

## **VOTING BLOCS**

### **NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an international movement of 118 members representing the interests and priorities of developing countries. The Movement's principles originated in a 1954 agreement between India and China detailing the principles their future relations would be based around. The values underlying this relationship were aired at the Asia-Africa Conference in 1955, which brought together the leaders of 29 states in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The major focus of this meeting was a discussion of the problems of resisting domination by major powers, opposing colonialism, and opposing neo-colonialism. The founding states of NAM were India, Ghana, Egypt, Indonesia, and the former Yugoslavia.

The organizational structure and values of NAM were clarified in June 1961 in a preparatory meeting for the First NAM Summit Conference. The criteria for joining NAM consisted of five main principles: 1) states should have independent policies based on non-alignment and the coexistence of States with differing political and social systems; 2) states should consistently support the Movements for National Independence; 3) states should not be a member of a multilateral military alliance concluded in the context of Great Power conflicts; 4) any regional or bilateral defense pact with a Great Power should be concluded outside the context of Great Power conflicts; and 5) military bases should not be conceded to Foreign Powers in the context of Great Power conflicts.

Since its inception the Movement has attempted to retain independence in world politics that does not represent the struggles between major powers. This evolved from the pressures put on many states during the Cold War. However, the Movement has not been defined solely by its relationship with competing powers during the Cold War. The focus of Non-Aligned Summits has shifted towards a broader range of political as well as economic problems affecting in developing countries. The focus of the Movement will continue to be on ensuring the ability of developing countries to follow independent paths in the international political and economic scenes.

NAM countries elected to the Security Council, and who form the NAM caucus in the Security Council, are expected to strive for and adopt unified positions reflecting the positions of NAM as adopted at its Summits and Ministerial Conferences. The tradition of the Movement is to pay attention to openness and the holding of extensive consultations with broad participation when dealing with sensitive issues. NAM members currently serving on the UN Security Council include Burkina Faso, Libya, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Panama, and South Africa.

### **AFRICAN UNION**

The African Union originated from the now defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU). The objectives of the OAU were to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid, to promote unity and solidarity among African states, to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development, to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each member state, and to promote international cooperation within the framework of the United

Nations. The OAU was fairly successful in achieving these goals. However, the goals of the African Union and its member states have evolved from establishing the independence of former colonies to economic and political hardships on the continent. The AU has added the protection of human rights, promotion of sustainable development, and eradication of preventable diseases to its list of goals. The AU's concern with these newer goals is evident in its efforts to bring an end to the humanitarian and political crisis in Zimbabwe. The AU is Africa's principal organization for the promotion of solutions to socio-economic issues, unity among the African people, partnerships between governments and civil society, stability and peace, and development programs for Africa.

The AU has also begun to take a more active role in creating and sustaining peace after conflicts on the continent. The AU is working with the UN in the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) hybrid peacekeeping mission. The AU has also deployed a peacekeeping mission to Somalia in an attempt to provide stability within the country. In addition to the AU mission in Somalia (ANISOM), the AU has also deployed missions of negotiators to help bridge the gaps between conflicting groups within the country. The AU will continue to strive to take an active role in the management of conflicts on the African continent both within and outside the United Nations.

Morocco is the only African nation not a member of the African Union and will continue to hold this status so long as the status of the Western Saharan region is unresolved. Mauritania and Guinea currently have suspended memberships in response to the coup d'états in both of these countries in 2008. Full membership rights will be restored to these two countries when the transition to legitimate democratic governance occurs. Libya's leader Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, is the current elected president of the African Union.

### **ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE**

The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was established on 25 September 1969 during a meeting of the heads of the Arab-Islamic states. The meeting, held in Rabat, Morocco, was convened in response to an Israeli attack that caused the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest site in the Muslim religion. The Israeli actions were perceived by the members of the conference to be an intentional attack on the holy site. The OIC was originally established with the sole goal of liberating Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa from Jewish control. Now the OIC exists and acts to create a common policy and culture among member states.

The OIC currently has 57 member states that come from Africa, Southern Europe, Central and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Russia, Thailand, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, and Northern Cyprus hold observer status in the OIC.

The OIC enjoys permanent delegation status at the United Nations and has offices in Geneva and New York City. Each year the delegation submits to the UN Secretary General a report concerning cooperation between the two bodies and points of concern to the OIC. The OIC was a vocal opponent to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and strives to become involved in the rebuilding of the Iraqi nation, specifically the preservation of Islamic holy sites and promotion of the cultural dissemination of Islamic values. The OIC has publicly supported the "Roadmap to

Peace” in the Middle East as defined by the United States, Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union. All OIC member states will take a unified stance against any Israeli aggression, whether it is in the Israeli-held territories of Gaza and the West Bank or against a Muslim-majority nation.

### **G-77**

The Group of 77 (G-77) was established in 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). As the largest coalition of developing nations in the United Nations, the Group of 77 provides the means for the developing world to articulate and promote its collective economic interests and enhance its joint negotiating capacity on major international economic issues. The G-77 also works to promote economic and technical cooperation among developing nations.

While membership of the G-77 has increased to 130 countries, the original name was retained because of its historical significance. The G-77 rotates its Presidency between members from its four geographic chapters – Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Carribean. Sudan is currently the president of the G-77.

Members of the G-77 currently on the Security Council are Burkina Faso, Libya, Vietnam, Indonesia, Panama, and South Africa. Since the G-77 is primarily an economic organization, any common voting tendencies its members exhibit are likely to be the result of membership in voting blocs other than the G-77.

### **EUROPEAN UNION**

The European Union (EU) is a supranational organization and an economic and political union of twenty-seven European countries. The EU grew out of efforts to prevent another relapse to wide-scale warfare on the European Continent. Its origins date back to the European Coal and Steel Community, an organization founded in 1951 that counted Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands as its founding members. The EU has grown both horizontally (more member states) and vertically (more integration) since 1951. The European Union as it is known now came into existence in 1992 with the signing of the Maastricht treaty, which established three pillars for the EU: the European Community pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy pillar, and the Justice and Home Affairs pillar. The European Community pillar is the most developed of these pillars and has led to the introduction of the Euro as a common currency in sixteen of the twenty-seven EU members.

The EU has come to play a large role in the UN. In addition to having two of the permanent seats on the Security Council (Britain and France), the EU’s members pay almost 40% of the UN’s budget. The EU is most concerned with taking preventative action to keep conflicts from erupting or escalating. The EU has become more involved with peacekeeping and peacebuilding, specifically in the Balkans and in Central Africa. The EU is currently involved in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), providing up to 4,300 peacekeeping troops to help provide stability in the region. The EU will act as a unified front on many issues, including attempts to prevent a nuclear weapons program in Iran.

## **ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the largest and most influential international organization on the American continents. The OAS can trace its roots back to the First International Conference of American States in 1889-1890; the official charter of the OAS was signed in April 1948 and went into effect in December 1951. The main goals of the OAS are promoting democracy, advancing human rights, expanding free trade, fighting the drugs trade, and promoting sustainable development. The OAS played the leading role in organizing and legitimizing the international intervention, led by the OAS and then the UN, in support of restoring democracy to Haiti in 1993. The OAS is still very involved in attempts to consolidate democracy and promote development in Haiti and can be expected to strongly support the UN mission (MINUSTAH) currently in Haiti

Costa Rica, Panama, and the United States currently represent the OAS on the Security Council. These countries will work in concert on many issues. However, Costa Rica and Panama can be expected to be more sensitive to safeguarding the role of small states in the international system.

The members of the OAS will find the most common ground in the battle against the trafficking of illicit drugs and the violence that often accompanies the drug trade. Under the auspice of the OAS the American continents are making notable progress towards removing land mines left over from the civil wars that raged in the region from the 1960s to the early 1990s. The OAS is also working to address the threat of terrorism, notably the FARC terrorist organization in Columbia. Though they will support most strongly efforts to stem terrorism in Columbia, both Panama and Costa Rica will also broadly support the United States' efforts to fight terrorism abroad, though they may push for a more multilateral approach.