

**Committee Overview:***Purpose:*

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (SOCHUM) is the third committee in the United Nations General Assembly. SOCHUM deals with a wide range of social, cultural and human rights issues that affect various peoples all around the world. Perhaps the most important aspect of GA 3 is its role in advancing global human rights. SOCHUM also discusses issues such as the protection of children, the advancement of women, dealing with IDP's (Internally Displaced Peoples), the promotion of the right to self-determination, and the elimination of racial discrimination. Further attesting to the broad scope of SOCHUM, it is not uncommon for the committee to discuss untraditional issues such as crime prevention, youth outreach, or drug control.

*Members and Voting:*

SOCHUM is similar to the other main committees, in that all 192 members of the United Nations General Assembly are members of SOCHUM, and that any issue presented within is decided by a standard majority vote, barring special cases. Non-members such as NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and other international actors may have observer status in the GA 3, but they are not permitted to participate in voting.

*Powers:*

SOCHUM has become one of the most significant organs of the United Nations. Given that nearly every international conflict has a "social" aspect, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee benefits from a wide jurisdiction, encompassing a broad range of topics. Any General Assembly agenda items that are classified as social, humanitarian or cultural are presented, voted on and amended within the GA 3.

*Limitations:*

While topics that fall under its jurisdiction are initially reviewed and voted on within the committee, SOCHUM can never pass a bill in and of itself; the final decision on any issue must be made by the General Assembly as a whole. As with much of international law, decisions made in SOCHUM are non-binding to individual member states, and therefore many resolutions do not carry a great deal of political power.