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United Nations Development Programme Background Guide 2020

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2020 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This year's staff is: Directors Ana Willett (Conference A) and Gamaliel Perez (Conference B). Ana holds a Master's degree of environmental policy from American University, and is currently attending Georgetown University to obtain another Master's degree of Marine Environmental Policy and Development. She currently works in government affairs and marketing at a nonprofit in Washington, D.C. Gamaliel is completing his Bachelor's degree in Political Theory at the University of California San Diego and plans on attending Law School.

The topics under discussion for the United Nations Development Programme are:

1. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Water and Ocean Governance
2. Closing the Energy Gap for All People

As one of the United Nations' operational programs, UNDP is directly involved on the ground in over 170 countries, in order to help implement policies within its three main pillars: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience. In this context, UNDP works to promote and advance the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015. Finally, in an effort to create better coordination between different UN program lines, UNDP also looks for a correct allocation of resources in order to maximize the efficiency of programs related to development in several countries, by administering the UN Capital Development Fund.

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 March 2020 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available 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 Under-Secretaries-General for the Development Department, Omar Torres-Vasquez (Conference A) and Maxwell Lacey (Conference B), at usg.development@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A
Ana Willett, *Director*

Conference B
Gamaliel Perez, *Director*

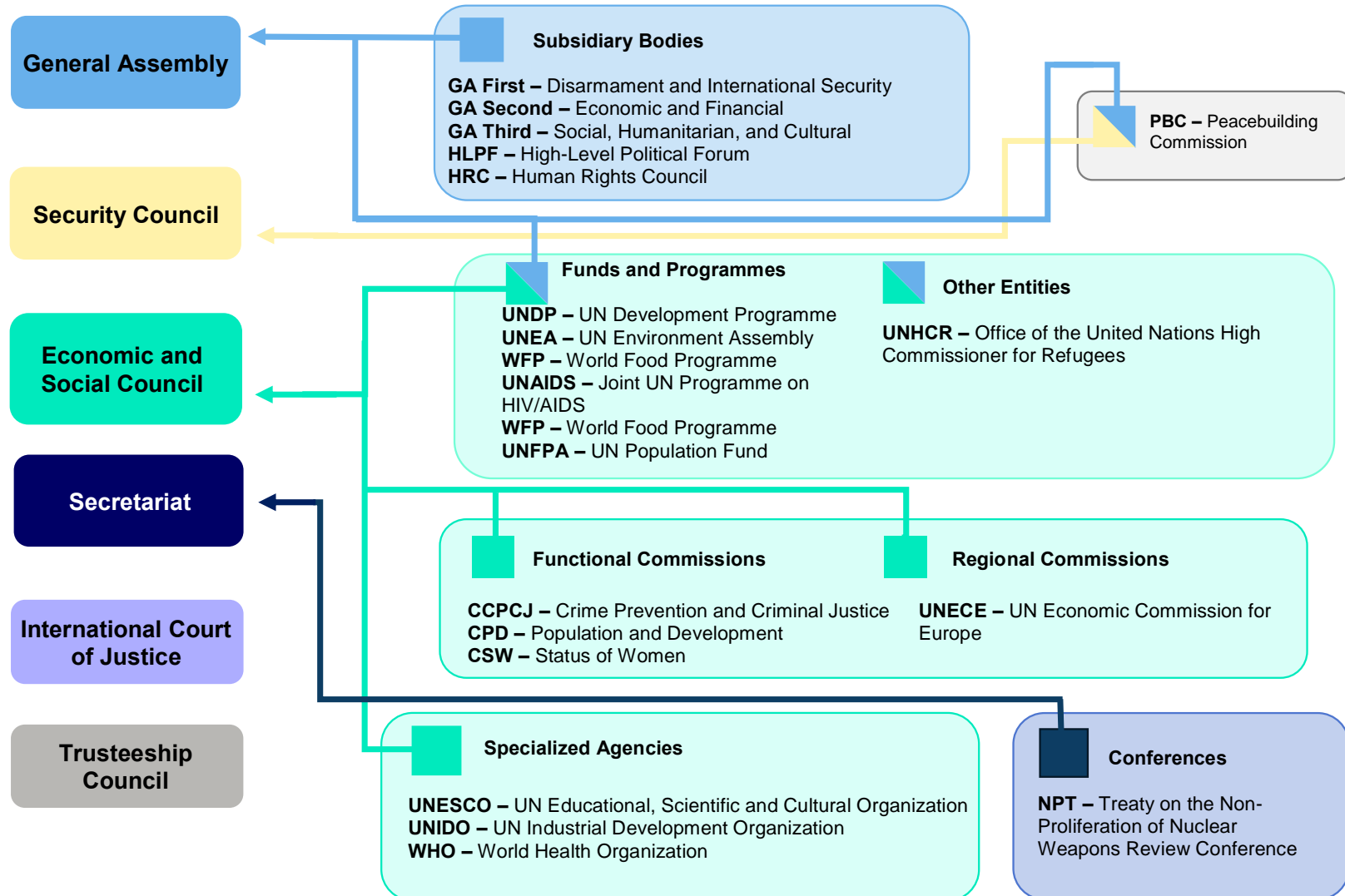


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) embodies Article 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which outlines the organization’s responsibility to promote “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development,” as prerequisites to peace.¹ Originally, development activities of the United Nations (UN) consisted largely of providing technical advice through the UN Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and support for pre-investment projects through the UN Special Fund, created in 1949 and 1958 respectively, for the benefit of less developed countries.² To streamline these assistance programs, General Assembly resolution 2029 (XX) of 22 November 1965 consolidated the EPTA and the UN Special Fund to establish UNDP as of 1 January 1966.³ Today, as the leader of the UN’s “global development network,” UNDP assists countries with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).⁴

At NMUN•NY 2020, we are simulating the **Executive Board of UNDP** in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the Conference. For the purposes of NMUN•NY 2020, and corresponding with the educational mission of the Conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNDP in line with the overall function of the organization.

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UNDP leadership comprises of an Administrator and an Executive Board.⁵ The Administrator is appointed by the Secretary-General and confirmed by the General Assembly for a four-year term.⁶ UNDP is led by an Executive Board that consists of 36 rotating members from five geographic groups: eight from the group of African States, seven from the group of Asian and Pacific States, four from the group of Eastern European States, five from the group of Latin America and the Caribbean States, and twelve from the group of Western European and Other States.⁷ Members typically serve three-year terms and are elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), but the group of Western European and Other States instead decides on its rotation internally.⁸

The Executive Board oversees all of UNDP’s projects and ensures that projects adapt to changing situations, as well as the unique needs of each country, while following policy guidance provided by the General Assembly and ECOSOC.⁹ It holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.¹⁰ The Executive Board is under the authority of ECOSOC and

¹ UNDP JPO Service Centre, *UNDP for Beginners: A Beginner’s Guide to the United Nations Development Programme*, 2015, p. 4; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 55.

² UN General Assembly, *Expanded programme of technical assistance for economic development of under-developed countries (A/RES/304 (IV))*, 1949; UN General Assembly, *Establishment of the Special Fund (A/RES/1240 (XIII))*, 1958.

³ UN General Assembly, *Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX))*, 1965.

⁴ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 249; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UNDG, *The Sustainable Development Goals Are Coming to Life*, 2016.

⁵ UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2018.

⁶ UNDP, *About us: Our leadership*, 2019.

⁷ UNDP, *Information Note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2018.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ UNDP, *Executive Board*, 2018.

¹⁰ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 249.

reports annually on its program of work and recommendations for field-level improvement.¹¹ The rules of procedure for the Executive Board aim for decision-making by consensus, but where a vote is needed, the rules of procedure for ECOSOC are used.¹² The Executive Board also serves as the governing body of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).¹³

The Bureau of the Executive Board is responsible for the organization and preparation of meetings, and it supports transparency and dialogue in the decision-making of the Executive Board by organizing and coordinating meetings and selecting teams for field visits.¹⁴ The Bureau is comprised of one President and four Vice-Presidents, who are elected annually at the first regular session according to geographic regions to ensure equality.¹⁵ The Presidency for 2019 is held by H.E. Mr. Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea.¹⁶ The Vice-Presidents for 2019 are from Antigua and Barbuda, the Republic of Albania, Ireland, and Botswana.¹⁷

UNDP obtains funding from Member States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, among other sources, which contributes approximately \$5 billion to UNDP annually with the Executive Board deciding on budgets and financial plans.¹⁸ Additional funding for individual projects and activities may be provided directly by organizations and governments, although UNDP remains the primary source of funding.¹⁹ With projects in over 170 countries, UNDP tracks allocation of its budget according to theme. For example, 28.6% of expenses have been allotted to inclusive and sustainable growth, 24.9% to basic services, 17.3% to early recovery, 10.9% to democratic governance, 5.4% to risk reduction, 2.8% to thought leadership, and 1% to gender equality.²⁰ Depending on the project, UNDP works with state governments, political entities on a national and community level, and non-governmental organizations to ensure accountability, efficiency, and trust.²¹

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2029 (XX) of 22 November 1965, UNDP retained the “principles, procedures and provisions” of the EPTA and the UN Special Fund following their consolidation.²² Having broadened in scope, UNDP’s present mandate is “to empower lives and build resilient nations” for sustainable human development.²³ As an assistance program, UNDP is “designed to support and supplement the national efforts of developing countries in solving the most important problems of their economic development, including industrial development.”²⁴ Importantly, as emphasized by General Assembly resolution 59/250, national governments retain “primary responsibility” for development within their countries.²⁵

¹¹ UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2019.

¹² Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, of the United Nations Population Fund and of the United Nations Office for Project Services (DP/2011/18)*, 2011.

¹³ UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2018.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ UNDP, *Members of the Executive Board*, 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UNDP, *Our funding: Overview*, 2019; UNDP, *Our funding: UNDP’s funding channels*, 2018.

¹⁹ UNDP, *UNDP Transparency Portal*, 2018.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² UN General Assembly, *Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX))*, 1965.

²³ UNDP JPO Service Centre, *UNDP for Beginners: A Beginner’s Guide to the United Nations Development Programme*, 2015, p. 4.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX))*, 1965.

²⁵ UN General Assembly, *Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (A/RES/59/250)*, 2005, p. 3.

UNDP's work is carried out by its offices in different countries, which are focused on helping countries develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities.²⁶ To assist in these efforts, UNDP also administers and utilizes the UN Volunteers program and the UN Capital Development Fund.²⁷ To function effectively across the globe, UNDP works to strengthen partnerships, build capacity, and coordinate the UN's development activities.²⁸ Partnerships are crucial to the work of UNDP and they enable UNDP to finance its various activities and implement projects.²⁹ UNDP also works with prominent individuals such as Goodwill Ambassadors and advocates to raise awareness of important issues in global development.³⁰ Building capacity is a focus area that allows UNDP to enhance the performance of various institutions and projects.³¹ This is necessary so that countries can strengthen development initiatives, public services, and aid delivery.³² For example, UNDP cooperates with Member States to strengthen legal institutions and enhance access to justice.³³ Another example is strengthening the private sector to create new jobs and improve infrastructure.³⁴

UNDP plays an important role in the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), which is the highest-level inter-agency forum for the UN development system and comprises all UN entities whose work relates to the 2030 Agenda at the country level.³⁵ Originally established as the UN Development Group in 1997 by the General Assembly, the UNSDG was "reinvigorated" in its current format following the December 2017 report of the Secretary-General on "*Repositioning the United Nations Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet*" (A/72/684-E/2018/7).³⁶ Led by the UN Deputy Secretary-General as Chair and the UNDP Administrator as Vice-Chair, the UNSDG "provides strategic direction and oversight to ensure [UN development system] entities deliver coherent, effective, and efficient support to countries seeking to achieve sustainable development."³⁷ UNDP also manages the resident coordinator system, which provides guidance and support for operational activities for development carried out by UN entities at the country level.³⁸ As of November 2016, there were 129 resident coordinators leading 131 UN country teams.³⁹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UNDP remains wholly committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 and plans to achieve them through sustainable means and actions.⁴⁰ UNDP's Executive Board met this past June to review the progress of UNDP's Strategic Plan (2018-2021).⁴¹ Ten observations were made at the Executive Meeting, all of which help continue to direct the work of UNDP by focusing on specific subsets of the SDGs.⁴² The observations focused on ways that UNDP could continue to address sustainable development, assessing

²⁶ UNDP, *About us: Overview*, 2018.

²⁷ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 249.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UNDP, *Our partners: Overview*, 2019.

³⁰ UNDP, *Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates*, 2018.

³¹ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (DP/2017/38)*, 2017.

³² UNDP, *Supporting Capacity Development: The UNDP Approach*, 2009.

³³ UNDP, *Democratic governance and peacebuilding: Access to justice*, 2018.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 247.

³⁶ Ibid; UN General Assembly & ECOSOC, *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet – Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/684-E/2018/7)*, 2017.

³⁷ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*, 2018, p. 248; UNDP, *Our partners: Overview*, 2018.

³⁸ UN DOCO, *The UN Resident Coordinator System – an Overview*, 2016.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Executive Board, Recent Sessions*, 2019.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Annual Session of the Executive Board*, 2019.

what had been done thus far and new, by innovating ways to achieve the SDGs.⁴³ The Executive Board highlighted successes of UNDP, such as achieving SDG 5 (gender equality), and also areas of improvement and continued innovation, such as UNDP need for innovation with newer work on ocean governance and the advanced integrated ways to eradicate poverty.⁴⁴

UNDP, as one of its ten observations, remains wholly committed to ocean and water governance as a way to achieve SDG 14, one of the main focuses of UNDP for 2019.⁴⁵ Specifically in 2019, UNDP has put emphasis on its Water and Ocean Governance Programme (WOGP), applying its management practices of adaptive and integrated ecosystem-based approaches for the use of freshwater and ocean resources at local, national, regional and global scales.⁴⁶ This, in turn, will hopefully have a positive impact and help to address that 80% of the world's global fish stocks are either fully exploited or collapsed, and that the world has seen a 30% increase in ocean acidity over the last 50 years due to a continuous build-up of anthropogenic carbon dioxide in the world's oceans.⁴⁷ On the 3 March, 2019 UNDP acknowledged marine life as the focus of World Wildlife Day for the first time in history.⁴⁸ Working in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), UNDP and CITES facilitated a global celebration with a theme of "life below water: for people and planet", a measure which closely aligns with SDG 14.⁴⁹

South-South cooperation remains a priority of the Executive Board for 2019.⁵⁰ The Executive Board acknowledged and documented the results achieved by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation in 2018 at the June Executive Board Meeting.⁵¹ It was noted that countries who engage in South-South Cooperation continue to increase their cooperative measures, addressing that continual improvement in South-South Cooperation will help drive future progress towards the SDGs.⁵² Utilizing the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), UNDP attended the meeting of Human Development Reports (HDR) and UNOSSC on the 18 July, 2019.⁵³ Both committees, with UNDP's development report from 2019, discussed how to address "Inequality in Human Development," a topic that UNDP has been committed to addressing in 2019.⁵⁴ One of the outcomes of this discussion is the jointly organized consultation for the 2019 HDR on the topic of inequality in human development, which continues to build on the ongoing discussion on the South-South Global Thinkers Network, with the 2019 HDR focusing on inequality of all dimensions of human development.⁵⁵ The South-South Global Thinkers Network specifically aimed at maximizing stakeholder engagement and ensuring the inclusive preparation of HDRs.⁵⁶ Specifically, was one of the observations of the UNDP Executive Board in June, noting that inclusivity was better, but more work needed to be done, such as the obtaining of funding.⁵⁷

⁴³ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Report of the Administrator on Results for 2017 and progress on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021*, 2018.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid; Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Report of the Administrator on Results for 2017 and Progress on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021*, 2018; Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Annual Session of the Executive Board*, 2019.

⁴⁶ UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2019.

⁴⁷ UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance, Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019, p.9.

⁴⁸ UNDP, *World Wildlife Day Focusing on Marine Species for First Time*, 2019.

⁴⁹ Ibid; UN Development Programme, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2019.

⁵⁰ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Executive Board, Recent Sessions*, 2019.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ UNDP, *UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and HDRO Joint Consultation and the Online E-discussion on "Inequality in Human Development"*, 2019.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid; Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Executive Board, Recent Sessions*, 2019.

Conclusion

The UNDP Executive Board's position atop three organizations, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNOPS, as well as its cooperative function with UNSDG, uniquely situates it to further development on all levels. With a wide range of working areas including crisis prevention, democratic governance, environment, and human rights, UNDP can target the most important aspects for sustainable and equal human development with innovative strategies outlined in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.⁵⁸ UNDP continues to work toward enhancing effective and inclusive democratic governance, strengthening resilience, eradicating poverty, and reducing inequalities and does so by working both bilaterally and multilaterally, tackling the SDGs to achieve their goals.⁵⁹ UNDP continues to take the necessary measures to aid the international community in its goal of achieving the SDGs, remaining poised to play a significant role in promoting global development for a more sustainable future for all.⁶⁰

Annotated Bibliography

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Held annually to allow the Executive Board of UNDP to assess the work done, this document is a broad, and excellent overview of what was discussed. This year specifically showcased how the SDGs have clearly defined and shaped what UNDP's scope of work will be going forward, alongside its Strategic Plan (2018-2021) to addressing and tackling the SDGs, addressing UNDP's yearly work on poverty, and the achievements that had been made on the Strategic Plan. It specifically outlined the ten distinct observations made by UNDP this year; highlighting successes and new developmental strategies as well as areas of improvement.

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. (2017). *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (DP/2017/38)*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from: <http://undocs.org/DP/2017/38>

The UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 gives delegates a good insight into the work that UNDP plans on accomplishing for the next two years. This four-year plan details out UNDP's specific priorities, strategies, and work methods, offering up the challenges in which UNDP will face. It specifically explains the approach UNDP must take to help countries achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. (2018). *Report of the Administrator on Results for 2017 and Progress on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (DP/2018/10)*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from: <http://undocs.org/DP/2018/10>

This report, submitted by the UNDP Administrator to the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2018, reviews the results achieved by UNDP in 2017 and the progress made on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021. The report provides delegates with an excellent introduction to the practical realities and challenges associated with UNDP's work. Delegates may also use the report to compare the current strategic plan with its predecessor for the period 2014-2017.

New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2018). *United Nations Handbook 2018-19*. Retrieved 1 November 2018 from: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Handbooks/UN-Handbook-2018-19-pdf.pdf>

⁵⁸ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (DP/2017/38)*, 2017.

⁵⁹ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Executive Board, Recent Sessions*, 2019.

⁶⁰ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (DP/2017/38)*, 2017.

This handbook provides information not only on UNDP, but also on the complete organization of the UN. Delegates can find basic information about all programs, committees, and funds within the UN system, including a quick overview of UNDP. Furthermore, it provides information on the role of UNDP within the UN system and gives the vital organizational structure to help delegates understand the role of UNDP within the United Nation's system.

United Nations Development Programme, Junior Professional Officer Service Centre. (2015). *UNDP for Beginners: A Beginner's Guide to the United Nations Development Programme*. Retrieved 1 November 2018 from: <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/jposc/docs/Recruitment-documents/UNDP%20for%20Beginners%20-%205%20edition%20-%20May%202015.pdf>

This guide is a comprehensive introduction to UNDP that explains key aspects such as its structure, development, and function. Furthermore, basic questions such as what UNDP does, what its internal entities do, principles of UNDP, and funding sources are discussed and explained. This is a great starting point for delegates to gather basic information about the operations and organization of UNDP before dealing with more specific topics.

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I. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Water and Ocean Governance

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that two third of the world’s population experiences water scarcity for at least one month of the year, while approximately two billion people access an “unsafely managed water supply system”.⁶¹ Ocean degradation has led to 80% of fish stocks being overexploited, ocean acidity increasing by 30%, and 10-20 million tons of plastic entering the ocean’s ecosystem every year.⁶² SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG 14 (life below water) of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) recognizes the destruction of oceans and pushes for its preservation as people depend on it for livelihoods and food.⁶³ It also harbors an ecosystem of rich biodiversity essential for sustainable development of the world.⁶⁴

To tackle these challenges, UNDP’s Water and Ocean Governance Programme (WOGP) report of 2017 deemed water and ocean governance as crucial areas to improve the sustainable development and management of ocean resources.⁶⁵ Ocean governance has four main dimensions: political, social, economic and administrative systems.⁶⁶ The World Ocean Council Ocean Governance defines ocean governance as the “the foundation of rules, institutions, processes, agreements and arrangements based on which economic activities are undertaken.”⁶⁷ Effective global governance requires Member States to address ongoing, emerging and transnational challenges of ocean resources.⁶⁸ A central challenge to ocean governance is assessing the transboundary nature of marine resources, such as the movement and impact of water beyond political boundaries, and threats to its sustainability.⁶⁹

Generally, ocean governance focuses on ecosystem preservation, coastal management, public literacy, and resource management.⁷⁰ The enforcement of these are not standardized because, due to the transboundary nature of oceanic and water resources, it includes multiple stakeholders and sectors.⁷¹ Consequently, the lack of consensus by the international community on the scope of ocean governance, and the emerging complexity of marine technology, poses challenges.⁷² The overall focus of UNDP has been a bottom-up approach, which highlights the importance of learning from local knowledge and scaling it up to national policies, multilateral agreements, and international partnerships.⁷³

International and Regional Framework

The 1982 treaty on the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, (UNCLOS), was the first international convention that outlined comprehensive rights and obligations for ocean usage and shared water resources.⁷⁴ Article 137 specifically defines oceans and seas as a “common heritage” on which no

⁶¹ UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2017.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁶⁴ UN DGC, *Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources*.

⁶⁵ UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2017.

⁶⁶ UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019.

⁶⁷ World Ocean Council, *Ocean Governance and the Private Sector*, 2018.

⁶⁸ UN DESA, *Global Governance and Global Rules for Development in the Post-2015 era*, 2014, p. 52.

⁶⁹ UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019, p. 14.

⁷⁰ OceanGov, *Ocean Governance for Sustainability – Challenges, Options and the Role of Science*, 2018.

⁷¹ UNESCO, *Step-by-Step Approach for Marine Spatial Planning toward Ecosystem-based Management*, 2009, pp. 18-42.

⁷² UNESCO, *Step-by-Step Approach for Marine Spatial Planning toward Ecosystem-based Management*, 2009, p. 71.

⁷³ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14*, 2016.

⁷⁴ UNCLOS III, *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982.

state can claim sole sovereignty and is a principle of the international law that should be held in trust for the future.⁷⁵ In 1992, the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* acknowledged the need to sustainably manage ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation, and address the special threats to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the face of climate changes.⁷⁶ In 2012, the (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development was foundational in defining ocean governance and its institutional challenges.⁷⁷ Its outcome document, *The Future We Want*, emphasized the importance of preserving ocean as a “common heritage” by including all ocean-related stakeholders.⁷⁸

By the 21st century, technological advancements required more scientific and human involvement than ever before.⁷⁹ It then became vital to use multiple lenses to analyze policy development, which led to the commencement of the UN Ocean Conference in 2017.⁸⁰ The conference generated 1,568 voluntary commitments from multiple stakeholders and Member States towards ocean conservation.⁸¹ This resulted in General Assembly resolution 71/312 of 2017, *Our ocean, our future*, which recognized the need for area-based management tools as a tool to deal with the transboundary challenges of oceans.⁸² Another outcome of the conference was to highlight the importance of addressing special policy gaps faced by SIDS, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and the least developed countries (LDCs).⁸³ These gaps include the lack of scientific knowledge, expansion of research capacity, and transfer of marine technology to better deal with developmental challenges faced by Member States.⁸⁴

Given the differing needs of Member States, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) calls for ecosystem-based marine and coastal management to be integrated at all levels of administration.⁸⁵ For example, the *Bucharest Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution* (1992), aimed at establishing legal protocols on ocean-pollution.⁸⁶ Other notable conventions include the *Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic* (OSPAR) (1992), which assessed the overall quality of the Atlantic Ocean’s marine environment.⁸⁷ *The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission* (HELCOM) (1992) produced recommendations for aquaculture and small-scale fisheries.⁸⁸ *Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region* (NOWPAP) (1994), called for the “wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment” for long-term benefits.⁸⁹ Most recently, frameworks such as the *Ocean Governance Strategy for Africa* (OGSA) (2018) and *Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050* aim at the efficient application of ecosystem-based management, and raising awareness through education.⁹⁰

⁷⁵ UNCLOS III, *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982, p. 70.

⁷⁶ UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288), 2012.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. II)), 1992.

⁸⁰ UN Ocean Conference, *About the UN Ocean Conference 2017*, 2017.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² UN General Assembly, *Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action* (A/RES/71/312), 2017.

⁸³ UN Ocean Conference, *Partnership Dialogue 7: Enhancing the Conservation and Sustainable use of Oceans and Their Resources by Implementing International law as Reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 2017.

⁸⁴ Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance, *The Role of Regional Ocean Governance in Implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14*, 2017, p. 39.

⁸⁵ UN Environment, *Taking Steps Toward Marine and Coastal Ecosystem-Based Management*, 2011, pp. 9-18.

⁸⁶ Black Sea Commission, *The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution*, 1992.

⁸⁷ OSPAR Commission, *The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic*, 1992.

⁸⁸ HELCOM, *The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic sea area*, 1992.

⁸⁹ UN Environment, *NOWPAP History*.

⁹⁰ UN Environment, *Development of Ocean Governance Strategy for Africa: Summary of Scoping Study and Gap Analysis*, 2018; African Union, *2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)*, 2012.

Role of the International System

Currently, a primary focus of UNDP includes water and ocean governance and the promotion of marine management practices.⁹¹ UNDP WOGP, launched in 2008, is UNDP's main global mechanism to collect data & coordinate programs around ocean governance.⁹² UNDP WOGP collaborates with other organizations, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Stockholm International Water Institute, Global Water Partnership, on projects ranging from governance, advocacy and leadership to sanitation and hygiene.⁹³ In particular, GEF is the largest financial institution with \$7.7B in co-financing contribution to marine preservation and coastal management.⁹⁴ GEF harnesses regional knowledge and uses innovative financial models to reduce the cost of management, optimize the usage of resources, and invest in the health of oceans.⁹⁵ Another example is Cap-Net UNDP, which has been instrumental in fostering local ownership of sustainable development by establishing monitoring & reporting systems.⁹⁶

UNDP collaborates with a wide variety of actors within the UN system in this area, with these partnerships in turn coordinated by UN-Water, the UN's inter-agency mechanism for all water and ocean-related matters.⁹⁷ In 2011, a multi-stakeholder approach was formalized by IOC-UNESCO, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO), and UNDP.⁹⁸ The approach focused on analyzing current challenges in coastal management, and ways to improve the provisions on the Law of the Sea Convention.⁹⁹

Similarly, PEMSEA (the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia) developed the Sustainable Development of Coastal Areas framework (SDCA) for Integrated Coastal Management (ICM).¹⁰⁰ SDCA supports cross-sectoral coordination by continuously exploring emerging issues in coastal sustainable development that affects different levels of integration.¹⁰¹ Commercial interests derived from oceanic resources have been recognized as resulting in a high environmental cost.¹⁰² To reverse this, recent international frameworks have focused on utilizing scientific knowledge, developing financial networks for effective policy, and coordinating stakeholder engagement.¹⁰³ These focus areas use multiple management tools for political, legal and institutional reforms.¹⁰⁴ Tools such as the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) identify ecological challenges that are transboundary in nature and aims to coordination initiatives between Member States.¹⁰⁵

⁹¹ UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2017.

⁹² UNDP, *Water & Oceans Governance Programme Contribution to Realizing the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 11.

⁹³ UNDP, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Water and Ocean Governance*, 2019.

⁹⁴ GEF et al., *From Coast to Coast: Celebrating 20 Years of Transboundary Management of Our Shared Oceans*, 2019.

⁹⁵ GEF et al., *From Coast to Coast: Celebrating 20 Years of Transboundary Management of Our Shared Oceans*, 2019.

⁹⁶ Cap-Net & UNDP, *About Us*, 2019.

⁹⁷ UN-Water, *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*.

⁹⁸ UNESCO, *A Blueprint for Ocean and Coast Sustainability*, 2011.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ PEMSEA, *Understanding Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) — Model Course on ICM. Instructor's Manual*, 2018, pp. 38-52.

¹⁰¹ UNDP, *Catalysing Ocean Finance, Volume I: Transforming Markets to Restore and Protect the Global Ocean*, 2012.

¹⁰² UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ IUCN, *Area Based Management Tools, Including Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction: A Report of the workshop on Area Based Management Tools, including Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ GEF, *TDA/SAP Methodology*, 2013.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organization (CSO) are also critical actors in achieving the 2030 Agenda.¹⁰⁶ For example, The Wildlife Conservation Society Marine Protected Area Fund (WCS MPA Fund) aims to invest a minimum of \$15 million by 2020 to scale local initiatives upwards to develop regional networks and global strategies for conserving the marine and biological ecosystem.¹⁰⁷ Recently, WCS MPA Fund's contribution to marine spatial planning for Gabon Bleu in 2012 led to similar efforts in Equatorial Guinea and the Congo, thus creating opportunities to “leverage, coordinate and scale up MPA efforts.”¹⁰⁸

Similarly, the private sector has been recognized as having a critical role to play in the strengthening of ocean governance.¹⁰⁹ The World Ocean Council has recognized that ocean governance is often developed in governmental or academic settings without coordinated involvement of the many industry sectors that depend on and utilize it.¹¹⁰ The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea does coordinate the participation of different stakeholders in a variety of forums and discussion platforms, such as NGOs, CSOs and the private sector, in order to report annually to the General Assembly.¹¹¹ Through such coordination efforts, UNDP aims to raise awareness on ocean governance, help Member States to overcome potential conflict over resource management, and establish partnerships with different interest-groups.¹¹²

Challenges to Integration: Scalability

In a general sense, scalability is a characteristic of a system or approach by which the effectiveness of a successful project can be replicated to a wider scale while retaining its efficiency.¹¹³ The ocean covers and crosses many international boundaries but lacks consistency between the variety of agreements and actors designed to govern it.¹¹⁴ Namely, there are 576 bilateral and multilateral agreements between Member States to deal with ocean-related issues.¹¹⁵ The co-existence of multiple agreements in isolation has led to disengagement between levels of administration leading to a lack of transparency, efficiency and accountability.¹¹⁶

Lack of coordination, coherence, and effectiveness on ocean-related issues hinders the enforcement of environmental regulations.¹¹⁷ To solve this, the United Nations High-Level Committee on Programmes created the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network, later known as UN-Oceans, to focus on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).¹¹⁸ They called for establishing at least 30% of the world's ocean as MPAs in order to safeguard marine biodiversity and ecosystems by 2020.¹¹⁹ These reserved areas utilize the Marine Protected Area Governance (MPAG) framework to combine economic, legal, knowledge, and communication incentives to solve inconsistencies in ocean governance.¹²⁰ Particularly for the LDCs and

¹⁰⁶ UN HLPF, *HLPF 2016 Position Paper Major Group of Non-Governmental Organisations*, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ UN Ocean Conference, *Protecting 1 Million sq kms Through the \$15 Million WCS Marine Protected Area Fund by Wildlife Conservation Society*, 2019.

¹⁰⁸ WCS MPA Fund, *Overview: A Call to Action for Ocean Protection*, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ World Ocean Council, *Ocean Governance and the Private Sector*, 2018, pp. 15-17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹¹¹ DOALOS, *The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, its Functions and Activities*.

¹¹² UN-Water, *Water and sanitation interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

¹¹³ UNESCO, *A Blueprint for Ocean and Coast Sustainability*, 2011, p. 14.

¹¹⁴ UNESCO, *Ocean Governance and Institutional Challenges*.

¹¹⁵ University of Oregon, *International Environmental Agreements (IEA) Database Project*, 2016.

¹¹⁶ UNESCO, *Ocean Governance and Institutional Challenges*.

¹¹⁷ European Parliamentary Research Service, *Ocean Governance and Blue Growth: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Responses*, 2019.

¹¹⁸ UN-Oceans, *UN-Oceans*.

¹¹⁹ UN Ocean Conference, *MPA Action Group: Global Partnership to Improve Management Effectiveness and Sustainability of a Global Portfolio of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (L/MMAs)*, 2016.

¹²⁰ UN Environment, *Enabling Effective and Equitable Marine Protected Areas – Guidance on Combining Governance Approaches*, 2019, p. 20.

SIDS, the risk of failure is high due to their geographical isolation, dependence on oceanic resources, exposure to sea-level rise and extreme weather events.¹²¹ For example, Port-Cros National Park optimally uses the MPAG framework to establish cross-jurisdictional coordination.¹²² They created a representative board with multiple stakeholders including national and local government, landowners and NGOs to mobilize cooperation.¹²³ Establishing MPAs enable economies to sustainably manage resources, set up accelerated funds to support innovation, and transition to clean economy.¹²⁴

Challenges to Integration: Scientific Knowledge and Innovation

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the ocean industry will be worth \$3,000,000,000,000 by 2030, making the regulation and preservation of it important.¹²⁵ Science, technology and innovation (STI), as laid out in the 2030 Agenda, and established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, can be used to help achieve the SDGs.¹²⁶ National research agendas have been reprioritized to track the ocean's health by exploring the STI realm in greater detail.¹²⁷ There is a call for utilizing STI developments beyond their research and commercial scope and be tested as new advanced tools for ocean governance and management.¹²⁸ For example, the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) is responsible for monitoring ocean acidity and providing capacity building frameworks to regions with limited scientific infrastructure, such as the SIDS and LDCs.¹²⁹ Another example is the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme.¹³⁰ This initiative facilitates the "exploitation, development, and exchange of oceanographic data and information among participating Member States."¹³¹ New monitoring mechanisms push for international policies to adapt quickly to new knowledge as it becomes available.¹³²

In 2019, the Meeting of the Communities of Ocean Action held in Incheon, provided technical and legal support towards good ocean governance practices; including policy development, legal frameworks, and partnership for multi-sectoral engagement.¹³³ STI can be used for political and legal reforms by providing research support, and processing data fairly for accurate reporting.¹³⁴ This theme was further explored in the fourth annual multi-stakeholder forum on STI for the SDGs held in 2019.¹³⁵ Furthermore, the 2020 UN-Oceans Conference will be held in Lisbon with a focus on "science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions."¹³⁶

¹²¹ UN-OHRLLS, *Small Island Developing States in Numbers. Climate Change Edition 2015*, 2015, pp. 8-22.

¹²² UN Environment, *Enabling Effective and Equitable Marine Protected Areas – Guidance on Combining Governance Approaches. Case Study Compendium*, 2019, p. 60

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ UNESCO, *Build Green Societies in Small Island Developing States: Addressing Key Vulnerabilities*.

¹²⁵ OECD, *Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*.

¹²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 30.

¹²⁷ OECD, *Rethinking Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*, 2019.

¹²⁸ UN DESA Division for Sustainable Development, *In-depth analysis of Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments to Support and Monitor Their Implementation*, 2017.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ UNESCO, *Monitoring the Ocean*.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² World Economic Forum, *Harnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution for Oceans*, 2017, p. 16

¹³³ Communities of Ocean Action, *Community of Ocean Action on Sustainable Blue Economy: Interim Assessment*, 2019.

¹³⁴ UN IATT, *Science, Technology and Innovation for SDGs Roadmaps*, 2018.

¹³⁵ UN HLPF, *Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/HLPF/2019/6)*, 2019, p. 4.

¹³⁶ IISD, *High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (UN Ocean Conference) 2020*.

Conclusion

There is a need to look beyond regional agendas and aim for political, legal and institutional reforms across all levels of integration.¹³⁷ Ecosystem-based policies and management of the ocean's health, especially in vulnerable regions, is vital in achieving SDGs 6 (clean water and sanitation) and 14 (life below water).¹³⁸ UNDP pushes for a bottom-up approach to scale local initiatives to internationally cohesive policies through multilateral agreements, treaties and conventions.¹³⁹ Under UNCLOS, legally binding reforms need to be established to harness positive synergies and reduce potential conflict about future uses of oceanic resources.¹⁴⁰ Oceans are considered a "common heritage of mankind" which requires progressive reforms to reverse damages done in the past and lay foundations for a sustainable future.¹⁴¹ International integrations and standardization of governance is required to preserve the "common heritage of mankind" for the future generation.¹⁴²

Further Research

Going forward, delegates should consider questions such as: How can STI be utilized for assessing current allocation of resources for marine and ecosystem-based management, including gaps in information and regulations? How can different monitoring mechanisms and local initiatives be scaled globally to protect the ocean's health? What barriers exist for SIDS and LDCs to implement ocean-policies? How can UNDP use its bottom-up approach to navigate emerging complexities in ocean governance? How can UNCLOS be made to meet present-day's oceanic challenges regarding innovation, economics and environment?

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Third session. (1982). *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*. Retrieved 18 July 2019 from: <https://www.un.org/unclos-e.pdf>

Delegates will find this document useful as this is a landmark convention that sets international regulations and national obligations related to the usage of ocean and its resources. Articles 118, 136, and 140 outline the responsibilities of Member States concerning conservation of the "common heritage" of mankind through cooperation, development and peaceful usage. Although the provisions have been updated since then to account for emerging challenges, it still remains a fundamental legislation across the UN system and beyond.

United Nations Development Programme. (2012). *Catalysing Ocean Finance Volume I: Transforming Markets to Restore and Protect the Global Ocean*. Retrieved 18 July 2019 from:

<https://www.undp.org/UNDP-GEF>

In this document presented by UNDP in partnership with the GEF, delegates can understand the planning tools concerned with the marine ecosystems and the effect on economies. The document estimates an initial public investment of \$5 billion over the

¹³⁷ UN General Assembly, *International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (A/RES/72/249)*, 2017.

¹³⁸ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14*, 2016.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ UN Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, *Intergovernmental Conference on an International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*.

¹⁴¹ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (A/AC.287/2017/PC.4/2)*, 2017.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 17.

next ten to twenty years to catalyze public and private investment in the marine industry. These initiatives focus on sustainably utilizing and developing the global oceans. The viability of the project depends on multiple programs such as the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP), ICM/Framework for SDCA, and the Global or Regional Ocean Legal Frameworks.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *UNDP Support to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14*. Retrieved 18 July 2019 from: <https://www.undp.org/SDG14>
Delegates will find this document useful with its focus on UNDP's contribution to SDG 14 (life below water). UNDP, alongside the United Nations Development Group, formulated a strategy called MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support) for governance cohesion of national and local initiatives under the SDG umbrella. The document also defines ocean governance, identifies challenges in the commercial market due to overexploitation of resources and non-cohesive administration. The document promotes a bottom-up approach (from smaller planning scales to national cohesiveness) to push for multilateral agreements, knowledge management, and partnership. The focus is on fisheries, greener shipping industry, coastal management, pollution, and MPAs.

United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*. Retrieved 18 July 2019 from: https://www.undp.org/Water_and_Ocean_Governance.pdf

In this document, delegates will find a contemporary review of the success stories in the WOGP portfolio. The case studies are focused on different issues throughout the international community, including the shipping industry, safeguarding marine flora and fauna, ecosystem-based management of coasts and seabed, and applying a human rights-approach to water sustainability. This document highlights the importance integrating multiple stakeholders across different sectors for effective governance reforms. This document also attempts to define water and ocean governance in regard to the timeline of its process for optimum ocean perseverance and human development. The document also attempts to explain the dimensions of governance and the present challenges including efficiency, knowledge sharing, and the scope of policy overlap between ocean governance and other water-utilizing industries.

World Economic Forum. (2017). *Harnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution for Oceans*. Retrieved 24 August 2019 from: <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/4IR>

Delegates will find this document useful because this document highlights the present-day challenges and opportunities to solve pressing environmental challenges related to Oceans. The focus is on harnessing scientific and technological innovations supported by new and effective approaches to governance, financing and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Delegates can understand the core fundamentals of diverse datasets and new management tools in the context of policy gaps identified for contemporary ocean sustainability. The document emphasizes the importance of harnessing new technologies, innovations and expertise for empowering communities; raising accountability in all level of governance; and utilizing real-time data on oceanic activity.

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II. Closing the Energy Gap for All People

*“In the 21st century, the ultimate renewable energy is human ingenuity.”*¹⁴³

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Development Programme (UNDP) continues to focus on the impact and significance of the energy gap and the millions of people still without access to clean, affordable energy because of it.¹⁴⁴ Goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlines the objective of providing all people with access to affordable and clean energy by the year 2030.¹⁴⁵ The “energy gap” refers to the number of people who lack access to clean, affordable energy.¹⁴⁶ Despite steady progress since the year 2000, and a global increase of the electricity access rate to 89% of the global population, there are still 840 million people who are without access to electricity.¹⁴⁷ Without access, people face greater economic and social hardships such as poverty, exclusion, and lack of education.¹⁴⁸

According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019*, there are still regional, social, and economic inequalities that limit the amount of progress being made.¹⁴⁹ It is estimated that 87% of the remaining population without electricity live in rural areas as opposed to urban communities.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, in sub-Saharan Africa only 44% of the population have access to electricity.¹⁵¹ As such, many of these rural communities require financial and political assistance for alternative, localized energy solutions.¹⁵²

Access to energy is just one of two primary objectives for SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy).¹⁵³ UNDP also focuses on aiding in efforts to help transition existing energy sectors into more sustainable methods.¹⁵⁴ It is estimated that by 2040, the world’s energy requirements will increase by 70%, with two thirds of the global population living in urban cities.¹⁵⁵ The energy sector alone accounts for over two thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁵⁶ Despite growing investments in renewable energies, sustainable electricity alone only accounts for 20% of the final energy usage.¹⁵⁷ Increasing investment in renewable energy sources to provide cost effective electricity will also help provide more energy accessibility.¹⁵⁸

International and Regional Framework

A number of international agreements have highlighted the need to close the energy gap.¹⁵⁹ As part of the 1948 *Universal Declaration Of Human Rights* (UDHR), energy is declared as an important resource that should be provided and protected for all citizens regardless of social or economic status.¹⁶⁰ The UDHR

¹⁴³ UNESCO, *Address by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of the soon-to-be-published Manual “Empowering the Poor through Human Rights Litigation” Session in Parliament*, 2011.

¹⁴⁴ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁴⁶ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 9.

¹⁴⁷ UNDP, *Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 9.

¹⁴⁹ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, 2019, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁵³ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, 2019, p. 37.

¹⁵⁸ UNDP, *Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2018.

¹⁵⁹ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

marked the first international framework that recognized access to electricity as a human right that should be protected by governments.¹⁶¹ Energy was also a factor in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), that discussed the impact of development on the environment.¹⁶² Subsequently, UNCED adopted *Agenda 21*, wherein Chapter 7 focuses on promoting sustainable human settlement development.¹⁶³ *Agenda 21* emphasizes promoting sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements and provides policy guidelines to national governments and international organizations.¹⁶⁴ The objective of the policy guides are to support the transition towards more energy efficient technologies and increase renewable energy access and usage.¹⁶⁵

In 2002, the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* (WWSN) placed greater emphasis on access to energy as a means to promote sustainable development.¹⁶⁶ The *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* was adopted in 2002 and made efforts to help Member States diversify energy resources by developing cleaner, and more cost effective sustainable energy technologies.¹⁶⁷ The Johannesburg Declaration also emphasizes the exchange of these technologies to developing countries to increase the global share of renewable energy sources and their relative affordability.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, in 2017, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 71/256, the *New Urban Agenda*, which outlines the duty of Member States to provide clean, renewable, and affordable energy to support the growth of sustainable settlements.¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, energy access and renewable energy transitions are the fundamental priorities of SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy).¹⁷⁰ The implementation of the SDGs, however, requires significant financial investment.¹⁷¹ The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015) is the action plan designed to outline the requirements for financing the SDGs.¹⁷² Specific to energy, the AAAA specifies the development of a new forum to bridge the infrastructure gap present within both urban and rural developments in order to be able to provide clean affordable energy to all people.¹⁷³ The AAAA also provides policy recommendations that incentivize public and private investment into energy infrastructure and renewable energy technology to increase the rate of global energy access.¹⁷⁴

Role of the International System

As the primary operational program in achieving the SDGs, UNDP serves a fundamental role in providing leadership on and fostering collaboration between the variety of bodies, projects, and funds designed to increase energy access for all.¹⁷⁵ UNDP's work is given coordinated through its own overarching *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*.¹⁷⁶ The *Strategic Plan* focuses on implementing the SDGs through six 'signature solutions'.¹⁷⁷ The six solutions are: poverty eradication, strengthening accountable governance,

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199.20)*, 2002.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*, 2017, pp. 8-10.

¹⁷⁰ UNDP, *Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2018.

¹⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 6.

¹⁷² UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference in Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 6.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ UNDP, *Looking to the Future*.

¹⁷⁶ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, *UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, 2017, p. 11.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

increasing crisis prevention and recovery, promoting nature-based solutions, strengthening gender equality, and closing the energy gap.¹⁷⁸

In 2018, UNDP provided over \$1 billion (USD) in financing for energy access projects that were distributed among 110 countries, including the private and public sector.¹⁷⁹ Its work in the energy sector is supported through bodies such as UN Energy, which functions as the primary mechanism for inter-agency collaboration on energy projects.¹⁸⁰ UN Energy collaborates with UNDP to promote coherence in the UN system, to engage with stakeholders, and to focus on the substance of collaborative policy development and implementation.¹⁸¹ UNDP also collaborates frequently with the International Energy Agency, particularly around the release of information and statistics related to energy access.¹⁸² In 2019, UNDP announced a new global partnership with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), to accelerate low carbon energy transitions and explore joint initiatives aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁸³ The partnership seeks to provide assistance to developing countries to provide a more efficient transition to renewable energy and increased energy access.¹⁸⁴

Other UN bodies, such as the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), regularly assess the progress towards achieving the SDGs.¹⁸⁵ According to the HLPF review of SDG 7, modern renewable power generation is expanding rapidly but greater efforts are required for it to have a significant impact on global usage.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, another area highlighted by the HLPF review is the need for more consistent, improved, and available data on energy access.¹⁸⁷ Produced in conjunction with several other organizations, the Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE) aim to answer whether governments are upholding the targets of SDG 7 as well as identifying the areas with the most critical amount of help needed.¹⁸⁸ RISE reports use 27 indicators that assess the levels of energy access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.¹⁸⁹ By using these measurements, RISE is able to provide accurate information for organizations and project networks to prioritize the areas with the greatest needs.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) is an organization that focuses its efforts on achieving SDG 7 in areas with the highest needs.¹⁹¹ SEforALL works on achieving electricity for all in Africa through policy reform, investment promotion, and private sector engagement.¹⁹²

Energy Access in Rural Communities

Energy access is vital and necessary in order to ensure the progression of community development as well as the fulfillment of the SDGs.¹⁹³ Although the world has made great strides in providing people with access to electricity, there are still heavy regional and social disparities that limit the progression and achievement of the targets of SDG 7.¹⁹⁴ Access rates between communities differed, with 79% of people in rural areas having access as opposed to 97% of people living in urban communities.¹⁹⁵ This can create a variety of issues such as poor health and environmental damage due to the lack of clean energy

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ UNDP, *Annual Report 2018*.

¹⁸⁰ UN-Energy, *Mission*.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² UNDP, *Looking to the Future*.

¹⁸³ UNDP, *UNDP and IRENA Join Forces to Advance Low-Carbon Energy Transition*, 2019.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ UN HLPF, *2018 HLPF Review of SDG Implementation*, 2018.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁸⁸ World Bank et al., *Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy*, 2016, p. xv.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. xviii.

¹⁹¹ Sustainable Energy for All, *2018 Annual Report: Leaving No One Behind*, 2018, p. 17.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁹³ *Achieving targets on Energy Helps Meet Other Global Goals, UN Forum Told*, UN DGC, 2018.

¹⁹⁴ IRENA, *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report*, 2019, p. 15.

¹⁹⁵ IRENA, *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report*, 2019, p. 15.

available.¹⁹⁶ Some of the major obstacles that limit rural communities in gaining access to energy are funds and location.¹⁹⁷ Within many rural communities in developing countries, there are infrastructural challenges in establishing complex energy grids or generators.¹⁹⁸ For many developing countries, expanding the outreach of already existing electrical grids can be a very costly investment that governments cannot afford.¹⁹⁹

Lack of access to energy also can exacerbate existing societal disparities in developing rural communities.²⁰⁰ For example, traditional cookstoves often double as a stove and source of heat for rural communities where electrical cooking equipment is not available.²⁰¹ These methods can cause health issues to the people in the home.²⁰² Some of the most affected groups of people are women and girls, who, in settings with high gender inequality, face higher exposure to indoor pollutants, causing more serious health issues.²⁰³ Every year 4.3 million people die from indoor air pollution, of which it is estimated women and children make up the majority.²⁰⁴ Energy poverty takes its greatest toll on women due to the amount of compiled health risks and issues that contribute to lost opportunities and a lack of a formal education or technical training.²⁰⁵ In an example of how UNDP can work to rectify these issues, UNDP started a market transformation project in Kenya that incentivized highly efficient Biomass Stoves and as a result have installed 1522 stoves in 723 schools giving 11,000 children access to safe education institutions.²⁰⁶

Off-Grid Energy Solutions

In order to address the issue of energy access in rural communities, UNDP and other organizations have invested in off-grid energy solutions.²⁰⁷ Off-grid energy solutions are localized energy projects that don't rely on or use public utility services or networks.²⁰⁸ UNDP has made efforts into researching and promoting these development projects so that rural communities can have access to clean, reliable energy.²⁰⁹ One example of an off-grid solutions is the 'Off-Grid Box' project by UNDP in Tanzania that provides electricity and clean water.²¹⁰ The box is a retrofitted shipping container equipped with hardware needed to produce electricity and clean water.²¹¹ It is designed to allow rural communities to have access to a reliable source of off-grid electricity which, in turn, enables rural economic activities and reduce household financial or medical costs.²¹² Additionally, solar mini grids now have the potential to provide increased levels of electricity that can be used for productive means such as watering crops, collecting water, and clean cooking and heating.²¹³ The widespread deployment of solar mini grids, however, will require significant investment on the part of the private sector.²¹⁴

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁹⁷ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 30.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ IEA, *Energy Access Outlook 2017*, 2017, p. 57.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ UNDP, *Gender and Climate Change: Gender and Sustainable Energy*, 2017, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ UNDP, *Market Transformation for Highly Efficient Biomass Stoves for Institutions and Medium-sized Enterprise*, 2011.

²⁰⁷ UNDP, *Derisking Renewable Energy Investments: Off Grid Electrification*, 2018, p. 25.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

²¹⁰ UNDP, *Bringing Clean Energy and Water to Off-Grid Communities*, 2018.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ UNDP, *Derisking Renewable Energy Investments: Off Grid Electrification*, 2018, p. 26.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

In addition to the rapid spread of these projects, the increasing options available are providing better and quicker access to energy than traditional grid expansions.²¹⁵ Other organizations, such as Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), have begun their own Integrated Electrification Pathways (IEPs) that focus on inclusive planning and policy measures that help projects achieve the targets of SDG 7.²¹⁶ IEPs serve as implementation tactics that utilize new technological approaches and delivery models to provide energy access to areas with highest human needs.²¹⁷ UNDP works with governments to increase the energy access rate of the country by expanding off-grid solutions.²¹⁸ In Afghanistan the installation of micro hydropower (MHP) systems provided electricity to 168,000 off-grid communities.²¹⁹ Additionally, in Nepal, a similar project was able to provide electricity access to over 45,000 people.²²⁰

Sustainable Urban Cities

Over 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas and account for 70% of global carbon dioxide emissions.²²¹ UNDP supports cities in becoming more sustainable and ultimately achieving a zero-carbon future.²²² Energy access still remains an issue in urban communities, as accessibility and stability of electricity can cause concern for many in poverty.²²³ Urban cities, which are cities with 1 million residents, will also experience blackouts, irregular supply, and low or fluctuating voltage output.²²⁴ Affordability is another key issue as many times energy costs can be very high causing people to survive for periods of time without electricity.²²⁵

One of the major challenges with growing urban populations is energy efficiency in residential buildings, due to power providers often having outdated supply systems that can cause blackouts.²²⁶ Many governments have enacted regulatory energy codes and building requirements in order to promote greater energy efficiency in buildings.²²⁷ UNDP, in its *Sustainable Urbanization Strategy*, discusses benefits such as cost savings and increased income that an increase of energy efficiency in buildings, business, and industries can help provide.²²⁸ Sustainable energy solutions alongside energy efficiency methods can also contribute to resolving other urban issues such as air quality, waste management, and improved health.²²⁹ Ensuring a stable source of energy is necessary in order for cities to have more inclusive policies that will aid the urban poor and marginalized communities and provide opportunities for further development.²³⁰

Conclusion

UNDP, in its efforts to increase access to clean energy and provide alternative solutions to both rural and urban communities, has already seen a steady amount of progress made as it continues to expand its partnerships and investments into projects.²³¹ As part of its mission to achieve the targets set by SDG 7, it is imperative that UNDP continues to foster and support further collaboration to fully address the energy

²¹⁵ OECD, *Achieving Clean Energy Access in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2018, p. 2.

²¹⁶ Sustainable Energy for All, *Integrated Electrification Pathways for Universal Access to Electricity: A Primer*, 2019, p. 7.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²¹⁸ UNDP, *UNDP Energy Projects*, 2015, p. 1.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²²¹ UNDP, *Sustainable Cities and Transport*.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 30.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ UNDP & GEF, *Promoting Energy Efficiency in Buildings*, 2010, p. 18.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ UNDP, *Sustainable Urbanization Strategy*, 2016, p. 11.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.

gap.²³² However, with 840 million people still lacking access to energy, and 3 billion people lacking clean energy resources, UNDP and the global community will need to increase their efforts to achieve SDG 7.²³³ The lack of access to energy in both rural and urban communities caused by improper funds and infrastructure create health, economic, and social problems that can lead to devastating effects.²³⁴ Although much progress has been made for the 2030 global target, an increase in funds, coordination and implementation access projects from UNDP and the rest of the UN system will be required to ensure that people receive the support that is required.²³⁵

Further Research

When researching the topic, delegates will need to take into consideration several questions: What are some of the major challenges when attempting to provide energy access to all people? What are some of the major inequalities present in clean energy access? Why is energy access for rural communities so crucial? Why are off-grid solutions increasingly more vital to the success of SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy)? What are benefits that can be expected of off-grid energy systems? Why are off-grid energy systems difficult to implement on a mass scale and how can this be addressed? What are some major challenges for energy efficiency and renewable energy for urban cities?

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This report is an in-depth overview of global progress regarding the energy gap. This report covers the need for energy access as well as clean cooking and heating solutions, renewable energy transitions, and energy efficiency methods for sustainable practices. This report also provides a high level of statistical information to highlight areas and issues that require greater efforts. Delegates will gain significant understanding of the entire energy gap with information from which they can develop areas of focus and importance.

Sustainable Energy for All. (2018). *2018 Annual Report: Leaving No One Behind*. Retrieved 21 October 2019 from: <https://www.seforall.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/SEforALL-2018-Annual-Report.pdf>

This report provides a summary and report of all the initiatives and projects that were the focus of the Sustainable Energy for All organization for the year 2018. Delegates will find information regarding what the organization does and what current projects it's involved with. The report also provides a progress update on previous projects that are still in use as well as future projects and issues the organization plans on addressing soon. Delegates will find this useful as it will provide an overview of some of the operational projects that a partner organization of UNDP are undertaking.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate - Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from: <http://www.un-expo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNDP-Energy-Strategy-2017-2021.pdf>

This report details the UNDP guidelines and strategies on improving energy access for the years 2017-2021, noting the challenges and implementation practices around sustainable energy development projects. UNDP details three main challenges that must be considered: social, economic, and environmental. The report also identifies methods of improvement and application where projects can meet these challenges. It also emphasizes and describes the benefits and assistance that energy partnerships can

²³² UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 11.

²³³ UNDP, *Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2018.

²³⁴ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.

²³⁵ Ibid.

have in addressing these concerns. Delegates will find this useful for the various explanations of program methodology and specific challenges that must be overcome.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Gender and Climate Change: Gender and Sustainable Energy*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from:

<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/UNDP%20Gender%20and%20Sustainable%20Energy%20Policy%20Brief%204-WEB.pdf>

This report details some of the main issues with the lack of energy access to all people, especially women and the adverse effects they suffer as a result. Many women in communities where there is no access to energy are disproportionately burdened, resulting in putting themselves at risk. This report will assist delegates to better understand the burdens and negative effects that communities face without clean energy and how social factors disproportionately exacerbate its effects.

United Nations Development Programme. (2018). *Derisking Renewable Energy Investment: Off-Grid Electrification*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from:

[https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Climate%20Strategies/DREI%20Off-Grid%20Electrification%20-%20Full%20Report%20\(20181210\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Climate%20Strategies/DREI%20Off-Grid%20Electrification%20-%20Full%20Report%20(20181210).pdf)

This report by UNDP details the methods of selecting the methods and policy decisions to help facilitate cooperation between policymakers and the private sector in being able to fund and provide energy access to those in need. Part of the objective of UNDP is to further promote and manage cooperation between the public and private sectors in energy access projects designed for smaller communities. Off-grid systems are some of the more useful systems that can be operated in order to ensure that people in marginalized communities as well as off-grid communities can still have access to electricity for basic needs. This provides delegates an in depth understanding of how off-grid systems function in project management.

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