



General Assembly Plenary: Committee History and Structure¹

September 3, 2017

The United Nations General Assembly (GA) was established in 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations.² Each Member State has a permanent seat on this committee. Thus, the GA is the congress or parliament of the United Nations. It “occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations.”³

In the GA, each UN Member State has one vote. No matter how different in military or economic power, all are equal. Thus the United States’ vote counts the same as Egypt’s, and Bolivia has the same voice as China. This is different from some other UN committees, such as the Security Council, which have limited membership or special voting rules. This feature gives the General Assembly a great deal of legitimacy on the world stage. It is a place where world public opinion can be expressed.

The GA covers all issues of global importance. Article 14 of the United Nations Charter gives the GA the power to “recommend measures for the peaceable adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations.” According to the Charter, the GA “may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs” except “any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security which are being dealt with by the Security Council.” Specifically, the GA can:

- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote disarmament, international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields;
- Consider and approve the UN 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.⁴

The General Assembly convenes annually from the third Tuesday of September until a pre-determined date in December. The first several days of each session are known as the “high-level plenary meeting,” or world summit. During plenary sessions, each Member State’s head of state, foreign minister, or UN ambassador addresses the General Assembly. During its 70th session (2015-2016), the GA held 117 plenary sessions and passed 305

¹ This background guide was written by Karen Ruth Adams, Montana Model UN faculty advisor, with contributions from Trevor Hunter, Samantha Stephens, Jessica McCutcheon, Nicholas Potratz, and Danielle Howlett. Copyright 2017 by Karen Ruth Adams.

² “Charter of the United Nations,” Chapter IV, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-iv/index.html>.

³ “Functions and Powers of the United Nations General Assembly,” United Nations General Assembly website, <http://www.un.org/ga/about/background.shtml>.

⁴ “Charter of the United Nations,” Chapter IV.

resolutions between September 2015 and September 2016.⁵ All GA sessions are held at in the General Assembly chambers at UN headquarters in New York.

Special sessions and world summits can be called by a majority of the General Assembly. Such high-level meetings address important new or recurring themes. The 2000 Millennium Summit, for example, articulated the Millennium Development Goals, which redefined the global approach to promoting and measuring economic development.⁶ In 2009, the GA held a three-day summit on the international economic crisis.⁷ In September 2015, the GA held a special session to create the SDGs to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.⁸ Most recently, in 2016, the UN General Assembly held high-level meetings and special sessions on refugees and migrants, the sustainable development goals (SDGs), antimicrobial resistance, the right to development, and the elimination of nuclear weapons.⁹

The majority of GA resolutions originate in one of the GA's many subcommittees, such as GA-1 (disarmament and security), GA-2 (economic and financial), GA-3 (social, humanitarian, and cultural), or ECOSOC (economic and social). Thus, the relationship between the GA and its subcommittees is akin to that between the US Senate and its subcommittees. Resolutions passed by subcommittees are simply working papers. Only when the GA passes a resolution does it go into effect.

In general, GA resolutions are not binding on Member States. They are simply recommendations. In this respect, the GA has less authority than the Security Council, whose resolutions are binding. However, because the GA includes all UN Member States, the GA many see it as the voice of world public opinion. In addition, GA resolutions often inspire treaties and conventions that are binding on the states that sign them.¹⁰ The only GA resolutions that are binding on Member States pertain to the UN budget, over which the GA exercises full control. In practice, however, some members do not pay their UN dues in full or on time.¹¹

Membership, Voting, and Leadership

The membership of the GA includes all 193 UN Member States. The most recent state to join was South Sudan in 2011. Non-member states and other entities recognized by the UN as permanent observers may attend and

⁵ For the full text of all 2015-2016 GA resolutions, as well as meeting summaries and press releases summarizing debate, see UN General Assembly, "Resolutions, 70th Session," <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/70>.

⁶ United Nations, "Millennium Summit (6-8 September 2000)," http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/millennium_summit.shtml.

⁷ United Nations, "United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, 24-26 June 2009," <http://www.un.org/ga/econcrisissummit/docs.shtml>.

⁸ United Nations Development Program, "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>.

⁹ United Nations General Assembly, "High-Level Meetings of the 71st Session," <http://www.un.org/en/ga/71/meetings/index.shtml>.

¹⁰ Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns, *The United Nations in the 21st Century*, 3rd edition (Boulder: Westview, 2007), p. 33.

¹¹ Budgetary resolutions are binding in that states that fail to pay their dues shall, at the discretion of the GA, "have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years." "Charter of the United Nations," Chapter IV, Article 19. For a list of countries currently in this situation, see "Countries in Arrears in the Payment of Their Financial Contributions Under the Terms of Article 19 of the UN Charter," UNGA website, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/art19.shtml>.

participate in meetings, but they cannot vote. At present, permanent observers include Palestine and the Holy See (Vatican City), as well as a number of international organizations, such as the European Union and African Union.¹²

Most votes conducted within the GA require only a simple majority to pass. The only exceptions are budgetary matters and other issues designated “important,” such as recommendations on peace and security, admission of new members, and the election of Security Council members, which require a two-thirds majority.¹³

According to the official GA website, “in recent years, a special effort has been made to achieve consensus on issues, rather than deciding by a formal vote, thus strengthening support for the Assembly’s decisions. The President, after having consulted and reached agreement with delegations, can propose that a resolution be adopted without a vote.”¹⁴

Regional blocs and other alliances play an important role in building consensus. Blocs consist of both countries in the same region and countries from different regions that face similar problems. For example, the Group of 77 is a group of less-developed countries that often vote together.¹⁵

The President of the General Assembly chairs the meetings and corrects any procedural mistakes. The president and 21 vice-presidents representing all world regions are elected annually by the members of the GA. Elections are held at least three months before the beginning of the annual session.¹⁶ The president of the 71st session (2016-2017) was Peter Thompson, the Permanent Representative of Fiji.¹⁷ In May 2017, the GA elected Miroslav Lajčák, Foreign Minister of Slovakia, as President of its 72nd session by acclamation.¹⁸

History and Challenges

The General Assembly’s primary challenges pertain to its relationship to the Security Council. There are two main issues: first, which of the two committees gets “first dibs” on security issues, and second, whether and how the GA can reform the UN. In addition, the GA bears the burden of addressing the wide variety of other issues of global concern not addressed by the Security Council.

According to the UN Charter, the GA can act on matters related to peace and security only when the Security Council (the committee charged with maintaining peace and security) has failed to act.¹⁹ In principle, this provision would seem to enable the Security Council to completely dominate the UN’s deliberations on security matters. In fact, however, disagreements between P-5 members often stymie the Security Council. For example, the

¹² United Nations, “Observers,” available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/observers.shtml>.

¹³ For a complete list of these items, see “Charter of the United Nations,” Chapter IV, Article 18, available at <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-iv/index.html>.

¹⁴ “Functions and Powers of the United Nations General Assembly.”

¹⁵ “The Group of 77 at the United Nations,” available at <http://www.g77.org/>. Also see Soo Yeon Kim and Bruce Russett, “The new politics of voting alignments in the United Nations General Assembly,” *International Organization* 50, no. 4 (1996), pp. 629-652.

¹⁶ United Nations General Assembly, “Rules of Procedure,” Section V, Rule 30, available at http://www.un.org/ga/ropga_prez.shtml.

¹⁷ UN News Centre, “General Assembly elects Permanent Representative of Fiji as President of 71st session,” 13 June 2016, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54215#.V46l7LgrLIU>.

¹⁸ UN News Centre, “Slovak Foreign Minister elected as President of 72nd session of the General Assembly,” 31 May 2017, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56876#.WXztY4QrKJA>.

¹⁹ “Charter of the United Nations,” Chapter IV, Article 12.

Security Council has never reached agreement on how to respond to North Korea's November 2010 shelling of a South Korean island.²⁰

In 1950, during the Korean War, the US led an effort to clarify this power in General Assembly Resolution 377. This resolution, known as the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, states that:

if the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in any case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately with a view to making appropriate recommendations to Members for collective measures, including in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression the use of armed force when necessary, to maintain or restore international peace and security.²¹

This is a key power of the General Assembly. Because each of the five permanent members of the Security Council (the US, UK, France, Russia, and China) has only one vote and no veto in the General Assembly, they cannot dominate the GA like they do the Security Council. Yet the General Assembly has only used its power to call emergency special sessions ten times.²² Historically, these sessions have been most often convened at the request of the US.²³ The most recent emergency special session, however, was called by Qatar in 1997 to address the "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory." Unlike previous emergency special sessions, this session has never been adjourned. Instead debate has been repeatedly suspended and reopened. This last occurred on January 15 and 16, 2009.²⁴

The GA has called so few emergency special sessions on security matters because it is rare for security issues to be completely ignored by the Security Council. In addition, it is often difficult for the GA to obtain the two-thirds majority required in Article 18 of the UN Charter to pass resolutions with respect to "the maintenance of international peace and security."²⁵ Even when such resolutions are passed, they are not binding on Member States. Unlike Security Council resolutions, GA resolutions are simply recommendations. As a result, it can be difficult for the GA to persuade states with large and capable militaries to carry out enforcement measures to reverse an act of aggression. Thus, although both the GA and the Security Council are charged with addressing international peace and security, the Security Council has more authority on particular breaches of the peace.

The issue of UN reform is much the same. To revise the Charter, the GA and the Security Council must together call for a review conference. Amendments go into effect only with a two-thirds vote in the General Assembly and ratification by "two-thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security Council."²⁶ This makes it very difficult to address a wide variety of reform issues, from making GA resolutions binding to changing the criteria for admitting new members to the UN.

²⁰ Louis Charbonneau, "U.N. Security Council deadlocked on Korean crisis," *Reuters*, 19 December 2010, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/12/20/us-korea-north-un-idUSTRE6BJ08A20101220>.

²¹ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 377 (1950), <http://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/5>.

²² For a list of emergency special sessions and related resolutions, see "Emergency Special Sessions, United Nations General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml>.

²³ Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns, *The United Nations in the 21st Century*, 3rd edition (Boulder: Westview, 2007), p. 30.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, "Tenth Emergency Special Session," <http://www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency10th.shtml>.

²⁵ United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations," Chapter IV, Article 18.

²⁶ "Charter of the United Nations," Chapter XVIII, Article 108.

The GA first convened on the 10th of January in 1946 in London with 51 member states. Since then, the UN and GA have expanded from 51 to 193 members, but the Security Council remains limited to 15 member states and dominated by the same permanent five Member States that set up the UN after World War II. The expansion of UN membership has resulted in many calls to expand the Security Council. Yet, to date, the only significant reform to the Security Council has been to add some non-permanent members and to specify that the 10 non-permanent members should be selected based on geographic representation. These amendments took effect in 1965.²⁷

The expansion of UN membership, the globalization of the world economy, and the rise of transnational challenges such as disease and environmental degradation have expanded the GA's agenda far beyond what was conceived in 1945.

Recent and Current Events

Since 2000, the General Assembly has been active on three main fronts. First, it created the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which became the focal point for international discussions about foreign aid to and development in the poorest states in the world. These were followed in 2015 by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which now act as a continuation of the MDGs with a stronger focus on environmental sustainability and protection. Second, the GA has begun the process of reforming itself. Third, the GA has begun to give more systematic attention to human rights and the sustainability, as visible in its actions on Syria and the SDGs.

In September 2000, the GA held a high-level plenary session called the United Nations Millennium Summit. At the end of the summit, Member States adopted eight measurable goals called the MDGs with a target date of 2015. Between 2000-2015, the GA received annual reports quantifying country and regional progress towards the MDGs. In this way, the GA encouraged both short- and long-term progress on the goals. The GA also urged all developed member states to donate 0.7 percent of their country's gross domestic product toward overseas development assistance (ODA).²⁸ Final progress was uneven, both in terms of ODA and less-developed country progress. Still, the MDGs gave the world clear goals for its discussions and efforts regarding development.²⁹

With the 2015 MDG deadline met, focus has shifted towards a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which states drafted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York City in April 2015.³⁰ With a deadline set for 2030, the SDGs are to:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

²⁷ "Functions and Powers." See also Mingst and Karns, *United Nations in the 21st Century*, p. 31.

²⁸ Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Security, Solidarity and Sovereignty: The Grand Themes of UN Reform," *The American Journal of International Law* 99, no. 3 (2005), p. 630. On the .7% goal, see "The 0.7% target: An in-depth look," Millennium Project website, <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/07.htm>.

²⁹ For a detailed report of the final success rate of the MDGs, see United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals: 2015 Progress Chart," http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20PC%20final.pdf.

³⁰ United Nations, "United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015," available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>.

11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.³¹

While accepting his position as President of the GA, Miroslav Lajčák noted that the SDGs were one of six priorities for his time in the position. He noted that these "would guide his work as an overarching principle."³² In a July 2017 letter to the prior President of the GA, Peter Thomson, Lajčák established the theme of the 72nd Session (2017-2018) of the General Assembly to be "Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet."³³

Since 2005, the GA has also responded to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's call for UN reform.³⁴ Annan challenged the GA to simplify and focus its agenda, end its reliance on consensus, and pay more attention to implementation of its resolutions, so they are not, as the Global Policy Forum has called them, "dead-letters of non-compliance."³⁵ One of the most important changes has been to streamline the GA's annual agenda by reducing the number of agenda items from more than 300 to less than 200 and organizing them under about a dozen headings. This leaves more time for high-priority items and makes it more likely that resolutions will build on one another.³⁶ Yet, according to the independent Center for UN Reform, the major issues of reform remain unresolved:

Generally speaking, delegates from the global North tend to see Revitalization as a merely procedural question and focus on practical improvements that can be made in GA procedures and operations, while delegates from the South first and foremost see it as a political process whose principal objective should be to strengthen the role of the Assembly as the main deliberative body of the UN, and resist what they call the "encroachment" by the Security Council on the work of the General Assembly.³⁷

In recent years, the GA's most path-breaking resolutions have related to human rights and the environment, which are relatively new issues in international politics. In September 2009, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon

³¹ United Nations, "Sustainable Development Goals," available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>.

³² UN News Centre, "Slovak Foreign Minister elected as President of 72nd session." The other five priorities are people, peace and prevention, migration, climate action, and human rights.

³³ Miroslav Lajcak, Letter to Peter Thompson, 7 July 2017, available at <https://www.un.org/pga/71/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2015/08/Theme-of-the-72nd-General-Debate.pdf>.

³⁴ Kofi Annan, "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All," Report of the Secretary General, 21 March 2005, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/59/2005.

³⁵ Global Policy Forum, "Reform of the General Assembly," <http://www.globalpolicy.org/reform/topics/gaindex.htm>.

³⁶ Lydia Swart, "Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly," in *Managing Change at the United Nations* (New York: Center for UN Reform Education, April 2008) [book online], p. 32 <http://www.centerforunreform.org/node/308> and <http://www.globalpolicy.org/un-reform/un-reform-topics/reform-of-the-general-assembly.html>

³⁷ Mie Hansen, "Update on Revitalization of the General Assembly: A recap of developments during the 65th GA session," Center for UN Reform, 27 September 2011, <http://www.centerforunreform.org/node/450>.

congratulated the GA on adopting its first resolution on the international community's "responsibility to protect" (R2P) civilians from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and other atrocities, even if this means violating national sovereignty.³⁸ In March 2011, the Security Council acted on this principle when it authorized "all necessary means" to protect civilians in Libya. After that, several members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) assisted Libyan rebels in their fight to depose President Moammar Kadafi. In doing so, they exceeded the Security Council mandate to protect civilians.

Since then, the international consensus behind R2P has weakened,³⁹ as is evident in the UN's limited responses to the civil war in Syria. Although the GA condemned the violence in December 2011,⁴⁰ several years passed before the Security Council agreed upon measures to provide basic protection for UN aid-workers and geographically limited safety to evacuating Syrian civilians.⁴¹ In fact, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon responded to the inaction in Syria by remarking that,

we face an urgent test here and now. Words must become deeds. Promise must become practice. You have all seen the horrible images and reports coming out of Syria: aerial bombardments of civilians; mothers weeping, clutching their dead children in their arms. Inaction cannot be an option for our community of nations. We cannot stand by while populations fall victim to these grave crimes and violations. We must uphold the core responsibilities of the United Nations.⁴²

With the Syrian conflict entering its seventh year, its citizens have been forced into horrendous situations and caught the attention of the UN and the international community. Life expectancy in the country has dropped by twenty years, about half of the population has been forcibly displaced, and 13.5 million Syrians are in urgent need of humanitarian and protection assistance.⁴³ The GA has urged bold action to be taken to tackle the refugee crisis in Europe and around the world, passing A/RES/70/290 on June 30, 2016 to plan a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants.⁴⁴ Further, the UN Special Envoy for Syria recently facilitated the latest round of Intra-Syrian talks in April 2016 in Geneva, focusing on the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid and a cessation of hostilities.⁴⁵

With regard to environmental issues, climate change has been the most salient in recent years. Due to the mixed results of the Kyoto Protocol, which ended in 2012, states have searched for a replacement agreement to

³⁸ "General Assembly agrees to hold more talks on responsibility to protect," UN News Centre, 14 September 2009, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32047>.

³⁹ Philippe Boloipon, "After Libya, the question: To protect or depose?," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 August 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/aug/25/opinion/la-oe-boloipon-libya-responsibility-t20110825>. For a list of resolutions see Security Council, "Security Council Resolutions," available at <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/>.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, "General Assembly Adopts More Than 60 Resolutions Recommended by Third Committee, Including Text Condemning Grave, Systematic Human Rights Violations in Syria," press release GA/11198, 19 December 2011, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2011/ga11198.doc.htm>.

⁴¹ Security Council Report, "Syria," <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/syria/>.

⁴² UN Department of Public Information, "Responsibility to Protect Faces Urgent Test 'Here and Now', Secretary-General Tells General Assembly, Stressing Immense Human Cost of Failure in Syria," press release SG/SM/14490 GA/11271, 5 September 2012, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sgsm14490.doc.htm>.

⁴³ "Credibility of international community at risk as Syria war grinds on"—senior UN officials," UN News Centre, 21 June 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54283#.V465H7grK01>.

⁴⁴ General Assembly of the United Nations, "Resolutions: 70th Session," available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/70/resolutions.shtml>.

⁴⁵ United Nations, "News Focus: Syria," available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=146>.

mitigate rising temperatures and their effects.⁴⁶ In December 2015, UN Member States concluded the Paris Climate Agreement, which bound nearly every state to reduce carbon emissions in order to prevent temperatures from rising more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050.⁴⁷

Many, including former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, lauded the accord as the first "universal" climate agreement. Still, others noted that the agreement suffered from serious flaws. First, "while every country [was] required to put forward a plan, there [was] no legal requirement dictating how, or how much, countries should cut emissions." Thus, most states agreed to the accord precisely because they were able to establish their own requirements without regard for the actual impact of their commitments on global emissions and future global temperatures. In fact, the commitments in the final agreement are expected to fall short of the 3.6 degree goal.

Second, the agreement states that developed countries should provide at least \$100 billion of aid to developing countries in an effort to mitigate climate change. These statements were, however, included only in the preamble; they are not legally binding on parties to the agreement. The UN and its Member States will need to push for stronger commitments from parties to the agreement if they intend to achieve the targets codified in the document.⁴⁸

UN Agenda Topics for the MMUN Conference

At the 2017 MMUN Conference, the General Assembly Plenary will address the following topics:

1. Adjusting to Climate Change
2. Promoting Intercultural Understanding

When writing your position papers and resolutions, think broadly about these issues, remembering both the overarching goals of the United Nations General Assembly and the perspective of the country you represent.

Recommended Reading

Amin, Samir. "The Millennium Development Goals: A Critique from the South." *The Monthly Review*. Available at <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0306amin.php>.

A scholarly critique of the MDGs from the perspective of less-developed countries.

Annan, Kofi. "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All." Report of the Secretary General. 21 March 2005. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/59/2005.

This report by the former Secretary-General summarizes some of the problems of the UN in general and of the GA in particular. Executive Summary is available at http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/larger_freedom_exec_summary.pdf.

"Charter of the United Nations." Available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

This document lays out the purposes and procedures of the UN. Delegates should be familiar with this document, especially Chapter IV, which addresses the GA.

Davenport, Coral. "Nations Approve Landmark Climate Accord in Paris." *New York Times*. 12 December 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/world/europe/climate-change-accord-paris.html?_r=0.

⁴⁶ Duncan Clark, "Has the Kyoto Protocol made any difference to carbon emissions?" *The Guardian*, 26 November 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2012/nov/26/kyoto-protocol-carbon-emissions>.

⁴⁷ Coral Davenport, "Nations Approve Landmark Climate Accord in Paris," *New York Times*, 12 December 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/world/europe/climate-change-accord-paris.html?_r=0.

⁴⁸ Davenport, "Nations Approve Landmark Climate Accord in Paris."

Montana Model UN High School Conference

This article provides an insightful overview of the Paris Agreement and some of its challenges.

United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. "Sustainable Development." United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>.

This page discusses sustainable development (the idea of improving people's lives economically while preserving the Earth and its resources) as it relates to the UN it includes links to pages regarding important recent developments such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Summit.

United Nations. "Member States." Available at <http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml>.

This site provides access to each state's UN mission website, where you can research your country's position on the issues before the UN.

United Nations. "Millennium Development Goals Report 2015." <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml>.

This report uses graphs and photos to show the work that has been done to meet the MDGs in various countries and regions since 2000. It also provides suggestions for improving on the gains of the MDGs in and beyond 2015.

United Nations General Assembly. Website. Available at <http://www.un.org/ga>.

The official website of the GA provides access to information on its duties and history, as well as its current agendas and resolutions. For GA resolutions and meetings from the last year, see United Nations General Assembly, "Resolutions, 71st Session," <http://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/71>. The fourth column contains links to meeting records and press releases summarizing the debate and voting.

United Nations General Assembly. "Despite Reservations, General Assembly Endorses Rio+20 Outcome Document; Will Study Modalities for Its Implementation, Budgetary Implications." Press release GA/11264. 27 July 2012. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11264.doc.htm>.

This press release summarizes the GA debate about whether to adopt the Rio+20 outcome document as a resolution. Search for your country's name to see how it approaches environmental issues.

United Nations General Assembly. "General Debate." Available at <https://gadebate.un.org/en>.

From this site you can read or watch your country's speeches at high-level GA Plenaries. This will give you a sense of its policy priorities and diplomatic style.