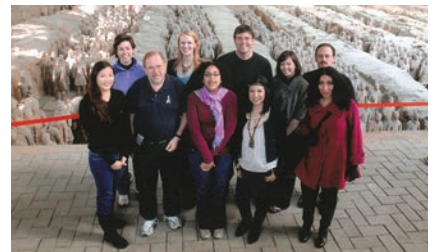




Economic and Social Council Plenary Background Guide 2018

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2018 National Model United Nations China Conference (NMUN•China)! We are pleased to welcome you to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This year's staff are: Director Michael Valdivieso and Assistant Directors Wang Haojie and Yan Shenghui. Michael is a postgraduate student at the London School of Economics and is the founder of Momentum Novum. This will be his fifth year on staff. Wang Haojie is currently a student at the School of Astronautics from Northwestern Polytechnical University perusing Master's Degree in Control Engineering. This will be his first year on staff. Yan Shenghui is currently pursuing his Bachelor's Degrees in Computer Science and Technology at Northwestern Polytechnical University. This will also be his first year on staff.

The topics under discussion for the Economic and Social Council Plenary are:

1. People-Centered Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
2. Harnessing Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development

As a principal organ of the United Nations, ECOSOC coordinates the activities of 14 specialized agencies, 13 regional and functional commissions, and over 3,900 civil society actors. ECOSOC is responsible for addressing some key emerging problems, which are outlined in its annual report to the General Assembly. In addition, ECOSOC coordinates funding mechanism and takes the lead role in formulating policy goals and frameworks for short and long-term programs, with particular emphasis on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a [Position Paper](#) by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 November 2018 in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

Two resources, to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Deputy Secretary-General, Patrick Parsons, at dsg.china@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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Committee Overview

Introduction

Chapter X of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a founding body and one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).¹ ECOSOC indirectly oversees the allocation of 70% of UN resources through its oversight of 14 specialized agencies and 13 functional and regional commissions.² The Council is mandated to serve as the primary body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics; to advise and coordinate the activities of Member States and other UN entities on matters within this mandate; and to lead discussion on the implementation of the international development framework.³

The **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** is one of the six primary organs of the UN. Under the authority of the *Charter of the United Nations*, ECOSOC is mandated to address economic and social matters. It submits an annual report to the General Assembly.

ECOSOC has undergone several reforms since its inception. In the 1960s and 1970s, developing Member States broadened the agenda of the UN and sought a stronger focus on urgent issues such as the promotion of development and the elimination of poverty.⁴ General Assembly resolution 2847(XXVI) (1971) increased ECOSOC membership from 27 to 54 in order to better reflect the UN's economic and geographic diversity.⁵ The General Assembly then adopted resolution 32/197 in 1977 to address the “Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System” and to improve ECOSOC's effectiveness by increasing coordination with its subsidiary bodies.⁶ To avoid any duplication of work due to broad mandates, General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 1995 clarified that the role of the General Assembly is to provide policy guidance while ECOSOC's focus is on coordination of work.⁷ This interpretation was reinforced by General Assembly resolution 57/270 in 2002.⁸

The General Assembly has implemented additional reforms over the past several years to strengthen the working methods of ECOSOC through resolution 68/1 of 2013.⁹ The 2013 reforms included an expansion of its functions and powers to enable ECOSOC to take the lead on identifying and discussing emerging challenges; to act as a policy forum for global leaders, especially concerning the integration of sustainable development efforts; and to provide a platform of accountability for all levels of monitoring and reporting on universal commitments.¹⁰ These reforms reinforce ECOSOC's critical role in preparing, monitoring, implementing, and facilitating global discussions around the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹¹

Governance, Structure, and Membership

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 members, each of which is elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.¹² The members are elected according to the geographical distribution of UN Member States to ensure representation from all regions and levels of development: 14 seats are allocated to African Member States, 11 to Asian Member States, six to Eastern European Member States, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean Member States, and 13 to Western European and Other Member States.¹³ Each member has one representative and one vote in

¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X; Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

³ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

⁴ Rosenthal, *The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, 2005, p. 20.

⁵ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2017-2018*, 2017.

⁶ Rosenthal, *The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, 2005, p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*; UN General Assembly, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)*, 2013.

¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

¹² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*.

¹³ *Ibid.*; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X, Arts. 61.1-2.

ECOSOC, and all decisions are made by a simple majority of those members present and voting.¹⁴ ECOSOC is governed by a President, Vice-President, and Rapporteur, in tandem with a Bureau consisting of five representatives: the President and four Vice-Presidents.¹⁵ All of these representatives are elected to one-year terms at the outset of each session.¹⁶ The Bureau is responsible for setting ECOSOC's agenda, devising action plans, and collaborating with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹⁷ Its presidency rotates equally among regional blocs.¹⁸

ECOSOC meets twice annually for one organizational session and one substantive session.¹⁹ During organizational sessions, items such as agenda setting and elections to the Bureau take place.²⁰ During substantive sessions, meetings are divided into five segments focusing on separate thematic aspects of the Council's work.²¹ The working methods of the Council were further reformed through General Assembly resolution 68/1 in 2013, and its substantive work is now organized as follows:

- High-level Segment (HLS): The HLS includes a thematic Annual Ministerial Review, a biannual Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), and ministerial-level meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).²²
- Integration Segment: This segment consolidates important messages on primary themes and action-oriented recommendations from the Council system to harmonize the work of ECOSOC members, subsidiary bodies, and stakeholders.²³
- Operational Activities for Development Segment: This segment helps ECOSOC guide subsidiary bodies on efficient coordination of funding and policy implementation in accordance with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.²⁴
- Coordination and Management Meetings: At these meetings, the Council reviews the work of its subsidiary bodies and considers the coordination of work across thematic issues within its mandate, such as gender mainstreaming.²⁵ The Council works closely with the Secretariat of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination during these meetings.²⁶
- Humanitarian Affairs Segment: This segment serves as a thematic forum for discussing operational challenges and normative progress on humanitarian policy.²⁷

ECOSOC oversees 14 subsidiary bodies that hold their own sessions and provide recommendations, draft resolutions, and annual reports to the Council.²⁸ The two most common types of subsidiary bodies are functional and regional commissions, but other subsidiary bodies include standing, ad hoc, expert, and other related bodies and committees.²⁹ Each subsidiary organ has adopted specific methods of work to align with its mandate, and methods are updated regularly.³⁰ Types of subsidiary bodies include:

¹⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992, p. 22; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X.

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Bureau*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992, p. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²² UN ECOSOC, *Development Cooperation Forum*; UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ UN ECOSOC, *What is OAS*.

²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ UN ECOSOC, *2014 Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2014.

²⁸ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

²⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013, p. 7.

- **Functional Commissions:** The nine functional commissions are “deliberative bodies whose role is to consider and make recommendations on issues in their areas of responsibility and expertise.”³¹ Functional commissions, in particular, have a responsibility to follow-up on the thematic considerations of major UN conferences and take measurable action in accordance with the role of ECOSOC.³²
- **Regional Commissions:** The five regional commissions aim to foster economic integration, oversee the implementation of regional sustainable development initiatives, and help address economic and social issues in sub-regions by promoting multilateral dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration within and between regions.³³ As regional commissions target problems and challenges within their geographical scope, members in most cases are Member States from this region.³⁴
- **Expert Bodies:** The bodies that fall into this category are focused on specific topics that ECOSOC has identified as important and deserving of additional attention or particular expertise.³⁵ These bodies consider issues falling within a more narrow scope of the Council’s work, with explicit mandates to improve the information, guidance, policy or regulations on the issue, with the particular aim of providing coherence and consistency at the international level.³⁶ Expert bodies are composed of either governmental experts, as in the case of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, or members serving in their personal capacity, as in the case of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.³⁷

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The *Charter of the United Nations* mandates ECOSOC to “make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters” including human rights and freedoms, to the General Assembly and its specialized agencies.³⁸ ECOSOC may also provide information to and assist the Security Council when necessary.³⁹ As emphasized by recent reforms accentuating this role, ECOSOC also provides coordination, monitoring, and advice to UN programs, agencies, and funds on international development policies and their implementation.⁴⁰ Examples of this coordination role include facilitating cooperation between economic institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in 1998 and establishing what has become ECOSOC’s HLS in 2007.⁴¹

ECOSOC fulfills its mandate both through its subsidiary bodies and in consultation of a broad range of civil society actors (CSAs).⁴² At present, there are 5,083 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with consultative status that may attend and participate in various UN meetings, conferences, and special sessions to voice their concerns to the international community.⁴³ Consultative status is granted by ECOSOC’s Committee on NGOs, which was established in 1946 and is comprised of 19 Member States.⁴⁴ The Committee on NGOs reports directly to ECOSOC on the procedural and substantive matters raised by CSAs.⁴⁵ ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of 1996 defines the

³¹ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

³² UN ECOSOC, *Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related field (E/RES/1998/46)*, 1998.

³³ UN Regional Commissions New York Office, *About*, 2016.

³⁴ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2017-2018*, 2017.

³⁵ UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, *Overview*, 2016.

³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Arts. 62-63, 65.

⁴⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/RES/2013/5)*, 2013, p. 1.

⁴⁰ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*; UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

⁴¹ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)*, 2006, p. 2.

⁴² UN DESA NGO Branch, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*.

⁴³ UN DESA NGO Branch, *Basic Facts about ECOSOC Status*.

⁴⁴ UN DESA NGO Branch, *The Committee on NGOs*.

⁴⁵ UN DESA, *Committee on NGOs convenes for first session of 2014*, 2014.

principles, eligibility requirements, rules, procedures, obligations, and responsibilities for NGOs and the UN in establishing the consultative relationship.⁴⁶ On 11 June 2018, the Committee on NGOs adopted the report of its 2018 resumed session, in which it recommended that ECOSOC grant consultative status to 209 NGOs.⁴⁷

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

From 9 to 18 July 2018, HLPF met under the auspices of ECOSOC on the theme of “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.”⁴⁸ The session included thematic reviews and panels on best practices, innovative proposals, and challenges associated with the SDGs.⁴⁹ HLPF reviewed progress towards SDG 6 on water and sanitation, SDG 7 on sustainable energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, SDG 15 on terrestrial ecosystems, and SDG 17 on partnerships for sustainable development.⁵⁰ At the conclusion of the session, HLPF adopted a ministerial declaration in which it committed to implementing the “people-centered, universal and transformative” 2030 Agenda; emphasized the interdependence between sustainable development and peace and security; highlighted the importance of human rights; and pledged to “embrac[e] diversity in cities and human settlements” and promote social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and understanding, and tolerance.⁵¹

The ministerial declaration was later adopted by ECOSOC at its 2018 HLS, which took place from 16 to 19 July 2018 on the theme of “From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities.”⁵² During a general debate, Member States drew attention to challenges and a lack of progress towards meeting the SDGs, welcomed proposed reform to the UN development system, and underlined the need for multilateral action for sustainable development.⁵³ The HLS also featured a high-level policy dialogue with international financial and trade institutions on sustainable development and a thematic discussion on leveraging new technologies for the SDGs.⁵⁴

The General Assembly continued to drive ECOSOC reform by adopting resolution 72/305 on “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of ECOSOC” on 23 July 2018.⁵⁵ While the resolution reaffirmed ECOSOC’s importance to the UN system, it also called upon ECOSOC to “improve its outcomes and the outcomes of its subsidiary bodies, making them more relevant, coherent and solution-oriented to address implementation challenges and ensuring their follow-up so as to strengthen the impact of the work of the Council.”⁵⁶ The resolution included numerous other measures for implementation, including a restructuring of ECOSOC’s annual cycle into three groups: ECOSOC forums, such as the Youth Forum; segments addressing actions to implement the 2030 Agenda, as well as humanitarian assistance; and segments on overall policy guidance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the future of sustainable development.⁵⁷

At the first meeting of its 2019 session on 26 July 2018, ECOSOC elected Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as its new President, as well as three Vice-Presidents: Omar Hilale of Morocco; Teodoro Lopez

⁴⁶ UN DESA NGO Branch, *The Committee on NGOs*; UN ECOSOC, *Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, 1996.

⁴⁷ UN DPI, *Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations Adopts Report of Resumed Session, Meeting Dates for 2019, Status to 209 Entities among Recommendations*, 2018.

⁴⁸ UN DESA, *High-level Political Forum 2018*, 2018.

⁴⁹ UN DPI, *Tapping Revenue of Wealthy, Transforming Unsustainable Industries Key to Achieving 2030 Agenda, Speakers Say as High-Level Political Forum Opens*, 2018.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ UN ECOSOC, *Draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2018 session of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/2018/L.20)*, 2018.

⁵² UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC High-level Segment*, 2018.

⁵³ Wahlén, *ECOSOC High-Level Segment Urges Faster SDG Implementation*, *SDG Knowledge Hub*, 2018.

⁵⁴ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC High-level Segment*, 2018.

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*, 2018.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Locsin, Jr., of the Philippines; and Tore Hattrem of Norway.⁵⁸ Speaking before the Council after her election, King identified her priorities as ensuring a successful HLPF and answering recent criticism by reviving ECOSOC and restoring its “deliberative function.”⁵⁹ ECOSOC also adopted its provisional agenda for the 2019 session.⁶⁰

Conclusion

ECOSOC plays a key role in coordinating activities and programs through the expansive UN system for humanitarian, development, and various other issues.⁶¹ The Council has demonstrated a commitment to mobilizing resources to tackle key priority issues, including the promotion of development and the formation and maintenance of international partnerships.⁶² It has also initiated collaboration across UN entities to ensure political commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, which has been seen as a “paradigm shift” for operations across the UN.⁶³ The contributions of the Council, both as a forum for discussion and in providing policy guidance, are significant, and its role will continue to grow in the post-2015 era, which requires clear organizational leadership and strong monitoring mechanisms to assess the progress towards and remaining challenges to achieving the SDGs.⁶⁴

Annotated Bibliography

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The Charter of the United Nations is the foundational document of the UN. It lays out the mandate and structure of not only ECOSOC, but also the remaining five principal organs. Member States are obliged to uphold the Charter's articles above all other treaties. It is an essential starting point in researching the UN. Chapter X, Articles 61-72, of the Charter describes ECOSOC's composition, functions and powers, voting, and rules of procedure.

New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2017). *United Nations Handbook 2017-2018*. Retrieved 30 July 2018 from: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/peace-rights-and-security/work-with-the-un-and-other-partners/un-handbook-2017-18/>

This is an excellent source for delegates to gain background information on the complex UN system and its main organs. This comprehensive handbook presents detailed information on UN entities and explains their functions, structures, and roles. It also gives an overview on various subsidiary organs established under the Charter of the United Nations, UN programs and funds, and other organizations related to the UN system. Delegates are encouraged to read the section on ECOSOC in detail to understand its structure, membership, working methods, and its relationships with various subsidiary bodies.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.). *Development Cooperation Forum* [Website]. Retrieved 4 July 2018 from: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/development-cooperation-forum>

The Council's website dedicated to DCF contains pertinent information on the research process for the topics under consideration by ECOSOC. Delegates will find information about explaining the most recent DCF outcomes under the purview of the expert body. There are also publications that detail findings and participation outcomes from partners in the global community. DCF policy briefs will be invaluable to delegates for preparing their research about partnership across and within the UN system.

⁵⁸ UN DPI, *Opening 2019 Session, Economic and Social Council Elects New President, Adopts Provisional Agenda, Other Organizational Matters*, 2018.

⁵⁹ UN DPI, *New ECOSOC president to revive 'deliberative function' of forum*, 2018.

⁶⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Provisional agenda (E/2019/1)*, 2018.

⁶¹ Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

⁶² UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

⁶³ UN ECOSOC, *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2016/8)*, 2016, p. 6.

⁶⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*; UN ECOSOC, *Accountable and effective development cooperation in a post-2015 era*, 2014.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Accountable and effective development cooperation in a post-2015 era* [Report]. Retrieved 31 July 2018 from:

http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/dcf_germany_hls_summary.pdf

This report summarizes the role of ECOSOC in sharing knowledge and coordinating the work of in defining strategic priorities of the post-2015 development agenda. It details the contribution ECOSOC can contribute to the process. This section is a useful resource for delegates as it also links to the relevant outcomes of the critical meetings that led to the finalization of the SDGs. Delegates can use this to understand how these topics have developed and look at how their Member States contributed to the process, thus gaining an understanding of their state's policies regarding the SDGs.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2016). *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Report of the Secretary-General (E/2016/8)*. Retrieved 20 July 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2016/8>

This report by the Secretary-General was submitted at ECOSOC's request to reflect the ECOSOC dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system. It reminds UN entities to reconsider their coordinated roles in the UN development system to ensure that they reflect the paradigmatic shift in UN goals following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Since ECOSOC closely monitors the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandate and its implementation, delegates should consider the tenants of this report and address short, medium, and long-term strategies in their proposals for sustainable strategies in development and humanitarian assistance.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2013). *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 30 July 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/68/1>

This resolution presents the ECOSOC reforms undertaken in 2013 to strengthen its program of work and its leading role in tackling challenges to sustainable development. It provides detailed recommendations of how ECOSOC will reshape its operating procedures and working methods to support sustainable development, and it outlines the main priorities for the Council's operational activities. Delegates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the suggested changes in the resolutions and should also consider how ECOSOC can maintain its leadership capacity to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

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I. People-Centered Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Introduction

In the face of climate change, the international community adopted three major agreements in 2015 to ensure a future that is environmentally sustainable and that prepares societies and economies to become climate-resilient.⁶⁵ These three global agreements are the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and the *Paris Agreement*.⁶⁶ These three instruments address the interconnected issue of the direct negative effects of climate change on people.⁶⁷ For example, climate change stresses people's livelihoods by limiting food supplies or depleting sources of water.⁶⁸ Further, because of climate change, natural disasters are stronger and their consequences more damaging.⁶⁹ The "number of people affected by natural disasters doubled from approximately 102 million in 2015 to 204 million in 2016, although there were fewer natural disasters."⁷⁰ What is more alarming is that the effects of climate change are felt more by people living in poverty around the world; it is estimated that three out of four people living in poverty are dependent on natural resources and agriculture, which makes them more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.⁷¹ In this regard it is of utmost importance that Member States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and relevant stakeholders center their efforts on reducing the vulnerability of communities to the effects of climate change and to enhance the resilience that societies and institutions have when they face natural disasters.⁷²

Climate change happens by the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and mitigation of climate change aims to reduce the emission of those gases that cause climate change in the first place.⁷³ At the same time, adaptation is focused on easing the effects that climate change has on people and on their daily lives.⁷⁴ In an attempt to harmonize the terminologies, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), adopted the following definitions:

"Climate change adaptation encompasses activities that contribute to the adjustment of actual or expected changes in the system induced by climate change. Disaster risk reduction includes all efforts that can contribute to reducing risk by analyzing the causal factors of disasters, reducing exposure to hazards and lessening vulnerability of people and livelihoods."⁷⁵

As a result of this, international organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies have incorporated these definitions into their practices and agendas.⁷⁶ Because there are gases already present in the atmosphere that are causing a certain degree of climate change, societies, governments, and international organizations have focused much of their efforts on adaptation.⁷⁷

International and Regional Framework

The three main documents that serve as the backbone for people-centered climate change adaptation and mitigation are the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*,

⁶⁵ UN Climate Change Secretariat, *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2017.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Mercy Corps, *Quick facts: How climate change affects people living in poverty*, 2018.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² UN Climate Change Secretariat, *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2017.

⁷³ FAO, *People-Centered Climate Change Adaptation: Integrating Gender Issues*.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ UNISDR, *Terminology*, 2017.

⁷⁶ IOM, *Disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and environmental migration*, 2010.

⁷⁷ FAO, *People-Centered Climate Change Adaptation: Integrating Gender Issues*.

and the *Paris Agreement*.⁷⁸ The main goal of the Paris Agreement is to keep this century's temperature rise to less than 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to take further actions in the future to reduce global temperatures to less than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels.⁷⁹ This agreement requires governments to prepare, communicate and maintain successive national determined contributions (NDCs), which are efforts by each party to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.⁸⁰ According to Article 4, all parties to the agreement should commit to the implementation of policies and use of new technologies to mitigate climate change by reducing the overall emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.⁸¹ Mitigation is mostly related to the generation of incentives to move production and economic practices to become sustainable and cleaner.⁸² On the other hand, parties to the agreement also commit to promoting proper adaptation to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change.⁸³ In this sense, adaptation becomes people-centered when it includes actions such as switching to drought-resistant crops, implementing new designs for communication systems, the employment of early warning systems for climate-related events, and rethinking business operations.⁸⁴

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* represents the international community's commitment to develop in a manner that considers both the preservation of the environment and the individual, while at the same time allowing economies to grow.⁸⁵ This agenda highlights people-centered climate change mitigation and adaptation in various contexts such as ending hunger and poverty for all people.⁸⁶ First, one of the indicators in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" places the individual in the center of the analysis by supporting the participation of "local communities in improving water and sanitation management."⁸⁷ Second, SDG 13 focuses on taking action to combat climate change and its impacts, and one of its indicators is related to the improvement of "education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning," which is central for the establishment of policies that place the people in the center of the debate.⁸⁸ In this regard, the SDGs are a cornerstone of climate change action and the importance of focusing on people.⁸⁹

As for the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, it develops a disaster risk reduction framework that is based upon the results, achievements, and challenges identified during and after the implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015*.⁹⁰ This framework committed parties, which included states, international organizations, and disaster experts, to focus their efforts in disaster risk reduction through a common system of coordination.⁹¹ The Sendai Framework is important because reducing disaster risk is proven to be the most cost-effective investment to prevent future losses.⁹² According to this framework, it is crucial that the investment in disaster risk reduction is distributed at the local and national level so that there is the possibility of capacity building and the implementation of strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and disasters caused by climate change.⁹³ The Sendai Framework has four main priority areas for action: "Understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'Build Back Better' in recovery,

⁷⁸ UN Climate Change Secretariat, *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2017.

⁷⁹ UNFCCC, *The Paris Agreement*, 2018.

⁸⁰ Ibid.; UNFCCC, *Climate: Get the Big Picture*.

⁸¹ Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, *The Paris Agreement*, 2015.

⁸² UNFCCC, *Climate: Get the Big Picture*.

⁸³ Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, *The Paris Agreement*, 2015.

⁸⁴ UNFCCC, *Climate: Get the Big Picture*.

⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015.

⁹¹ UNISDR, *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)*.

⁹² UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*.

⁹³ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015.

rehabilitation and reconstruction.”⁹⁴ There is also an emphasis on the inclusion of rural communities in the process of developing policies that reduce risk.⁹⁵

Role of the International System

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) plays a central role in the coordination of climate change mitigation and adaptation because it focuses its work on the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic.⁹⁶ This coordination is done through its Development Segment and its Humanitarian Affairs Segment.⁹⁷ The Development Segment of ECOSOC is related to climate change adaptation because it focuses on adjusting the UN system to be able to deliver and achieve the 2030 Agenda.⁹⁸ This segment met from 27 February to 1 March 2018.⁹⁹ One of its main outcomes was the adoption of the report of the Secretary-General on “Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver the 2030 Agenda: Ensuring a better future for all” (E/2018/3).¹⁰⁰ This report highlights the importance of cooperation between UN bodies, agencies, and funds for a coordinated response for sustainable development and at the same time keeping adaptation in mind.¹⁰¹ In this regard, the main UN agency that is focused on development is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁰² As for people-centered climate change adaptation, UNDP, through its Climate Change Adaptation Office, has established several Signature Programmes that focus, among other things, on advancing cross-sectoral climate resilient livelihoods and fostering resilience for food security.¹⁰³ Within these Signature Programmes, UNDP focuses on fostering economic diversification because some economic activities are very sensitive to climate change, such as tourism and agriculture.¹⁰⁴ For this reason, it is imperative that states diversify their economies “either by expanding climate sensitive sectors or by promoting adaptation measures that increase resilience within the sector.”¹⁰⁵ The diversification of the economy, which means the inclusion of new sectors and industries that are climate resilient, directly translates into livelihoods that are more resilient to climate change and natural disasters.¹⁰⁶

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ (FAO’s) Adapt Framework also favors people-centered climate change adaptation by “providing general guidance in the implementation of FAO’s multi-disciplinary activities for climate change adaptation.”¹⁰⁷ The main actions are focused on data and knowledge for impact and vulnerability assessment, strengthening capacities for adaptation through financing, policies and institutions, and climate-smart management of water and land.¹⁰⁸ An example of adaptation efforts is a project implemented in Tajikistan that looked to sustain agricultural biodiversity in the face of climate change in the region.¹⁰⁹ Among the results delivered by the project are the inclusion of the conservation of agricultural biodiversity into industrial policies, programs, and trade.¹¹⁰

To cope with the effects of climate change, ECOSOC’s Humanitarian Affairs Segment serves as a platform that brings together UN agencies, Member States, the private sector, and affected communities.¹¹¹ During the 2017 meeting, the report of the Secretary-General on “Strengthening the Coordination of emergency and humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (E/2017/58) was adopted and it highlights how “climate change and changing

⁹⁴ UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *About Us*.

⁹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *2017 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment: Synthesis*, 2017.

⁹⁸ UN ECOSOC, *2018 Operational Activities for Development Segment*.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all: Report of the Secretary General (A/72/124)*, 2017.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ UNDP, *What We Do*, 2018.

¹⁰⁴ UNDP, *Economic Diversification*, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ FAO, *FAO-Adapt*, 2018.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ UNDP, *Sustaining agricultural biodiversity in the face of climate change in Tajikistan*, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian Affairs Segment*.

weather patterns” has led to an increase in complex challenges that require humanitarian assistance.¹¹² An example of this is how around “70 million people across 45 countries are estimated to require emergency food assistance in 2017, including more than 20 million people in north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen who are facing famine or are at risk of famine” due to a strong El Niño phenomenon in 2016 that was exacerbated by climate change.¹¹³ In addition to natural hazards brought by climate change, the consequences that it brings have an impact on humanitarian affairs.¹¹⁴ In this regard, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has identified that the humanitarian effects of climate change are primarily related to droughts that affect agricultural production and food security.¹¹⁵ The implications of climate change for OCHA are related to the increased stress put on the humanitarian system to respond to more crises around the world that are more intense than in previous years.¹¹⁶ To this end, humanitarian actors must become key players in providing technical advice to communities to be able to manage the effects of climate change.¹¹⁷

In addition to both segments of ECOSOC that are related to people-centered climate change adaptation and mitigation, the Global Environment Facility provides funding for projects that tackle the most pressing issues regarding the environment.¹¹⁸ The Global Environment Facility provides funding for projects that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and provide adaptation to climate change.¹¹⁹ One of its main projects is increasing food security in Africa in partnership with 12 African countries by investing over \$900 million “to enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of food production by reducing land degradation and biodiversity loss, recovering natural vegetation and increasing soil carbon.”¹²⁰ As an additional source of funding for states, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the Adaptation Fund in 2001 with the objective of financing adaptation projects in developing countries that are parties to the *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (1997).¹²¹ The fund works by keeping a percentage of the proceeds from clean development mechanisms (CDM).¹²² The CDM allows developing countries to use the implementation of emission-reduction projects to earn certified emission reduction credits, which can later be sold to developed countries to “meet a part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.”¹²³

Climate Change Adaptation

People-centered climate change adaptation involves many activities that have an effect on the daily lives of individuals in different ways.¹²⁴ In this regard, people-centered adaptation can be understood as the main activities that an individual has to change to be able to adapt to climate change.¹²⁵ The SDGs are regarded as the main drivers for development and the inclusion of people in the process of adapting economic activities to climate change.¹²⁶ Governments in general are encouraged to incentivize entrepreneurship that is inclusive and sustainable; however, because of climate change these activities must adapt to new realities and consider the principles established by the SDGs.¹²⁷ These principles are deeply related to the establishment of sustainable practices such as “waste prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. It encourages businesses to adopt sustainable practices, while integrating sustainability information into their reporting cycle.”¹²⁸ Additionally, entrepreneurship has a significant impact on

¹¹² UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/58)*, 2017.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ UN OCHA, *Climate Change and Humanitarian Actions: Key Emerging Trends and Challenges*, 2009.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Global Environment Facility, *About Us*, 2018.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Global Environment Facility, *The GEF and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2015.

¹²¹ UNFCCC, *Adaptation Fund*, 2018.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ UN Climate Change Secretariat, *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2017.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Entrepreneurship for development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/210)*, 2016.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

the SDGs since, for example, the outcome of implementing sustainable development management on agricultural ecosystems can be measured through the “increase in the ratio of GDP to Carbon dioxide emissions.”¹²⁹

The case of agriculture is key to understanding adaptation because there are 1.7 billion farmers based on marginal rural lands that are characterized by sloping terrain, fragile soils, low rainfall, and deprived access to markets, which makes them extremely vulnerable to climate change.¹³⁰ An example of adaptation is the case of the province of Yasothorn, Thailand, which is a rice-producing region that is highly dependent on rainfall.¹³¹ With the assistance of the FAO, members of the Yasothorn Farmer Group Network implemented organic farming practices, water management, diversification of agriculture, and a risk assessment.¹³² Since then, rice producers have been able to sustain their yields in spite of the erratic rainfalls.¹³³ The implementation of adaptation measure in the agriculture sector can result in an improvement on food security and better coping mechanisms to the effects of climate change.¹³⁴ Furthermore, part of the adaptation to climate change is the implementation of early warning systems that allow governments and communities to respond rapidly to weather-related events, which is related to one of the main priorities of the Sendai Framework that is focused on enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response.¹³⁵

Climate Change Mitigation

When it comes to people-centered climate change mitigation, many activities can be identified as possible drivers of mitigation, but one very important driver is tourism.¹³⁶ This is because “tourism was recognized in the 2030 Agenda for its capacity to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by fostering economic growth, creating jobs, promoting local culture and accelerating the change to more sustainable consumption and production patterns.”¹³⁷ To avoid the pollution and the risk of damaging ecosystems caused by tourism and the impact that they have in climate change, the United Nations Office for World Tourism (UNWTO) established the Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism in 2004, and now they are called International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories.¹³⁸ During the Conference on the Global Observatories it was recognized that efficiently planned and managed tourism development has the potential to contribute to environmental protection and poverty reduction by focusing on biodiversity assets.¹³⁹ Another example of this is the establishment of the UN Regional Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries in Asia, which is a region that has experienced the devastating effects of climate change first hand.¹⁴⁰ This regional fund provides funding for early warning systems and disaster preparedness, among others.¹⁴¹ Additionally, it has to be highlighted that adaptation can only work up to a certain extent because it responds to changing conditions of climate and it is necessary for governments to acknowledge and promote policies that mitigate climate change.¹⁴²

Within the efforts to mitigate climate change, there are actions that can be done to improve people’s daily lives, while at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁴³ One major example of this is mobility in Africa and how it is currently the continent with the highest vehicle growth rates in the world, but at the same time it has a low level of motorization.¹⁴⁴ With the objective of promoting an agenda that stimulates clean mobility, following the 2018 Africa Clean Mobility Week, Member States, civil society, media, and private sector agreed on a roadmap that

¹²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Entrepreneurship for development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/210)*, 2016.

¹³⁰ Oxfam, *People-Centred Resilience*, 2009.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Coordination and Management Meeting: Panel on Climate change and Nutrition*, 2017.

¹³⁵ UNISDR, *Early warning for all*, 2017.

¹³⁶ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection: Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/173)*, 2016.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ UN ESCAP, *Speech by Under-Secretary-General Noeleen Heyzer at the Opening Session of the United Nations Climate Change Talks*, 2011.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Oxfam, *People-Centred Resilience*, 2009.

¹⁴³ UNEP, *Forty-Two African Countries Agree to a Cleaner Mobility Roadmap for the Continent*, 2018.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

considers the necessity of improving fuel efficiency, endorse electric mobility, and the need to promote sustainable transport infrastructure.¹⁴⁵ Another example on how to improve people's lives and reduce emissions at the same time is lighting, which is a factor that contributes to our quality of life and productivity.¹⁴⁶ In this matter, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is promoting the implementation of energy efficient lighting that cannot only reduce the costs of lighting but can also ultimately reduce the amount of resources that we use and the emissions that we produce.¹⁴⁷ UNEP encourages governments to follow a five-stage approach to this topic.¹⁴⁸ First, governments should establish regulations that control the type of products that can be sold and those that should be banned from the market.¹⁴⁹ Second, governments should focus on organizing communicational campaigns to promote the use of this technology.¹⁵⁰ Then, governments should provide incentives to the implementation of energy efficient lighting. Third, A monitoring system should be put in place to assure a successful transition.¹⁵¹ Finally, an appropriate system to manage lighting products should be created to avoid an environmental impact.¹⁵²

Conclusion

People-centered climate change adaptation and mitigation is interconnected with various issues that the international community currently faces such as disaster risk reduction, development and implementation of inclusive policies, information gathering, and funding.¹⁵³ The time to take responsibility and action on climate change is now and without proper mobilization of resources and efforts, the consequences will be catastrophic.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, while adaptation is crucial for improving the daily lives of individuals, it can only go so far and mitigation is therefore necessary to achieve a sustainable future and potentially avoid the consequences of climate change.¹⁵⁵ In this sense, it is indispensable to make adaptation and mitigation as inclusive as possible, allowing the participation of the public and private sector, enabling dialogues at all possible levels, and most of all focus on the people.¹⁵⁶ The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and the *Paris Agreement* provide good basis for the development of strategies both internationally and domestically that promote people-centered climate change adaptation and mitigation.¹⁵⁷ For this reason, it is necessary that there is cooperation between international organizations, all levels of government, and civil society when designing and formulating policies that will seek to contribute to the adaptation and mitigation of climate change.¹⁵⁸ In addition, funding is a crucial area that needs to be the center of the attention of

Further Research

It is important for delegates to follow the meetings of various UN bodies and programs in the upcoming months, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that will be focused on the transformation of societies towards becoming sustainable and resilient.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, it is important that delegates view this topic as oriented to the individual and how to develop policies that put people in the center of discussion by asking questions like: How do climate change policies affect the livelihoods of individuals? How can climate change adaptation provide more opportunities for vulnerable populations to thrive? What is the role of civil society in climate change mitigation and adaptation? What are the necessary steps that Members States should take to fully implement the

¹⁴⁵ UNEP, *Forty-Two African Countries Agree to a Cleaner Mobility Roadmap for the Continent*, 2018.

¹⁴⁶ UNEP, *Accelerating the Global Adoption of Energy-Efficient of Lighting*, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ UN Climate Change Secretariat, *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2017.

¹⁵⁴ UN ESCAP, *Speech by Under-Secretary-General Noeleen Heyzer at the Opening Session of the United Nations Climate Change Talks*, 2011.

¹⁵⁵ Oxfam, *People-Centred Resilience*, 2009.

¹⁵⁶ UNISDR, *Governments and business should engage to curb risk*, 2017.

¹⁵⁷ UN Climate Change Secretariat, *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ UNISDR, *Governments and business should engage to curb risk*, 2017.

¹⁵⁹ UN DESA, *High-level Political Forum 2018*.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement? What are the current challenges faced by Member States regarding the implementation of these international instruments?

Annotated Bibliography

International Organization for Migration. (2010). *Disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and environmental migration* [Policy Brief]. Retrieved 27 May 2018 from:

http://www.publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/DDR_CCA_report.pdf

This policy brief focuses on providing communities the possibility of exploring different strategies to implement disaster risk reduction and at the same time do climate change adaptation. In addition to that, this brief emphasizes that to reduce disaster risk and help communities adapt to the consequences of climate change, there needs to be an effort that goes across the national, regional, and local level. Delegates will find this document useful to understand what the recommendations of the United Nations regarding climate change adaptation are.

United Nations Climate Change Secretariat. (2017). *Opportunities and options for integrating climate change adaptation with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-20130*. Retrieved 27 May 2018 from:

https://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/groups_committees/adaptation_committee/application/pdf/techpaper_adaptation.pdf

The main objective of this technical paper is to gather the key points that came out from key stake holders after a meeting held in Bonn, Germany, on 16 and 17 of May 2017. One of the main focus of this paper is to describe the importance of generating the linkage of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework when trying to achieve resilience. Also, it highlights the importance that the private, public and international sector come together to have appropriate climate adaptation in communities.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *2017 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment: Synthesis* [Report]. Retrieved 27 May 2018 from:

<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2017doc/2017-ecosoc-has-synthesis.pdf>

This synthesis provides a great overview of all the events and meetings that took place during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment in 2017. It encompasses descriptions of the meetings as well as their objectives and outcomes. Delegates will find it useful to focus on topics regarding risk and vulnerability of the people, the challenges related to disaster and climate change induced mobility.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2015). *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. Retrieved 27 May 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/69/283>

The Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is useful for delegates to have as a guide on disaster risk reduction as well as on the matter of resilience. This declaration contemplates the importance of including people as the main focus when preparing governments and societies for natural disasters regardless of their origin. Additionally, the Sendai Declaration is a good starting point to analyze climate change mitigation and the mitigation of its effects.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 27 May 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the most important document to review when analyzing sustainable development and understanding the objectives of the Member States regarding development. This agenda has the people as one of the main pillars of sustainable development. This Agenda will provide delegates with a sufficient background information about the path of development established by the UN and the goals that Member States home to achieve by the year 2030.

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II. Harnessing Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development

*“Culture is an essential component of sustainable development; represents a source of identity, innovation and creativity for the individual and community; and is an important factor in building social inclusion and eradicating poverty, providing for economic growth and ownership of development processes.”*¹⁶⁰

Introduction

Cultural heritage does not simply refer to structures, monuments and collections of objects, it also includes “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants.”¹⁶¹ Generally, intangible cultural heritage can be manifested in five broad domains: oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship.¹⁶² In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* and recognized the “importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development.”¹⁶³ In recognition of that important role, UNESCO established the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage with the aim of ensuring better protection of important intangible cultural heritages worldwide and raising awareness of their significance.¹⁶⁴ By 2018 the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage totaled 470 elements.¹⁶⁵

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) has recognized intangible cultural heritage as a driver of sustainable development, which integrates the role of culture, through cultural heritage and creativity, as an enabler of sustainable development across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁶⁶ Cultural heritage can effectively contribute to sustainable development in the social and economic dimension.¹⁶⁷

International and Regional Framework

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* recognizes the protection and safeguarding of the world’s cultural and natural heritage as a specific target of SDG 11, which is related to inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements.¹⁶⁸ Target four of this SDG aims at strengthening the “efforts to protect and safeguard the world cultural and natural heritage.”¹⁶⁹ In addition to the 2030 Agenda, one of the most fundamental international agreements on protecting cultural heritage is the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* that was adopted in 1972, also known as the World Heritage Convention.¹⁷⁰ Thus far, 193 countries have ratified this convention and are expected to protect world heritage and are encouraged to report periodically on their conditions.¹⁷¹

The *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001) stressed that “culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy.”¹⁷² Further, the *Istanbul Declaration* was adopted in 2002 by UNESCO in a roundtable on “Intangible Heritage and Culture Diversity.”¹⁷³ This declaration stated that “[t]he extreme vulnerability of intangible cultural heritage...requires that governments take resolute action respecting the context in which the intangible cultural

¹⁶⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (E/HLS/2013/1)*, 2013.

¹⁶¹ UNESCO, *What is intangible cultural heritage?*, p. 3.

¹⁶² UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ UNESCO, *Browse the Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of good safeguarding practices*, 2017.

¹⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁶⁷ UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development*, 2015, p.3.

¹⁶⁸ General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention*, 2015.

¹⁶⁹ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 11*.

¹⁷⁰ UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972.

¹⁷¹ UNESCO World Heritage Center, *States Parties Ratification Status*, 2018.

¹⁷² UNESCO, *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, 2001.

¹⁷³ UNESCO, *Istanbul Declaration*, 2002.

heritage is expressed and disseminated,” and the representatives realized that intangible culture heritage, stemming from cultural diversity “is a guarantee for sustainable development” and highlighted the urgency to take action.¹⁷⁴ In 2005, UNESCO adopted the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.¹⁷⁵ Over 140 states become State Parties to this convention.¹⁷⁶ In this convention, State Parties reached consensus that “cultural diversity... increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values and therefore is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations.”¹⁷⁷ The convention emphasized the importance of culture for social cohesion and the “[p]rinciple of the complementarity of economic and cultural aspects of development.”¹⁷⁸ It also stressed that “[p]arties shall endeavor to integrate culture in their development policies at all levels for the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development.”¹⁷⁹

“Considering that existing international agreements, recommendations, and resolutions concerning the cultural and natural heritage need to be effectively enriched and supplemented by means of new provisions relating to the intangible cultural heritage,” UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003.¹⁸⁰ This convention contains measures on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at both the national and international level and the principles concerning international cooperation and assistance.¹⁸¹ Currently, 178 states have ratified this convention and are responsible for taking the necessary measures to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage present in their territories.¹⁸² In 2008, the *Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* were adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention at its second session and it explains the linkages between intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, including the aspects of inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability and peace and security.¹⁸³ These operational directives stressed that “State Parties shall direct their safeguarding efforts solely on intangible cultural heritage that is compatible with sustainable development.”¹⁸⁴

Regional frameworks have also been developed concerning the values of cultural heritage, including the Council of Europe’s *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005), which emphasizes “the value and potential of cultural heritage wisely used as a resource for sustainable development and quality of life in a constantly evolving society.”¹⁸⁵ The parties to this convention agreed to “take the necessary steps to apply the provisions of this Convention concerning the role of cultural heritage in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society, in the processes of sustainable development, and the promotion of cultural diversity.”¹⁸⁶

Role of the International System

One of the governing bodies of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* is the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and its functions are to promote the objectives of the World Heritage Convention, provide guidance on best practices and make recommendations on measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.¹⁸⁷ The committee is responsible for examining “requests submitted by States Parties for the inscription of intangible heritage on the Lists as well as proposals for

¹⁷⁴ UNESCO, *Istanbul Declaration*, 2002.

¹⁷⁵ UNESCO, *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, 2005.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² UNESCO, *The States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)*, 2018.

¹⁸³ General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2018.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Council of Europe, *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, 2005.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ UNESCO, *Functions of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

programs and projects.”¹⁸⁸ The committee is also responsible for granting international assistance to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.¹⁸⁹

In certain Member States, there are institutes and centers that are associated with UNESCO but are not legally part of the organization, called category 2 centres.¹⁹⁰ These centres are under the auspices of UNESCO and “are established and funded by Member States to contribute to the achievement of UNESCO’s objectives by way of global, regional, sub-regional or interregional activities.”¹⁹¹ They “are intended to serve as international or regional centres and poles of expertise or excellence to provide technical assistance and services to Member States, cooperation partners and also to the network of UNESCO field offices.”¹⁹² In relation to intangible cultural heritage, the centers “promote the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and contribute to its implementation,” “reinforce capacities in the Region for actively implementing the 2003 Convention on the regional and international level,” “increase the participation of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Region” and “foster regional and international cooperation for safeguarding” intangible cultural heritage.¹⁹³ An example of one of these centers is the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region, which was established as a category 2 centre in 2011.¹⁹⁴

Inclusive Economic Development

Intangible cultural heritage is key to inclusive economic development because it has the potential to provide livelihoods for all aspects of society, including marginalized and vulnerable groups.¹⁹⁵ For example, traditional craftsmanship “generates income not only for craftspeople and their families, but also for those involved in the transportation and sale of the craft products or the gathering or production of raw materials.”¹⁹⁶ This type of economic development centered on cultural heritage further builds an inclusive society because “they are often conducted in the framework of family and community, which provides security in the workplace and a sense of belonging; they are seen as honourable work as they are closely linked to the identity of the community.”¹⁹⁷

Intangible cultural heritage should also be viewed as “a strategic resource to enable transformative development at the local and global level.”¹⁹⁸ For example, “new materials can be adapted to respond to old needs... while old skills provide answers to new challenges.”¹⁹⁹ Similarly, communities can utilize tourism related to intangible cultural heritage through “[t]he discovery of the diversity of traditions, festive events, performing arts, skills related to traditional crafts, and other areas of intangible cultural heritage [a]s a powerful lever for attracting tourists at national, regional and international levels... to generate income and stimulate job creation while nourishing the sense of pride in the community, provided that they respect ethics and responsibility principles vis-à-vis the living heritage and the people concerned.”²⁰⁰

On a broader level, incorporating intangible cultural heritage can be a “driver, enabler and guarantee of sustainable development” to achieve the SDGs.²⁰¹ For example, SDG 8 and SDG 9 can be accomplished by “assisting youth in securing decent work and productive employment by the use of traditional skills,” “safeguarding the traditional safety nets that are historically nurtured by gift-giving practices,” and “supporting sustainable livelihoods” that use

¹⁸⁸ UNESCO, *Functions of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ UNESCO, *Category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO*.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ UNESCO ICHCAP, *Overview and History*, 2018.

¹⁹⁵ UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development*, 2015, p. 9.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003.

intangible cultural heritage like the performing arts and traditional craftsmanship “through community-based organizations and cooperatives.”²⁰²

Inclusive Social Development

The social dimension of sustainable development emphasizes the need to improve the quality of life for all citizens by raising base levels of material income and by increasing social equity, such that all groups have fair access to education, livelihood and resources.²⁰³ As a tool for inclusive social development, “[s]upporting and nurturing [intangible cultural heritage] contributes to a positive sense of identity, belonging and place and creates the conditions and environments for engaged citizens to work collaboratively to address global issues at the local level.”²⁰⁴ Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention calls upon States Parties to “adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community.”²⁰⁵ Member States should recognize that inclusive social development is at the heart of the implementation of this provision of the Convention.²⁰⁶ Further, Article 177 of the *Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* commits States Parties “to recognize that inclusive social development comprehends issues such as sustainable food security, quality health care, quality education for all, gender equality and access to safe water and sanitation, and that these goals should be underpinned by inclusive governance and the freedom for people to choose their own value systems.”²⁰⁷

In the area of food security, for example, because “[c]ommunities have built up considerable traditional knowledge, founded on a comprehensive approach to their specific rural life and environment” through “traditional foodways and local farming, pastoral, fishing, hunting, food-gathering and food preservation systems,” they can achieve food security.²⁰⁸ Foodways “concern our everyday life about food including ceremonies, beliefs, myths and songs and dance,” all of which “form part of our Intangible Cultural Heritage which needs to be cherished and carried forward to future generations.”²⁰⁹ For example, the Isukha people live on the edge of the Kakamega rainforest in western Kenya, and their knowledge of the local resources and traditional food ways is vital to their community’s well-being.²¹⁰ Their diet consists largely of what they grow, herd, and collect from the wild.²¹¹ Community members pass on traditions and experiences related to food preparation, knowledge of the flora and fauna, nutritional facts and needs of the body, seasonal influences, and rituals involving foods prepared for celebrations.²¹² Thanks to these traditional foodways, the Isukha people can be self-reliant and live in harmony with their environment, fulfilling their needs.²¹³ Traditional practices concerning water management can contribute to equitable access to clean water and sustainable water use, notably in agriculture and other livelihoods.²¹⁴

Conclusion

Ranging from traditions and oral expressions and performing arts to social practice and traditional craftsmanship, intangible cultural heritage can contribute to economic growth by being a primary material from which to develop products and services and attract cultural tourism.²¹⁵ In the social dimension, intangible cultural heritage gives the local population a sense of belonging, which contributes to improving social cohesion among the inhabitants.²¹⁶ As

²⁰² UNESCO Apia & UNESCO ICHCAP, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Pacific*, 2016.

²⁰³ Tweed & Sutherland, *Built cultural heritage and sustainable urban development*, 2007.

²⁰⁴ Heritage Saskatchewan, *Policy Brief: Intangible Cultural Heritage / Living Heritage*, 2017.

²⁰⁵ UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972.

²⁰⁶ General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention*, 2015.

²⁰⁷ UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003.

²⁰⁸ UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development*, 2015, p. 3.

²⁰⁹ UNESCO, *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Traditional Foodways of the Isukha Community of Kenya*, 2013.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development*, 2015.

²¹⁵ UNESCO Catalunya, *Contribution of Intangible Cultural Heritage to Sustainable Development*.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

for performing arts, such as music, dance and theatre, it welcomes all ages within the same activity, thus improving intergenerational dialogue and community spirit.²¹⁷ Intangible cultural heritage is commonly seen as a social and economic resource and it is recognized that intangible cultural heritage elements can be pivotal in achieving economic growth and sustainable development.²¹⁸

Further Research

As delegates begin their research on this topic, they should consider the following questions: What measures are needed to promote the safeguarding of the cultural heritage in the global development agenda? How can cultural heritage conservation and promotion be integrated into sustainable development? How can the relationship between cultural heritage and the various dimensions of sustainable development be articulated? What role can states play in the discussion of cultural heritage? How can all states respect each other's heritage, and the heritage of minority groups within their own state, in a way that preserves that cultural and economically supports it?

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development* [Report]. Retrieved 28 May 2018 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002434/243402e.pdf>

Published in response to The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, this report further illustrates the importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development. It emphasizes that the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, together with peace and security, are not separate spheres of action, but highly interdependent. It explains the detailed contributions of intangible culture heritage to these three dimensions by citing concrete examples. This report will offer delegates insight into the relationship between the intangible cultural heritage and the various dimensions of sustainable development, as well providing sources for further research.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Retrieved 4 June 2018 from: https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-2016_version-EN.pdf

This is a collection of the most important international agreements regarding the intangible cultural heritage and the rules governing their protection by relevant international organizations and Member States. It is critical that delegates have an understanding of the definitions and responsibilities established by the Convention concerning Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This convention contains measures on safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage at both the national and international level and the principles concerning the international cooperation and assistance. Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage are also useful for gaining a in-depth understanding on the linkages between intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, including the aspects of inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability and peace and security.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *World Heritage and Sustainable Development* [Website]. Retrieved 29 May 2018 from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/>

This website serves as the main repository for world heritage and sustainable development, as well as publications and relevant activities resources. The related themes and programs cover a wide range of topics under the sustainable development and will help delegates better understand the relationship between heritages and other related aspects. In addition, the website offers an overview of worldwide activities undertaken by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization concerning the World Heritage and Sustainable Development.

²¹⁷ UNESCO Catalunya, *Contribution of Intangible Cultural Heritage to Sustainable Development*.

²¹⁸ UNESCO, *Integration of ICH safeguarding into cultural policies: a cumulative in-depth study of periodic reports*, 2016.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, General Conference, Seventeenth session. (1972). *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Retrieved 28 May 2018 from: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

As the most foundational international agreements regarding world heritage, the World Heritage Convention links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. It is critical that delegates understand the definitions and responsibilities established by the Convention as preserving world heritage serves as the premise of harnessing it. It is also worth noting The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, for it provides delegates a better understanding on what governments should do to further implement the World Heritage Convention and the contributions of culture heritage to the sustainable development.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *Culture and sustainable development: Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (A/69/216)*. Retrieved 28 May 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/A/69/216>

This report stresses the contribution of culture as both an enabler and driver of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. As a progress report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/223, this report provides the comprehensive understanding of the role of culture in various fields. These include policy making, gender equality, innovation, local markets for cultural goods and services and so on. Additionally, this report includes options for a consolidated United Nations approach on culture and sustainable development, and it discusses the possible measures to reach its full potential in environmental sustainability and inclusive economic and social development. This report will help delegates to think in depth as to how to harness the culture heritage for sustainable development.

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