MIDWEST MODEL UNITED NATIONS
Gateway to Diplomacy

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BACKGROUND MATERIALS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOURTH COMMITTEE

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General Assembly Fourth Committee

Committee Mandate

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative body and one of the principal organs of the United Nations (UN). It was established in 1945 by Chapter IV of the *Charter of the United Nations* and is comprised of all 193 UN Member States. The GA's broad membership enables it to engage in unique high-level diplomacy and the Charter allows the GA to consider and take action on almost any topic, including political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal issues.[1] The GA expresses the will of the international community in the form of written resolutions that, while not legally binding, set the policy direction for the UN as an organization and can influence Member States and regional organizations. These resolutions sometimes take direct action, but it is far more common that they lay out a set of policies or, in the case of legal resolutions, international norms. The development of these resolutions takes a significant amount of time, as disagreements on policy are common, so the work of the GA is broken up into six subsidiary committees.

The General Assembly Fourth Committee

The General Assembly Fourth Committee (GA4) is the Special Political and Decolonization committee of the GA. Fourth Committee has a unique mandate that focuses on specific issues, including decolonization, the rights of Palestinian refugees, peacekeeping, outer space, and public information, among others.[2] With its specialized purpose, Fourth Committee often spends the most time on each topic, passing a limited number of draft resolutions during each session of the General Assembly. Much of the committee's time is spent addressing the various aspects of the rights of Palestinians and the impact of occupying power in Palestinian territory, but it is not the singular focus of Fourth Committee; the committee regularly addresses human rights issues in other occupied or non-self-governing territories.[3] As a main committee of the GA, it is comprised of all 193 UN Member States, each having a single vote; no state receives special veto authority or is given extra weight due to monetary or other contributions.

Reporting

There are multiple subsidiary committees that report to the GA through Fourth Committee. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was established in 1959 and reports to Fourth Committee on the exploration and use of space for the benefit of all mankind.[4] The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations regularly reviews and reports to Fourth Committee on all peacekeeping operations and includes 147 Member States in addition to several other

[1] United Nations General Assembly, "Functions and powers of the General Assembly," n.d.
[2] United Nations General Assembly, "Special Political and Decolonization," n.d.
[3] United Nations Department of Public Information, "Draft Resolutions on Palestine Refugees, Israeli Practices in Occupied Arab Lands among 12 Approved as Fourth Committee Concludes Its Work," 2016.
[4] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space," n.d.

international organizations.[5] The Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and the Committee on Information also report to the GA through Fourth Committee.

Delegates in Fourth Committee debate a topic and develop working papers which can then be adopted as a draft resolution by majority vote of the committee. Draft resolutions are then passed on to the General Assembly Plenary. Some Member States lack adequate staff to have representatives at every committee session or informal debate; more Member States review and vote on draft resolutions in plenary sessions than in committee sessions. Draft resolutions that receive majority support in plenary session are adopted as resolutions and then represent the will of the majority of the international community on a given issue.

[5] UN Peacekeeping, "General Assembly and Peacekeeping," n.d.

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General Assembly Fourth Committee

Topic A: International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

"Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."[6]
–Carl Sagan

Introduction

The age of space exploration has allowed for many discoveries, the development of new technology, and the advancement of humanity's collective scientific knowledge. With advances in space exploration, there has been a concerted effort within the international community to ensure that activities taking place in space are both responsible and peaceful. As the possibility of space tourism, mining, and even habitation become increasingly possible, issues that might affect the international community have become major debates. Recently, there is a push within the international community to provide more information sharing and cooperation amongst Member States to address such issues. The General Assembly Fourth Committee and its subsidiary, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) works to address developing situations in space to ensure that the international community has a system in place to address issues that may arise because of continued space exploration and/or uses of outer space.[7]

Background

United Nations General Assembly created COPUOS in 1959.[8] Reporting directly to the General Assembly Fourth Committee, COPOUS reviews international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, researches possible future international actions that may need to be taken, and studies space-related legal issues.[9] Since its creation, COPUOS has been the primary body for the drafting major treaties and international policies governing the use of outer space. As the international framework on outer space advanced, the General Assembly sought to create a more robust body to deal with outer space issues. On December 13, 1958, the General Assembly adopted A/RES/1348 and created the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), initially a small expert body meant to provide guidance to COPUOS.[10] With guidance from UNOOSA, COPUOS began to draft what would become five main treaties that form the guiding international principles for activity in outer space.[11]

The first international treaty governing activities in outer space remains among the most broad and significant. The *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies*, more commonly

[6] Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*, 1994, page 7.
[7] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Capacity Building," n.d.
[8] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space," n.d.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space," n.d.

known as the *Outer Space Treaty*, established the principles that the international community felt were vital to ensure peace in the usage of outer space and governs States' responsibilities when they engage in activities in outer space.[12] The *Outer Space Treaty* outlines how States have the freedom to conduct space exploration and emphasizes that such exploration is beneficial to all Member States.[13] It details a non-appropriation approach to outer space, which is defined to include celestial bodies as well as the Moon; institutes a ban on placing nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in outer space; prohibits the harmful contamination of space and other celestial bodies; and holds Member States accountable for national space activities carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities, and for any damage caused by their space objects.[14]

Since the adoption of the *Outer Space Treaty*, four additional treaties have expanded the international framework on outer space. The 1968 *Rescue Agreement*, the 1972 *Liability Convention*, the 1975 *Registration Convention*, and the 1979 *Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies*, also known as the *Moon Treaty*, all address specifics of outer space exploration that the *Outer Space Treaty* does not.[15] Although the extent to which these treaties have been signed and ratified varies greatly, the treaties form a core framework for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space that is complemented by international conferences and discussions on the subject that began in the 1960s and continues through to today.

UNISPACE Conferences

After the launch of Sputnik I in 1957, promoting greater collaboration on issues involving space exploration and the proper uses of outer space became a priority for the UN.[16] To fully engage the international community and other organizations, the UN decided to hose the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE) to foster constructive dialogue and debate regarding the issue of outer space use.[17] The first of a series of three conferences was held on August 14-27, 1968.[18] Known as UNISPACE I, the conference focused on the potential benefits of outer space use and conducted a significant review of the major progress that had already been made in space exploration. The conference outcome document also called for a more concerted effort to improve international cooperation amongst Member States to guarantee that all States benefit from peaceful outer space use.[19] Moreover, the conference resulted in a plan to: provide security for the global environment and maintain its natural resources; enhance space usage applications for human security, development, and welfare; protect the environment of space itself; and provide a means for developing States to have access to space science and the benefits that come from its proper usages.[20]

[12] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "History: Treaties," n.d.
[13] United Nations General Assembly, *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies*, A/RES/2222(XXI), 1966.
[14] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies," n.d.
[15] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "History: Treaties," n.d.
[16] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "UNISPACE Conferences," n.d.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

The later UNISPACE conferences addressed various thematic issues that were in need of attention. UNISPACE II recognized the concerns of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes with the growing threat of an arms race, as well as the prevention of such an arms race as a necessary condition for peaceful exploration.[21] UNISPACE III, held on July 19-30, 1999, set a major milestone for the 21st Century by creating a significant action plan for the peaceful uses of outer space within the new century.[22] Over the decades that the UNISPACE conferences were held, the UN also continued to bolster its own capacities in outer space.

United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER)

One of the greatest advancements in space technologies stems from the use of satellites for data collection and the provision of information. However, the ability to utilize satellite imaging for weather and geographical observation was not universally acquired by all Member States, and for many years, was limited to those Member States with the technological capacity to launch and maintain satellites. In 2006, the UN established the United Nations Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) under the auspices of UNOOSA. UN-SPIDER helps to provide specialized space-based technologies for managing disasters and reducing disaster risks, especially to developing Member States that traditionally suffer from limited access to such technologies.[23] UN-SPIDER works to ensure that satellite data, especially mapping data, is shared amongst information providers and the various groups of people who need such data during humanitarian emergencies, such as policymakers, disaster risk managers, and emergency responders.[24]

Current Situation

Role of Space Technologies in Sustainable Development

Potential for new activity in outer space and related scientific and technological discoveries are increasing at a rapid pace, especially as more States are beginning to engage in space exploration as has private enterprise. Space-based technologies impact a diversity of fields, including health, environmental monitoring, natural resource management, disaster management, meteorological forecasting, climate modeling, information technology, and satellite communications.[25] Because of this, leveraging space-based technologies can play a vital role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the realization of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Space-based technologies especially important in the pursuit of SDGs 3, 11, and 13 (good health and well-being; sustainable cities and communities; and climate action, respectively).[26] Through the use of data sharing and best practices in satellite images, space-

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER)," n.d.
[24] Ibid.
[25] United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies*, A/RES/72/78, 2017.
[26] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Sustainable Development Goals," n.d.

based technologies can help in development planning, telecommunications, and even early warning and management of health risks through the application of tele-epidemiology.[27] These applications promote the development of sustainable, safe, and resilient cities and human settlements, as well as the goal of good health and well-being. Satellite imaging also allows for an unprecedented growth in environmental monitoring, which will be vital in continued efforts to combat climate change.

As the private sector increasingly enters space, however, there is increasing concern from the international community that the benefits of space exploration will not be equitably shared. As an example, some United States-based firms have begun to explore the possibility of space tourism and even mining asteroids.[28] The U.S. Government passed the Space Act of 2015, which allows their President to "facilitate the commercial exploration and utilization of space resources to meet national needs."[29] Not only have some international experts expressed the worry that such efforts could divert from space exploration and the benefits it brings, but they have also indicated that it could lead to conflict on Earth as companies and nations lay claim to the prospecting sites in outer space.[30] There is ongoing debate as to whether these efforts align with the *Outer Space Treaty*, which some argue established outer space as the "common heritage of mankind," which refers to the concept that some places belong to all humanity.[31]

Like commercialization, potential weaponization has also been identified as a threat to the peaceful use of outer space. The weaponization of outer space generally refers to the placement of specifically designed devices that have the potential for destructive capacity in orbit, although some definitions include ground-based systems that could be used to fire upon objects in space.[32] Militaries already rely heavily on satellites for strategic command, communication, and response monitoring, but this is generally not considered weaponization.[33] In 2008, the Russian Federation proposed draft treaty which would require Member States to refrain from launching objects that could have the capacity to carry any form of weaponry into space and or threatening to use force against objects in space.[34] The proposed treaty would reaffirm all parties' commitments made to the *Outer Space Treaty* and greatly improve upon the existing framework for preventing an arms race in outer space, but it has gained little traction.[35] While the General Assembly First Committee regularly discusses how to prevent an arms race in outer space, the Fourth Committee sometimes calls for Member States to ensure that their efforts are only advancing people purposes.

Space Debris and Low-Earth Orbit (LEO)

[27] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Satellite imagery and human geography data to be used to combat Ebola," 2015.
[28] Skibba, "Mining in Space Could Lead to Conflicts on Earth," *NautilusThink*, 2018.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Reaching Critical Will, "Outer Space: Militarization, Weaponization, and the prevention of an arms race," n.d.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

Currently, there are over 1,400 known objects out of a total of 19,000 that orbit Earth. The remaining objects rotating around the Earth's orbit are still widely referred to as "space debris."[36] Objects circling the Earth range from rocket stages to lens caps; any object that is left in the orbit of space circling the planet can have potentially dangerous consequences for some of Earth's orbiting satellites. Possible collisions can occur and, in some instances, have been attributed as a cause of some satellite failures.[37]

COPUOS has made a concerted effort to recognize the potential effects of space debris and has made it a priority to prevent new space debris from going into Earth's orbit. Once a year, information is exchanged between international organizations, Member States, and other relevant bodies. The information is then transferred to the COPUOS's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. As a result of the aggregated data, the subcommittee implemented the Space Debris Mitigations Guidelines, in which procedures for dealing with and combating space debris are laid out.[38] However, without a voluntary commitment from Member States to mitigate the volume of space debris, potential interference with critical satellite technologies persists.

Future Outlook

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the UNISPACE I conference, UNOOSA hosted the UNISPACE+50 conference in June of 2018. The goal of the conference was to strengthen global cooperation in space and the use of space for sustainable development. The resultant resolution, which called for increased global governance of outer space activities and encouraged coordination in the application of space science and technologies to the SDGs, will go to the General Assembly for consideration at their 73rd session later in 2018.[39] The resolution highlights two of the largest concerns facing the future of the peaceful uses of outer space: how can the international community best maximize new technologies to the benefit of all Member States, and, with the increase of the variety of actors in space fields, how can the UN implement and maintain a system of global governance that ensures fair access to outer space?

Focus Questions

- Does your Member State have access to space technologies that will help its development?
- Does your Member State participate in space debris mitigation?
- Is your Member State party to the treaties governing outer space?
- Does your Member State have a space program, or private-entities capable of entering space?
- What space-based technologies would most benefit your Member State or region?

[36] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "Space Debris," n.d.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, "UNISPACE+50 concludes with global commitment to cooperate in space and use space for sustainable development," 2018.

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General Assembly Fourth Committee

Topic B: Assistance in Mine Action

"I urge all Governments to provide political and financial support to enable mine action work to continue, wherever it is needed. In our turbulent world, mine action is a concrete step towards peace."

–Secretary-General António Guterres

Introduction

Landmines and explosive remnants of war pose a threat to life and affect humanitarian aid in areas where they exist as remnants of armed conflict and war. These landmines, whether stockpiled or buried, pose an impediment to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were created by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2015 when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over the last decade, programs have been created, recalibrated, and enhanced to combat this threat with the ultimate goal of clearing and destroying all landmines, eliminating stockpiles, averting the impediment they pose to development and humanitarian aid, and preventing their acquisition by non-State actors. Several treaties have been drafted by UN bodies and various conferences; efforts at every level to combat the proliferation, use, and detrimental effects of land mines are collectively referred to as mine action.

Background

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is the primary body tasked with the eradication of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, ranging from unexploded missiles and artillery shells to rockets, grenades and mortars, improvised explosive devices, and cluster bombs. In conjunction with other UN bodies and agencies, UNMAS coordinates programs to remove, clear, and destroy landmines in Member States that are affected by the menace and threat they pose, as well as promotes and assists in the destruction of stockpiles. Often, UNMAS provides technical support to Member States, but UNMAS is also actively involved in removing explosive remnants of war in seventeen territories, including Afghanistan, Lebanon, Mali, and Palestine.[40] To carry out its mission, UNMAS partners and coordinates with several other UN bodies and agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, academic institutions, and national bodies of Member States to execute her mandate.[41] Among the other UN entities working to address issues related to landmines are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Many of these bodies address mine action within the scope of their normal expertise. UNDP often assists Member States with the development of infrastructure; when they operate in fragile States that suffer from having explosive remnants of war, they often customize their plans and

[40] UN Mine Action Gateway, "About UNMAS," n.d.
[41] Ibid.

programs to helping build up mine action infrastructure, especially as landmines are a direct impediment to development.[42] UNDP has also partnered with the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining to produce a study on links between mine action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[43] The DPKO, which handles peacekeeping operations, undertakes efforts to ensure that peacekeepers are able to carry out their missions and humanitarian agencies are able to deliver assistances to civilians without the threat of landmines.[44]

Land mines and other explosive remnants of war, even after years after conflict has left an area, often result in civilian casualties, depriving children and their families of access to much needed land, schools, water, religious buildings, play areas, and other sites necessary to their wellbeing.[45] Children are more prone to injury from landmines and explosive remnants of war because they are smaller and therefore more likely to be injured or killed by blasts. Some explosive remnants are also colorful and can be mistaken as toys by children.[46] UNICEF works to teach children and their families how to live safely in contaminated areas until the lethal threat can be cleared permanently. Partnership is key to long-term solutions, and so UNICEF works with States, NGOs, other UN agencies, civil-society, and other international organizations.[47]

All of these organizations operate under the same five pillars of mine action, which were development by UNMAS: clearance, education, victim assistance, advocacy, and stockpile destruction. UNDP recognizes the presence of mines in some Member States as a significant hindrance to the eradication of extreme poverty reduction of inequalities and exclusion.[48] The General Assembly regularly passes resolutions reinforcing these pillars. *A/RES/70/80* called on Member States to establish national mine action programs wherever mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety, health, and lives of the local civilian population, or where they pose an impediment to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and social and economic development.[49]

Many national and international efforts in mine action are guided by international agreements that address explosive remnants of war. Among the first documents to mines was the second protocol to the *Convention on Certain Convention Weapons* (CCW), which restricts the use of mines and booby-traps. Protocol V to the CCW addresses explosive remnants of war more generally and was adopted in 2003. The 1997 *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, commonly known as the *Ottawa Treaty*, seeks to end the threat posed by anti-personnel mines. Article I of the treaty prohibits, under any circumstances, the use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention or transfer of anti-personnel mines, either directly or

[42] United Nations Development Programme, *Executive Summary: Mine Action for Sustainable Development*, 2016.
[43] Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, *Leaving No-One Behind: Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017.
[44] United Nations Peacekeeping, "Mine Action," 2018.
[45] United Nations Children's Fund, "Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse," 2015.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] United Nations Development Program, *Executive Summary: Mine Action for Sustainable Development*, 2018.
[49] United Nations General Assembly, *Assistance in Mine Action*, A/RES/70/80, 2015.

indirectly.[50] The treaty also urges Member States to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in accordance with the provisions of the convention.[51] In 2008, the *Convention on Cluster Munitions* was approved at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions.[52] The treaty defines cluster munitions "conventional munitions that are designed to disperse or release explosive submunitions;" these submunitions do not always trigger/explode and can remain as an explosive remnants of conflict.[53] Similar to the *Ottawa Treaty*, the *Convention on Cluster Munitions* seeks to eliminate the production and use of cluster munitions.[54] The General Assembly has called for universal accession in the past, but none of these conventions has achieved universal acceptance or ratification.

Current Situation

The threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war is still very present in many fragile States. In 2016 alone, 6,516 people were injured or maimed by explosive remnants of war and another 2,089 people were killed.[55] Civilians in 56 countries and territories were affected by these explosives; many of them were in active conflict areas, such as Afghanistan, Libya, Ukraine, and Yemen, but a great deal of them were not.[56] Instead, they are true remnants, explosives placed by governments, insurgent groups, non-State actors, or were the result of the use of cluster munitions.[57] Financial resources dedicated to removing and destroying landmines and other explosive remnants of war have increased, but it is a long and difficult process.[58]

The Process of Mine Action

The first "pillar" of mine action, clearance, involves surveys, mapping, and minefield marking as well as the actual clearance of mines from the ground, which is often referred to as "demining."[59] This is often what people most consider when thinking about mine action; it requires technical expertise and, often, specialized equipment and training.[60] A lack of access to these resources can mean that clearance is difficult or dangerous for those attempting to undertake it. Mine Action not only entails the removal and or destruction of landmines, however, but also the process of educating people about protecting themselves from the dangers of habiting in a mine-affected environment.[61] Education, otherwise referred to as mine risk education (MRE), refers to the educational activities aimed at reducing the risk of injury from mines and unexploded

[50] Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Land Mines, *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, 1997.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Convention on Cluster Munitions, *Convention on Cluster Munitions*, 2008.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] New York Times Editorial Board, "Why Do Land Mines Still Kill So Many?," *New York Times*, 2018.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] UN Mine Action Gateway, "Clearance of Mines and Explosive Remnants of War," n.d.
[60] Ibid.
[61] UN Mine Action Gateway, "Issues," n.d.

ordnance by raising awareness and promoting behavioral change through public-information campaigns, education and training, and liaison with communities.[62]
Despite efforts to remove mines and educate local populations, people continue to be injured or killed each year. Member States and international organizations often provide victim assistance, which refers to a set of concrete actions to meet the immediate and long-term needs of mine victims, their families, mine-affected communities, and persons with disabilities.[63] Article Six of the *Anti-personnel Mine Ban Treaty* states that "each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs."[64] Victim assistance efforts can include, but is not limited to, information management systems; emergency and continuing medical care; physical rehabilitation; psychosocial support and social inclusion; economic reintegration; and laws and public policies that promote effective treatment, care and protection for all landmine victims, with a human rights perspective.[65]

The UN, and many NGOs, continue to advocate not only for victims assistance, but for long term elimination of mines, especially through the destruction of stockpiles.[66] Stockpiled landmines far outnumber those currently laid in the ground. Article 4 of the *Ottawa Treaty* requires State Parties to destroy their stockpiled mines within four years after their accession to the convention.[67] Sixty-five countries have destroyed their stockpiles, while another fifty-one have officially declared not having a stockpile of antipersonnel mines, with an additional three scheduled to destroy their stockpiles by the end of the year.[68] Unfortunately, many of the States with the largest stockpiles have not ratified the treaty.[69] There is growing concern that stockpiled landmines in conflict areas could be acquired by non-State actors, which could exacerbate the future humanitarian threat posed by explosive remnants of war in the area.[70] Non-State actors have also increasingly used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which can kill indiscriminately.[71] In 2017, the General Assembly put forward a resolution that urged Member States to put in place national controls against the production, sale, supply, purchase, transfer and storage of precursor components and materials that could be used to make improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and encouraged them to establish national policies.[72]

Cooperation on Mine Action

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[62] UN Mine Action Gateway, "Mine Risk Education," n.d.
[63] UN Mine Action Gateway, "Victim Assistance," n.d.
[64] Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Land Mines, *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, 1997.
[65] UN Mine Action Gateway, "Victim Assistance," n.d.
[66] New York Times Editorial Board, "Why Do Land Mines Still Kill So Many?," *New York Times*, 2018.
[67] Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Land Mines, *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, 1997.
[68] UN Mine Action Gateway, "Stockpile Destruction," n.d.
[69] New York Times Editorial Board, "Why Do Land Mines Still Kill So Many?," *New York Times*, 2018.
[70] United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, "Addressing Improvised Explosive Devices: Options and Opportunities to Better Utilize UN Processes and Actors"
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

Over a dozen United Nations bodies cooperate and coordinate to further the goal of eradicating the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Several of these organizations engage via the UN's Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, which not only allowed for the sharing of information and best practices but allows for the setting of common priorities.[73] The DPKO serves as chair of this group, which has membership including not only UNICEF and UNDP but also the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and eight other organizations. The group developed the *Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018* to guide international efforts during that time period.[74] The strategy outlines four cross-cutting functions and activities and four strategic objectives, which include: risks to individuals and the socio-economic impacts of mines and ERW, including cluster munitions, are reduced; comprehensive support is provided by national and international actors to mine and ERW victims within broader responses to injury and disability; the transfer of mine action functions to national actors is accelerated, with national capacity to fulfill mine action responsibilities increased; and mine action is promoted and integrated in multilateral instruments and frameworks as well as national plans and legislation.[75]

The commitment by the UN to plan and assist in the transfer of mine action functions to national actors on the basis of context specific parameters is constitutes a major shift in international thought on mine action. UN agencies have ramped up support for affected states in developing, improving, and implementing national and regional strategies along with completion plans with milestones for transition. To enhance regional cooperation, the UN has facilitated the development of data collection systems. These systems can ultimately be used to provide technical and institutional support and assess and build the capacity of national authorities on mine action. The UN *Policy on Victim Assistance in Mine Action* also focuses on integrating victim assistance into national and regional frameworks.[76]

Future Outlook

The UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action seeks to promote and integrate Mine Action in multilateral instruments and frameworks as well as national plans and legislation. Their Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism seeks to universalize international policy through several approaches, including treaty universalization, and the presence and discussion of mine action in documents associated with peace and ceasefire processes.[77] International development and the achievement of the SDGs continue to be hampered by the threat of landmines and efforts to ensure predictable support from partners and NGOs and to transfer responsibilities to sustainable national systems and institutions is ongoing.[78]

[73] UN Mine Action Gateway, "About UNMAS," n.d.
[74] United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, *The Strategy of The United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018*, 2013.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the UN Strategy for Mine Action 2013-2018, *Report from the 6th Round of Data Collection*, 2016.
[78] United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, *The Strategy of The United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018*, 2013.

Focus Questions

- How can the UN achieve its goal of complete destruction of all stockpiles of land mines and other explosive remnants of war?
- How can victims of landmines be reintegrated into society in affected areas?
- What alternative means of delivering humanitarian aid to victims, especially children in affected areas be achieved until complete clearance of buried landmines is achieved?
- How can specialized UN bodies further implement previous resolutions and programs on mine action?
- How can regional cooperation be fostered to improve mine action?
- In what ways can landmines be kept out of the hands of non-state actors, and their deployments in combat prevented?
- Are there loopholes in existing framework for mine action, and how can they be resolved?

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