DISMUN 2025-2026 | GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STUDY GUIDE 2025-2026

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
BACKGROUND GUIDE 2025-2026

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Diyafah International Model United Nations Conference (DISMUN-Abu Dhabi)! We are pleased to welcome you to the GA. This year's chair is Palak Mathur of year 13 and Deputy Chair is Eyshal Fatima of year 11.

> ***The topic under discussion for the General Assembly is:***
> - The Role of Regional Alliances in Peace Building.

The General Assembly First Committee (First Committee) is one of the six main committees of the General Assembly, and is the key body for discussion of matters of disarmament and security at the United Nations (UN). The Committee's existence dates back to the beginning of the UN and has resulted in many major initiatives and treaties that address matters of international security. As the only committee in which all members can have a voice in these issues, the First Committee's role in the UN system is unique, and it continues to make important contributions to the work of the General Assembly.

We hope our delegates can utilise this background guide, as it introduces the topics for this committee. We urge you all to recognise that this guide is not meant to replace further research. We applaud and highly encourage in-depth research into your member state's policies and the use of the annotations to further your knowledge on these topics.

On the DISMUN webpage, you will find resources that are essential to your preparation for the conference and as a reference during committee sessions. The DISMUN Handbook explains each step in the delegation process from preconference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Delegates should not discuss the topics or agenda with other members of their committee until the first committee session. We urge our delegates to be respectful of this request.

In addition, please review the mandatory DISMUN Conduct Expectations and the DISMUN Procedure on the DISMUN website. DIS wants to emphasise that any instances of discrimination based on race, gender, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact Communications.DISMUN@diyafahinternationalschool.com

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Chair: Palak Mathur

Deputy Chair: Eyshal Fatima

Committee History

"Disarmament, with mutual and confidence, is a continuing imperative"

Introduction
The General Assembly First Committee (First Committee) is one of the six main committees of the General Assembly, and is the key body for discussion of matters of disarmament and security at the United Nations (UN). The Committee's existence dates back to the beginning of the UN and has resulted in many major initiatives and treaties that address matters of international security. As the only committee in which all members can have a voice in these issues, the First Committee's role in the UN system is unique, and it continues to make important contributions to the work of the General Assembly.

Mandate
The United Nations (UN) General Assembly is one of the five principal organs laid out in the Charter of the United Nations (1945). Its mandate is laid out in Chapter IV of the Charter, with Article 10 stating that the body:

> "May discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters."

One of the most important characteristics of the General Assembly is its universal nature and ability to discuss any issue within the UN system. This is core to the mandate of the General Assembly and illustrated by the diversity and range of topics discussed within its Main Committees.

As mandated in Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly must concern itself with questions of "international peace and security," and "disarmament and the regulation of armaments." The first resolution passed by the General Assembly, in 1946, called for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction." The General Assembly First Committee (First Committee) is focused on "Disarmament and International Security," and serves as the primary forum for discussing these issues.

Originally, this committee was known as the Political and Security Committee but was rapidly overwhelmed by the range of issues that could be assigned to it. In time, it came to focus on nuclear and conventional disarmament. In addition to traditional disarmament topics, the committee also examines emerging nontraditional disarmament issues, such as preventing an arms race in space and telecommunications in terms of international security; the committee also discusses regional issues and the role of gender in disarmament.

Governance, Structure, and Membership
The General Assembly is comprised of all 193 Member States of the UN, as outlined in Article 9 of the Charter. Each Member State has one vote, regardless of its population or geography. Additionally, nonMember States, non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations have received invitations to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

Decisions on important matters require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting; these questions include those on peace and security, admission of new States are invited if the Security Council is discussing an issue that directly concerns the interests of the Member State. Invited Member States do not have the right to vote but are allowed to submit proposals and draft resolutions. Furthermore, those Member States can inform the Council about a current crisis in their region. However, such proposals may be put to a vote only at the request of a member of the Council. members, and budgetary matters. Though each Member

State is granted one vote, there has been a special effort in recent sessions to achieve consensus on issues rather than going through a formal vote.

The work of the General Assembly is distributed to its six committees, each examining different topics that affect the international community. The First Committee examines topics pertaining to international security and peace; the Second Committee examines economic and financial topics; the Third Committee examines social, cultural, and humanitarian affairs; the Fourth Committee examines special political questions and decolonization, the Fifth Committee handles administrative and budgetary issues of the United Nations; and the Sixth Committee examines legal questions in the General Assembly. In addition to the six Main Committees of the General Assembly, a number of Boards, Commissions, Committees, Councils, and Working Groups work to support the advancement of the General Assembly's mandate.

The UN Secretary-General is tasked with serving as "Chief Administrative Officer" of the organization, which includes providing support – both substantive and logistical – to committees. All Main Committees receive logistical support from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM). For substantive support, including writing reports and undertaking research, the department within the Secretariat differs, depending on the thematic issue area of the committee. For First Committee, the responsible department or entity within the Secretariat is the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

Functions and Powers
The General Assembly assumes the role as the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the UN. It provides a forum for multilateral discussions on a range of issues outlined in the Charter, specifically within Articles 10 – 22 which detail the functions and powers of the body as follows:

• The General Assembly is tasked with initiating studies and making recommendations to promote international cooperation in the political field, encouraging the development of international law, promoting the implementation of cultural, social, and human rights, and promoting fundamental freedoms free from discrimination (Article 13).

• The General Assembly "receives and considers reports" issued by "the other principal organs established under the Charter as well as reports issued by its own subsidiary bodies" (Article 15). The General Assembly Plenary receives recommendations from the six Main Committees. Once the recommendations are sent to the Plenary Committee, the Plenary then votes on whether to adopt the resolutions as Presented. Any decisions reached by the Assembly are non-binding in international law; however, their decisions have enacted actions that have affected millions of people around the world.

• The General Assembly additionally "approves the budget of the UN and decides on the scales of assessment, i.e., each Member State's share of the budget" (Article 17).

• Should the Security Council fail to address a breach of international peace and security due to deadlocks between permanent members, the Assembly can consider the matter immediately, laid out in Article 11, but further codified with the adoption of General Assembly resolution 377(V) (1950) entitled "Uniting for Peace."

Sessions
The General Assembly can meet in either "regular annual sessions," or "special sessions," within which includes "emergency special sessions." The regular annual session begins on Tuesday of the third week of September and runs for one year – thus essentially, the General Assembly is "in session" for the entire year. Special sessions are outlined in Chapter IV, Article 20 of the Charter. These sessions have addressed topics that include settlement and decolonization, world health problems, international disarmament, global development, gender issues, and the environment.

Discussions on issues of international peace and security which are not taken up by the Security Council, as detailed in Article 11 and the "Uniting for Peace" resolution have occurred under "emergency special sessions" and have occurred ten times. The most recent "emergency special session" has held on and off meetings since April 1997, following the request from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to discuss the topic of Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The tenth emergency special session resumed on 15 January 2009 under the consideration of the President of the General Assembly, Dr. Ali Abussalam Treki, after three years of no debate.

"The Role of Regional Alliances in Peacebuilding"

Introduction

The topic, "The Role of Regional Alliances in Peace Building", highlights the significance of regional alliances in maintaining and promoting peace. These alliances, comprising countries with shared geographical, historical, cultural, or political backgrounds, contribute to peacebuilding through conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction. Additionally, they promote collective security, regional integration, and socio-economic development. Examples of such alliances include the European Union, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the Organization of American States, each playing a vital role in fostering peaceful relations within their respective regions.

In the 21st century, global peace and security are increasingly being challenged not only by inter-state wars but also by civil conflicts, transnational terrorism, and political instability. While the United Nations (UN) remains the primary global peacekeeping body, it often relies on regional alliances to maintain order and build peace within specific regions. These regional alliances—such as the **African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Organization of American States (OAS)**—play critical roles in preventing conflict, deploying peacekeeping operations, mediating disputes, and fostering long-term reconciliation. This essay explores the functions, strengths, and limitations of regional alliances in peacebuilding, highlighting significant case studies and offering policy recommendations for strengthening their roles in future conflict scenarios.

Conceptual Framework: What is Peacebuilding?

The concept of peacebuilding extends beyond peacekeeping or peace enforcement. It involves comprehensive efforts aimed at addressing the structural causes of violence, rebuilding war-torn societies, and laying the foundation for sustainable development and governance.
The United Nations identifies key pillars of peacebuilding as:

- Establishing inclusive political institutions
- Supporting transitional justice and reconciliation
- Rebuilding public infrastructure and governance
- Promoting rule of law and human rights
- Supporting economic recovery and poverty reduction

Regional alliances are uniquely positioned to support these pillars due to their proximity to conflicts, shared cultural and historical ties, and vested interests in regional stability.

Why Regional Alliances Matter

1. Proximity and Contextual Knowledge
Regional organizations possess deeper insights into local politics, history, language, and culture, allowing for more effective mediation and negotiation.
2. Enhanced Legitimacy
They are often viewed as neutral and credible actors by regional stakeholders, especially when compared to foreign powers.
3. Complementarity with the UN
Chapter VIII of the UN Charter acknowledges the role of regional arrangements in maintaining peace and security, provided their actions are aligned with UN principles.

Major Regional Alliances and Their Roles in Peacebuilding

1. African Union (AU)

The AU has emerged as a vital player in managing intra-state conflicts across Africa, where the majority of the world's peacekeeping missions occur. The African Union (AU) significantly contributes to peacebuilding in Africa by collaborating with regional alliances. Its key roles include promoting conflict resolution and prevention, deploying peacekeeping missions, supporting post-conflict reconstruction, and enhancing regional alliances' capacities to address peacebuilding challenges. The AU's efforts in conjunction with regional alliances help establish stability, security, and development across the African continent.

Case Study: Sudan and South Sudan

The case study of Sudan and South Sudan illustrates the peacebuilding efforts undertaken in the aftermath of the long-lasting civil war that eventually led to South Sudan's independence in 2011. Peacebuilding in this context has involved various actors, including the African Union, the United Nations, and neighboring countries, who have been working towards conflict resolution and reconciliation between the two nations.

Key Strengths of Regional Alliances
1. Signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, which ended one of Africa's longest civil wars.
2. South Sudan's Independence: Following a referendum, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011.
3. Humanitarian Aid: The international community has provided significant humanitarian assistance to address the needs of affected populations in both countries.

Challenges Faced by Regional Alliances
1. Political Instability: Both Sudan and South Sudan have experienced political instability, which has hindered the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives.
2. Ethnic Tensions: Historic ethnic tensions between different groups have remained a significant challenge to peacebuilding efforts.
3. Governance Challenges: Establishing effective governance structures and addressing corruption have been significant limitations in both countries.
4. Resource Constraints: Limited resources, both within the countries and among international actors, have constrained the extent and effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts.
5. Regional Interference: Interference from neighboring countries and regional actors has complicated the peacebuilding process.

Case Study: Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR Althea)

After the Bosnian War (1992–1995), the **Dayton Peace Agreement** ended the violence, and the EU and NATO, in coordination with regional actors like the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**, assumed key roles in post-conflict peacebuilding. Bosnia became a test case for regional and international cooperation in rebuilding a deeply divided society.

Key Strengths of Regional Alliances
1. Military Stabilization: NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) ensured immediate post-war security and disarmament.
2. Democratic Institution Building: The OSCE and EU helped reform electoral systems, train civil servants, and monitor human rights.
3. EU Accession Framework: The EU's conditionality-based approach encouraged legal and constitutional reforms essential to reconciliation.

4. Cross-Ethnic Dialogue: Regional programs supported return of refugees and inter-ethnic school initiatives in cooperation with NGOs and civil society.

Challenges Faced by Regional Alliances

1. Entrenched Ethnic Divisions
   The power-sharing arrangement institutionalized ethnic identities, often leading to political deadlock and nationalist rhetoric.
2. Limited Local Ownership
   Heavy international oversight, including the Office of the High Representative (OHR), created dependency rather than internal leadership.
3. Slow EU Integration
   Bureaucratic hurdles and internal political crises have stalled Bosnia's EU accession and disillusioned the public.
4. Russian and External Influence
   External actors like Russia support nationalist factions, undermining EU and NATO-led peacebuilding efforts.

Case Study: Myanmar Crisis (Post-2021 Coup)

Following the 2021 military coup, ASEAN produced a Five-Point Consensus for de-escalation and political dialogue. However, the junta's non-compliance and ASEAN's lack of enforcement mechanisms rendered the efforts largely symbolic.

Key Strengths of Regional Alliances

1. Cultural affinity and shared norms enhance trust and facilitate local cooperation.
2. Rapid deployment capacity due to proximity and familiarity with terrain.
3. Regional ownership enhances legitimacy and sustainability of peace processes.
4. Facilitation of inclusive dialogue, often with civil society, women's groups, and marginalized communities.

Challenges Faced by Regional Alliances

1. Institutional Capacity
Many alliances, especially in the Global South, suffer from limited financial resources, lack of technical expertise, and dependence on foreign donors.
2. Political Fragmentation
Diverging interests among member states often hinder consensus and result in political inertia, as seen in the Arab League's inaction during the Syrian crisis.
3. Coordination with Global Actors
Lack of harmonized mandates between the UN and regional organizations can cause duplication, inefficiencies, or jurisdictional confusion.
4. Legitimacy Concerns
In some cases, regional interventions may be perceived as biased or externally manipulated, especially when influential regional powers dominate alliances.

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Policy Recommendations

1. Enhance Legal and Operational Mandates
   - Regional organizations should be given clearer peace enforcement authority under international law, supported by UN Security Council resolutions.
2. Build Financial and Technical Capacity
   - International donors should invest in indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, peacekeeping training centers, and research institutes within regional alliances.
3. Strengthen UN–Regional Coordination
   - Joint operational frameworks, shared databases, and co-led missions (e.g., AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur) can improve efficiency and burden sharing.
4. Promote Inclusivity and Local Ownership
   - Regional alliances must integrate gender-sensitive peacebuilding and grassroots reconciliation programs into their strategies.
5. Implement Early Warning Systems
   - Develop regional conflict monitoring centers and engage in preventive diplomacy before violence erupts.

Conclusion

Regional alliances have evolved into indispensable pillars of the global peace architecture. From deploying peacekeepers to facilitating political transitions, these bodies possess unique strengths rooted in regional solidarity, contextual knowledge, and cultural proximity. However, their effectiveness is constrained by political divides, institutional weakness, and overlapping mandates. The future of international peacebuilding will depend significantly on how regional alliances are empowered, reformed, and integrated into a multilateral framework that values regional leadership while maintaining global accountability.

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