

Oldenburg Model United Nations Conference 2011
- Changes and Challenges in a Globalised World -



Guide to

The General Assembly's Third Committee

Paving the Way of Persons with Disabilities into Society

Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates of the GA^{3rd},

My name is Sebastian Katzer, I am 18 years old and I will serve as one of your chairs in this year's OLMUN 2011 GA^{3rd} committee. I live near Oldenburg and graduated from high school this year at the KGS Rastede. In my free time I mostly enjoy music (both listening to and playing) and sports, especially soccer.

This conference will be my 6th MUN overall and my 4th OLMUN. Apart from Oldenburg, I also took part in the BERMUN two times, 2008 and 2009.

In all these conferences I participated as a delegate, so this will be my first time as chair at a MUN conference. I absolutely enjoyed the MUN experience in every single conference and I will do my best to make this year's experience an unforgettable one. Together with my fellow chairs Alexander and Jan-Phillip we are looking forward to a memorable and exciting OLMUN conference.

— See you in June!

— Yours sincerely,

Sebastian Katzer



Dear delegates of the GA 3rd!

My name is Alexander Husch and this year I have the great pleasure and feel most honoured to, after 3 previous OLMUN conferences in which I participated as a delegate, serve as one of your chairs in the GA's Third Committee of OLMUN 2011 and, at least for a week, neglect all the books, CD's and trainers in my room, apparently representing my hobbies. I am 19 years old, graduated from grammar school in 2010 and as I write this to you the sky is covered in grey and rain is hammering against my window. This is what it was like the last 4 weeks – so: yes, I am currently resident in the UK and yes, sometimes clichés are true!

At the moment I am working at an independent school near London teaching German as a “Modern Foreign Language Assistant”, as it were in the UK's school system, but I will shortly be back to, of course, spend all my time on indispensable preparation and great excitement, while my fellow chairs Jan-Phillip and Sebastian and I are looking forward to finally meeting you all in June and once again enjoying such a unique atmosphere as the one of a MUN conference in Oldenburg!

All the best and kind regards,

Alexander Husch



Dear Delegates,

My name is Jan-Philipp Reinhold and it is an honour for me to serve as one of this year's chairs of the GA 3rd. I am a student from the Technical University of Hamburg – Harburg. It is my second semester and I study engineering. I am 20 years old and my hobbies are snowboarding, surfing, volleyball, tennis, party, Hamburg and MUN conferences.

In my eyes, MUNs are a good opportunity to meet a lot of new people from all over the world, discuss with them about serious topics which may even affect our future on this planet and having fun with them in your committee. I am really looking forward to have a nice time with you as in my previous MUNs.

This year's OLMUN is my sixth MUN conference and my second time as chair. Last time when I chaired a committee we had a lot of fun but also serious discussions. We had all kind of delegates and it was so great to see so many different personalities. I hope this year will be the same and that you all have a great time with us in our committee. I will give my best to guide you through the 11th OLMUN conference with my Co - Chairs.

So let's hope for some fruitful debates and well prepared delegates! Yours sincerely,

Jan-Philipp Reinhold



1. The Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Affairs Committee – Third Committee of the General Assembly –

The Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Affairs Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, better known as the “Third Committee of the GA”, negotiates with a programme concerning the different issues named in its description. In this matter it has to cope with problems which may address a single country, a group of countries, a body like the European Union or comparable institutions, or even the world as a whole. In any case, the matter which is discussed in the GA^{3rd} is of global interest since all member states of the United Nations need to work together to solve these problems, especially if the group of countries concerned consists solely of Third World Countries.

A central part of the work in the GA^{3rd} is the handling of human rights questions, a matter in which it also observes the work of the Human Rights Council. Since all social and cultural matters always involve dealing with humans, most of the time especially regarding minorities or other groups of persons which are oppressed somehow, the human rights issue is a vital part of the committee's tasks.

Looking through the past topics the GA^{3rd} has dealt with, the aforementioned thesis gets concrete. Most human rights violations affect groups like women, children, indigene, refugees etc. In order to promote both the abolishment of racism or other discrimination, and the right to self-determination, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee focuses on these persons to ensure the compliance of the said persons.

As you can see when looking at this year's OLMUN GA^{3rd} topic, the committee also addresses important social affairs. Apart from Persons with Disabilities, this may concern issues related to youth, family or ageing, as well as the fight against crimes and criminal justice or drug control. Again, there are various bodies of the UN which centralise on these topics, like the UNODC, but in the GA^{3rd} delegates put together all the different aspects of a problem and its consequences regarding the fields of society, culture and humanitarian science.

2. General Introduction

Very recently, I was at Open Door, Colonia Cabred. There, talking to the director, he told me, “here there are around 1,064,” or a number thereabouts, “of institutionalized persons”. He said, more or less 750 are poor; that is, they're there because they've been there for a long time, and they're there because no one goes to look for them, and because they don't have anywhere to go if they leave. All told, the time they've spent there, the loneliness, becoming accustomed to this loneliness or this way of life and not having family members that are interested in them... So, they're not crazy, they're poor and alone, which is a good way to make someone crazy.

– Felipe Solá, Governor of the province of Buenos Aires¹

¹Mental Disability Rights International: RUINED LIVES, Segregation From Society in Argentina's Psychiatric Asylums, p.5 (2007)

Revealing circumstances in some Argentine psychiatric institutions where people with mental disabilities are held under absolutely inhumane conditions, this quotation, taken from a report by Mental Disability Rights International (2007) on the segregation of people with mental disabilities from society, shall serve as a first step to introduce this year's topic of the Third Committee of the General Assembly:

Paving the Way to the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities into Society

Of course the quotation shown above does only refer to persons with mental disabilities. Nevertheless it implies significant nuisances which you, as delegates working on solutions, will often face. Throughout this guide you will find certain approaches that should help get a first impression of the issue itself, but also give you hints and ideas for resolutions that are to be written.

To give you a feeling for the topic and at the same time coming back to the before mentioned nuisances, let us consider Filipe Solà's statement, again. His implications should lead to a first general problem recognition in terms of circumstances, status and treatment for and of persons with disabilities based on a discrepancy between developing and industrialized countries, between poor and rich and between rural and urban regions (by the way, Open Door is a small place in the province of Buenos Aires).

Other concerned fields are social backgrounds (family etc.), support services (accommodation, treatment, medical care etc.) and of course public institutions (including personnel etc.) – just to name a few problems.

"[...] So, they're not crazy, they're poor and alone, which is a good way to make someone crazy."

Inter alia, our goal should be to avoid sentences like this in future, since one of the most abstract and inhumane ways of torture is a downward spiral, no matter in which context, leading to constricting immobility.

3. Summaries of the three main UN documents concerning persons with disabilities

3.1. "World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons"

During the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1982, the UN General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

The World Programme emphasized equal opportunity rights for people with disabilities, as well as equal access to improved living conditions resulting from economic and social

development. Further, for the first time, the relationship between disability and the environment was officially recognized in the definition of handicap.

The implementation of the World Programme of Action required states to establish legal authority for instituting measures to reach Programme objectives, to eliminate barriers to full participation, and to support the creation and growth of organisations of people with disabilities. The World Programme of Action proposed governmental actions to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities in a variety of spheres: from education to legislation, and from employment to sports and culture. The UN Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992 was declared to provide a timeframe for governments to implement the World Programme.

Since this is the first UN document for action towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities into society, please find more detailed explanation of aforementioned issues in the summaries of the two subsequent documents given below.

3.2. “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities”

After the UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), which was conceived as the beginning of the implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (commonly referred to as WPA), the UN General Assembly adopted the so called “Standard Rules” in 1993.

Although it is not a compulsory legality, the Standard Rules, as one of the three major documents or even mechanisms for progressive work towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities into society, highlight the importance of the matter itself and at the same time tries to clarify, paraphrase and summarise the WPA to 22 ‘Rules’ in total. The document as such is highly expressive in terms of commitment, responsibility, policy-related advices as well as common morality.

The document consists of three sub-parts entitled “Preconditions for Equal Participation” (Rules 1-4), “Target Areas for Equal Participation” (Rules 5-12) and “Implementation Measures” (Rules 13-22). The additional sub-section called “Monitoring Mechanism” mainly serves as the introduction and stresses the obligations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development, who is responsible for international dialogue and frequent reports to the UN.

Introduction

This sub-section includes previous measures, the current purpose and a clear terminology used throughout the following document – these explanations of certain terms can also be used as definitions!

I. Preconditions for Equal Participation

Since adequate presuppositions are indispensable necessities for progressive action towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities into society, this part of the document is dedicated to the very basics such as appropriate awareness (-raising) of the matter, supply of medical care, rehabilitation (which here rather means a vocational rehabilitation and therefore implies a

social rehab. – see also definition of the term “Rehabilitation”) and the provision of assistive professional and personal support services.

II. Target Areas for Equal Participation

The document's centre section draws attention on the pragmatic approach to guidelines concerning cultural, educational, vocational, personal, social and religious issues, hence to issues and problems every person, particularly if suffering from the burden of disability, is facing almost every day.

The aspect of *accessibility* should be considered as not necessarily mentioned as explicitly in other official documents and therefore as significant and essential, since physical environment (e.g. public transport, accommodation, buildings etc.) and communication (e.g. sign language) is taken notice of.

As you will understand, equal participation begins with sober and pragmatic guidelines related to daily routine. In this sense this section aims at both, an equalisation and a socialisation leading to participation under equal opportunities. This, distinguished delegates, is the noble aim of overcoming disability, or, if you allow the use of a purely linguistic obviousness, enabling the disabled.

III. Implementation Measures

In order to establish an effective system helping to improve and advance the process of implementation, national and international political and economic measures are required. The third section of the Standard Rules recommends the establishment of a data base which can, also commonly, be used for research based on information, collected statistics and other data.

At the same time resulting achievements should be included in national policies and legislation, so as to constantly follow the pursuit of further development.

In addition to that, States are encouraged to find financing possibilities by fundraising or reconfiguration of funds already existing to, of course, expedite the process of implementation and also to strengthen the participation of organisations of persons with disabilities, especially with regard to specific implementation and improvement measures.

In general, such organisations are – the document stresses that very much – more than welcome to offer new principles and contributions where they consider it possible and/or essential.

By adopting the “Standard Rules” the UN General Assembly finally calls for an implementation monitoring. In fact, this is an appeal for international cooperation, be it bi- or multilateral, with special regard to cooperation between industrialised and developing countries. Since such relations and cooperation may cause difficulties, the document's last point concentrates on a global support network and therefore invites States to cooperate with the United Nations and/or other suitable agencies or organisations.

3.3. “United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has come into effect in 2008, is the most important international document regarding the treatment of persons with disabilities. As of January 2011 it has received 147 signatories and is ratified by 98 states.

Its main purpose is to provide a legal basis for all states which have ratified it; therefore it is legally binding for these states. The convention points out the importance of including Persons with Disabilities into Society and fight discrimination of any kind against them. It is vital to see persons with disabilities as what they are: not objects but persons who should have the same rights as everyone else.

To ensure the implementation of the necessary measures for reaching this aim, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states the General Principles as well as the General Obligations in the process of doing so. According to this, both the main General Principle and Obligations are to enable an equal participation for persons with disabilities, including political, cultural and community life, but is not limited to these. There also cannot be any proper inclusion without involving these concerned into the progress, the Persons with Disabilities themselves.

Moreover, persons with disabilities need to have equal rights to receive education, have access to work and health-regarded facilities and measures. In short, they need to reach the same life standard as persons without any disability.

An important part of these efforts is to lay an extra focus on equality between men and women as well as children. To fight discrimination of any kind is another General Principle of the Convention in order to guarantee an equitable inclusion of as many Persons with Disabilities as possible.

Another vital part of the discussions within the committee has to be the International Cooperation in order to adequately implement the aforementioned aims. One of the bodies established for this purpose is the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Its work consists of monitoring and observing the process of all States Parties in maintaining the objectives of the Convention.

For a more detailed summary of the Convention you may like to check this Power Point Presentation designed by the UN. Don't worry if you get an alert asking whether you want to open the file, it's from the original United Nations website, so the source is definitely trustworthy: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/ppt/crpdbasics.ppt>.

4. Research

For OLMUN 2011, to ensure that all delegates are well-prepared and to enable fluent lobbying and debating as well as a great variety of opinions and ideas, we expect every delegate to bring a draft resolution on our committee's topic, which should be at least one page long. If you need help on writing the resolution, please read the OLMUN 2011 handbook or contact us, we will happily support you.

Additionally, you will need a short policy statement, outlining the main points of your resolution. This statement does not need to be longer than 150 words, as it shall briefly give other delegates an overview on your country's position. Before starting the lobbying, we will call

for every delegate to read out his policy statement to the committee to make the lobbying process more efficient.

When researching the position towards the treatment of Disabled Persons your respective country holds, the various measures it has or has not taken yet, the existing programs and what possible new measures you as a representative could introduce, you should consider a few things on the way.

1. Begin with your research **in time!**

It is of vital importance for you to start early enough with your researching work. As most of you probably have not yet dealt with the topic of Including Disabled Persons into Society, you need to dive into it and understand its facets properly.

2. Use a **variety of sources** for your research!

Be sure not to use just one single source for your whole resolution. Diversification is important to reach a well-thought-out resolution with useful and debatable points. Also, the more sources you use, the more you broaden your horizon on our topic. This will prove to be very useful when discussing in your lobbying groups as well as in the debates itself.

3. Find out the **situation** of Disabled Persons in the **country you represent!**

An aspect you should never forget is that at a MUN conference you are not required to elaborate a resolution which you as a private person would think of, but one that your country would support. Therefore you need to find out in detail the situation disabled persons currently have to face in your country in order to ensure point 4:

4. Elaborate a comprehensible, realistic resolution considering the **position of your country!**

Of course you shall not just copy the statements your country has already taken regarding this topic but rather you are urged to think for yourself and find a resolution. But as said before, this resolution needs to be realistic considering that you are a representative of an existing country with existing positions. Within this frame you need to find a self-contained solution which you can present in our committee.

We hope to have given you a good first overview about the topic of Including Disabled Persons into Society. Obviously, the topic is much deeper and you need to research and study for yourself to grasp it in its whole complexity. But we are confident that you will take this task and adequately prepare yourself for the OLMUN 2011 GA^{3rd} Committee, as we are looking forward to welcome enthusiastic delegates, willingly to make this Conference a memorable experience for every single one of us.

If you have any questions or problems, whether it be regarding the research, the draft resolution, the course of events or any other issue, do not hesitate to contact us at ga3rd@olmun.org We will respond as fast as possible and do our best to help you out. You also can send your draft resolutions to us if you feel like there is a problem or if you are unsure about the accuracy of style and content.

Additionally, please make use of the OLMUN forum on www.olmun.org to get in touch with the other delegates beforehand, which will lighten and fasten the lobbying process. We are looking forward to an interesting, successful and entertaining MUN and we will happily welcome you to spend a great OLMUN conference with you from June 6th to June 9th!



Yours sincerely,

Sebastian, Jan-Phillip and Alexander

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5. Useful links

United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&lang=en#EndDec

http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2008/080404_Disabilities.doc.htm

Other useful links:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx>

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=26520>

http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/DDS_Barriers.pdf

<http://www.ragged-edge-mag.com/garrett/causes.htm>

<http://www.suite101.com/content/discrimination-against-people-with-disabilities-a181483>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ABOUTUS/Pages/DiscriminationAgainstPersonsWithDisabilities.asp>

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