issue in this committee.

State Representation

State-level representation in the UN follows the same formal principle as the General Assembly: one country, one vote, with no state weighted more heavily than another on paper. In practice, though, formal equality does not translate into equal decision-making power. Some UN bodies can bind every member state to their decisions, while most others can only recommend. The clearest example of this gap is the Security Council, which can issue binding decisions that member states are expected to follow without every country having a hand in shaping them.

One major issue comes from the structure of the Security Council itself. It consists of 15 members: its five permanent members include China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the chief Allied powers of World War II, and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly to two-year terms without veto power, meaning they cannot block UNSC decisions on their own.

This means a small number of states can block decisions, even when most countries support them, which can slow down responses to international crises or prevent the UN from taking action. For example, Russia has vetoed over a dozen Syria-related Security Council resolutions since 2011, often alongside China. In 2020, the two vetoed the renewal of a cross-border aid mechanism that allowed the UN to deliver humanitarian assistance to the rebel-held northwest Syria without the

central government's approval. Cutting the authorized crossings from four to one put millions of civilians' access to food and medical supplies at risk.

Another issue is that many countries have limited influence over which issues are prioritized and how resources are used within the UN, even though all states are considered equal under the UN Charter. This imbalance fuels ongoing calls for reform: countries such as India, Brazil, and Germany have repeatedly called for reform to the Security Council, arguing that the current structure does not reflect the current global balance of power. Additionally, many African States have also raised concerns that the region is not allotted a permanent seat despite the numerous member states that rest on the continent. These concerns high the need for further resolutions to state representation in the UN system.

Regional Representation

The United Nations is organized into five regional groups: African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and Other States. Member states may choose to coordinate UN activities with other group members, but the regional groups formally exist to establish equitable geographic representation in UN bodies and do not weigh ideological differences. As a result, states within the same regional group often hold substantially different foreign policy objectives. For example, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Central Asian, and East Asian countries are combined within Asia-Pacific States, yet their voting behavior on GA resolutions concerning the right to development (A/RES/80/207), a democratic and equitable international order (A/RES/80/208), the situation of human rights in Iran (A/RES/80/222), and human rights in the occupied territories of Ukraine (A/RES/80/223), often diverges substantially. In these cases, voting patterns show greater cohesion within subregions than across the Asia-Pacific group as a whole, highlighting potential limitations of geographic classifications as indicators of shared political aims (United Nations General Assembly).

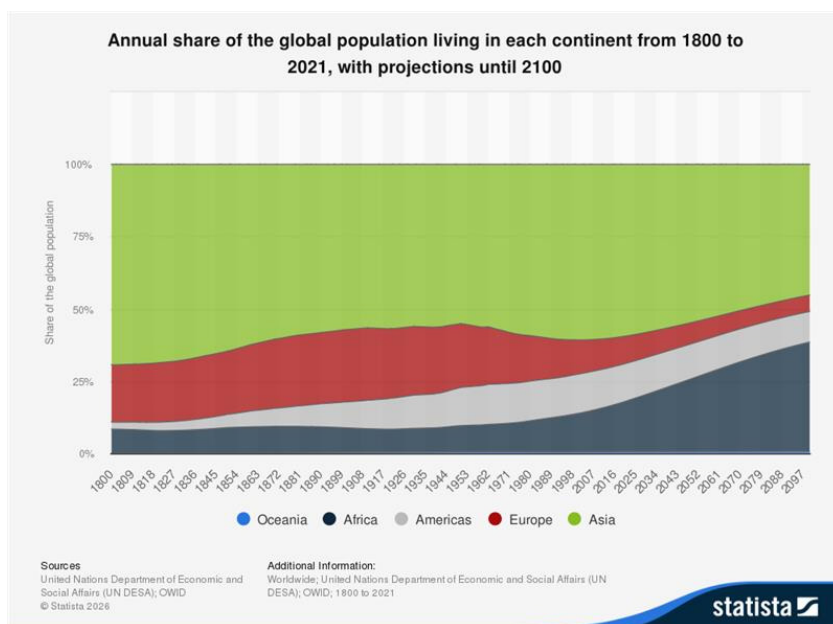
Disparities in representation exist at the leadership level. In particular, senior UN leadership positions largely remain concentrated among nationals from the Western European and Other States Group. A few notable examples include the Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund, held by a US national since 1947, Undersecretary General for Peace operations, held by a French National since 1997, and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, held by an Italian national from 1992-2010 (Chai, 2024). Taken into consideration with the fact that several positions have been successively held by the United Kingdom, China, and Russia, there is a pattern of nations wielding dual influence over UN secretariat leadership and the Security Council, this signifies an imbalance of power held by a specific group of states largely from one regional group. While UN officials are expected to act independently of their governments, professional experiences and social contexts inevitably shape leaders'

understanding of global challenges. Concentration of leadership among nationals from a small number of western states reduces the diversity of perspectives represented in institutional decision-making, particularly regarding issues that disproportionately affect developing countries.

Despite representing a declining share of the world's population, Western Europe increased its share of UN secretariat positions from 41% to 45% between 1945

and 2007 (Novosad & Werker, 2019). By contrast, China accounted for more than one-fifth of the world's population but occupied just 1% of senior Secretariat positions during that same time period. Comparable circumstances exist for other populous developing countries. India, Indonesia, and Bangladesh each possess shares of the world population at least three times larger than their shares of Secretariat positions. In each case, these countries held less than one-quarter of the representation that would be expected if leadership positions reflected the global population distribution. Conversely, smaller nations such as Finland, Norway, and Ireland occupied Secretariat positions at rates upwards of seventeen times their share of the world's population. Not all the disparities are this pronounced: Poland, United States, South Africa, and Myanmar all maintain representation roughly proportional to their demographic weight.

Population size alone is unlikely to be the appropriate standard for representation in leadership, nor would perfectly proportional representation be feasible. Nevertheless, these trends raise broader questions about the extent to which the leadership of the United Nations reflects the diversity of the people it serves. Leaders shape organizational priorities, determine the allocation of resources, and guide the agendas of UN bodies. As a result, persistent disparities in leadership may contribute to perceptions among some member states that their perspectives and interests are not meaningfully reflected in the decision making process, which can affect the institution's effectiveness and legitimacy. As global demographic and political realities continue to evolve, ensuring broader representation in the General Assembly and UN leadership roles will be essential to maintaining confidence in the



Annual share of the global population living in each continent from 1800 to 2021, with projections until 2100

organization and strengthening all individuals it aims to serve.

Social Representation

A democratically elected government may not fully reflect the beliefs of the portion of the population that did not vote for it. In severe instances, a government that persecutes marginalized communities cannot faithfully represent the people it is actively harming. One such case is the Rohingya Muslims, an ethnic minority in Myanmar. Despite making up a population of 1 million prior to 2017, the government restricts the Rohingya population through marriage, family planning, employment, education, religious choice, and religious freedom (Albert & Maizland, 2020). They most notably lack citizenship, rendering the entire population stateless. This exclusion extends directly into political representation. Myanmar's government does not recognize the Rohingya as one of the country's 135 official ethnic groups, and in its 2015 general elections, no parliamentary candidate was Muslim. Unable to pursue justice through their own government, their case had to be carried by other states and institutions. In 2019, Gambia brought a genocide case against Myanmar to the International Court of Justice on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and a UN fact-finding mission recommended that Myanmar's military leaders be referred to the International Criminal Court. This case shows that when a persecuting government holds a population's only seat at the UN, that population's path to representation rests in external states and institutions willing to take on their cause.

In order for a state to send a delegation to the United Nations, it must submit credentials for that delegation, which are subject to approval by the UN Credentials Committee. The Committee can assess these credentials narrowly, with a simple confirmation that a delegate is properly endorsed by a state's head of government, or it can weigh the legitimacy of the government being represented. Historically, this legitimacy-based approach has been used to withhold recognition from governments the international community wished to condemn: in 1970, the Credentials Committee rejected the credentials of South Africa's apartheid government despite it maintaining effective control of the state (Public International Law and Policy Group, 2007). In this case, non-accreditation served as a form of condemnation. When an authoritative government submits its delegation's credentials for approval, accreditation becomes a question of both social representation and government legitimacy. Approving UN credentials is a significant step towards global recognition for a particular government's legitimacy, and grants governments access to global partnerships and a platform to advance their own interests. When a persecuting government holds the UN seat, the persecuted population is not only underrepresented but also actively misrepresented.

Even when marginalized communities do gain formal representation within

international institutions, that representation is not always on their own terms. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) illustrates how institutional inclusion can stifle the original cause. The forum offers indigenous peoples a seat at the table but it also dilutes their fundamental claims, specifically around land, sovereignty, land, and collective identity. In a 2009 General Comment, the Forum interpreted Article 3 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, which recognizes indigenous peoples's right to self-determination, as merely restating the individual right to self-determination already found in existing human rights treaties, rather than the collective right to sovereignty and nationhood that many indigenous delegations had already sought (Schulte-Tenckhoff & Hasan Khan, 2011). Thus, having a seat at the table does not automatically mean that one's concerns are heard.

Gender is one of the clearest examples of this gap: while the UN's calls for inclusion persist, such as Security Council Resolution 1325's emphasis on women's participation in peace and conflict decision making, women remain underrepresented in the governments meant to represent them. Social representation is also impacted by the limited visibility of marginalized communities in a nation's own government. Women make up 22.9% of cabinet ministers worldwide, and underrepresentation is particularly stark in areas like foreign affairs and defense: areas that the United Nations deals with frequently. The most commonly held positions by women relate to gender equality, family and children affairs, and social inclusion. On the other hand, 113 countries worldwide had never had a woman serve as Head of State or Government in 2024. A lack of female leadership at the table means that the impact of women's voices and contributions is not being realized.

Non-State and Future Representation

Non-state representation raises a growing debate over how much influence actors like NGOs should have in formal UN decision making. Over time, non-state actors have become more involved in UN processes by attending meetings, submitting reports, and partaking in discussions through consultative status. Through consultative status, NGOs may provide input in UN discussions but remain separate from formal decision-making. As a result, their role in the UN remains limited.

This means non-state actors cannot vote or directly influence final decisions. Even though they are included in the process, they do not have the same level of influence as member states. Another issue is unequal access. Some organizations are more active in UN discussions than others, often due to differences in resources, experience, and connections. For example, larger international NGOs with more resources and experience working with the UN often have greater access to discussions compared to smaller or local organizations. This means that even within non-state participation, influence is not evenly distributed.

There has also been growing attention on the need for broader participation, especially from youth groups, as they argue that decisions made at the UN affect their future and should reflect a wider range of perspectives. According to the United Nations Youth, the UN has encouraged more involvement from different actors, especially youth groups, reflecting a growing demand for more inclusive participation. For example, youth representatives have been invited to speak at UN climate conferences such as the UN Climate Change Conference (COP), where they can present their views but are not involved in voting or final decisions. As a result, it is still unclear how much influence these groups have on final decisions.

Case Studies

Ezulwini Consensus

At the UN's establishment in 1945, only four African nations were recognized as independent founding members: Ethiopia, Liberia, Union of South Africa, and Egypt. The rest of the continent largely remained under colonial rule at this time. From 1951 to 1977, forty-eight states received their independence from Western European nations (Brooklyn Museum, n.d.). The surge in post-colonial nations corresponds with an increase in UN membership over the same time period, with the largest increase coming from 82 members in 1958 to 97 members in 1960 (United Nations, n.d.). Recognizing the need for reform in 1963, the General Assembly recommended the Charter be amended to increase UN Security Council Membership from eleven to fifteen, and set the following guideline for geographic representation (Dag Hammarskjöld Library, n.d.):

- 5 seats for African and Asian States
- 1 seats for Eastern European States
- 2 seats for Latin American States
- 2 seats for Western European and other States

The current allocation of representation on the UNSC reflects the world power dynamics in 1963, and many call for reforms to UNSC permanent and elected seats, as this impacts the Council's ability to address current geopolitical realities. About 60% of current UNSC resolutions involve African nations, namely those in current crises such as Libya, Democratic



Julius Nyerere holding a sign demanding complete independence from the British Empire, 1961. Africa through a Lens, CO 1069/166. (Photo: The National Archives UK)

Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic, and Somalia (Forti & Carvalho, 2020). While these nations are the key stakeholders of these documents, they lack the ability to make a direct, meaningful impact on these decisions concerning their own affairs.

One such call for reform is from the African Union, which, through the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration on Reform of the United Nations, asserts Africa's vision for reform. The Ezulwini consensus maintains that African States should be allotted no less than two permanent seats on the UNSC and five non-permanent seats. Furthermore, the African Union is opposed to the concept of veto power; however, so long as this power exists, they believe it should be made available to all permanent members of the UNSC. In terms of selecting members for these permanent seats, the consensus dictates that it should be the African Union's responsibility to select Africa's representatives for the permanent seats, and that the selection criteria will be determined by the African Union.

Positions on UNSC reform vary greatly. Permanent members like the United States, France, and the United Kingdom have publicly expressed support for increased permanent and elected seats for not just African States, but other states as well. However, the three countries maintain that new permanent members will not be granted veto power, a position that many nations take issue with. Guyana rejects any proposal for expanded permanent membership without veto privilege, as this would create a hierarchy within UNSC permanent members and perpetuate the same injustices the UN seeks to amend through increased representation. The Russian Federation believes that veto power ensures the adoption of realistic decisions. The nation also supports UNSC reform, but cautions that an overly broad council may limit the effectiveness of its authority.

The Ezulwini Consensus calls for greater representation of African States, it stands to benefit the United Nations as well. The body is in a legitimacy crisis, perpetuated by Western leadership's monopoly on middle and high level secretariat positions, and how this leadership monopoly manifests in both UN decisions and global realities. Allotting greater representation to African, Asia Pacific, and LAC States, enhances the UN's effectiveness in addressing global challenges.

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Indigenous peoples worldwide often face barriers to access basic rights like education, sanitary living conditions, and even recognition of their very existence. Groups such as International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Cultural Survival, and Center for World Indigenous Studies, leverage activism, advocacy, and research to champion global indigenous movements, which typically seek recognition as sovereign nations, international legal standing, binding treaty rights, and self-determination as

indigenous peoples.

Formal institutions like the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) seek to address these concerns by elevating representation of various indigenous groups to the international stage. The UNPFII serves as an advisory body to the UN Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSOC), providing expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to both the council and the various programs, funds, and agencies that consult it. Its mandate specifically concerns economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health, and human rights. Contrary to the breadth of its mandate, the body notably lacks enforcement, or monitoring power, and can only make recommendations to ECOSOC. The limited scope of its power means that the forum lacks mechanisms to ensure compliance with indigenous rights commitments. The two other groups that specifically deal in indigenous issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also lack meaningful enforcement or monitoring power.

Although each group has different needs, many indigenous groups have the following in common:

- Treaty Recognition: the recognition of treaties signed with colonial governments as legitimate international agreements between sovereign peoples
- Self-Determination as a Group: the right to determine their own political futures
- Land and Resource Sovereignty: governance and authority over ancestral territories
- International Legal Standing: the ability to bring claim in international courts as indigenous groups

The UNPFII gives indigenous voices from around the globe an opportunity to participate in UN affairs, but participation is not equivalent to the implementation of meaningful change. If one were to view a seat at the table as the culmination of the indigenous rights movement, they would be ignoring the voices of those who never asked for this level of institutional representation. Through the UNPFII, its indigenous members work together to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues, provide advice to the ECOSOC and promote the coordination of UN activities related to the indigenous issues. It is worth noting, however, that a significant gap exists between the abilities granted to the UNPFII and the desired result of indigenous movements. In order to shift from participation to action, bodies like these must be granted the necessary powers to effect purposeful change. Otherwise, their seat at the table remains largely symbolic.

Directives / QARMAs

The directives/QARMAS section is critical in giving delegates an idea of what they should target during debate and resolutions but may also provide a foundation for their research and position papers. These questions should be open-ended and help delegates understand what the dais deem most crucial for the topic at hand, fostering specific solutions rather than general discussions.

How can the GA reform its decision-making procedures to better reflect changing geopolitical realities?

What methods can be used to build consensus regarding structural reforms among member states with competing interests?

How can reforming state and regional representation improve the UN's ability to address international security threats and reach development goals?

How should veto power in the Security Council be restructured to prevent further marginalization of underrepresented regions?

To what extent should existing UN bodies be reformed versus replaced entirely, and what criteria should guide that recommendation?

How can the GA empower the voices of marginalized communities and non-state actors beyond advisory-level bodies?

What measures can delegates take to hold nations accountable for leveraging institutional influence to maintain the status quo?

Can non-state and indigenous groups be adequately represented through state-dominated institutional structures?

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