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Update for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Committee Overview	2
Recent Developments	2
Annotated Bibliography.....	4
Bibliography	4
I. Youth Leadership and Education for Sustainable Development	7
Recent Developments	7
Annotated Bibliography.....	8
Bibliography	9
II. Ensuring Decent Work for All.....	12
Recent Developments	12
Annotated Bibliography.....	13
Bibliography	14
III. The Role of Science, Technology, and Innovation in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals	17
Recent Developments	17
Annotated Bibliography.....	18
Bibliography	19

Committee Overview

Recent Developments

In the latter half of 2016, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) continued preparing for its upcoming 2017 session.¹ Shortly after the conclusion of the 2016 HLPF session, the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) published a summary of the Forum discussions, looking back at the first year of implementation of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and highlighting key considerations for subsequent sessions.² According to the ECOSOC summary, the biggest challenge with respect to successfully implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at year one remains severe inequality across and within countries.³ It was therefore recommended that future SDG Progress Reports be extended to issues such as universality, integration, and transformation, and that “countries in special situations” be subject to separate reports.⁴ Participants also suggested making the next Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) of 2019 more relevant for policymakers by strengthening the science-policy interface.⁵ Finally, the ECOSOC President noted the importance of making full use of the follow-up and reporting mechanisms already in place, in order to avoid creating an additional burden on countries.⁶

The 2017 session of HLPF, to be held in July under the auspices of ECOSOC, will focus on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, and 17 in order to “eradicate poverty and promote prosperity in a changing world.”⁷ In preparation for this session, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization organized an expert meeting in mid-December in Vienna, Austria, on “Readying institutions for integrated approaches to the 2030 Agenda.”⁸ Emphasis was placed on the interlinkages between the seven SDGs to be reviewed by HLPF, and outcomes of the meeting will contribute to the upcoming session of the Forum.⁹ Ahead of the 2017 session, HLPF members can also participate in regional preparatory meetings under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) regional commissions.¹⁰ These meetings bring together government representatives, civil society organizations, UN programs and entities, and regional intergovernmental organizations.¹¹ In the past, those meetings have submitted recommendations and inputs to HLPF, thus providing key insights into regional collaboration for the achievement of the SDGs and a valuable regional perspective into the 2030 Agenda.¹² There will be four regional preparatory meetings in 2017: the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in March

¹ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*.

² Benson Wahlén, President’s HLPF Summary Reflects on Leaving No One Behind, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

³ UN ECOSOC, *HLPF 2016 Draft Summary*, 2016.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*.

⁸ UN DESA, *Expert Meeting on Readying Institutions and policies for integrated approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda*.

⁹ UN PAN, *Expert meeting in preparation for HLPF 2017 Readying institutions and policies for integrated approaches to implementation of the 2030 Agenda - Summary*.

¹⁰ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*.

¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.1)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Economic Commission for Europe to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.2)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Key messages of the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.3)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.4)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.5)*, 2016.

¹² UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.1)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Economic Commission for Europe to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.2)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Key messages of the second session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.3)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.4)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Input from the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.5)*, 2016.

2017; the Economic Commission for Europe Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) and the Latin America and the Caribbean RFSD, both in April 2017; and the Africa RFSD in May 2017.¹³

In 2016, 22 Member States participated in the voluntary national review (VNR) process of that year's HLPF session.¹⁴ That number has increased to 40 for the 2017 VNRs, as of January 2017.¹⁵ Togo will be the only country to submit a VNR two years in a row in 2016 and 2017.¹⁶ In order to help them prepare their 2017 national reviews, countries have access to a Questions & Answers (Q&A) document from the UN Secretariat that addresses format and other practical considerations, but also content-related questions.¹⁷ Countries are encouraged to consider the VNRs as part of a review cycle and to pursue their engagement in peer-learning and exchange even after participating in the reviews.¹⁸ As the UN enters year two of the 2030 Agenda, national reviews are now expected to present the initial progress made in achieving the SDGs.¹⁹ Civil society is also monitoring the national review process launched last year, thus providing a useful external perspective on the strategies that have been implemented and what progress has been made.²⁰ A coalition of four non-governmental organizations published a report in November 2016 to review 16 of the VNRs submitted in 2016 and provide recommendations for both country and civil society reporting.²¹ VNRs were assessed against the UN Secretary-General's common reporting guidelines from January 2016 and analyzed according to eight thematic measures that countries have so far taken towards implementation.²² The report presents concrete and precise recommendations for reporting countries: for example, it advises them to participate at least three times in the VNR process, to clearly identify obstacles and areas where they need support, and to lay out their next steps to encourage accountability.²³

Beyond HLPF, support for the successful achievement of the SDGs will come from the General Assembly and the SDG implementation team recently appointed by its President.²⁴ On 8 November 2016, President Thomson announced a new plan to “strengthen momentum for SDG implementation” during the 71st GA session.²⁵ Efforts will be focused on three tracks: “A) Raising the global public’s awareness of the importance of SDG implementation; B) Strengthening momentum in the implementation of each of the 17 SDGs; C) Supporting the UN and related agencies in making their maximum contribution to SDG implementation at all levels.”²⁶ In his briefing of Member States, the President of the General Assembly also called for greater inclusion and collaboration between all actors to promote sustainability, human dignity, and equity, and to guarantee regional balance and gender equality.²⁷ A report on the progress made against this plan will be submitted to the 2017 session of HLPF.²⁸

¹³ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - ECA Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD)*; UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) 2017*; UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - ECLAC: Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development (LAC RFSD)*; UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - ESCAP: Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)*.

¹⁴ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - Q&A for Voluntary National Reviews at the 2017 HLPF*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Benson Wahlén, CSOs Respond to EC Plans, 2016 VNRs, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

²¹ Bond, *Progressing national SDGs implementation: Experiences and recommendations from 2016*, 2016.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *SDG Implementation Strategy Briefing of Member States by the President of the General Assembly*, 2016.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Strategic Plan of the Office of the President of the General Assembly*, 2016.

²⁷ UN General Assembly, *SDG Implementation Strategy Briefing of Member States by the President of the General Assembly*, 2016.

²⁸ Ibid.



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Alongside the Ministerial Declaration published following the 2016 session of HLPF, the ECOSOC President also presented a summary of the discussions held during the meetings and side events. The document provides a first review of the progress made in achieving the SDGs, as well as an overview of the various topics covered under the “leaving no one behind” umbrella theme. The summary also sheds lights on more practical issues, including the science-policy interface needed to realize the 2030 Agenda, the means of implementation, and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Delegates will find this resource helpful for understanding the key outcome discussions of the recent HLPF session and how they can inform upcoming sessions and efforts.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2016, November 8). *Strategic Plan of the Office of the President of the General Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 31 December 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2016/11/08/sdg-implementation-strategy/>

On 8 November 2016, the President of the General Assembly introduced a new strategic plan to trigger “a universal push to transform our world” and implement the SDGs. With a dedicated team recently appointed, the GA President is focusing the work of his office on three specific tracks, with an emphasis on building partnerships with the largest range of actors possible. Delegates can find relevant information and resources on the GA website, and they are invited to remain aware of all existing initiatives both within and outside of the UN that can contribute to and support the work of HLPF.

United Nations, Regional Commissions New York Office. (n.d.). *Regional Forums on Sustainable Development* [Website]. Retrieved 31 December 2016 from: <http://www.regionalcommissions.org/regional-forums-on-sustainable-development/>

The UN organization employs five regional commissions to mainstream its work and activities at the regional level and to work more closely with both individual Member States and other regional entities. Regional Commissions play a key role in promoting sustainable development in their respective regions and aim to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through their Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSD). These annual meetings also provide key regional inputs to HLPF. As of January 2017, four RFSDs have been scheduled in preparation for HLPF 2017. On this webpage from the UN Regional Commissions, delegates will find all outcome documents from the previous RFSDs, which should help them better understand their respective regional contexts and sustainable development issues.

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United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2016). *Input from the Economic Commission for Europe to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.2)* [Report]. Retrieved 31 December 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/E/HLPF/2016/3/Add.2>

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I. Youth Leadership and Education for Sustainable Development

Recent Developments

Since October 2016, several participants to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the United Nations (UN) General Assembly have been promoting and supporting youth leadership and education in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁹ In December, the UN General Assembly adopted resolutions on the implementation of the outcome from the World Summit for Social Development 2016 (71/162) and on shaping future agendas toward literacy (71/166) to urge all relevant international and regional actors, including public institutions, the private sector, and civil society, to include social groups, particularly young people, in the implementation of sustainable development programs and to provide them with equal access to education and skills development training.³⁰ Additionally, in line with the 2016 HLPF theme of “ensuring that no one is left behind,” Member States reaffirmed through these resolutions the goal to achieve literacy and numeracy for all youth and the importance of providing all actors with the necessary resources to alleviate challenges preventing youth from accessing equitable, quality education, such as discrimination based on age, gender, location, or disabilities.³¹

Several HLPF participants, including the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), have also continued actively working to improve youth leadership and education for sustainable development.³² The UN MGCY, through its Youth Science Policy Interface Publication, launched a special series of peer-reviewed articles dedicated to urban sustainable development, written by young scientists, engineers, and policymakers, in preparation for the third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, which took place in October 2016.³³ Youth contribution and leadership in the design of policies have also been encouraged on several other occasions, including through the *Youth Declaration on Media and Information Literacy* from the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2016, held in November 2016.³⁴

UNESCO has recently undertaken several global initiatives to promote access to quality education, such as workshops in Africa and Asia to enhance girls’ education in the sciences and a major 2017-2019 roadmap of activities to monitor the progress of SDG 4.³⁵ The plan also seeks to enable sustainable development actors to reduce the gaps in the accessibility of quality education and to “ensure that no one is left behind.”³⁶ Its SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, an initiative based on the recommendation of the 2016 *Global Education Monitoring Report*, met in December 2016 and established four working groups to provide the necessary resources to these actors for the implementation of the plan, such as financing, advocacy, and monitoring services.³⁷

During the meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) presented examples of initiatives taken under the 50-year plan *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (2013) to illustrate the key role played by regional collaborations, complementary to international efforts, in achieving SDG 4.³⁸ For instance, in consonance with attaining literacy for all youth, the United States

²⁹ UN Major Group for Children & Youth, *Sustainable Urban Development: Challenges & Opportunities*, 2016.

³⁰ UN DPI, *General Assembly Adopts 50 Third Committee Resolutions, as Diverging Views on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Animate Voting*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/RES/71/162)*, 2016.

³¹ UN General Assembly, *Inclusive development for persons with disabilities (A/RES/71/165)*, 2016, UN General Assembly, *Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (A/RES/71/166)*, 2016.

³² UN Major Group for Children & Youth, *Sustainable Urban Development: Challenges & Opportunities*, 2016.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ UNESCO, *Youth Declaration on Media and Information Literacy*, 2016.

³⁵ UNESCO, *Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education, a project planning meeting*, 2016; UNESCO, *Experience-sharing Workshop – Enhancing Institutional Capacity for Gender Mainstreaming in Education*, 2016; UNESCO, *Second SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Meeting: Background Documents*, 2016.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ GEM Report Team, *The Global Education Monitoring Report – Education for people and planet: creating sustainable futures for all*, 2016; Association for the Development of Education in Africa, *SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee develops a roadmap and forms 4 working groups*, 2016.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Agency for International Development, in partnership with the ADEA, launched the “Global Book Alliance” in December 2016 to ensure that youth across Africa and Asia have access to proper reading materials.³⁹ This regional initiative adds itself to other worldwide actions undertaken regionally by public organizations, such as the Mediterranean *Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development*, launched in December 2016, which encourages Mediterranean Member States to multiply learning opportunities for displaced populations and refugees.⁴⁰ East of the Mediterranean Sea, 32 Member States from Eastern Asia have established a network of national SDG 4 coordinators to harmonize all efforts deployed to implement the education-related SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region following the second Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030.⁴¹

Over the last few months, civil society and the private sector have also been major contributors to initiatives put in place to enhance youth leadership and education in sustainable development and to provide a safe learning environment.⁴² For example, the non-governmental organization Sightsavers, together with the Imperial College London’s Partnership for Child Development, collaborated with the World Bank through the School Health Initiative Programming to identify intellectual disabilities among children in developing countries and improve educational performance of youth, particularly in Africa.⁴³ As of December 2016, they have implemented the program specifically in Ghana, Cambodia, Senegal, and Ethiopia.⁴⁴ The pledge of the private sector to achieve SDG 4 has also been demonstrated on several recent occasions, including through the commitments of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, announced in November 2016, to improving quality education in Nigeria by measuring youth literacy and numeracy, as well as the commitments of numerous businesses to improving access to quality education for all young refugees.⁴⁵ For example, Google has pledged to help provide access to education to 10,000 young refugees in Lebanon in 2017.⁴⁶

The initiatives above demonstrate that a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including HLPF participants, continuously contribute to improving the quality of youth education around the world and enhance their collaboration by designing sustainable development policies. The resolution adopted in July 2016 by the UN General Assembly on the “Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level” (70/299) reiterates the objective for HLPF to facilitate the sharing of these experiences and knowledge for the implementation of the SDGs.⁴⁷ Therefore, HLPF plays a critical role in the implementation of the SDGs as a central forum for establishing global partnerships, where participants, including all Member States, are called upon to “ensure that no one is left behind.”

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In consonance with the 2016 theme of HLPF to “ensure that no one is left behind,” addressing the enhancement of youth leadership and particularly access to quality education for sustainable development for all youths is particularly relevant in the context of the global refugee crisis. This document is the result of discussions between governments of the Mediterranean region aimed at addressing the ongoing crisis. Delegates will gain knowledge on an approach recently adopted by

³⁹ Association for the Development of Education in Africa, *USAID and ADEA organize a joint sub-regional meeting in Dakar, to promote the launch of the Global Book Alliance*, 2016.

⁴⁰ Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030, *2nd Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030 II)*, 2016; Ministerial Conference on the Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, *Action Plan of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030, *2nd Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030 II)*, 2016.

⁴² Global Partnership for Education, *Private Sector and Foundations*.

⁴³ Sightsavers, *School Health Initiative Programming*.

⁴⁴ Global Partnership for Education, *In Ghana, partners review screening and deworming interventions in schools*, 2016.

⁴⁵ William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, *TEP LearNigeria Initiative for a Civil-society assessment of Learning in Nigeria*, 2016; The White House, *Private Sector Participants to the Call to Action*, 2016.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level (A/RES/70/299)*, 2016.



Member States to promote access to education for refugees, a vulnerable social group, including relevant strategies for the design of future education policies and resolutions.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *Second SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Meeting: Background Documents*. Retrieved 1 January 2017 from:

https://en.unesco.org/system/files/sc_meeting_brochure_dec2016.pdf

In December 2016, participants at the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, an initiative of UNESCO, drew a roadmap of activities for 2017-2019. The goal of these activities is to improve accessibility to education in addition to leveraging youth participation in the design of sustainable development policies. Provided for Committee participants, these background documents will allow delegates to understand the major concerns that must be considered during the elaboration of the action plan.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (A/RES/71/166)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/476). Retrieved 31 December 2016 from: www.undocs.org/A/RES/71/166

In addition to resolutions 71/162 and 71/165 adopted by the General Assembly, this resolution provides guidelines that have been newly adopted by Member States to improve literacy programs. For instance, Member States are encouraged to take steps to facilitate access to quality education while giving particular attention to vulnerable groups. It also addresses challenges to providing global access to quality education in addition to the enhancement of youth leadership in sustainable development. This recently established perspective will be useful to delegates when they are writing their position papers and draft resolutions.

United Nations Major Group for Children & Youth. (2016). *Youth Science Policy Interface Publication – Special Edition: Sustainable Urban Development: Challenges & Opportunities*. Retrieved 31 December 2016 from: http://media.wix.com/ugd/046809_1a1429f20b77406582d0c8f9f7c09c2b.pdf

In past years, the UN Major Group for Children & Youth has shared through its Youth Science Policy Interface Platform several publications written by young professionals to help with policy design. In a context of urban sustainable development, this edition is an excellent example of the role that youth can play in leading global efforts. Delegates are also invited to take note of the previous work accomplished by the UN Major Group for Children & Youth at HLPF 2016. These documents will illustrate the large spectrum of domains where youth are already contributing to the design of sustainable development policies.

The White House. (2016). *Private Sector Participants to the Call to Action* [Website]. Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/20/private-sector-participants-call-action>

The commitments of the private sector have a significant impact in relation to promoting youth leadership and education for sustainable development. To adequately define the role of the private sector in the design of their resolutions, delegates are invited to consult this list of actions taken by private companies to address the global refugee crisis following a call for action made by the government of the United States of America. Delegates can familiarize themselves with the types of resources that the private sector has the potential to provide.

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *Experience-sharing Workshop – Enhancing Institutional Capacity for Gender Mainstreaming in Education* [Report]. Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002468/246834E.pdf>

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II. Ensuring Decent Work for All

Recent Developments

Ensuring decent work continues to be a pivotal goal for the international community and thus has recently been integrated into numerous reports and official statements. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will debate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which focuses on “Decent Work and Economic Growth for All,” in its meeting in 2019; until then, the Forum continues to facilitate voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of SDG implementation, which in most cases include the topic of ensuring decent work for all.⁴⁸ Member States have continued to emphasize the importance of decent work in their VNRs, and many have already implemented actions for achieving SDG 8.⁴⁹

A great number of other United Nations (UN) bodies and organizations have discussed the topic and published documents on this matter. During the 13th and 14th meetings of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly’s Second Committee, held on 17 October 2016, delegates discussed various obstacles to eradicating poverty and concluded that the objective of ensuring decent work for all is threatened by climate change and technology gaps.⁵⁰ On 8 September 2016, the UN Institute for Training and Research and the Sustainable Development Goals Fund held a workshop on “Attaining the SDGs by 2030: Business and the UN, New Partnership Models,” in which decent work played a substantial role since gender considerations and the role of minorities, such as migrants, were on the agenda.⁵¹ While no concrete outcomes were adopted, the workshop helped government officials improve global networks with business and civil society leaders.⁵² On 1 December 2016, the outcome document of the second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, the *Nairobi Outcome Document*, was released.⁵³ In the document, participants pledged to strengthen efforts toward ensuring decent work.⁵⁴ From 6 to 8 December 2016, the Division for Sustainable Development in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico organized an “Expert Group Meeting on Exponential Technological Change, Automation, and Their Policy Implications for Sustainable Development.”⁵⁵ Conference participants identified priority areas and potential mechanisms for fostering international cooperation to achieve the SDGs, including SDG 8.⁵⁶ New technologies played a pivotal role in their considerations on how the SDGs can be achieved.⁵⁷

The International Labour Organization (ILO) continues to be one of the key organizations that facilitates debates and research on ensuring decent work for all. To conclude the Asia-Pacific and Arab States Decent Work Decade of 2006-2015, and in preparation for the 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting, the ILO published a statistical report on 3 November 2016 in which it summarized the achievements and remaining challenges of the states in the region concerning the implementation of decent work.⁵⁸ On the same day, the ILO published a report in which it explained the background of the *Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration)* of 1977, which was amended in 2000 and 2006.⁵⁹ In the report, the ILO addressed important factors that influence decent work, such as foreign direct investments and awareness for effectively implementing existing laws on decent work for all.⁶⁰ On 10 November 2016, the ILO decided on the follow-up of

⁴⁸ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform – High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁴⁹ UN DSD & UN DESA, *Synthesis of Voluntary National Review*, 2016.

⁵⁰ UN DPI, *Technology Gap, Climate Change among Obstacles to Eradicating Poverty, Speakers Say in Second Committee GA/EF/3455*, 2016.

⁵¹ UNITAR & SDG Fund, *Attaining the SDGs by 2030: Business and the UN, New Partnership Models*, 2016.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, *Nairobi Outcome Document*, 2016.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ UN DSD, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform - Expert Group Meeting on Exponential Technological Change, Automation, and Their Policy Implications for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ ILO, *Statistical report of the Decent Work Decade 2006–15: Asia-Pacific and the Arab States*, 2016.

⁵⁹ ILO, *Multinational enterprises, development and decent work: Report on the promotion and application of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, 2016.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

the resolution concerning decent work in global supply chains, which will guide the work of the ILO's office on this matter between 2017 and 2021.⁶¹ Among other aspects, the ILO's governing body requested that the office organize a "tripartite Meeting of Experts to identify possible action to promote decent work and protection of fundamental principles and rights at work for workers in export processing zones" in 2017, which should be followed by meetings on similar issues in 2018 and 2019.⁶² The follow-up document identifies numerous areas of action for the ILO, including capacity building, partnerships, and monitoring of actions.⁶³

Four days later, the ILO published the report *Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects*, in which it analyzes current trends in non-standard employment, a major obstacle on the path towards decent work for all.⁶⁴ On 9 December 2016, the 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the ILO took place in Bali, Indonesia, and the *Bali Declaration* was adopted.⁶⁵ The meeting concluded the Asia-Pacific Decent Work Decade, and accordingly, ensuring decent work for all was the major focus of the declaration.⁶⁶ The document lists initiatives that Member States should implement on the path towards sustainable development, such as policies for more decent jobs, especially for young people, women, and other disadvantaged groups.⁶⁷ On 15 December 2016, the ILO published the *Global Wage Report 2016/17*.⁶⁸ It documents both past and present wage levels around the world and thus allows readers to grasp the evolution of wage levels and access to decent jobs in different countries.⁶⁹ On 29 December 2016, the ILO, in cooperation with the Green Initiative, published a Technical Paper on "A just transition to climate-resilient economies and societies: Issues and perspectives for the world of work," in which it dedicates an entire chapter to climate change risks for decent work.⁷⁰

Ensuring decent work for all remains an issue of outstanding importance, not only for the ILO, but also for HLPF and other UN bodies. While the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) constitutes an important step on the path towards decent work for all, much depends on the concrete actions of Member States and international organizations.

Annotated Bibliography

The Green Initiative & International Labour Organization. (2016). *Technical Paper: A just transition to climate-resilient economies and societies: Issues and perspectives for the world of work*. Retrieved 28 December 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---gjp/documents/publication/wcms_536552.pdf

In this working paper, the Green Initiative and the ILO address the challenges climate change poses to economies and societies and explain how resilience against such challenges and risks can be built. In the first chapter, the authors provide a detailed overview of climate change-induced risks for decent work, such as economic losses, health, labor productivity, and migration. It further addresses additional important aspects of decent work, such as job quality and job losses, and explains in detail which measures could be taken to improve decent work opportunities and resilience against climate change. Accordingly, the document helps delegates understand the different risks posed by climate change to decent work and how states can deal with those risks.

International Labour Organization. (2016). *The Bali Declaration (APRM.16/D.6)*. Retrieved 27 December 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_537445.pdf

⁶¹ ILO, *Decision on the fifth item on the agenda: Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work in global supply chains ILO programme of action 2017–21*, 2016; ILO, *Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work in global supply chains*, 2016.

⁶² Ibid.; ILO, *Decision on the fifth item on the agenda: Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work in global supply chains ILO programme of action 2017–21*, 2016.

⁶³ Ibid.; ILO, *Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work in global supply chains*, 2016.

⁶⁴ ILO, *Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects*, 2016.

⁶⁵ ILO, *The Bali Declaration (APRM.16/D.6)*, 2016.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ ILO, *Global Wage Report 2016/2017*, 2016.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ The Green Initiative & ILO, *A just transition to climate-resilient economies and societies: Issues and perspectives for the world of work*, 2016.

The Bali Declaration, which was adopted at the 16th Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting, lists priorities for national policies and actions as well as actions by the ILO on facilitating decent work for all. Many of the listed policies include examples of how decent jobs for all can be created and how sustainable development can thus be fostered. Youth and women play a pivotal role in the document, and creating green jobs is also named as a priority. Accordingly, the Bali Declaration enables delegates to acquire a detailed understanding of how the ILO contributes to the international community's initiatives to guarantee decent work for all. It further discusses policies that are current priorities and that may thus be implemented in HLPF's agenda.

International Labour Organization. (2016). *Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work in global supply chains (general discussion) (GB.328/INS/5/1)*. Retrieved 29 December 2016 from:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_531660.pdf

This document was designed to guide the work of the ILO in relation to facilitating and supporting decent work in global supply chains between 2017 and 2021. Therefore, it helps delegates to prepare for the conference in at least two ways. On the one hand, it provides them with the opportunity to learn about the ILO's work in the field and its plans for the next five years. On the other hand, it allows them to get a deeper understanding of the essential aspects that need to be considered when debating decent work in global supply chains, which can be very valuable for their own work at the conference. Accordingly, the document constitutes a pivotal resource for both theoretical and practical insights on decent work in global supply chains.

International Labour Organization. (2016). *Global Wage Report 2016/2017*. Retrieved 27 December 2016 from:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_537846.pdf

The Global Wage Report 2016/2017, which was published in December 2016, represents a pivotal document for assessing the current state of access and the specific quality of decent jobs for all people in different countries around the world. It provides a detailed analysis of major trends in wages, addresses concerns about access to decent jobs in some states, and discusses existing gender gaps as well as similarities and differences between states. Moreover, the document explains how inequality can be reduced and how decent jobs for all can be created. Accordingly, it is a key resource for delegates to learn more about current trends in wage inequalities and access to decent jobs all over the world. It helps delegates learn more about the country they are representing as well as grasp international trends.

International Labour Organization. (2016). *Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects*. Retrieved 27 December 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_534326.pdf

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_534326.pdf

This ILO report defines and explains the concept of non-standard employment, which in many cases conflicts with decent work. The report sheds light on the challenges and problems of non-standard employment, describes current trends in such deployment, and addresses the special situation of vulnerable groups, such as youth, women, and migrants. Moreover, it dedicates an entire chapter to addressing decent work deficits in non-standard employment and is thus highly relevant to the topic of ensuring decent work for all. Accordingly, this report constitutes a valuable resource for delegates who seek to learn more about the factors that may prevent and constrain decent work, enabling them to better understand what is needed to ensure decent work for all.

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III. The Role of Science, Technology, and Innovation in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

Recent Developments

In recent months, the role of science, technology, and innovation (STI) in implementing the sustainable development goals has continued to be an important topic of discussion within the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). HLPF has specifically continued to facilitate Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) which discuss national priorities, progress, and challenges.⁷¹ 22 Member States presented VNRs in 2016; many highlighted the importance of STI for sustainable development and “mentioned initiatives to develop technology at the national level and to cooperate with partners.”⁷² For example, Madagascar stated that from 2017, the national budget would be aligned with the National Development Plan, and the links between STI and universities would be prioritized.⁷³

Recent developments related to the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) have included preparation for the upcoming second annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum).⁷⁴ The United Nations (UN) Inter-Agency Task Team on STI for the Sustainable Development Goals (IATT) will collaborate with ten representatives from civil society, the scientific community, and the private sector for the STI Forum, which will be held on 15-16 May 2017 in New York.⁷⁵ The objective of this Forum is to discuss the potential of STI in relation to implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).⁷⁶

In addition to HLPF’s efforts to enhance the role of science and technology, the UN General Assembly officially established the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries in resolution 71/251 of 23 December 2016.⁷⁷ The goal of the Technology Bank is to foster development of both national and regional innovative environments that generate homegrown technological research by helping developing countries strengthen their STI capacities.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Bank aims to accelerate and enable the development of these countries by facilitating technology transfers.⁷⁹ The establishment of the Technology Bank fulfilled one of the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda.⁸⁰

As former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon prepared to leave office in January 2017, one of his final acts was to appoint a group of fifteen experts and scientists to draft the *Global Sustainable Development Report*.⁸¹ This report, which is due to be published in 2019, is intended to be a collection of scientific data that will provide guidance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.⁸² The report discusses the importance of fully implementing the Technology Bank to enhance STI in every country in order to create and maintain innovative communities that utilize scientific evidence to inform and shape policy.⁸³ Global coordination and cooperation focused on technology sharing can help link societies to create an informed global community based in science.⁸⁴

Numerous conferences have dealt with the role of STI in the implementation of the SDGs in recent months. On 26-27 November 2016, the first Global Sustainable Transport Conference was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, where key stakeholders from governments, civil society, the private sector, and the UN discussed innovative

⁷¹ UN DESA, *Synthesis of Voluntary Nations Reviews*, 2016.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Technology Facilitation Mechanism*, 2015.

⁷⁵ UN DESA, *Second annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017.

⁷⁶ UN DESA, *Technology Facilitation Mechanism*, 2015.

⁷⁷ UN OHRLLS, *Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries established by UN General Assembly*, 2016.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ UN OHRLLS, *Technology Bank*, 2016.

⁸¹ UN General Assembly, *Experts, Eminent Scientists to Draft Report on Sustainable Development Ahead of Global Review Set for 2019*, 2017.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2016*, 2016.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

transportation.⁸⁵ The outcome document stresses the importance of integrating STI in transport systems as a means of ensuring sustainable and green transport.⁸⁶ For example, information and communications technology (ICT), as well as energy-efficient technologies, can be used to bring about transformative changes to transport systems.⁸⁷ On 6-8 December 2016, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) organized the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Exponential Technological Change, Automation, and Their Policy Implications for Sustainable Development, which took place in Mexico City, Mexico.⁸⁸ The goal of the EGM is to gather information on the “challenges of harnessing technological change for sustainable development,” and it is particularly focused on disruptive automation technology and concerns within agriculture and infrastructure, including ICTs.⁸⁹ The EGM will inform the 2017 STI Forum of potential effects of automation technologies on sustainable development.⁹⁰ On 23-25 January 2017, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held the Intersessional Panel of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), during which it discussed two main themes: first, “new innovation approaches to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals,” and second, the role of STI in ensuring food security by 2030.⁹¹ The findings of the panel are expected to be presented during the 20th session of the CSTD in May 2017.⁹² Eight priority research topics were proposed, including climate-smart agriculture; nurturing diversity; and creating opportunities for young people, women, and marginalized groups.⁹³

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The Global Sustainable Transport Conference was held for the first time ever on 26-27 November 2017. The conference is briefly summarized in this source. Delegates will benefit from reading this document because it will provide them with a complete overview of the conference and thus enable them to understand numerous key issues regarding the nexus of sustainable transportation and science, technology, and innovation. It constitutes a valuable research tool for beginning preparations on transportation and sustainable development.

United Nations, Global Sustainable Transport Conference. (2016). *Summary Report: Secretary-General’s Global Sustainable Transport Conference*. Retrieved 4 January 2017 from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12438Summary_Report_GSTC.pdf

This summary report was written in response to the Global Sustainable Transport Conference of 2016. Following the very first conference, the Secretary-General wrote this report, which lists key areas of focus for sustainable transportation. Energy-efficient technology and the importance of ICTs are discussed within this report. This document will be helpful to delegates who wish to research sustainable transportation and certain areas for improvement, as well as accomplishments within the subject.

United Nations, Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. (2016, December 23). *Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries established by UN General Assembly* [Press Release]. Retrieved 30 December 2016 from: <http://unohrrls.org/custom-content/uploads/2016/12/FINAL-Press-Release-23-December-2016-Technology-Bank-for-Least-Developed-Countries-established-by-UN-General-Assembly.pdf>

⁸⁵ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Transport Conference*, 2016.

⁸⁶ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference*, 2016.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ UN DESA, *Expert Group Meeting on Exponential Technological Change, Automation, and Their Policy Implications for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ UNCTAD, *CSTD 2016-2017 Inter-sessional Panel*, 2017.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ UNCTAD & UN CSTD, *Issues Paper On The role of science, technology and innovation in ensuring food security by 2030*, 2017.

This press release provides a very concise and informative explanation of the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries in 2016. The Technology Bank is intended to strengthen developing countries' science, technology, and innovation capacities to help ensure and accelerate development. While this document is relevant to all delegates, it will be of particular use to those representing developing states. The source helps delegates understand the role of technology sharing and innovation for sustainable development.

United Nations, Commission on Science and Technology for Development. (2017, January 23). *Issues Paper On The role of science, technology and innovation in ensuring food security by 2030*. Retrieved 28 January 2016 from: http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/CSTD2017_Issues02_STI_en.pdf

This Issues Paper, prepared by UN CSTD, is divided into four chapters: "The Challenge of Food Security," "Science and Technology for Food Security," "Developing Innovative Food Systems," and "Policy Considerations." As a part of the CSTD 2016-2017 Inter-sessional Panel, this issues paper has a significant amount of nation-specific information regarding what nations and regions are doing about STI in food security. This paper will be helpful to delegates because of this nation-specific information. Additionally, delegates can use this paper as a guide to what is being done with STI and food security on a national, regional, and global scale.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Concept Note: Expert Group Meeting on Exponential Technological Change, Automation, and Their Policy Implications for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 20 January 2017 from:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11726concept%20note_7%20Nov%202016.pdf

This document summarizes the results of the Expert Meeting Group and discusses the links between the Group and the STI Forum. It is a very in-depth, well-organized account of many elements of the EGM, including division of labor, an annotated agenda, and various working methods. It additionally details the objective of the EGM and gives delegates an idea of what the Group aims to do. This concept note can thus be of particular importance for delegates not only when preparing for the conference, but also while writing working papers at the conference.

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