Change the World MUN
Paris 2026

Powered by
Associazione Diplomatici

BACKGROUND GUIDE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE

DISARMAMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

CHANGE THE WORLD ACADEMY

The Biggest Model United Nations in the World

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 Change the World Model United Nations (CWMUN).

As your committee Dais, we are looking forward to meeting you and hearing your ideas about how to solve international problems.

The United Nations (UN) depends on the cooperation and goodwill of its 193 member States. Because each State has unique interests and concerns, it is challenging to write, negotiate and pass resolutions. Every stage of the process demands creativity and diplomacy.

By reading this Background Guide, you are taking the first step in a journey that goes far beyond preparing for a conference. Over the coming weeks, you will analyse one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, understand how governments and international organisations respond to it, and learn how diplomats transform ideas into international action.

This guide is not meant to provide all the answers. Its purpose is to help you ask better questions, because diplomacy is not about knowing everything. It is about making responsible decisions with the best information available.

Remember: every solution begins with informed leadership.

You will be discussing this topic:

The Militarization of Education: Preventing the Recruitment of Children and Youth by Armed Groups

While we may all lead different lives and face different struggles, we have to bear in mind that we all share the same world and the same resources. Whether it is environmental problems or political unrest, what is happening in the world concerns all of us. Only through mutual understanding, unity, and collaboration can we lay the foundations of a worthier world.

As your committee Dais, we will work to keep the committees running smoothly. We will do our best to help you understand the procedures and to ensure that the perspectives of all delegates are heard and respected.

Sincerely,

The CWMUN Staff Board



What is this activity about?

The Change the World Model United Nations is a role-playing game. Your task is to impersonate a diplomat of the assigned Country and present the perspective of this Country's current government.

What should you do before the Simulation?

Before the Simulation, you should:

- Create your handbook, a collection of relevant UN resolutions, reports, academic studies, and news from reliable media.
- Write the Position Paper, describing the position of your country on the topic you have been assigned to.
- Prepare some topics for Moderated Caucus debates, *i.e.* short formal debates which cover narrow aspects of each topic. For example, within the topic "Violence against women"; delegates can hold a caucus with the subtopic "Ways of preventing genital mutilation".
- Think about some ideas for the Resolution, at least two or three clauses that your State would like to include in the main body of the Resolution.
- Learn and practice the Rules of Procedure.

Why this Background Guide Matters?

The strongest delegates are not those who memorise the greatest number of facts, but those who understand the issue from different perspectives.

As you read this guide, challenge yourself to think critically: ask why different countries defend different positions, identify competing priorities, question assumptions, and begin developing your own strategic understanding of the topic.

Remember: You are not preparing to pass an exam; you are preparing to participate in an international negotiation.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this experience, you should be able to:

- Understand the international context surrounding the topic
- Explain your country's official position
- Develop evidence-based policy proposals
- Negotiate with other delegations
- Build consensus
- Translate ideas into diplomatic action

Think like an analyst, not just a reader.

Tips (!)

Before attending the simulation, go beyond this Background Guide. Explore official UN documents, government statements, reports by international organisations, academic research, reliable news sources. Ask yourself: has the situation changed since this guide was written? Real diplomacy requires continuous learning.

Learn about your Country from the official website of your State's permanent mission to the United Nations, and from other government websites (for example, the website and social media profiles of the Royal Family or President, Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs...). Make sure to know as much as possible about the foreign relations of your Country! Consider that at the United Nations, Countries generally lean towards their own geopolitical blocs: Western, Former Soviet, African, Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin American... Consider also organisations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union, the Arab League, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Union of South American Nations (USAN)...

REMEMBER!

Your task is to present the official position of your assigned Country. Misrepresenting this position and/or representing your private views is against the rules, even if you do not agree with your Country's position. In any case, you must not hyperbolise nor satirise the position of your Country. Humour, and especially sarcasm, is generally not typical for formal writing or formal debates. Although MUN welcomes wit and smart puns, please always be extremely considerate when using humour

Think Like a Diplomat

As you prepare for the conference, do not ask only: "What does my country think?", but also ask: "Why does my country think this?". And even more importantly: "How can different countries move from disagreement to cooperation?".

Because diplomacy is not about defending positions. It is about building solutions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Historical background and Establishment of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

The establishment of the United Nations General Assembly was the result of the international community's desire to prevent another global conflict after the Second World War and demonstrated the need for a strong international organisation. During the preparatory negotiations held at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference (1944) and later at the Yalta Conference (1945)[1], the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and China designed the framework of the future United Nations, while France joined as one of the sponsoring powers before the San Francisco Conference.[2] At the United Nations Conference on International Organization, held in San Francisco between April and June 1945, representatives of 50 states negotiated and adopted the Charter of the United Nations.[3] The General Assembly was established as one of the six principal organs of the Organization, embodying the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States by granting each state one vote.[4]

One of the main challenges during its creation concerned the balance of power between the General Assembly and the Security Council. While smaller states advocated for a stronger and more democratic Assembly, the major Allied powers insisted on assigning primary responsibility for international peace and security to the Security Council, including the veto power of its five permanent members.

[1] United Nations. (n.d.). Preparatory Years: UN Charter History. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/preparatory-years
[2] United Nations. (n.d.). The San Francisco Conference. United Nations; United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/san-francisco-conference
[3] United Nations. (1945). UN charter. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter
[4] United Nations. (2025). History of the United Nations. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un

The General Assembly is now composed of all 193 Member States of the United Nations, and it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion on the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. It also plays a central role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law.

The Assembly regularly meets from September to December each year (main part), and thereafter, from January to September (resumed part), as required, including to take up outstanding reports from the Fourth and Fifth Committees. During the resumed part of the session, the Assembly also considers current issues in high-level thematic debates organised by the President of the General Assembly. During that period, the Assembly traditionally also conducts informal consultations on a wide range of substantive topics towards the adoption of new resolutions[5].

As hinted before, the UN GA has six Standing Committees, which all discuss specific topics:

I. Disarmament and Security
II. Economic and Financial
III. Social, Humanitarian and Cultural
IV. Special Political and Decolonisation
V. Administrative and Budgetary
VI. Legal

Each of the 193 Member States in the Assembly has one vote. Votes taken on designated important issues – such as recommendations on peace and security, the election of Security Council and Economic and Social Council members, and budgetary questions – require a two-thirds majority of Member States, but other questions are decided by a simple majority.

[5] Functions and powers of the General Assembly

Mandate, structure and core functions:

The Assembly makes recommendations to States on international issues within its competence. It has also taken actions across all pillars of the United Nations, including concerning political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal matters. In September 2015, the Assembly agreed on a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals[6], contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (resolution 70/1 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development). In 2022, the Assembly held a series of meetings to discuss the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Our Common Agenda"[7], an agenda of action, designed to strengthen and accelerate multilateral agreements – particularly the 2030 Agenda – and make a tangible difference in people's lives.[8]

According to the Charter of the United Nations[9], the General Assembly may:

- Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States.
- Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General
- Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament
- Discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it
- Discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations

[6] United Nations. (2015). The 17 sustainable development goals. United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/goals
[7] Our Common Agenda | United Nations
[8] Letter from the President of the General Assembly – Final OCA Summary | General Assembly of the United Nations
[9] United Nations. (1945). UN charter. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter

- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields
- Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among countries
- Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs[10]

Although the General Assembly plays a central role in global governance, its powers are subject to legal and political limitations. Unlike the Security Council, the Assembly generally cannot adopt legally binding decisions for Member States on matters of peace and security and it cannot impose sanctions or authorize the use of force. Its resolutions are mostly recommendatory and derive their effectiveness from the political support and voluntary implementation of Member States.

However, the Assembly exercises significant influence by adopting resolutions and declarations, promoting the development and codification of international law, establishing subsidiary bodies, approving the United Nations budget and serving as the most representative forum for international dialogue and consensus-building. These instruments enable the Assembly to shape international norms and coordinate global action, even when it lacks direct enforcement powers.[11]

Major Actions and Historical Impact:

The General Assembly has been passing several resolutions since its foundation in 1946. To pass, GA resolutions need to be voted by a simple majority (e.g. 50 percent of all votes plus one). Some of the most remarkable are:

[10] United Nations. (2015). Functions and powers of the General Assembly. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/ga/about/background.shtml
[11] United Nations. (2024). General Assembly of the United Nations. United Nations; United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/ga/

- Resolution 1 (1946): Established the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC)[12] "to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy" and tasked it to "make specific proposals... for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction", among other issues regarding nuclear technology.[13]

- Resolution 96 (1946): issuing the crime of Genocide[14]
- Resolution 100 (1946): establishing the Headquarters of the UN
- Resolution 177 (1947): The International Law Commission was directed to "formulate the principles of international law recognised in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and in the judgment of the Tribunal". This resulted in the creation of the Nuremberg Principles.[15]
- Resolution 217 (1947): Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[16]
- Resolution 1962 (1963): One of the earliest resolutions governing Outer space.[17]
- Resolution 3010 (1972): Adopted to make the year 1975 International Women's Year.[18]
- Resolution 60/7 (2005): designated the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.
- Resolution ES-11/4 (2022): Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.[19]

Moreover, throughout its history, the General Assembly has significantly contributed to the development of international law, the promotion of human rights and the establishment of global political norms. Among its greatest achievements are the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948[20], which became the foundation of the international human rights system, the endorsement of the 2030

[12] Atomic Energy | United Nations
[13] Resolution 1 (1946) / (un.org)
[14] The Crime of Genocide. (un.org)
[15] Affirmation of the Principles of International Law recognized by the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal General Assembly resolution 95 (I)
[16] A/RES/3/217 A - Universal Declaration of Human Rights - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements (un-documents.net)
[17] RES 1962 (XVIII) (unoosa.org)
[18] A/RES/27/3010 - International Women's Year - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements (un-documents.net)
[19] N2263066.pdf (un.org)
[20] United Nations. (1948, December 10). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

Agenda for Sustainable Development[21], and its role in supporting decolonisation and the fight against apartheid. The Assembly has also demonstrated its capacity to respond to major international crises through Emergency Special Sessions under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, including those concerning Hungary (1956), the Suez Crisis (1956), Afghanistan (1980), and more recently Ukraine (2022).[22]

However, the General Assembly also faces important limitations. Since most of its resolutions are not legally binding, their implementation depends largely on the political will of Member States. This has often reduced its effectiveness in preventing or ending armed conflicts, particularly when major powers have conflicting interests.

Despite these constraints, the General Assembly remains the most representative forum of the United Nations and continues to play a fundamental role in building international consensus, promoting dialogue and influencing the evolution of international law.

Current relevance and ongoing challenges:

There has been a sustained effort to make the work of the General Assembly more focused and relevant. This was first identified as a priority during the 58th session, and efforts continued at subsequent sessions to streamline the agenda, improve the practices and working methods of the Main Committees, enhance the role of the General Committee, strengthen the role and authority of the President and examine the Assembly's role in the process of selecting the Secretary-General.

During recent sessions, the Assembly adopted landmark resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/RES/70/305[23], A/RES/71/323, A/RES/72/313[24], A/RES/73/341[25], A/RES/74/303[26]) and A/RES/75/325[27]), which, amongst other, established an oath of office and a code of ethics for the Presidents of

[21] United Nations. (2015). The 17 sustainable development goals. United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/goals
[22] United Nations. (n.d.). General Assembly of the United Nations. Www.Un.Org. https://www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml
[23] ts (F) (un.org)
[24] N1828962.pdf (un.org)
[25] N1927990.pdf (un.org)
[26] N2023117.pdf (un.org)
[27] N2125062.pdf (un.org)

the General Assembly and provided for informal interactive dialogues with candidates for the position of President of the General Assembly.

The practice of convening high-level thematic debates is also a direct outcome of the revitalisation process.[28]
It has become an established practice for the Secretary-General to brief Member States periodically, in informal meetings of the General Assembly, on his recent activities and travels. These briefings have provided a well-received opportunity for exchange between the Secretary-General and Member States.

Today, the General Assembly addresses some of the most pressing global challenges, including armed conflicts, climate change, sustainable development, global health, human rights, migration and the regulation of emerging technologies. However, its effectiveness is often constrained by increasing political polarisation among Member States. Diverging positions between countries frequently make it difficult to achieve broad consensus on sensitive issues such as international sanctions, Security Council reform and the interpretation of international law. These geopolitical tensions have intensified diplomatic negotiations within the Assembly, making consensus-building more complex while reinforcing the importance of the General Assembly as the only universal forum where all Member States can participate on an equal basis. For these reasons, the General Assembly remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges and promoting cooperation among States.[29]

Future Outlook and Questions for Delegates:

As the main policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly will continue to play a crucial role in addressing global challenges and promoting international cooperation.[30] To strengthen its effectiveness, future reforms could focus on improving the implementation of its resolutions, increasing transparency and efficiency in its working systems and enhancing cooperation with

[28] Revitalization of the General Assembly of the United Nations
[29] Kandt, K. (2017, February 6). UN General Assembly Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reform. General Assembly of the United Nations. https://www.un.org/pga/71/2017/02/06/un-general-assembly-intergovernmental-negotiations-on-security-council-reform/
[30] United Nations. (2024). General Assembly of the United Nations. United Nations; United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/ga/.

other organs of the United Nations.[31] In the coming years, the Assembly will face increasingly complex issues such as climate change, global health emergencies, sustainable development, digital governance, artificial intelligence, armed conflicts, and growing geopolitical tensions. To successfully address these future challenges, a renewed commitment from all Member States to the principles of the United Nations Charter.[32]

Some guiding questions:

- How can the General Assembly improve the impact of its resolutions?
- Which reforms could make the Assembly more effective in responding to global crises?
- How can Member States strengthen international cooperation while respecting national sovereignty?

[31]United Nations. (2015). Functions and powers of the General Assembly. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/ga/about/background.shtml
[32] United Nations. (1945). UN charter. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter

First Committee

(Disarmament and International Security - DISEC)

Historical background and Establishment of the First Committee:

The General Assembly's work on disarmament is conducted through one of its main committees, the First Committee on Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)[33]. Also referred to as the General Assembly First Committee, DISEC was established in 1945, after World War II, a conflict that had lasted six years and caused widespread devastation to populations and economies around the world, highlighting the urgent need for peace. Although the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war to an end, they also exposed the unprecedented destructive power of modern military technology, leaving the international community determined to prevent similar catastrophes in the future. Within this context, disarmament and the promotion of peace became central priorities.[34] In relation to this, it is interesting to note that the very first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly originated from the work of the First Committee and proposed the establishment of a special commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy.

DISEC is responsible for addressing disarmament issues and global threats to international peace and security. It provides a platform for Member States to discuss disarmament challenges, build consensus, and develop recommendations that promote cooperative security, arms reduction, and the establishment of shared international norms. Although its resolutions are non-binding, the committee's work often lays the groundwork for negotiations in other disarmament bodies, contributing to the

[33] First Committee of the UN General Assembly. https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/unga
[34] United Nations. (2025). History of the United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un

development of international agreements and the maintenance of global peace and security.[35]

Mandate, structure and core functions:

The Disarmament and International Security Committee's mandate covers all matters related to disarmament and international security under the scope of Article 11 of the UN Charter, which authorizes the General Assembly to consider "the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments," and empowers it to make recommendations based on these principles to member states and the Security Council.

The Committee's work is organized into seven thematic clusters:

1. Nuclear weapons
2. Other weapons of mass destruction
3. Outer space (disarmament aspects)
4. Conventional weapons
5. Regional disarmament and security
6. Other disarmament measures and international security
7. Disarmament machinery[36]

The Committee convenes annually in October for a 4–5-week session following the General Assembly's General Debate, with participation open to all 193 member states.

The Committee's sessions are structured into three distinct stages: general debate, thematic discussions, and action on drafts. This systematic approach allows for a

[35] United Nations. UN General Assembly - First Committee - Disarmament and International Security. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/

[36] The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly. (2nd ed.). New York: Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. https://unitar.org/sites/default/files/media/publication/doc/un_pga_new_handbook_0.pdf

comprehensive examination of issues, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and resolutions are carefully crafted.

Each year, the Committee adopts between 50–70 resolutions and a few decisions, addressing critical issues such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control treaties, and measures for conflict prevention. Approximately half of these resolutions are reached through consensus, reflecting the Committee's emphasis on collaborative approaches.[37]

In addition, DISEC works in close cooperation with specialized UN bodies like the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament to ensure coordinated efforts in achieving disarmament goals.

Lastly, DISEC's main political limitation derives from the UN Charter.[38] As a committee of the General Assembly, it can only adopt non-binding resolutions, which depend entirely on the will of Member States.[39] Although decisions are taken based on the principle of "one state, one vote", allowing resolutions to pass by a simple majority, the committee has no means of enforcing compliance, particularly from major powers.[40] From a legal perspective, DISEC's function is limited to promoting international legal instruments by encouraging Member States to negotiate and implement treaties, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).[41] Operationally, DISEC lacks executive capacity. It cannot authorize military interventions, impose sanctions, deploy peacekeeping forces, or confiscate illicit weapons. The implementation of disarmament initiatives therefore relies entirely on the cooperation of Member States and other UN bodies.[42]

[37] *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. (2nd ed.). New York: Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. https://unitar.org/sites/default/files/media/publication/doc/un_pga_new_handbook_0.pdf
[38] United Nations. (1945). UN charter. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter
[39] Articles 10–14 and Article 12, Chapter IV, United Nations Charter. (1945). United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text
[40] Article 18, Chapter IV, United Nations Charter. (1945). United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text
[41] United Nations. (2020). UN General Assembly - First Committee - Disarmament and International Security. Un.Org. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/
[42] Chapter V-VII, United Nations Charter. (1945). United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text

Major Actions and Historical Impact:

The global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda has been significantly shaped by three key initiatives: the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) [43], the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)[44], and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).[45]

Firstly, DISEC has played a central role in promoting the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), emphasizing the importance of compliance through regular resolutions. The NPT, which entered into force in 1970, is widely regarded as the cornerstone of global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Its 191 state parties make it one of the most universally adhered-to disarmament agreements, structured around three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Moreover, the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2001, focuses on combating the illicit trade in small arms, which fuels conflicts, terrorism, and organized crime, particularly in fragile states. The Programme of Action (PoA)[46] emphasizes strengthening national laws, international cooperation, and disarmament efforts in post-conflict zones. Notable achievements include enhanced transparency in arms transfers through the UN Register of Conventional Arms and the establishment of national focal points to track SALW proliferation[47]. DISEC conducts regular reviews of the PoA, urging its full implementation and supporting complementary frameworks such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).[48]

In addition, DISEC continues to advocate for universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), supporting capacity-building measures and fostering dialogue among non-signatory states to overcome political

[43] *Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*. NTI. https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/
[44] *Small Arms and Light Weapons*. UNODA. https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/
[45] "The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)," CTBTO, n.d., https://www.ctbto.org/our-mission/the-treaty.
[46] *Small Arms and Light Weapons*. UNODA. https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/
[47] *Small Arms and Light Weapons*. UNODA. https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/
[48] *The Arms Trade Treaty* (A/RES/72/44). (2017). United Nations General Assembly. https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/417/85/pdf/n1741785.pdf

deadlocks. Introduced in 1996, CTBT represents a critical measure to prevent nuclear arms races by banning all nuclear explosions. Its objectives include halting nuclear weapons testing, limiting weapons modernization, and reinforcing non-proliferation. Key features like the International Monitoring System (IMS)—a global network of seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound, and radionuclide sensors—bolster verification mechanisms, alongside provisions for on-site inspections to investigate suspicious activities.[49]

Despite these achievements, DISEC has also faced significant limitations in addressing some of the most complex security challenges. Since it operates as a General Assembly committee, its resolutions are not legally binding and depend on the political will of Member States for implementation. This has limited its ability to directly prevent nuclear proliferation or enforce disarmament obligations.

For instance, ongoing conflicts involving the widespread use of conventional weapons highlight the challenges in controlling illicit arms flows despite existing international mechanisms. Nevertheless, DISEC remains a crucial forum for international security dialogue, as it allows all UN Member States to debate disarmament issues, establish international norms and promote cooperation.

Current relevance and ongoing challenges:

The United Nations Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) faces several significant challenges in its mission to maintain global peace and security.

One major issue is regulating emerging technologies such as lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), artificial intelligence (AI) in warfare, and cyber capabilities. These technologies present unprecedented risks by lowering conflict thresholds, enabling autonomous decision-making in life-or-death situations, and increasing the chances of unintended escalation[50]. The absence of global frameworks

[49] Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). (1949). *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)*(CTBT/MSS/RES/1). https://www.ctbto.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/2022_treaty_booklet_E.pdf

[50]Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). UNODA. https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/

exposes these technologies to misuse, threatening the security of all states. To address this, DISEC proposes establishing international treaties to regulate LAWS, creating norms for ethical AI use in military applications, and enhancing the effectiveness of existing international assistance frameworks[51]. However, achieving consensus among states with differing interests and managing the dual-use nature of these technologies pose significant challenges.

Another critical issue is combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), which fuel conflict, terrorism, and organized crime. The illicit trade in SALW continues to destabilize regions, particularly in developing areas.[52] DISEC-proposed actions include strengthening the Programme of Action on SALW, improving stockpile management, enforcing the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and supporting regional disarmament efforts.[53] Challenges such as weak enforcement mechanisms and the involvement of non-state actors in black-market networks hinder effective regulation. A reduction in SALW proliferation could significantly reduce conflict-related deaths and enhance regional stability.

Moreover, the militarization of outer space poses a growing threat to global security, with the development of anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) and other space-based weapons increasing the risk of an arms race. DISEC aims to revive and strengthen the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) initiative, create a binding treaty to ban space weapons, and promote international transparency.[54] The challenges here include competing interests among space-faring nations and difficulties in defining "weaponization" in space, but preventing an arms race in space could preserve the peaceful use of outer space and protect critical global infrastructure.[55]

Beyond these technical challenges, DISEC's effectiveness is strongly influenced by geopolitical divisions among Member States. One of the main sources of disagreement

[51] General and complete disarmament. Report of the First Committee - United Nations (2023). https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/347/86/pdf/n2334786.pdf?OpenElement
[52] Small arms and light weapons (SALW) and mine action (MA). NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52142.htm
[53] Small Arms and Light Weapons. UNODA. https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/
[54] United Nations General Assembly. (2023). Open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours (A/AC.294/2023/WP.13). https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/018/98/pdf/g2301898.pdf
[55] Czajkowski, M. (2024). *Anti-Satellite weapons – current status*. Roczniki Nauk Społecznych, 52(4), 183–201. https://doi.org/10.18290/rns2024.0043

concerns the different security priorities between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear states. While many developing countries advocate for complete nuclear disarmament and stronger restrictions on military technologies, nuclear powers argue that strategic deterrence remains necessary for international stability. Similar divisions arise regarding emerging technologies, where some states support strict international regulations on autonomous weapons and military AI, others emphasize the importance of maintaining technological advantages for national security purposes.[56]

Nevertheless, DISEC remains essential because it provides the only universal platform where all UN Member States can discuss disarmament and international security issues on an equal basis. Its importance lies not only in producing resolutions, but also in facilitating diplomatic dialogue, building international norms and identifying areas of possible cooperation despite geopolitical tensions.

Future Outlook and Questions for Delegates:

Due to the fact that international security challenges continue to evolve, the First Committee must be ready to face emerging threats. Future reforms could focus on improving its methods, encouraging cooperation among Member States, and promoting implementation of resolutions.[57] In addition, enhanced coordination with the Conference on Disarmament could strengthen the Committee's ability to develop long-lasting approaches to global security issues.[58] Since rapid advances in science and technology are reshaping the world, DISEC will likely expand its focus on issues such as military applications of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, autonomous weapons, and the peaceful use of outer space.[59] To remain effective, the Committee will need to encourage international dialogue.

[56]Emerging challenges | United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges
[57]UN General Assembly - First Committee - Disarmament and International Security. (2025). Un.Org. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first
[58] United Nations. (2020). UN General Assembly - First Committee - Disarmament and International Security. Un.Org. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/
[59] Emerging challenges | United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (2025). Unoda.Org. https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges

- How can the First Committee improve the implementation and effectiveness of its work?
- What new mechanisms could strengthen international cooperation on emerging security threats?
- What role should DISEC play in preventing future conflicts in an increasingly complex global environment?

The Militarization of Education: Preventing the Recruitment of Children and Youth by Armed Groups

Introduction and context of the topic

According to the Paris Principles on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, “a child associated with an armed force or armed group" refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or [60]who has been recruited or employed by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, such as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes.[61] There are many ways for children to become associated with armed forces and groups. Some children are abducted and beaten into submission, others join military groups to escape poverty, to defend their communities, out of a feeling of revenge or for other reasons. Regardless of how children are recruited and of their roles, child soldiers are victims exposed to acute levels of violence, whose participation in conflict bears serious implications for their physical and emotional well-being.[62]

Moreover, the recruitment and service of children in armed conflict remains one of the most serious violations of international law, affecting tens of thousands of boys and girls worldwide. As the international humanitarian law defines, enlisting children under the age of 15 as soldiers is not only prohibited but is also defined as a war crime by the International Criminal Court.[63] Despite the existence of this comprehensive international legal framework prohibiting this practice, children continue to be

[60] IIHL Home - IIHL. (2021, December 29). IIHL. https://iihl.org/
[61] UNICEF. (2007). THE PARIS PRINCIPLES PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES ON CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED FORCES OR ARMED GROUPS PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES ON CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED FORCES OR ARMED GROUPS1. https://www.unicef.org/mali/media/1561/file/ParisPrinciples.pdf
[62] Child Recruitment and Use | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2016). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers
[63] International Criminal Court. (2025). International Criminal Court. Icc-Cpi.Int. https://www.icc-cpi.int/

exploited by both State armed forces and non-State armed groups in numerous conflict settings.

The issue is particularly relevant in the current international scenario because ongoing and emerging conflicts continue to expose children to these risks of recruitment and exploitation, undermining international peace, security, and sustainable development. The employment of children as soldiers not only causes severe and long-lasting physical and psychological harm to children but also perpetuates cycles of violence and instability, with consequences that extend well beyond the end of hostilities.[64]

Root causes and historical development

Thousands of children are recruited and employed in armed conflicts across the world. Data shows that between 2005 and 2022, more than 105,000 children were verified as recruited and handled by parties to conflict, although the actual number of cases is believed to be much higher.[65]

Children join an armed force or group for various reasons. Some are abducted, threatened, coerced, or manipulated by armed actors. Others are driven by poverty, compelled to generate income for their families. While there are cases where they associate themselves to survive or to protect their communities. Moreover, warring parties employ children not only as fighters, but as scouts, cooks, porters, guards, messengers, and more.[66]

In this context, in 1996 when the mandate of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict was created, the UN General Assembly tried to promote the collection of information about the state of children affected by war. Later on, in 1999, the first resolution on children and armed conflict adopted by the United Nations

[64] Questions and Answers on the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2023). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/questions-and-answers-on-the-recruitment-and-use-of-child-soldiers2

[65] UNICEF. (2020, September 3). Children recruited by armed forces or armed groups. Unicef; UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces

[66] UNICEF. (2020, September 3). Children recruited by armed forces or armed groups. Unicef; UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces

Security Council[67] placed the issue of children affected by war on the Council's agenda. The resolution also identified and condemned six grave violations affecting children in times of war and their recruitment was included.[68]

These advancements represented one of the key moments in the historical development of the topic, marking the beginning of a coordinated international effort to prevent the recruitment of children by armed groups.

Current Situation and Actors

Therefore, this issue is not an isolated or sudden phenomenon, but, on the other hand, the result of wider processes spread worldwide. Several countries continue to be affected by the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. According to the data collected in the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)[69], the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the countries with the highest number of child recruitment cases, involving armed groups such as the M23 Movement (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO), and other non-state armed actors. In Sudan, the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has resulted in numerous verified cases of child recruitment and use. In Nigeria, Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have recruited thousands of children, using them as fighters, messengers, porters, and in some cases for suicide attacks.

To address this issue, UNICEF plays a key role in preventing child recruitment and protecting children affected by armed conflict. UNICEF partners with governments, community groups and other stakeholders to address the drivers of child recruitment and stop violations before they occur. Furthermore, it supports the release and

[67] 1999 – The first resolution adopted by the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict placed the issue of children affected by war on the agenda of the Security Council. (Security Council Resolution 1261) | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2026). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/1999-security-council-resolution-1261

[68] The Six Grave Violations | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2026). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/six-grave-violations

[69] Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2026). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/tools-for-action/monitoring-and-reporting

reintegration of thousands of children who leave armed forces each year, making it one of the leading international actors in this fight.[70]

International Response and Committee Action

The main concrete action adopted by the international community is the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000 and represents one of the most important international legal instruments to protect children. Under the Protocol, States cannot recruit or conscript anyone under the age of 18 and States must take all possible measures to prevent the recruitment of children, including legislation to prohibit and criminalize the recruitment of anyone under the age of 18. It also requires States to demobilize children recruited or used in conflict and to ensure their physical and psychological recovery as well as their social reintegration.[71]

Another important initiative was the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign, launched in 2014 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in partnership with UNICEF to build global consensus against the recruitment of children by national security forces in conflict situations. The campaign aimed to generate political will and international support to end this practice once and for all. It received strong support from Member States, the United Nations, NGOs, regional organizations, and the general public, while the UN Security Council and General Assembly endorsed the initiative and requested regular progress reports. Although the campaign officially ended in 2016, its objectives have largely been achieved through continued Action Plans with the United Nations. Thousands of child soldiers have been released and reintegrated with the support of UNICEF, UN peacekeeping and political missions, and NGO partners. In addition, countries such as Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo implemented the necessary measures to end and prevent the recruitment

[70] UNICEF. (2020, September 3). Children recruited by armed forces or armed groups. Unicef; UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces

[71] Child Recruitment and Use | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2016). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers

of children in their armed forces and were subsequently removed from the UN list, while national campaigns promoting the objectives of "Children, Not Soldiers" continue in many affected countries.[72]

Among the most important measures adopted by the international community, there are the "Action Plans" mandated by the UN Security Council to end and prevent the recruitment and employment of children in armed conflict. Their implementation has led to the release of more than 130,000 boys and girls, highlighting their crucial role in protecting children and promoting their reintegration.[73]

Despite these achievements, serious challenges for the protection of children affected by armed conflict continue to exist, while violence against children in armed conflict has reached extreme levels. These factors show that, although progress has been made, the current measures are still not sufficient to fully address the problem.[74]

Finally, some aspects of the international response remain insufficient. Greater involvement of technology and social media companies is needed to take concrete, transparent, and child rights-based measures. At the same time, there is a strong need for donors to increase financial support for survivor-centred assistance, reintegration, and education programmes in order to provide long-term protection and recovery for affected children.[75]

[72] Child Recruitment and Use | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2016). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers
[73] Children, Not Soldiers | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2016). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/children-not-soldiers
[74] United Nations. (2022). Children. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/children
[75] UN Secretary-General Report 2026. Official report. A_80_723--S_2026_357-EN https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/723

Future challenges and possible approaches

The main future challenge is that, despite some progress, serious challenges for the protection of children affected by armed conflict remain. In particular, since 2023, when violence against children in armed conflict reached extreme levels, the situation has worsened.[76]

The United Nations explains that the Security Council adopted resolutions to engage in dialogue with listed Governments and armed groups to develop Action Plans, which are written, signed commitments between the United Nations and parties to conflict listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, aimed at halting and preventing violations against children. The effectiveness of this approach is demonstrated by the fact that thousands of children have been released as a result of Action Plans mandated by the UN Security Council and other actions aimed at ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups.[77]

Despite the existence of these Action Plans, they are still not enough, there is an urgent need for concrete and efficient action plans to establish time-bound measures to end violations against children, release and reunify children with their families, as well as put in place legislation, tools and mechanisms to prevent future violations and to hold perpetrators accountable. Moreover, the practice of armed groups recruiting and using persons under the age of 18 years in hostilities continues despite existing international standards.[78]

Furthermore, a possible compromise is based on the commitments included in UN Action Plans. These include issuing military command orders prohibiting the recruitment and use of children, criminalizing the recruitment and use of children, integrating age-verification mechanisms in recruitment procedures, releasing all

[76] United Nations. (2022). Children. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/children
[77] Mandate | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2025). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/about/the-mandate/mandate
[78] Mandate | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2025). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/about/the-mandate/mandate

children identified in the ranks of security forces, and ensuring children's reintegration into civilian life. These commitments allow governments to cooperate with the United Nations while progressively implementing international standards.[79]

Finally, in order to develop realistic proposals, it is vital to support Action Plans that establish concrete time-bound measures and legislation to prevent future violations. It is also important to promote the delivery of comprehensive and long-term reintegration assistance for children, while encouraging States to criminalize the recruitment of children.[80]

[79] Mandate | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2025). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/about/the-mandate/mandate

[80] Action Plans | Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. (2024). Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/tools-for-action/action-plans

Annotated Bibliography

Hereafter you can find some links that we think could be helpful to deepen your knowledge on both the committee and the topic you will be discussing.

- The more inspiring and complete website when talking about the UN is their own: https://www.un.org/. Especially useful is their Official Document System (ODS) https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp.

- More specifically for the GA, visiting the assembly's official site will prepare you for the conference. https://www.un.org/en/ga/

- More specifically for the GA DISEC, visiting the assembly's official site will prepare you for the conference. https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml

- For the United Nations Charter visit the following official site. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter

- To deepen your knowledge about the history of the United Nations visit the official website https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un

- For the Non-Proliferation Treaty, visiting the official site will prepare you for the conference. https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/

- For the general and complete disarmament, read the official report of the First Committee of 2023. https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/347/86/pdf/n2334786.pdf?OpenElement

- For emerging challenges that threaten the future, visiting the following site will prepare you for the conference. https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/our-work/emerging-challenges

- The more complete framework when talking about the regulations for the recruitment of children is the Paris Principles and Guidelines on children associated

with armed forces or armed groups.
https://www.unicef.org/mali/media/1561/file/ParisPrinciples.pdf

- Specifically, about Child Recruitment and Use, visiting the following site will prepare you for the conference. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers

- In addition, the site about Questions and Answers on the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict is useful to deepen your knowledge on the topic. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/questions-and-answers-on-the-recruitment-and-use-of-child-soldiers2

- There is also an article by UNICEF about children recruited by armed forces or armed groups that will prepare you for the conference. https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces

- To know more about the first resolution adopted by the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict, which placed the issue of children affected by war on the agenda of the Security Council. (1999) visit the following site. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/1999-security-council-resolution-1261

- Specifically, about the Six Grave Violations affecting children visit the official site. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/six-grave-violations

- The official site for the Action Plans to address grave violations against children is the following. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/tools-for-action/action-plans