



United Nations Third Committee

Committee Mandate

With the creation of the United Nations and the Charter in 1945 also came the creation of the General Assembly (UNGA), the main deliberative body and one of the principal organs of the United Nations.¹ The UNGA consists of all 193 Member States of the United Nations and is the main platform for high-level diplomacy. The main documents created within the UNGA are non-binding resolutions that address international norms on certain topics. The General Assembly has 6 subsidiary committees.

The UNGA Third Committee is known as the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, currently chaired by H. E. Christian Braun of Luxembourg. The Third Committee's main topics focus on social, humanitarian affairs, and human rights issues. Topics include social development and human rights, often touching on gender equality, crime prevention and criminal justice, the protection of vulnerable populations such as children, indigenous groups, refugees, and persons with disabilities.²

Membership

The UNGA Third Committee is a plenary committee made up of all 193 Member States. The UNGA operates on the idea of Sovereign Equality: each Member State, regardless of size, GNI, or any other factor, gets a single, equal vote.³ Some states do lack sufficient representatives at each subsidiary committee meeting or informal debates. Usually, more delegates are present during the review and votes for draft resolutions during the General Assembly Plenary sessions than during a meeting of a subsidiary General Assembly committee.⁴ Debate in the GA Third Committee can be more intense than elsewhere due to the sensitive nature of cultural topics.

Reporting

The General Assembly has no direct subsidiary bodies, but is often advised by other UN entities, such as UN-Women, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR), or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). While in session, delegates of this committee discuss and debate a topic to develop a working paper, which can then be adopted as a draft resolution by a simple majority vote of the committee. Draft resolutions from GA Third Committee, and all other subsidiary committees, are passed on to the General Assembly Plenary for a second vote and typically passed via majority vote. Any resolution that is adopted by the General Assembly is a statement of the will of the international community.

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

² United Nations General Assembly, "Social, Humanitarian, & Cultural Issues (Third Committee),"

³ United Nations Conference on International Organization, Charter of the United Nations, 1945.

⁴ United Nations General Assembly, "Social, Humanitarian, & Cultural Issues (Third Committee),"

Bibliography

United Nations Conference on International Organization. Charter of the United Nations. 1945. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/.%20>

United Nations General Assembly. "Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues (Third Committee)." <https://www.un.org/en/ga/third/>.