



# Parliamentarians for Global Action

## PGA UN NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2011

### SUMMARY

As we enter into the final stages of the year, most of the six UN General Assembly Committees are concluding their work. Texts of resolutions are being adopted at Committee level with a view to adoption by the plenary of the UN General Assembly later in the year or in early 2011. Some of these draft resolutions are of direct interest/relevance or have some bearing on the programme work of PGA – see further below.

In the UN Security Council, a number of resolutions have also been adopted. Some of these resolutions also have particular interest/relevance to, or have some bearing on, the programme work of PGA – see further below.

### 1. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

#### First Committee (Disarmament)

The First Committee concluded its work at the end of October 2010. It has taken the view that Conventional Arms Control is a Lynchpin to Regional and Sub-regional Stability. This is the subject of one of 16 Draft Resolutions, Decisions Approved by First Committee over the past 2 months. They have also sent to the plenary General Assembly texts on Regional Disarmament, Effects of Depleted Uranium Use and Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament. *The work of the Committee, as in previous years, has been infused with the importance of also regulating SALW, most apparent in the draft texts/resolutions on regional disarmament and consolidation of peace through practical disarmament.*

Many statements have been made in support of the negotiation of an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) at this year's First Committee proceedings. The First ATT PrepCom thereof has already taken place (July 2010), in which a number of PGA Members actively participated ([http://www.pgaction.org/ATT\\_Side\\_Event\\_13July.html](http://www.pgaction.org/ATT_Side_Event_13July.html)) and the Second PrepCom will take place in February/March 2011.

#### Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)

(a) In the first week of November 2010, the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) took action on three draft resolutions — all adopted without a vote — that would have the General Assembly welcome the establishment of UN Women, declare 23 June every year International Widows' Day and condemn all forms of violence against women and girls. The draft resolution entitled Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly — approved by consensus in the presence of General Assembly President Joseph Deiss of Switzerland — would have the Assembly welcome progress made towards achieving gender equality, but stress the challenges and obstacles that remain in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action. The wide-ranging 25-paragraph text would also have the General Assembly welcome the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women — UN Women — and urge Member States to ensure that it is adequately funded so that it can “promptly and effectively plan and carry out its mandate”.

(b) In the second week of November 2010, the Third Committee also approved texts calling for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Global Development Goal Efforts, High-Level Meeting to Assess Progress as well as Texts on Obstetric Fistula. The General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to work towards convening a high-level meeting on ensuring accessibility for, and inclusion of, persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts, under the terms of the approved draft resolution. Put forward by the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania in the wake of the High-Level Plenary Meeting held in September on the Millennium Development Goals, the draft resolution would have the Assembly urge Member States to explicitly include disability issues and persons with disabilities in national plans and tools designed to contribute to the full realization of the Goals.

### **Sixth Committee (Legal Affairs)**

In mid-October 2010, the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, appearing before the Sixth Committee, observed that resources allocated to Rule of Law activities have fallen short. Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro's stated that *"Over the past year, we have again seen the importance of international judicial and non-judicial mechanisms that promote compliance with international law and contribute to conflict prevention as well as efforts to combat impunity. These mechanisms, however, require further strengthening. At the Review Conference of the Rome Statute earlier this year, States reaffirmed their commitment to its full implementation. And they reaffirmed that international justice is complementary to national justice. The international community must contribute more to positive complementarity by further reinforcing or developing national capacity to combat impunity."*

## **2. UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

(a) At the end of October 2010, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution recognizing the importance of the work of the Peace Building Commission and welcomed the Review Report of this organ. It requested all UN actors to act on the recommendations contained therein with a view to making more effective the work of the Peace Building Commission. This is of interest/relevance of PGA in the context of its peace building and conflict resolution activities.

(b) Also at the end of October 2010, the Security Council issued a Presidential Statement entitled 'Women and Peace and Security' marking the 10 year anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution, 1325. (<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/603/52/PDF/N1060352.pdf?OpenElement> ). This is of particular interest/relevance to PGA in the context of its recently concluded Annual Forum on 'Empowerment of Women-Advancing Human Security' ([http://pgaction.org/32nd\\_Annual\\_Forum.html](http://pgaction.org/32nd_Annual_Forum.html) )

(c) In its Presidential Statement issued in mid-November 2010 on the situation in Sudan, the Security Council called for *"...respect for international law, international human rights law and humanitarian law; protection of freedom of expression; humanitarian access across Sudan, including in the border areas; and an end to all harassment of civil society. The Security Council underlines the importance of increased participation of women in the Sudanese peace processes."*

(d) In the third week of November 2010, the Security Council once again called on parties to conflict to take steps to protect civilians affected by hostilities, demanding that they put an end to practices such as sexual violence, forced recruitment and other violations of international humanitarian law. In a presidential statement adopted during its debate on the issue, the Security Council noted with concern the humanitarian impact of conflict, and called on parties to armed conflict *"to give protection to the civilian population in accordance with applicable international humanitarian law."* UN human rights chief Navi Pillay noted that the primary task is to prevent the commission of violations. *"Where prevention fails, we collectively bear the responsibility to ensure accountability,"* she added. *"Accountability is not only required to fulfill international legal obligations, it is also our best tool to prevent the recurrence of violations."* Such comments/observations are of obvious importance/relevance in the context of PGA's International Law and Human Rights Programme. The Presidential Statement also refers specifically to the need for accountability, the dangers of impunity and, inter alia, the Rome Statute of the ICC – More information on this Presidential Statement, including the text itself, may be viewed at <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MCOI-8BGCYL?OpenDocument>

*Any PGA Member interested in obtaining further information on a particular point of interest referenced below or a copy of a text/resolution or presidential statement referenced in this Newsletter, may do so by contacting the PGA Secretariat at PGA Headquarters in New York ([peter.barcroft@pgaction.org](mailto:peter.barcroft@pgaction.org))*