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Commission for Social Development Background Guide 2022

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2022 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD). This year's staff are: Directors Alexandra Bogdasarow (Conference A) and Jacob Sarasin (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Hoki Matsuo (Conference A) and Aleksei Stanonis (Conference B). Alexandra has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Chinese Studies and is currently pursuing her Masters in Organisation of Social Issues at the University of Trier. She also works as a research assistant at the University of Trier. Jacob graduated from Manhattan College in May 2019 and currently works for a law firm in New York City, runs a voter information non-profit, and will be attending law school in the fall of 2022. Hoki has recently proceeded to his major in Social Justice and International Relations in Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. Aleksei has been involved in Model UN activities for more than seven years, has participated in a number of different Model UN organizations, and currently serves in the SDG9 Youth Envoy in Russia.

The topics under discussion for CSocD are:

1. Digital Inclusion for Sustainable Development
2. Social Policy to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Recovery Post Covid-19 Pandemic

The UN Commission for Social Development is the only Commission mandated to provide recommendations about social development policies to the Economic and Social Council and serves in an advisory capacity to ensure that the key issues of social inclusion, youth employment, poverty, civil society, indigenous people, and poverty are considered in social policy development. CSocD meets annually in New York and provides crucial inputs to thematic reviews of progress on Sustainable Development Goals, as well as serving as a vital advisory role for more effective policy frameworks. As such, delegates simulating the committee will have the opportunity to work towards consensus and draft resolutions examining existing policy and proposing new frameworks for the purposes of sustainable social development.

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 2022 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](#), serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

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 Economic and Social Council Department, Lauren Kiser (Conference A) and Eileen Austin (Conference B), at usg.ecosoc@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A

Alexandra Bogdasarow, Director
Hoki Matsuo, Assistant Director

Conference B

Jacob A. Sarasin, Director
Aleksei Stanonis, Assistant Director

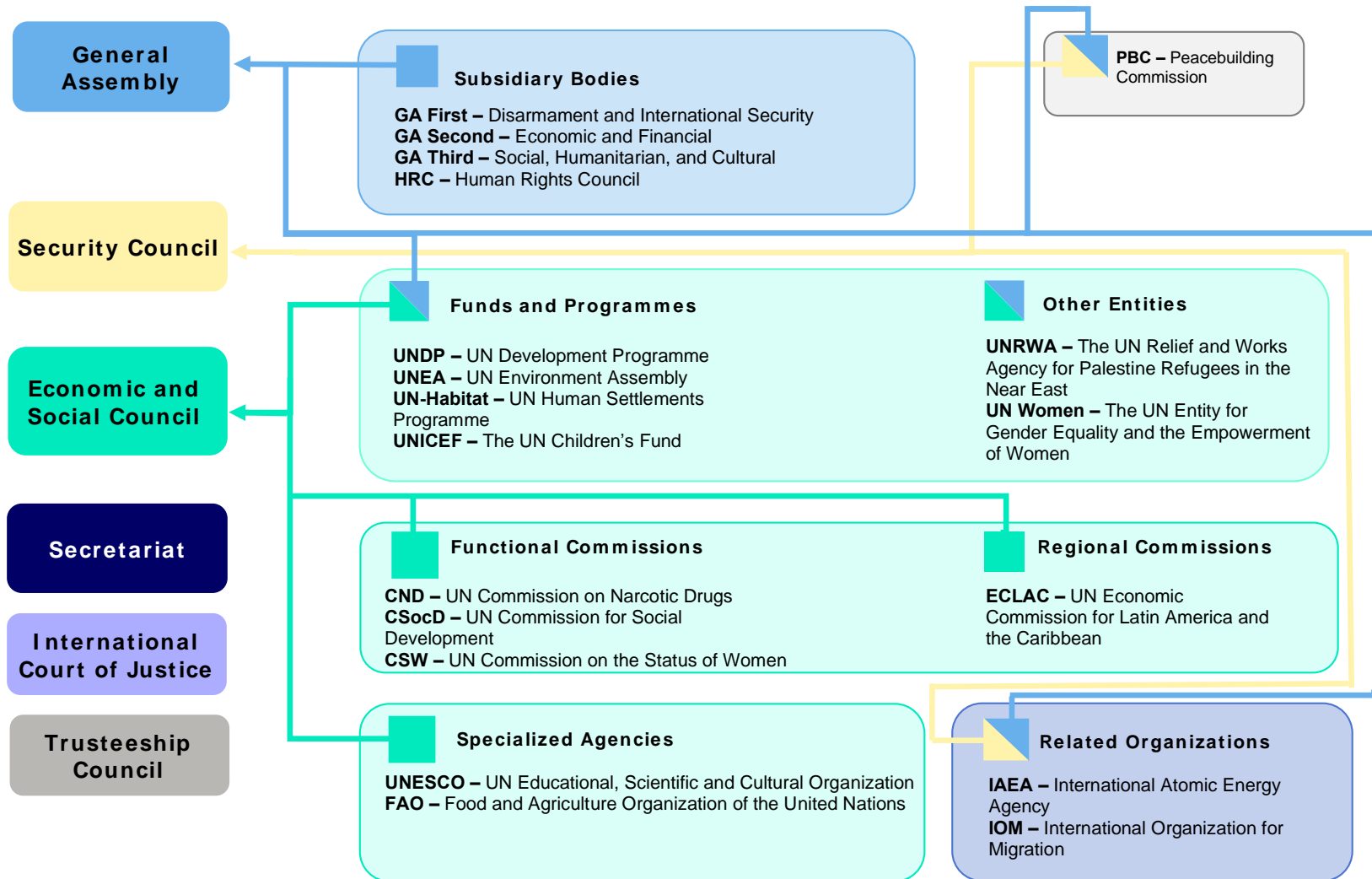


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

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 Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is a key actor in the United Nations (UN) system on matters of “efforts of the United Nations in the social field towards supporting and strengthening independent social and economic development.”¹ Since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the Commission has been tasked with monitoring the implementation of the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development* (1995) and *Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development* (1995).² The *United Nations Report of the World Summit for Social Development* (1995) provided a definition for social development and emphasized that, while intertwined with economic development and environmental protection, social development is about considering the needs of people as a core component of development.³ The Report also highlighted poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion as key elements that must be addressed in social policy and development.⁴ The UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) further defines social development as “processes of change that lead to improvements in human well-being, social relations, and social institutions, and that are equitable, sustainable, and compatible with principles of democratic governance and social justice.”⁵ These definitions help demonstrate the wide purview that CSocD oversees in the international system as an advisor to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁶

Social progress, justice, and protections have been a priority of the UN since its inception in 1945 and were highlighted in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948.⁷ The UN reiterated its commitment to social development in 1969 with the *Declaration on Social Policy and Development*, which states that importance must be placed on individual human lives.⁸ Further, it goes on to address that social development cannot exist so long as cultural genocide and other injustices remain.⁹ These early documents highlight the UN’s commitment to social policy and development throughout its history, commitments that CSocD strives to further within its mandate.¹⁰

CSocD, originally called the Social Commission, was established in 1946 by ECOSOC resolution 10 (II) as a functional commission and expert body to advise on social policy.¹¹ Since then, both the Commission’s mandate and membership have been expanded to address a greater variety of issues; it has also become a forum for high-level panels concerning development.¹² The Commission views the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) as an opportunity to enhance its role within the UN system in promoting international development and monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.¹³ The body and its Bureau have identified inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, as an especially important issue that the Commission must address in the near future.¹⁴

¹ UN ECOSOC, *Reappraisal of the role of the Social Commission (E/RES/1139(XLI))*, 1966, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1996, p. 2.

⁵ UNRISD, *Social Development in an Uncertain World: UNRISD Research Agenda 2010-2014*, 2011, p. 2.

⁶ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/RES/2542 (XXIV))*, 1969.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹¹ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD); New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2021, p. 164.

¹² UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹³ *Commission on Social Development Discusses Role in Advancing SDGs*, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁴ UN CSocD, *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development*.

Governance, Structure, and Membership

CSocD is a functional commission of ECOSOC and thus reports directly to the Council.¹⁵ Its main responsibility is to address and advise on the more technical aspects of policy-making for ECOSOC in the area of social development, and it recommends draft resolutions for adoption by ECOSOC.¹⁶ CSocD is serviced by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the UN Secretariat, which supports the Commission in collecting information on the effectiveness of international policy concerning social development.¹⁷ Further, the DSPD facilitates the intergovernmental process by resolving the logistical challenges that are necessary in organizing meetings and forums for the Commission.¹⁸ In accordance with a strategy that was reaffirmed in 2012, CSocD operates on a two-year review and policy cycle in which one session focuses primarily on analyzing policy and how it has shaped global social development, while the following set of meetings focuses on creating policy recommendations and draft resolutions.¹⁹

CSocD has traditionally had a bureau made up of one Chair and four Vice-Chairs to help set the agenda for the entire two-year policy cycle pursuant to ECOSOC decision 2002/210.²⁰ Bureau members are elected at the first meeting of each regular session, which immediately follows the conclusion of the previous session, and serve for two consecutive meetings.²¹ For the 59th session, the Bureau chair was Ambassador María del Carmen Squeff of Argentina, who was joined by four vice-chairs in the Bureau who were elected at the beginning of the 59th session.²² Increasing the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Bureau has been a priority as the Commission continues to establish itself within the UN system.²³

The original membership of the Commission was 18; it has grown multiple times since the inaugural session, with its last expansion in 1996.²⁴ The current membership sits at 46 Member States.²⁵ Members are elected by ECOSOC to the Commission for four-year terms.²⁶ Membership is based on proportional regional representation, with 12 seats for African states, 10 for Asia-Pacific, five for Eastern Europe, nine for Latin America and the Caribbean, and 10 for Western Europe and other states.²⁷

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The current mandate of CSocD is to examine existing policy and propose new frameworks for the purposes of sustainable social development.²⁸ While the Commission's original mandate was to advise ECOSOC on matters related to social policy, CSocD has undergone significant transformation.²⁹ The most notable expansion of its mandate came in 1995 at the *World Summit for Social Development* in Copenhagen, when CSocD became the main body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

¹⁶ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?, 2010; UN CSocD, Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021.

¹⁷ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

¹⁸ UN DESA, *DESA Divisions*.

¹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development (E/RES/2021/8)*, 2020.

²⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development (2002/210)*, 2002.

²¹ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

²² UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021.

²³ UN ECOSOC, *Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development (2002/210)*, 2002.

²⁴ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2020.

²⁵ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ UN DGC, *Poverty Remains World's Biggest Challenge, Social Development Commission Chair Says as Session Concludes with Approval of 3 Texts, Election of New Vice-Chairs (SOC/4837)*, 2016; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2020.

²⁸ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

the Summit's outcome documents, the *Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action* (1995).³⁰ The Programme of Action renewed the call for a review of CSocD, strengthening the Commission as a policy advisory body that would examine and recommend changes in international frameworks concerning social development.³¹ The three main themes of the Summit were poverty eradication, productive employment, and social integration.³² Another outcome of the Summit was for ECOSOC to regularly review the Commission's role and strengthen its capacity.³³

In addition to its follow-up on the *Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action*, CSocD's mandate includes providing broad policy advice on issues of social development, anticipating potential issues in social development, making recommendations, promoting the exchange of information among social development stakeholders, and advising ECOSOC on the coordination of social development issues.³⁴ This mandate may continue to expand as the Commission defines its role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; it was endorsed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as valuable to achieving the SDGs through its specialized review and policy cycle, and continues to play a significant role in the pursuit of the SDGs.³⁵ As mandated, the Commission serves as a forum for important discussions about social development in the global community.³⁶ It frequently invites field experts and UN leaders to participate in high-level discussion panels aimed at producing action-oriented recommendations to ECOSOC on sustainable development policy.³⁷

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

The 58th session of CSocD took place 10-19th of February 2020.³⁸ This meeting celebrated the 25th anniversary of the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development* and the 75th year of the Commission.³⁹ The priority theme for the 58th session was affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness.⁴⁰ At the 58th session, the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Mr. Gbolié Desiré Wulfran of Côte d'Ivoire, held a high-level panel discussion of the priority theme.⁴¹ This panel addressed a definition of homeless in the context of the new decade, a comprehensive overview of the current state of homelessness on a global scale, and provided an examination of the structural socioeconomic conditions that drive homelessness.⁴² Looking towards the future, the panel also discussed methods for preventing homelessness, and a platform for sharing national strategies for tackling homelessness.⁴³ CSocD recommended three draft resolutions to ECOSOC for adoption.⁴⁴ The three proposals were on adopted by ECOSOC and addressed the priority theme of affordable housing and social protection, social dimensions of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (2001), and Modalities for the fourth review of the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (2002), respectively.⁴⁵

³⁰ UN World Summit for Social Development, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, 1996, p. 84.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³² UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010, p. 2.

³³ UN World Summit for Social Development, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, 1996.

³⁴ UN DESA, *Mandate and Terms of Reference – CSocD*.

³⁵ UN DGC, *Poverty Remains World's Biggest Challenge, Social Development Commission Chair Says as Session Concludes with Approval of 3 Texts, Election of New Vice-Chairs (SOC/4837)*, 2016; *More Inclusive Governance, Greater Focus on Education Key for Building Post-Pandemic Resilience against Future Crises, Policy Experts Tell Social Development Commission*, UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2021.

³⁶ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁸ UN CSocD, *58th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD58*.

³⁹ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-eighth session (E/2020/26-E/CN.5/2020/7)*, 2020, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴¹ UN CSocD, *High-Level Panel Discussion on the Priority Theme, 2020*.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-eighth session (E/2020/26-E/CN.5/2020/7)*, 2020, p. 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

CSocD held its 59th session from 8-19th February 2021, which convened in a hybrid format, with in-person opening and closing ceremonies, but general discussions and panel discussions were held virtually.⁴⁶ The priority theme for the 59th session was a “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all.”⁴⁷ The 59th session produced four draft resolutions, each of which were forwarded by acclamation, to ECOSOC for adoption.⁴⁸ The first resolution adopted by the Commission at the 59th session addressed the administrative task of *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development*.⁴⁹ At the recommendation of the Commission, this resolution was adopted by ECOSOC and reinforced the administrative functions of the Commission while providing a framework for operation through 2023.⁵⁰ This resolution also decided that the priority theme for the 60th session of the CSocD, to be held in February of 2022, will be “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.”⁵¹

The second resolution adopted at the 59th session addressed *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development*.⁵² This resolution was introduced by the representative of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China with the intention of ensuring the continued commitment to the agreements from the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, with specific attention paid to the prioritization of structural transformation in African countries and the ratification by UN Member States to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.⁵³ The third resolution adopted at the 59th session addressed the priority theme of the session, *Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all*.⁵⁴ This third resolution primarily addressed the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated inequalities in social development due in part to disparities in economic development, and encouraged Member States to close the digital divide by promoting digital inclusion as a measure to attain the social inclusion of all, specifically through partnership in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and relevant private partnerships.⁵⁵ The fourth resolution adopted by the Commission at the 59th session focused specifically on *Policies and programmes involving youth*.⁵⁶ This resolution addressed, among other issues, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic with specific regard to the lives of young persons and the digital divide.⁵⁷

Conclusion

CSocD has seen its mandate expand since 1946, which has given the Commission greater capacity to affect the global community.⁵⁸ Through its mandated cycle of monitoring and review of SDG progress, the Commission has an opportunity to recommend policies that will have a lasting impact on the entire international community.⁵⁹ With assistance from Division of Social Policy and Development (DSPD), the

⁴⁶ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021, p. 3.

⁴⁷ UN CSocD, *59th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD59*.

⁴⁸ UN DESA Social Inclusion, *Role of digital technologies on well-being for all among resolutions agreed upon, as CSocD59 concludes session*, 2021.

⁴⁹ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021, p. 7.

⁵⁰ ECOSOC, *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development (E/RES/2021/8)*, 2021, p. 2.

⁵¹ UN CSocD, *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD60*.

⁵² UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021, p.10.

⁵³ ECOSOC, *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (E/RES/2021/9)*, 2021, p. 7.

⁵⁴ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021, p.23.

⁵⁵ ECOSOC, *Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all (E/RES/2021/10)*, 2021, p. 4.

⁵⁶ UN DESA Social Inclusion, *Role of digital technologies on well-being for all among resolutions agreed upon, as CSocD59 concludes session*, 2021.

⁵⁷ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021, p. 34.

⁵⁸ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

⁵⁹ *Commission on Social Development Discusses Role in Advancing SDGs*, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2016.

Commission is able to address a wide scope of issues pertaining to social development.⁶⁰ CSocD can address both economic and social development needs through reviewing, analyzing, and recommending international policy to ECOSOC.⁶¹

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This news article highlights what the role of the Commission will be regarding the SDGs and their implementation. The comments from the UN Secretary-General indicate that the Commission will be vital in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Further, CSocD will prioritize the SDGs during the next review and policy cycle. Delegates can use this source to understand what the Commission will have as their main priority for the next session and to understand its role in implementation of the SDGs.

United Nations, Commission for Social Development. (2021). *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/19)*. Retrieved 3 August 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/E/2021/26>

This document reports on the most recent session for CSocD. The document summarizes the main events of the session, such as the drafting of four resolutions and the adoption of the agenda for the sixtieth session in 2021. The document explains in more detail each event during the fifty-ninth session, such as the debates on the draft resolutions and the Member States that participated. This document is not only a great tool for learning the latest discussion on the committee, but it is also a great example of how CSocD sessions occurs.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD60*. Retrieved 2 August 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csocd-social-policy-and-development-division/csocd60.html>

This website details the proposed agenda and the relevant themes for the 2022 session of CSocD, which is scheduled to take place in February 2022 at the UN headquarters in New York. The theme “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda” specifies what the Commission’s priorities will be in the future. Delegates can also review the contributions of civil society groups to meeting preparation.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. Retrieved 1 August 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csocd-social-policy-and-development-division.html>

This is the main overview from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs website on the Commission for Social Development. Here, relevant information can be found on the history of the committee including its membership, governance, and mandate. In addition, a full list of recent sessions and draft resolutions can be found at this link. This source should be used primarily to understand the Commission’s work and historical development.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Mandate and Terms of Reference – CSocD*. Retrieved 5 August 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csocd-social-policy-and-development-division/mandate-and-terms-of-reference-csocd.html>

⁶⁰ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

⁶¹ Ibid.

This page from the website of DSPD, as part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, clearly lays out the mandate of CSocD and highlights the different facets of its work. This resource explains the unique role CSocD plays in the UN system and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also links to the Commission's Programme of Work, session pages, key reports, and outcome documents. This source will be useful to delegates as it concretely defines the confines in which CSocD is intended to operate and can prevent proposals which fall outside of the body's scope of work.

United Nations, World Summit for Social Development. (1995). *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*. Retrieved 1 August 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/A/CONF.166/9>
This document is a report on the proceedings of the 1995 Copenhagen Summit. The summit was monumental in discerning how the UN would address social development. It includes an agreement that not only codifies shared values, but also explains how the UN System could use those to improve social development throughout the global community. Because this summit has played a significant role in shaping CSocD's mandate, delegates may find this report useful for understanding how the Commission approaches social development.

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1. Digital Inclusion for Sustainable Development

Introduction

Digital technologies have spread rapidly; nearly 50% of the earth's population currently have access to the internet.⁶² Digital technologies exist in various forms, including the internet, mobile phones, and other tools that are used to collect, store, analyze, and share information digitally.⁶³ Many people depend on advancing digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and mobile applications for work, education, and to socially connect with friends and families.⁶⁴ Digital technologies can contribute to achieving sustainable development through fostering social connectedness and enhancing workflow, but they can also lead to the marginalization of minority groups due to the digital divide.⁶⁵ The United Nations defines the digital divide as the inequalities in accessibility to information and communication technologies (ICT).⁶⁶ Therefore there is a need to understand that digital divide, and how to close that divide, in order to enhance digital inclusion.⁶⁷

People in low- and middle-income countries are also still lagging behind digitalization across the globe, with only up to 28% of the population able to access digital technologies, compared to the global average of 50%.⁶⁸ Developing countries also traditionally struggle in building national policies to address this, and to access global systems such international trade that have been widely digitized by technology such as by AI, big data, and robotics.⁶⁹

Amidst all of this, the global COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the world into requiring digital technologies day-to-day on an unprecedented scale, due to lockdowns, social distancing, and school shutdowns.⁷⁰ Prior to COVID-19, there was an ongoing rapid digital transformation as e-commerce created new jobs and opportunities for a cost-efficient consumption and production pattern.⁷¹ As such, it is important that vulnerable and marginalized populations are able to access digital technologies so that national development, social fulfillment, and human dignity are able to be enjoyed by all.⁷²

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) was adopted in 1948 as a legal set of human rights to be followed universally.⁷³ The UDHR outlines that everyone has a right to freedom of expression, to life, liberty, security, and to privacy, among many other rights.⁷⁴ The rights to digital rights are outlined in the report *The right to privacy in the digital age* (2018) by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).⁷⁵ This report also highlights the importance of ensuring security with digital technologies, such as with big data and AI, as this technology may pose various risks to human rights, and the Report further explains the importance of privacy in the digital age.⁷⁶

After the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly, held in 2000, emphasized the importance of reducing poverty and marginalization among

⁶² UN 75, *The impact of digital technologies*.

⁶³ UN DESA, *Online Global Dialogue on Digital Inclusion for All*, 2021.

⁶⁴ UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, *The age of digital interdependence: report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation*, 2019.

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ UN DGC, *The Role of e-Governance in Bridging the Digital Divide*, *UN Chronicle*.

⁶⁷ UNDESA, *Leveraging digital technologies for social inclusion*, 2021.

⁶⁸ IMF, *Digitalizing Sub-Saharan Africa: Hopes and Hurdles*, 2020.

⁶⁹ UNCTAD, *Technology and Innovation Report 2021*, 2021.

⁷⁰ UNDESA, *Leveraging digital technologies for social inclusion*, 2021.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² UN DGC, *The Role of e-Governance in Bridging the Digital Divide*, *UN Chronicle*.

⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217(III))*, 1948.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ UN HRC, *The right to privacy in the digital age (A/HRC/39/29)*, 2018.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

communities and regions that become left behind by rapid globalization.⁷⁷ The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) is a summit that aims to bridge the global digital divide and bring people to access and utilize digital technologies in the information based society easily.⁷⁸ This two-phase summit hosted in 2003 and 2005 published foundational documents to assess the digital divide, known as the *Geneva Declaration of Principles followed by the Geneva Plan of Action* (2003) and the *Tunis Commitment* followed by the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society* (2005), both of which continue to form the foundation of global social policy on the impact of digital technologies on members.⁷⁹

The Geneva Plan of Action (2003) presents concrete methods in implementing ICTs to build an inclusive information society to improve accessibility to ICTs and close the digital divide.⁸⁰ *The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society* that followed the Tunis Commitment, recommends financial mechanisms and solutions in bridging the digital divide.⁸¹ The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, adopted in 1966, also leads the way in ensuring all people receive equal rights to live their lives.⁸² Similarly, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is essential to note as children's human rights such as safety, privacy, and social protection must be secured as they grow and develop while being influenced by media and ICT in the digital age.⁸³ Other human rights frameworks also play an important role, such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) (1981) which underlines women's rights to opportunities in social and political life.⁸⁴

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1 *Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) which introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁸⁵ ICTs have been mentioned in SDG 9 ("industry, innovation and infrastructure"), and progress on other goals such as SDG 3 ("good health and well-being"), and SDG 4 ("quality education"), also connect issues of emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and AI to the social livelihood and quality of life of people.⁸⁶ The SDGs set out a significant blueprint for a sustainable future, especially with goal 9.c. to "Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020".⁸⁷ To support the progress of sustainable development in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the *Istanbul Programme of Action* (2011) called for affordable and accessible internet in LDCs through pillars such as food, human, and governmental security and other development priorities.⁸⁸

Lastly, the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) is a conference convened by the ITU to consider topics of digital and telecommunication development every four years, with the latest being in 2017.⁸⁹ The ITU also adopted multiple resolutions in the WTDC in 2017 regarding solutions for digital inclusion for communities including women, girls, children, youth, the elderly, the disabled, and indigenous people.⁹⁰

⁷⁷ UN DGC, *24th Special Session of the General Assembly on Social Development*, 2000.

⁷⁸ WSIS Forum 2016, *WSIS Forum 2016: "WSIS Action Lines: Supporting the Implementation of SDGs"*, 2016.

⁷⁹ WSIS, *Basic information: About WSIS*, 2015.

⁸⁰ WSIS, *Plan of Action*, 2003.

⁸¹ WSIS, *Tunis Commitment*, 2005; WSIS, *Tunis Agenda for the International Society*, 2005.

⁸² UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 1966.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989; OHCHR, *Protecting children's rights in the digital age*, 2014.

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 1979.

⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

⁸⁶ Sustainable Development Goals Help Desk, *Digital Technologies for the SDGs*, 2020.

⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313)*, 2017.

⁸⁸ UN Publications, *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries*, 2011.

⁸⁹ ITU, *About WTDC*.

⁹⁰ ITU, *Digital Inclusion Resolutions*, 2021.

Role of the International System

As digital technologies rapidly transform lives for a better quality of living, the United Nations has multi-dimensionally assessed this issue of securing digital technologies for those in need.⁹¹ Given the rapid changes being seen in the transformation of the digitized world, UN Secretary-General António Guterres convened the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation in 2018, to raise awareness on digital technologies, while rendering proposals and advice to governments, private and international organizations, civil society, technical and academic communities, and other relevant stakeholders.⁹² The High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation produced the report *The Age of Digital Interdependence* (2019), that outlines concrete actions based on cooperation between states and the private sector, civil society, the technology community, and the global public to connect, respect, and protect people in the digital age.⁹³ The report also explains how human rights could be violated when personal information utilized online contradicts international security standards.⁹⁴ It also highlights how human rights that were addressed before current emerging digital technologies still hold equal significance on current digital platforms.⁹⁵

In 2018, the report by the Economic and Social Council *Harnessing new technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals* notes how to achieve the SDGs through pointing out the possibilities and drawbacks of emerging digitalization across the globe.⁹⁶ In 2020, the Secretary-General launched the report “Roadmap for Digital Cooperation (74/821)” as a follow up on the recommendations of the previous report *The Age of Digital Interdependence* in 2019 by the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation.⁹⁷ Statistics from the report show that only 53.6% of the global population have access to the internet, leaving the other half still unable to achieve full digital autonomy.⁹⁸ The report strongly emphasizes the promotion of the digital economy and digital public goods to all with equity, peace and safety, while underscoring that people and under-served groups deserve equal access.⁹⁹ It stresses that access should be granted to digital tools, skill development, and training to under-served groups in order to accelerate developmental progress in achieving the full potential of digital technologies in the SDGs.¹⁰⁰

Annual reports by the United Nations are made regarding the progress on meeting the SDGs, which monitor areas of development to ensure that “no one is left behind.”¹⁰¹ In the report *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021* (2021), data from the COVID-19 pandemic proved that individuals’ and governments’ abilities to manage ICT has become critically important, but nevertheless data from 2017 to 2019 show that 40% of youth and adults are still unable to independently perform a basic ICT skill such as sending an email with an attachment.¹⁰² General Assembly resolution 74/197 on *Information and communications technologies for sustainable development* (2020) was adopted by a consensus where the assembly agreed on that gender and poverty played a factor in the digital divide, especially in Africa.¹⁰³

⁹¹ UN DGC, Don’t let the digital divide become ‘the new face of inequality’: UN deputy chief, *UN News*, 2021.

⁹² UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, *The age of digital interdependence: report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation*, 2019.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Harnessing new technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: report of the Secretary-General (E/2018/66)*, 2018.

⁹⁷ UN Secretary-General, *The UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap on Digital Cooperation (A/74/821)*, 2020.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, *The age of digital interdependence: report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation*, 2019.

¹⁰¹ UN Statistics Division, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, 2020.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ UN General Assembly, *Information, and communications technologies for sustainable development (A/RES/74/197)*, 2020.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is also involved in advocating for digital inclusion for women, as women continuously have been left behind the paradigm shift of the digital era.¹⁰⁴ In its report, *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*, UN Women highlights how gender stereotypes within digital working environments have become mainstream and underscores the emergence of the gender digital divide.¹⁰⁵ Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and ICT areas of study are still dominated by men, despite evidence showing that these same fields benefit from the representation of women.¹⁰⁶ Goal 5b of the SDGs specifically works to close the digital divide by seeking to “enhance the use of...information and communication technology to promote the empowerment of women.”¹⁰⁷

UNCTAD's latest version of its biennial *Digital Economy Report* in 2019, looks into opportunities to access the digital economy by developing countries.¹⁰⁸ With states from the global north compared to the global south accounting for most of the digital platforms and markets of IoT, and accessibility being highly concentrated in these areas, inequalities continue to grow.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, implementing digital business models, re-evaluating local infrastructure and entrepreneurial ecosystems, digital employment and educational policy-making, are among the possible solutions to narrowing this divide.¹¹⁰ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and ITU in 2019 have launched the Giga Initiative with the goal of connecting every school to the internet and every young person to the digital society.¹¹¹ Through research and technical support, The Giga Initiative has been a successful program during the COVID-19 pandemic to continuously support the offline population across Asian, African, and African regions.¹¹² ITU has also released a report in 2020 by the name *Connecting Humanity - Assessing investment needs of connecting humanity to the Internet by 2030* which sets out an estimate of the cost at the point of time needed to supply connectivity for all people ubiquitously by 2030.¹¹³ The report also defined the baseline to what quality connectivity is and what global population is needed for global connectivity.¹¹⁴

The Digital Divide

With a motivation towards building a digital society since the 1990s, the UN has historically assessed the digital divide since the early 2000s.¹¹⁵ The *Millennium Development Goals* (2000), as predecessor to the SDGs, aimed to close the information and technology gap within the global north and south.¹¹⁶ The adoption of the SDGs follows this goal, specifically SDG 9.c, which aims to provide affordable internet in LDCs by 2020.¹¹⁷ Rapid progress has been made over the years in LDCs upon SDG 9.c, wherein all 47 of these countries have succeeded in securing 3G network services and infrastructures for its citizens, but the need to increase the prevalence of basic ICT skills through education enrollment continues.¹¹⁸ In 2020 however, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced international lockdowns, and the global shift of social and

¹⁰⁴ UNDESA, *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: The role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all”*, 2020.

¹⁰⁵ UN Women, *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ UNCTAD, *Digital Economy Report 2019*, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ ITU, *Digitally empowered Generation Equality Women, girls and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries*, 2021.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ UNICEF, *Giga Connecting Every School to the Internet*, 2020.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ ITU, *Connecting humanity: assessing investment needs of connecting humanity to the internet by 2030 August 2020*, 2020.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, *Bridging digital divide between industrialized and developing countries stressed in committee on information debate*, 2001; UN ECOSOC, *Bridging the technology gap between and within nations (E/CN.16/2006/2)*, 2006.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ UNDESA, *SDG Indicators*, 2021.

¹¹⁸ ITU, *ICTs, LDCs and the SDGs: Achieving universal and affordable Internet in the LDCs*, 2021.

professional engagement to being primarily online, including telecommuting, videoconferencing, and e-commerce, emphasized the social inequality of the digital divide.¹¹⁹ Nations capable of ICT were safer from cyber threats and benefited more during the pandemic than those who do not have the infrastructure to engage in these same technologies.¹²⁰

Statistics from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) highlights that marginalized groups such as women, poor, elderly, and those with low literacy are disproportionately left out of a digitalized society, due to stereotypes that drive mainstream beliefs that these groups less skilled in these areas.¹²¹ UN DESA also has highlighted that digital inclusion also means “ensuring the accessibility of ICTs for social and economic development, especially for people with specific needs, including Indigenous peoples”.¹²²

Connectivity problems in rural and urban areas are also an important dimension of the digital divide, as the need to access to the internet has increased within remote areas due to the pandemic.¹²³ Urban-rural digital divides have to be addressed to ensure the quality of life of people in rural areas keeps pace with the quality of life of those in urban cities.¹²⁴ This includes providing these communities with access to the digital market, finance, remote jobs, data, and materials to improve their yield.¹²⁵ In urban and suburban areas, the digital divide among communities with a big income gap have been closing up the divide, as the ITU explains in its “Measuring the Information Society Report” in 2018.¹²⁶ The ILO also puts focus on the education and training of the 65% of youths that are unable to receive education as they did before the pandemic, due to the lack of remote learning infrastructure.¹²⁷ The report *What we know about the gender digital divide for girls: A literature review* (2020) from UNICEF also shows that the gender digital divide is identifiable from consumption patterns of digital media and devices between genders.¹²⁸ Gender stereotypes, sociocultural norms, lack of education of ICTs, as well as the risks of cyber harassment and abuse, are some of the root causes of women and girls continuing to be under-served within digital inclusion initiatives.¹²⁹ However the gender digital divide also differs between regions, as the ITU explains, as more than 5 times as many women use the internet in developed countries than LDCs.¹³⁰ Additionally, there are affordability gaps, and even if digital technology affordability gaps were to be filled such as by introducing policies and investing in broadband networks, the digital divide will not cease to exist unless digital literacy, education, and household accessibility can be ensured.¹³¹ ICTs have immense potential to contribute to the achievement of all 17 SDGs through its speed, manageability, productivity, and its ability to connect civil society, government and other relevant actors, and it’s important that marginalized groups such as women and girls have equal access.¹³²

Investment in digital infrastructure

Existing digital divide infrastructure issues remain, especially in African states and other LDCs, due to a high demand, high costs, and already existing local networks primarily utilizing weak digital ecosystems

¹¹⁹ ITU, *ICTs for a Sustainable World #ICT4SDG*, 2021.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ UNDESA, *Leveraging digital technologies for social inclusion*, 2021.

¹²² UN, *Indigenous Peoples and Connectivity: Bridging the Digital Divide*, 2021.

¹²³ UN DGC, Bridging Asia-Pacific ‘digital divide’ vital to realize tech benefits, *UN News*, 2020.

¹²⁴ UN DGC, Internet upgrade breathes new life into rural areas, new UN report finds, *UN News*, 2021.

¹²⁵ UN DGC, Internet upgrade breathes new life into rural areas, new UN report finds, *UN News*, 2021.

¹²⁶ ITU, *Measuring the Information Society Report*, 2018.

¹²⁷ ILO, *Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being*, 2020.

¹²⁸ UNICEF, *Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality What we know about the gender digital divide for girls: A literature review*, 2021.

¹²⁹ OECD, *Bridging the Gender Digital Divide*, 2018.

¹³⁰ ITU, *Bridging the gender divide*, 2021.

¹³¹ UNDP, *The evolving digital divide*, 2021.

¹³² ITU, *ICTs for a Sustainable World #ICT4SDG*, 2021; UNCTAD, *The Role of ICTs in Accelerating the achievement of the SDGs*, 2017.

and networks compared to that of other states.¹³³ An UNCTAD report titled *Accentuating the Need to Bridge Digital Divides* (2020) shows that the global community is engaging in more digital networks and social media platforms in their daily lives, as consumption and production patterns continue to shift towards e-commerce.¹³⁴ Infrastructural approaches to closing the digital divide include integrating these approaches within trade procedures and national logistics.¹³⁵ Digital infrastructure is essential for all LDCs, with investments in e-commerce, e-transactions, e-governance, and support necessary to grow access in these areas.¹³⁶ Public-private partnerships are one avenue to achieving the infrastructure needed to help close these gaps.¹³⁷ African states often face competition in starting international e-commerce, while digital and physical infrastructure both need additional development, from an often limited pool of locally-situated capital and talent.¹³⁸

However, successful regional investments in digital infrastructure have been demonstrated through the work of bodies such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).¹³⁹ ESCAP and the Alliance for Affordable Internet conducted a survey in 2020 that showed that the Asia and Pacific Region has the highest ranking compared to other regions in ICT regulatory policies, especially in broadband strategies.¹⁴⁰ An example of such investments in digital infrastructure is Thailand, which through its national action plan and support from the Universal Service and Access Fund, has managed to provide internet connectivity to approximately 1.7 million rural households.¹⁴¹ This is being done through installations of hotspots and quality internet access that is provided by telecom operators or government-owned telecommunication companies.¹⁴² The Philippines has also begun increasing broadband capacity through fiber optics and wireless technology across the country, especially in remote areas, resulting in the government saving close to \$15 million within the first year of implementation of a state owned National Broadband Plan.¹⁴³ Strategies in enterprises and markets in Africa have been seen as successful in bridging ICT to the local contexts of Sub-Saharan African developing countries.¹⁴⁴ The digital divide can further be closed through building strong partnerships within digital business-to-business dealings, from analog outposts, to digital services, to end-users.¹⁴⁵ Building this digital infrastructure can also be done through turning the physical disadvantage of some regions to an advantage by creating software developments jobs for companies in developed countries, in exchange for affordable labor and a previously under-served client base.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

Although the digital divide continues to exist, efforts by the international community are contributing to the closure of the divide and the number of internet users is increasing every year according to the ITU.¹⁴⁷ As the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the digital divide clearer than ever before, not only CSocD, but all relevant entities and governments, have to work towards achieving digital inclusion for all.¹⁴⁸ To combat these issues, the Secretary-General's report "Roadmap for Digital Cooperation (74/821)" continues to be a source of goals for global society to strive for in order to leave no one behind in digital

¹³³ UNCTAD, *Digital Economy Report 2019*, 2019.

¹³⁴ UNCTAD, *Coronavirus reveals need to bridge the digital divide*, 2020.

¹³⁵ UNCTAD, *Digital Economy Report 2019*, 2019.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ UN ESCAP, *The Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Platform*, 2021.

¹⁴⁰ Alliance for Affordable Internet, *2020 Affordability Report*, 2020.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ UNCTAD, *Digital Economy Report 2019*, 2019.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ ITU, *Statistics*, 2021.

¹⁴⁸ UNDESA, *Leveraging digital technologies for social inclusion*, 2021.

technologies.¹⁴⁹ National policies, as well as policies that focus on the digital inclusion of marginalized groups, have to be efficient and inclusive in order to close the digital divide and achieve the SDGs.¹⁵⁰

Further Research

As delegates begin their research, some questions that may be helpful include: How can the UN, alongside regional, national, NGOs, IGOs, and other international actors cooperate in closing the digital divide? How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Member States' digital infrastructures? Where and when has the digital divide begun? What effects and effective programs have been implemented in Member States' during COVID-19 to promote digital inclusion? How will global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic help or hinder digital inclusivity?

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The Commission for Social Development convened from 8 to 17 February 2021 to address digital inclusion by taking into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on digital divide. Access to digital technologies and connectivity to the internet has been a priority theme in the pandemic, and therefore having CSocD discuss this important issue is useful to seeing their vision, goals, and predictions for the future of this issue. Delegates will find this resource helpful to understanding the current status of CSocD's work on the digital divide, as well as opportunities for future progress.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2020). *The Digital Revolution: Implications for Gender Equality and Women's Rights 25 Years after Beijing*. Retrieved 13 August 2021 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/the-digital-revolution-implications-for-gender-equality-and-womens-rights-25-years-after-beijing-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1837>

While many of the factors impact the digital divide, this report emphasizes the aspect of gender, and how women and girls have yet to achieve equal digital participation. 25 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women uses this publication to assess the progress made, and the challenges remaining. The report also focuses on influencing factors such changing workforce statistics, and an evolving educational and social landscape that delegates will find useful to research as they begin drafting proposals to address the digital divide.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2019). *Digital Economy Report 2019*. Retrieved 22 September 2021 from: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/der2019_en.pdf

This report assesses the value of the digital economy in developing countries, while considering how the increasing evolution of our digital societies increased social inequalities. The report provides specific explanations on how markets in developing countries are adapting to the digital economy through making use of local social networks and infrastructure. Delegates will find the innovative ideas and solutions proposed in this report, as well as discussion of the remaining challenges, useful as they begin their research.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fourth session. (2020). *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation (A/74/821)*. Retrieved 12 August 2021 from: https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/assets/pdf/Roadmap_for_Digital_Cooperation_EN.pdf

This report highlights how digital technology has been essential to deal with the COVID19 pandemic. Despite this, the presence of xenophobia, violent extremism, gender inequality and social inequality online still hinder the achievement of full digital inclusion. This

¹⁴⁹ UN, *The UN Secretary-General's Roadmap on Digital Cooperation (A/74/821)*, 2020.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*



source will be a useful starting point for delegates in learning how international actors currently understand issues of digital inclusion.

United Nations Statistics Division. (2021). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*. Retrieved 24 July 2021 from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2021.pdf>

The report reviews the current progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets, especially with consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Report emphasizes, under its relevant DSGs, that digital technologies have to be properly monitored and regulated in order to fully realize the SDGs. This Report's discussion on how the digital economy has changed the trend and direction of achieving the SDGs will assist delegates in creating policies that will accurately reflect the current global landscape.

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2. Social Policy to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Recovery Post COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

The mandate of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is to "[i]dentify emerging issues affecting social development that require urgent consideration and make substantive recommendations thereon".¹⁵¹ The COVID-19 pandemic became an unprecedented threat to the socioeconomic well-being worldwide and it is the first disease-based challenge of this scale that the United Nations (UN) has faced.¹⁵² As a result, the post-pandemic recovery currently has to models to follow.¹⁵³ Social Policy is defined as public interventions that aim to guarantee adequate and secure livelihoods, income, and well-being, which enable all individuals to strive for their own life goals.¹⁵⁴ The concept of sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the current generation and does not undermine the ability to meet the needs of future generations."¹⁵⁵ Sustainable development has become the guiding principle of the international agenda.¹⁵⁶ Thus, sustainable recovery, in terms of social policy, is the process of restoring access to education, work, health, and wellbeing, leaving no one behind, while also preserving resources for future generations.¹⁵⁷ Though Member States have not yet developed a single unifying effective social policy that would promote inclusive and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery, the pursuit of sustainable social policy for recovery is still necessary and a high-priority for Member States.¹⁵⁸

The UN and CSocD have used the expertise at their disposal to take effective measures to mitigate the consequences of smaller-scale epidemics.¹⁵⁹ One measure is to analyze the most effective new methods of developing social policy in present challenging circumstances used by the UN Member States.¹⁶⁰ The COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to presenting an immediate threat to human health and life, is causing complex damage to most processes of the economy, seriously affecting the life of every person.¹⁶¹ First, quarantines and other measures introduced to counter the spread of the disease have had a negative impact on the economy of all countries.¹⁶² Consequently, it has significantly damaged the social sphere, which depends on the economic well-being of citizens and states.¹⁶³ Second, indirect factors caused by the pandemic, such as prolonged stress and a sense of uncertainty, have led to an aggravation of existing health problems, a decrease in the level of satisfaction with living standards, and an increase in the abuse of alcohol and other psychoactive substances.¹⁶⁴

Social development includes a wide range of issues, spanning from poverty eradication to social integration of people with disabilities.¹⁶⁵ Before 2020, there were many obstacles to successfully addressing these issues, including in achieving the goals set by General Assembly resolution 70/1 *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in 2015¹⁶⁶. However, recovering

¹⁵¹ UN CSocD, *Mandate and Terms of Reference*, 2021.

¹⁵² UN CCSA, *How Covid-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective - Volume III*, 2021.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ UNRISD, *Social Policy and Development*, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁵⁶ UN Academic Impact, *Sustainability*, 2021.

¹⁵⁷ UNRISD, *Alternative Economies for Transformation*, 2021.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ UN CSocD, *Social Policy and Development Division*, 2021.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ UN DESA, *COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together*, 2021.

¹⁶² OECD, *The Territorial Impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government*, 2020.

¹⁶³ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

¹⁶⁴ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

¹⁶⁵ UN DESA, *Key Issues, Social Development*, 2021.

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

from the COVID-19 pandemic has become the greatest new challenge facing the international community.¹⁶⁷ Achieving the 2030 Agenda post-COVID 19 remains paramount, as is ensuring the rights of everyone, including the most vulnerable and those most affected by measures of social isolation.¹⁶⁸

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) has set the standard for the development of policies that prioritize citizen-led approach, which calls on Member States to meet the essential needs of their people.¹⁶⁹ Along with the UDHR, the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) of 1976, clarified the details related to the three segments of human civil and political rights which are economic, social and cultural, and solidarity rights.¹⁷⁰ In addition, the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development* (1995) is of great importance in regulating the work of the Commission.¹⁷¹ This document contains several obligations that the signatories of the declaration have committed to fulfill.¹⁷² For example, it states that economic development, social development, and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.¹⁷³ Although social development is important for every country, it is impossible to achieve success in this area without a collective commitment to achieving related goal and the political will of the international community.¹⁷⁴

The 2030 Agenda has been the primary guiding framework in the UN's activities since 2015, and CSocD is closely linked to one of the most important aspects of the *2030 Agenda*, as about 1.3 billion people face multidimensional poverty, and 3 billion live without decent work.¹⁷⁵ The main framework was established by the General Assembly resolution 70/1, titled, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which was adopted in 2015, as well as the follow-up and review through General Assembly resolution 70/299, titled, *Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level*, which was adopted in 2016.¹⁷⁶ The work in terms of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) should also be noted.¹⁷⁷ The HLPF, established by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) named *The Future We Want* (2012), is the central platform of the UN for the follow-up and review of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), which coordinates the efforts of the Member States and the UN system towards achieving the SDGs.¹⁷⁸ It is also important to note that on 25 June 2021, the General Assembly passed resolution 75/290 titled *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*, which determined to review the work of the HLPF at its upcoming session in order to use the lessons learned from previous cycles of the work of the Forum.¹⁷⁹

The key documents that secure the rights of these people at an international level are the *Copenhagen Declaration* and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006).¹⁸⁰ This agenda is also

¹⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948.

¹⁷⁰ *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*, 1976.

¹⁷¹ World Summit for Social Development, *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*, 1995.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ UN Academic Impact, *Sustainability*, 2021.

¹⁷⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Temporary Social Commission*, 1946.

¹⁷⁵ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-seventh session*, 2019.

¹⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the Global Level*, 2016.

¹⁷⁷ UN, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20*, 2021.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/75/290)*, 2021.

¹⁸⁰ World Summit for Social Development, *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*, 1995.; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

covered in the *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (2002).¹⁸¹ These documents emphasized the special nature of the needs of people with disabilities, as well as the importance of ensuring them equal opportunities to other members of society. An important and challenging aspect of social policy development is that one of the most numerous minorities in the world, which includes every tenth inhabitant of the planet, are disabled people, who are too often forced to live in conditions of poverty, unemployment, and social isolation.¹⁸² In addition, in all countries, elderly populations may be particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, poverty, and marginalization.¹⁸³ Everyone has an equal right to decent living and working conditions, but vulnerable populations such as these require specific and strategic support to fully enjoy these rights.¹⁸⁴

Role of the International System

In the UN system, CSocD is a subsidiary body to ECOSOC.¹⁸⁵ ECOSOC is the principal UN body that is primarily responsible for the follow-up to all major international conferences related to the three main areas of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental development. As a hub for knowledge sharing and mutual learning, it has played an important role in analyzing the experience that was first introduced by the *Millennium Development Goals* (2000), the SDG's predecessor.¹⁸⁶ Currently, it considers the ongoing post-2015 agenda, reviewing implementation issues, exploring the scope of a renewed global partnership, and inviting young people to share their views on their future.¹⁸⁷

Within its structure, with the advice of CSocD, ECOSOC dictates the Operational Activities for the Development Segment.¹⁸⁸ It meets annually and acts under General Assembly resolution 72/305, titled, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*.¹⁸⁹ The purpose is to serve as a key platform for Member States and other stakeholders to review progress in the implementation of the mandates contained in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), which also oversees the implementation of the resolution on the restructuring of the United Nations development system.¹⁹⁰ The UN calls on Member States to conduct regular and comprehensive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels, which are conducted under the leadership and on the initiative of the Member States themselves, and a significant number of Member States do support and participate in this voluntary transparency initiative.¹⁹¹

Another UN institution that actively contributes to the social policy development is the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), launched in 2007, which reviews the latest trends and progress in international development cooperation and encourages coordination between various actors and activities.¹⁹² Since 2008, the DCF has been convened on a biennial basis by the decision of ECOSOC.¹⁹³ The DCF brings together a wide range of actors of various statuses: ministers and senior experts from developing and developed countries, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, international organizations and development banks, local authorities, charitable foundations, and the private sector.¹⁹⁴ Along with the bodies consisting of representatives of the UN Member States, the activities of such a secretariat body as United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are also significant.¹⁹⁵ The main objective of UNCTAD is to develop policies related to all aspects of development,

¹⁸¹ Second World Assembly on Ageing, *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*, 2002.

¹⁸² UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2007.

¹⁸³ UN DESA, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*, 2020.

¹⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2007.

¹⁸⁵ UN DESA, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ UN ECOSOC, *World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015: MDG Lessons for Post-2015*, 2015.

¹⁸⁸ UN DESA, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ UN DESA, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹⁹¹ UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Voluntary National Reviews*, 2021.

¹⁹² UN ECOSOC, *Official Launch of the Development Cooperation Forum*, 2007.

¹⁹³ UN DCF, *Development Cooperation Forum: Outcomes*, 2018.

¹⁹⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Development Cooperation Forum*, 2021.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology.¹⁹⁶ Another actor to be mentioned is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), established in 1960.¹⁹⁷ The OECD carries out extensive analytical work, develops recommendations for member countries and serves as a platform for organizing multilateral negotiations on economic problems.¹⁹⁸ A significant part of the OECD's activities is related to countering money laundering, tax evasion, corruption, and bribery, and its social impacts.¹⁹⁹

Achieving the 2030 Agenda Post-COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic served as an unprecedented signal for action, exposing the high degree of inequality in the world, and highlighting the problems that formed the need for the *2030 Agenda* initially.²⁰⁰ The spread of the COVID-19 virus and the associated economic problems have negatively affected the indicators of sustainable development throughout the list of SDGs.²⁰¹ Many of the previous achievements in reducing poverty, eliminating hunger, providing health care, and improving well-being may be reversed, unless the world community takes the same decisive actions to achieve the SDGs that are currently being taken to counter the spread of COVID-19 infection.²⁰² In addition, any decrease in the achievement in the goals of the *2030 Agenda* could lead to an even greater negative impact of the COVID-19 spread.²⁰³ For example, as stated in the report of the *UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (2021)*, weak progress in the implementation of the SDGs, along with a high degree of concentration of economic activity, overpopulation and urbanization, led to the fact that the initial impact of the pandemic in the Asia-Pacific region was as significant as it was.²⁰⁴

The current COVID-19 crisis makes it difficult to revise traditional social norms or implement the usual political programs to take decisive steps that will help return the international community to the trajectory of achieving the SDGs.²⁰⁵ Significant progress in achieving SDGs is vital for the implementation of such recovery programs that will create more 'green' and inclusive economies that are more resilient to the challenges of development of public relations.²⁰⁶ It is the large-scale nature of investment programs in 'green' technologies that may be the least expensive way to both revive the economies affected by the virus, and to make significant progress in the fight against climate change.²⁰⁷ Recent research claims that 'green' projects, in comparison with traditional support options, create more jobs, as well as bring more profit and reduce more costs in the short- and long-term.²⁰⁸

Sustainable social development cannot guarantee the satisfaction of basic needs without a reliable economic basis.²⁰⁹ Thus, the Commission's field of activity is not intended to help UN Member States directly achieve the social development targets established before the pandemic, but rather to respond to the current crises and rebuilding previous processes on a new sustainable foundation.²¹⁰ Essentially, to create 'clean' physical infrastructure, improving the energy efficiency of buildings, investing in education and vocational training, investing in natural capital, and conducting research in the field of 'clean'

¹⁹⁶ UNCTAD, *About UNCTAD*, 2021.

¹⁹⁷ OECD, *Who we are*, 2021.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ UN ECOSOC, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, 2020.

²⁰¹ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ UN ECOSOC, *Social policy to promote a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery: building back better post-COVID-19 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*, 2020.

²⁰⁴ UN CCSA, *How Covid-19 is Changing the World: a Statistical Perspective - Volume III*, 2021.

²⁰⁵ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

²⁰⁶ Oxford Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, *Will COVID-19 Fiscal Recovery Packages Accelerate or Retard Progress on Climate Change*, 2020.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

²¹⁰ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

technologies, building the world back greener than it was prior to COVID-19.²¹¹ In other words, never before has the achievement of SDGs 1-3, 5, and 6 been so clearly dependent on achieving success under the targets of SDGs 12-15.²¹²

Although the UN has not completed all of the tasks established under the Decade of Action that began in 2021, the activities of such advisory bodies as CSocD, even in the context of a pandemic, are not limited to raising awareness of the SDGs among Member States.²¹³ Numerous examples confirm that governments and international organizations are already taking into account various aspects of sustainable development in their economic recovery assistance programs, and the corresponding measures are not only supported by businesses and the population, but also prove to be cost-effective in the long term.²¹⁴ Thus, the Commission is also focusing on preparing comprehensive proposals for ECOSOC that can accelerate the development of effective targeted measures to achieve the designated goals.²¹⁵

Ensuring the rights of Persons with Disabilities and other social groups most affected by measures of social isolation

One of the key tenants of the SDGs is the principle to “leave no one behind.”²¹⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic affects all segments of the population and causes damage to representatives of those social groups that are in the most vulnerable situation, including people living in poverty, the elderly, the disabled, youth, and indigenous peoples.²¹⁷ In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the inequality faced by over a billion people with disabilities in the world.²¹⁸

Before proceeding directly with the ways of addressing this disparity, it should be noted that people with disabilities are indeed a socially marginalized group, but do not represent a small portion of the population.²¹⁹ It is estimated that 46% of older people aged 60 years and older are disabled.²²⁰ Every fifth woman is likely to face a disability in her life, and every tenth child has a disability.²²¹ Thus, paying attention to the needs of this population group is a human rights duty.²²² Even under normal circumstances, people with disabilities are less likely to be equal members of their communities, with less access to education, health care, and income-generating opportunities.²²³ The proportion of COVID-19-related deaths in nursing homes, where elderly people with disabilities are overrepresented, ranges from 19% to 72%.²²⁴ Since one of the most important goals of the UN is to achieve maximum inclusiveness of the organization's programs and initiatives, the Commission cannot ignore the needs of this population group.²²⁵

²¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, 2020.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ UN, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Voluntary National Reviews*, 2021; UN DESA, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019*, 2019; UN DESA, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, 2020.

²¹⁵ UN CSocD, *Mandate and Terms of Reference*, 2021.

²¹⁶ UN Academic Impact, *Sustainability*, 2021.

²¹⁷ UN DESA, *COVID-19 Outbreak and Persons with Disabilities*, 2020.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ UN DESA, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*, 2020.

²²⁰ UN DESA, *Ageing and disability*, 2021.

²²¹ WHO, *World Report on Disability*, 2011.

²²² UN DESA, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*, 2020.

²²³ UN DESA, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*, 2020.

²²⁴ UN DESA, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*, 2020.

²²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Social Policy to Promote a More Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Recovery: Building Back Better Post-COVID-19 for the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the Context of the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development (E/CN.5/2021/4)*, 2020.

A key to success in the struggle for decent care for people with disabilities lies in understanding their needs, and understanding that disabled people are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.²²⁶ They may face obstacles to implementing basic protective measures, such as hand washing and maintaining physical distance, for several reasons: lack of access to water, poor sanitation and hygiene, and dependence on physical contact for support, among other requirements.²²⁷ They are also likely to have higher health requirements and lower health indicators.²²⁸ For example, they are more susceptible to secondary diseases and concomitant diseases, such as lung problems, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, which can worsen the outcome of COVID-19 infections.²²⁹

CSocD placed a special emphasis on this issue in 2019 during its 57th Session.²³⁰ It recognizes the ensuring of the rights of persons with disabilities as priority agenda item and encouraged a wide range of actors including non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors to participate as actively as possible in order to ensure that persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups, are appropriately included under the SDG framework and in post-COVID-19 recovery.²³¹

Conclusion

It cannot be said that the COVID-19 pandemic has caught the world community completely at a loss.²³² While the pandemic did negatively impact progress in achieving the SDGs, it also presents significant opportunities to build back greener and consider marginalized communities in inclusive community rebuilding.²³³ CSocD is called upon to provide social support as the world recovers from the pandemic and aims for 2030.²³⁴ This rebuilding process may be challenging, as the SDGs goal to leave no one behind, to offer a vision of what the social policy of the third decade of the 21st century should be, and how it should be carried out.²³⁵ The UN and CSocD in particular reaffirm that the SDGs should become the supporting structure of a new post-COVID-19 economy that corresponds to the economic goals of sustainable development, does not contradict environmental goals, and contributes to the achievement of social goals.²³⁶

Further Research

In beginning their research, delegates should ask questions such as: How can the successful implementation of social development policies help mitigate the impact of recovering from COVID-19? Does our current understanding and approach to social policy still stand in a post-COVID-19 society? If not, how can the existing framework be updated or evolved to meet the new needs of the international community? How can CSocD and like-minded UN partners work together to make sure that vulnerable and marginalized populations are adequately represented in these new social policies? What other opportunities does “building back greener and better” after COVID-19 offer CSocD and the international community?

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²²⁶ UN DESA, *COVID-19 Outbreak and Persons with Disabilities*, 2020.

²²⁷ UN DESA, *COVID-19 Outbreak and Persons with Disabilities*, 2020.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-seventh session*, 2019.

²³¹ UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-seventh session*, 2019.

²³² UN ECOSOC, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, 2020.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ UNDP, *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*, 2020.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

This source serves as a summary of the mandate and history of the Commission for Social Development. This section of the UN website will help delegates to get an idea of the goals and objectives of the Commission, to trace the path of its transformation, understand its role among other bodies and special agencies of the UN Family system, and learn the current agenda priorities. In addition to the final documents of the Commission's sessions, you can also find working papers containing an important information that can deepen the understanding of the procedural side of the Commission's work. That is a helpful resource for delegates to better understand how CSocD operates.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2020). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*. Retrieved 2 August 2021 from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/#>

This resource, the Report on the Sustainable Development Goals for 2020, brings together data on current progress towards the goals, and demonstrates that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, progress was uneven, and the pace of progress was insufficient to achieve the SDGs by 2030 on a number of targets. In addition to the generalized data on each SDG, an analysis of the situation is also provided, which will be useful for delegates to develop their own proposals on the agenda.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2021). *COVID-19 Outbreak and Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved 2 August 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/covid-19.html>

This section of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs website is the root folder for materials dedicated to the activities of the United Nations in relation to persons with disabilities. Delegates can deepen their knowledge of the network of UN agencies and bodies involved in solving the problem. In addition, delegates can understand the history of how this issue was addressed in the UN system, and future areas for progress.

United Nations, Development Programme. (2020). *Putting the UN Frameworks for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights*. Retrieved 28 July 2021 from: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/covid19/Brief2-COVID-19-final-June2020.pdf>

This document is devoted to a comprehensive review of the UN's socio-economic response to COVID-19, as the international community aimed to counter the spread and combat the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. This resource includes analytical briefing information, a large quantity of relevant statistical data, and assessments by the experts regarding the expected forecasts on future progress. This source will be useful to delegates aiming to understand the full situation of progress left to be made, and obstacles remaining to achieving global socio-economic advancement.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2020). *Social policy to promote a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery: building back better post-COVID-19 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development (E/CN.5/2021/4)*. Retrieved 22 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.5/2021/4>

This resolution has been prepared by the UN Secretariat for CSocD and includes extensive background on the measures that have been already implemented by the UN. The resolution contains an analysis of the social impact of the COVID-19 in areas such as poverty, employment, decent work, inequality, and social exclusion, as well as an analysis of vulnerable populations' experience under COVID-19, including women, older persons, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and migrant workers. Delegates will find this resource a useful source of relevant background information on this important topic.

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