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Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs)

Volume II
ARTICLE 22

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TEXT OF ARTICLE 22

The General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. In contrast to studies in previous Supplements, the study on Article 22 in this Supplement will contain a General Survey and an Analytical Summary, in order to accurately reflect major relevant developments under this Article. The General Survey provides an overview of practice under Article 22, and the Analytical Summary will cover relevant constitutional discussions.

2. In this study, the scope of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly covers only the main committees as well as the Ad Hoc committees, commissions, councils and working groups that are established by the General Assembly and subordinated to it. It does not therefore include: i) bodies established by treaties but associated to the General Assembly;¹ and ii) bodies that although established by the General Assembly to undertake particular operational functions but are mainly autonomous.²

GENERAL SURVEY

3. Within the period under review, the General Assembly established several Ad Hoc Committees including, inter alia, the following:
   - On 4 December 2000, the Assembly established an Ad Hoc Committee with the mandate to elaborate a Convention against Corruption.³ This Ad Hoc Committee submitted the

¹ For example: The Human Rights Committee, The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Committee on the Elimination Against Women.
² For example, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the United Nations University. See respectively GA resolution 2186 (XXI) and GA resolution 2951 (XXVII).
³ GA resolution 55/61, para. 7.
On 12 December 2000, the Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property, open also to participation by States members of the specialized agencies with the mandate “to further the work done, consolidate areas of agreement and resolve outstanding issues with a view to elaborating a generally acceptable instrument based on the draft articles on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property” adopted by the International Law Commission in 1991. The Assembly adopted, at its ninety-ninth session the text of the draft United Nations Convention on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property, prepared and submitted by the International Law Commission and the Ad Hoc Committee on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property.


On 19 December 2001, the Assembly established the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the
Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. The Assembly adopted, at its sixty-first session, the draft text of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee.

- On 21 December 2001, the Assembly established the Ad Hoc committee of the whole of the General Assembly with the mandate to conduct the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and related initiatives. This Ad Hoc Committee submitted a Report which was considered by the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

- On 4 December 2006, the Assembly established the Ad Hoc Committee on Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the mandate to consider the report of the Group of Legal Experts established by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 59/300. The Ad Hoc Committee was convened during the sixty-second and sixty-third sessions of the General Assembly and prepared two draft resolutions which were adopted by the General Assembly, resolutions 62/63 and 63/119. In accordance with these resolutions, the General Assembly made a number of recommendations to States and the Secretary-General to investigate and, if appropriate to prosecute crimes of a serious nature which might have been committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission. The Assembly also decided that the consideration of the report of the Group of Legal Experts, in particular its legal aspects, would be continued during its sixty-seventh session in the framework of a working group of the Sixth Committee (resolution 64/110).

4. During the review period, the General Assembly established, inter alia, the following working groups:

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13 G A resolution 56/168.
14 G A resolution 61/106, paras. 1 and 2.
15 G A resolution 56/218, para 3.
16 See G A resolution 57/7, the preamble.
17 Report of the Group of Legal Experts established by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 59/300. See G A resolution 60/980.
18 G A resolution 61/29, para.1.
• On 22 November 2002, the Assembly established an Open-ended Working Group with the mandate to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of the Preparatory Committee, for the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.\(^\text{19}\) This Working Group prepared a Report and submitted it to the Assembly.\(^\text{20}\)

• On 20 December 2002, the Assembly established an Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, under the chairmanship of the President of the Assembly,\(^\text{21}\) with the mandate to “produce concrete recommendations to ensure an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration bearing in mind the continuing reform process of the United Nations and resolution by the General Assembly 50/227.\(^\text{22}\) The Ad Hoc Working Group submitted its Report to the Assembly, recommending the adoption of two draft resolutions on Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields which was adopted at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.\(^\text{23}\)

• On 17 November 2004, the Assembly established an Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group on Marine Biological Diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction with the mandate to: i) survey the past and present activities of the UN and other relevant international organizations with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction; ii) examine the scientific, technical, economic, legal, environmental, socio-economic and other aspects of the above-mentioned issues; iii) identify key issues and questions to facilitate consideration by the States thereof; and iv) indicate, where appropriate, possible options and approaches to promote international cooperation and coordination for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.\(^\text{24}\)

\(^{19}\) G A resolution 57/61, para.1.
\(^{20}\) See A/AC.268/2007/2.
\(^{21}\) G A resolution 57/270A, para. 1.
\(^{22}\) G A resolution 57/270A, para. 3.
\(^{23}\) See G A resolutions 57/270 A and 57/270 B.
\(^{24}\) G A resolution 59/24, para. 73.
This Working Group prepared a Report dealing with diverse items of its mandate. Due to the nature of its mandate.

- On 12 September 2005, the Assembly established an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly open to all Member States with the mandate to: i) identify further ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on previous resolution; and ii) submit a report thereon to the Assembly at the respective session. This Working Group prepared several reports and submitted them to the Assembly. Due to the continuous mandate assigned to this Working Group, it was still active at the end the period covered in this study.

- On 24 December 2008, the Assembly established an Open-ended Working Group with the mandate of establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. At the end of the period under review, this Working Group had not yet completed its mandate.

- On 31 July 2009, the Assembly established an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group with the mandate to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. At the end of the period under review, this Working Group had not yet completed its mandate.


25 See A/61/65.
26 G A resolution 59/313, para. 4; G A resolution 62/276, para. 2; G A resolution 63/309, para. 2.
27 See A/62/952/Add.1.
28 G A resolution 63/240, para. 3.
29 G A resolution 63/305, para. 1.
30 G A resolution 62/228, para. 39.
31 G A resolution, 62/228, para. 40.
6. The General Assembly established the Human Rights Council and, concurrently with the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission which are examined under the section “analytical summary of practice”.  


8. During the period under review, besides their annual reports, the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly submitted special or thematic reports and the Assembly endorsed, approved them or took note thereof; examples are as follows:

- The International Civil Service Commission submitted its Report on the United Nations Common System structured in four sections: i) conditions of service applicable to general service and professional service categories; ii) conditions of service applicable only to professional service and higher categories; iii) conditions of service applicable only to general service and locally recruited categories; and iv) strengthening of international service which was deferred.  

- The Assembly approved the chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to the information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations.  

- The Assembly took note of the release of the Report by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, entitled” Sources and Effects of Ionizing Radiation.”

32 See paras 18 to 21 below.
33 G A resolution 59/290.
34 G A resolution 55/223; G A resolution 57/285.
35 G A resolution 55/137, para. 137.
• The Joint Inspection Unit submitted and the General Assembly endorsed: i) a report on the United Nations system common services at Geneva;\(^{38}\) ii) a report on policies and practices in the use of services of private management consulting firms in the organizations of the United Nations system;\(^{39}\) iii) a report entitled “The results approach in the United Nations: implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration”;\(^{40}\) iv) a report entitled “Enhancing governance oversight role: structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports”;\(^{41}\) v) a report on support costs related to extra-budgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system;\(^{42}\) vi) a report on common and joint services of the United Nations system organizations at Vienna;\(^{43}\) vii) a report on the management audit review of outsourcing in the United Nations and the United Nations funds and programmes;\(^{44}\) viii) a report on the revenue-producing activities of the United Nations system;\(^{45}\) ix) a report on reforming the Field Service category of personnel in United Nations peace operations.\(^{46}\)

9. On a number of occasions, the General Assembly acknowledged the important contributions of its subsidiary organs to its work; examples are as follows:

• The Assembly highlighted the work accomplished by the International Law Commission on the topics of “State responsibility” and “International liability for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law.”\(^{47}\)

• The Assembly also highlighted the work done by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) on privately financed infrastructure projects,\(^{48}\) which culminated in the adoption of the UNCITRAL Legislative Guide on Privately

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\(^{37}\) United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.00.IX.3 and E.00.IX.4.

\(^{38}\) G A resolution 56/279.

\(^{39}\) G A resolution 56/235.

\(^{40}\) G A resolution 57/303.

\(^{41}\) G A resolution 57/284 A-B.

\(^{42}\) G A resolution 58/283.

\(^{43}\) G A resolution 58/278.

\(^{44}\) G A resolution 58/277.

\(^{45}\) G A resolution 58/263.

\(^{46}\) G A resolution 58/257.

\(^{47}\) G A resolution 55/152, respectively paras. 2 and 7.

\(^{48}\) G A resolution 55/151, para. 2.
Financed Infrastructure Projects. The Assembly also expressed its appreciation for the completion and adoption of its Legislative Guide on Insolvency Law.

10. During the period under review, the General Assembly introduced some amendments to the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal with effect from 1 January 2001 concerning composition of the Tribunal, appointment of its members and reference to the six United Nations official languages. The General Assembly also added an article concerning the referral of a significant question of law arising out of a case handled by three members of the Tribunal to the whole Tribunal. A second amendment came with effect since 1 January 2004.

11. During the period under review, the General Assembly renewed or modified mandates of some of its subsidiary bodies, including in particular:

- The Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Committee established by its resolution 51/210 “shall continue to elaborate a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.”
- The Assembly requested the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization to maintain, in its agenda, as a priority item, the issue of “the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to

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50 G A resolution 59/40, para. 1.
51 G A resolution 55/159.
52 United Nations Administrative Tribunal Statute, article 3 para. 1 as amended reads as follows: “The Tribunal shall be composed of seven members, no two of whom may be nationals of the same State. Members shall possess the requisite qualifications and experience, including as appropriate, legal qualifications and experience. Only three members shall sit in any particular case”.
53 United Nations Administrative Tribunal Statute, article 3 para. 2, as amended, reads as follows: “The members shall be appointed by the General Assembly for four years and may be reappointed once. A member appointed to replace a member whose term of office has not expired shall hold office for the remainder of his or her predecessor’s term, and may be reappointed once”.
54 In article 7, paragraph 7, and in renumbered article 11, para. 4, reference to “five official languages” was amended to read “six official languages”.
55 United Nations Administrative Tribunal Statute, article 8, as amended, reads as follows: “Where the three members of the Tribunal sitting in any particular case consider that the case raises a significant question of law, they may, at any time before they render judgment, refer the case for consideration by the whole Tribunal. The quorum for a hearing by the whole Tribunal shall be five members”.
56 United Nations Administrative Tribunal Statute, article 3 para. 1 reads as follows: “The Tribunal shall be composed of seven members no two of whom may be nationals of the same State. Members should possess judicial or other relevant legal experience in the field of administrative law or its equivalent within the member’s national jurisdiction. Only three members shall sit in any particular case”. See G A resolution 58/87.
57 G A resolution 55/158, para. 13; G A resolution 57/27, para. 17; G A resolution 61/40, para. 22; G A resolution 63/129 para. 22; G A resolution 64/118, para. 22.
assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter.” The Assembly also decided to consider within the Sixth Committee, or a working group thereof, further progress in relation to the above-mentioned issue.

- The Assembly also requested the Special Committee to continue: i) to consider proposals on the maintenance of international peace and security to strengthen the role of United Nations; ii) to work on the question concerning peaceful settlement of international disputes between States and enhancement of the International Court of Justice; and iii) to consider proposals on the Trusteeship Council in the light of, inter alia, of the Secretary-General’s report: “Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform.”

- The Assembly requested the Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration of Decolonization to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and to carry out those actions approved by the Assembly regarding the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and the Second International Decade in all Territories that have not yet exercised their right to self-determination, including independence. The Assembly requested the Special Committee to continue to consider the examination of the question of the implementation of the Declaration concerning Tokelau, New Caledonia and Western Sahara.

58 G A resolution 55/157, para. 9.
59 G A resolution 55/157, para. 10.
60 G A resolution 55/156 para. 3; G A Resolution 56/86, para. 3; G A resolution 57/24, para. 3; G A resolution 58/248, para. 3; G A resolution 60/23, para. 3 [no longer reference to the Trusteeship Council]; G A resolution 61/138, para. 4 [no longer reference to the Trusteeship Council]; G A resolution 62/69, para. 3 [no longer reference to the Trusteeship Council]; G A resolution 63/127, para. 3 [no longer reference to the Trusteeship Council]; G A resolution 64/115, para. 4 [no longer reference to the Trusteeship Council].
61 G A resolution 51/950 and Add.1-7.
62 G A resolution 55/147, para. 8. This paragraph includes a set of measures including the dispatch of visit missions. Thus, e.g., the Assembly welcomed the invitation extended by the Governor of America Samoa to the Special Committee to send a visit mission to that territory. See G A resolution 55/144, page 6 para. 3. See also: G A resolution 58/104, para. 20; G A resolution 59/219, para. 20; G A resolution 59/44, para. 3; G A resolution 60/112, para. 23.
63 G A resolution 55/143, para. 14; G A resolution 56/71, para 16; GA resolution 57/137, para 21; G A resolution 58/107, para. 21.
64 G A resolution 55/142, para. 16; G A resolution 56/70, para 16; G A resolution 57/136, para. 16; G A resolution 58/106, para. 16.
65 G A resolution 55/141, para. 10; G A resolution 56/69, para 12; G A resolution 57/135, para. 12; G A resolution 58/109, para. 8.
• The Assembly besides welcoming the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, decided that it shall continue its efforts for a comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects and shall review the implementation of its previous proposals and consider any new proposals to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to fulfill its responsibilities in this field.\textsuperscript{66} The Assembly requested, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories to investigate Israeli practices in Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967 especially concerning the lack of compliance with the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{67}

• The Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities to consider the issue of children with disabilities in its deliberations.\textsuperscript{68}

• The Assembly requested the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to submit its report on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).\textsuperscript{69}

12. During the period under review, the General Assembly continued to call on its subsidiary bodies to cooperate and co-ordinate among each other the performance of their related functions; examples are as follows:

• The General Assembly authorized the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to give emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people.\textsuperscript{70} The Assembly requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution

\textsuperscript{66} G A resolution 55/135, paras. 1 and 4.
\textsuperscript{67} G A resolution 55/130, para. 5; G A resolution 56/59, para. 5; G A resolution 57/125, para. 1; G A resolution 57/124, para.5; G A resolution 61/116, para.6.
\textsuperscript{68} G A resolution 58/157, para. 35.
\textsuperscript{69} G A resolution 58/90, para. 2.
\textsuperscript{70} G A resolution 55/52, para. 5.
194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee.\footnote{GA resolution 55/52, para. 7; GA resolution 57/107, para. 5.}

- The Assembly emphasized the importance of further enhancing the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.\footnote{GA resolution 56/26, para. 2.}

13. As a result of the decision of the General Assembly to establish a new system of administration of justice, including a two-tier formal system of the Administration of Justice,\footnote{See paragraph 5, above.} the United Nations Administrative Tribunal was abolished as of 31 December 2009.\footnote{See GA resolution 61/261, GA resolution 62/228, and GA resolution 63/253.}

**ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE**

**A. Human Rights Council**

**i) Establishment**

14. On 15 March 2006, The General Assembly decided to establish the Human Rights Council based in Geneva to replace the Commission on Human Rights, as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly.\footnote{GA resolution 60/251, para. 1.} The Resolution establishing the Council was passed with 170 votes in favor, 4 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, United States of America) and 3 abstentions (Belarus, Islamic Republic of Iran and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).\footnote{A/60/PV.72, pp. 5 and 6.} The United States did not join the consensus on the resolution on the grounds that it lacked a viable mechanism for maintaining credible membership.\footnote{A/60/PV.72, p. 7.}

**ii) Mandate**

\footnote{GA resolution 60/251, para. 1.
A/60/PV.72, pp. 5 and 6.
A/60/PV.72, p. 7.}
15. The Human Rights Council was mandated to perform, *inter alia*, the following functions:

- Be responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all;\(^{78}\)
- Address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations;\(^{79}\)
- Promote human rights education, learning, advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building;\(^{80}\)
- Serve as a forum for dialogue on thematic issues on all human rights;\(^{81}\)
- Make recommendations to the General Assembly for the further development of international law in the field of human rights;\(^{82}\)
- Promote the full implementation of human rights obligations undertaken by States and follow-up to the goals and commitments related to the promotion and protection of human rights from United Nations conferences and summits;\(^{83}\)
- Undertake a universal periodic review of the fulfillment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments. The review shall be a cooperative mechanism based on interactive dialogue, with full involvement of the country-concerned;\(^{84}\)
- Contribute towards the prevention of human rights violations and respond promptly to human rights emergencies;\(^{85}\)
- Assume the role and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights relating to the work of the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;\(^{86}\)

\(^{78}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 2.
\(^{79}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 3.
\(^{80}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(a).
\(^{81}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(b).
\(^{82}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(c).
\(^{83}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(d).
\(^{84}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(e).
\(^{85}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(f).
\(^{86}\) G A resolution 60/251, para. 5(g).
• Work in close cooperation in the field of human rights with Governments; regional organizations, national human rights organizations and civil society;\textsuperscript{87}
• Make recommendations regarding the promotion and protection of human rights;\textsuperscript{88}

16. Due to the nature of its mandate and status, the Human Rights Council continued to work throughout the period under review.

\textit{iii) Composition}

17. The Human Rights Council consists of forty seven Member States, elected directly and individually by secret ballot by the majority of the members of the General Assembly.\textsuperscript{89} The membership, based on geographical representation and seats allocated to each regional groups are as follows: Group of African States 13; Group of Asian States 13; Group of Eastern European States 6; Group of Latin-American and Caribbean States 8; and Group of Western European and Other States 7.\textsuperscript{90} The Members of the Council shall serve for a three-year period and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election after two consecutive terms.\textsuperscript{91} Membership in the Council shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations and the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, may suspend the rights of membership in the Council of a member of the Council that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights.\textsuperscript{92}

\textbf{B. Peacebuilding Commission}

\textit{i) Establishment}

\textsuperscript{87} G A resolution 60/251, para. 5.(h).
\textsuperscript{88} G A resolution 60/251, para. 5.(i).
\textsuperscript{89} G A resolution 60/251, para. 7.
\textsuperscript{90} G A resolution 60/251, para. 7.
\textsuperscript{91} G A resolution 60/251, para. 7.
\textsuperscript{92} G A resolution 60/251, para. 8.
18. On 20 December 2005, the General Assembly acting concurrently with the Security Council, acting under articles 7, 22 and 29 of the United Nations Charter and with a view to give effect to the decision made by the 2005 World Summit,\(^93\) which had earlier at the same year decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body.\(^94\)

\textit{ii) Mandate}

19. The functions assigned to the Peacebuilding Commission are:

- To bring together all the relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict reconstruction and recovery.\(^95\)
- To focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies to lay the foundation for sustainable development.\(^96\)
- To provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.\(^97\)

20. Due to the nature of its mandate, the Peacebuilding Commission continued working during the period under review.

\textit{iii) Composition}

21. The Peacebuilding Commission has a standing Organizational Committee, responsible for developing its own rules of procedure and working methods. This Committee is constituted by: i) seven members of the Security Council, including permanent members; ii) seven member of the

\(^93\) G A resolution 60/1, paras 97-105.
\(^95\) G A Resolution 60/180, para. 2(a).
\(^96\) G A Resolution 60/180, para. 2(b).
\(^97\) G A Resolution 60/180, para. 2(c).
Economic and Social Council; iii) five top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including a standing peace-building fund that are not among those selected in the previous categories; and iv) five top providers of military personal and civilian police to United Nations Missions that are not among those selected in the previous categories.98

98 G A resolution 60/180, para. 4.