



General Assembly First Committee

Committee Mandate

The General Assembly (GA) was created as one of the main original organs of the United Nations (UN) in 1945.¹ The GA is a deliberative body that can create non-binding resolutions for the international community.² The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is composed of all 193 Member States, allowing all Member States input into the discussions and decisions of the UNGA.³ Because of its representation, the UNGA serves as a platform for each Member State to practice diplomacy and collaborate in the crafting of international norms. This body holds annual meetings in the month of September to carry out this work of diplomacy.⁴

The UNGA is divided into six subsidiary committees each of which focus on different topic areas.⁵ The First Committee of the GA addresses topics of disarmament and other issues related to peace and security within the international community.⁶ Additionally, this committee is the only committee in the UN in which the Member States can request verbatim records.⁷ The UNGA is currently in its 74th session, during which the First Committee has discussed 7 topic clusters: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; disarmament of outer space; conventional weapons; other disarmament measures and international security; regional disarmament and security; and disarmament machinery.⁸ Another organ of the UN, the UN Security Council, also focuses on international peace and security; however, the Security Council's discussions center on specific threats or conflicts, whereas the First Committee high-level discussions focus on general disarmament issues and security concerns.

Membership

The foundational notion of sovereign equality, which guarantees all Member States a single and equally weighted vote, is best displayed in the UNGA.⁹ The UNGA is a plenary body, meaning that the UNGA and all six of their subsidiary committees benefit from a universal membership of all UN Member States.¹⁰ Admission of new members to the GA requires a two-thirds majority vote by current Member States.¹¹ The UNGA also

¹United Nations Conference on International Organization. "Charter of the United Nations." 1945.

² United Nations. "About the UN: Main Organs."

³ Ibid

⁴ United Nations. "About the UN: Main Organs."

⁵ United Nations. "General Assembly of the United Nations."

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ General Assembly First Committee. "Action on draft resolutions and decisions under disarmament and international security items." A/C.1/74/CRP.3. 2019.

⁹ United Nations Conference on International Organization. "Charter of the United Nations." 1945.

¹⁰ United Nations. "General Assembly of the United Nations."

¹¹ United Nations. "About the General Assembly."

has over 100 non-member States, entities, and organizations that are invited to participate as observers in the GA.¹² The GA First Committee has a rotating Chairperson position which is elected on a yearly basis. The Chairperson for the 74th session of the UNGA is H.E. Mr. Sacha Llorenty Soliz of Bolivia.¹³

Reporting

The GA First Committee regularly works with the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. Both of these entities report to the GA on a yearly basis. During its regular sessions, delegates of the GA First Committee discuss and debate a topic in order to develop a draft resolution to be adopted by a simple majority vote of the committee. First Committee, along with all of the other subsidiary GA committees, submit their resolutions to the GA plenary for a second simple majority vote for full adoption.¹⁴ Any resolution adopted by the General Assembly is a representation of the will of the international community.

¹² United Nations 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/74/3. 2019.

¹³ United Nations. "Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)."

¹⁴ United Nations. "Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)."

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