



New York City, NY, USA
3-7 April (Conf. A) / 10-14 April (Conf. B)



United Nations Development Program Background Guide 2022

Written by: Ashlee Ann Rolheiser and Kimberly Sánchez, Directors,
with contributions by Adam Wolf and Joli McSherry



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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 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This year's staff are: Directors Ashlee Ann Rolheiser (Conference A) and Kimberly Sanchez (Conference B). Ashlee has a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and has recently graduated with a Master's in International Affairs and Diplomacy. She is the Director of Operations for a grassroots nonprofit organization in Edmonton, Canada. Kimberly completed her BS in Linguistics focusing on translation and interpretation from the University of San Carlos de Guatemala. She is currently working for a transnational corporation.

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

1. Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19
2. Monitoring Inclusive Sustainable Development in the Anthropocene

As one of the United Nations' operational programs, UNDP is directly involved on the ground in over 170 countries, 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. With a focus on sustainable development, UNDP helps countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities, and build resilience. Currently, UNDP is focused on three broad development contexts for its Strategic Plan (2018-2021): eradicate poverty in all forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformations, and build resilience to shocks and crises. To accurately stimulate the committee, it will be critical for delegates to understand UNDP's role in coordinating and funding development initiatives around the world.

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 Under-Secretaries-General for the Development (GA) Department, Vincent Carrier (Conference A) and Martin Schunk (Conference B), at usg.dev@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A
Ashlee Rolheiser, Director

Conference B
Kimberly Sanchez, Director

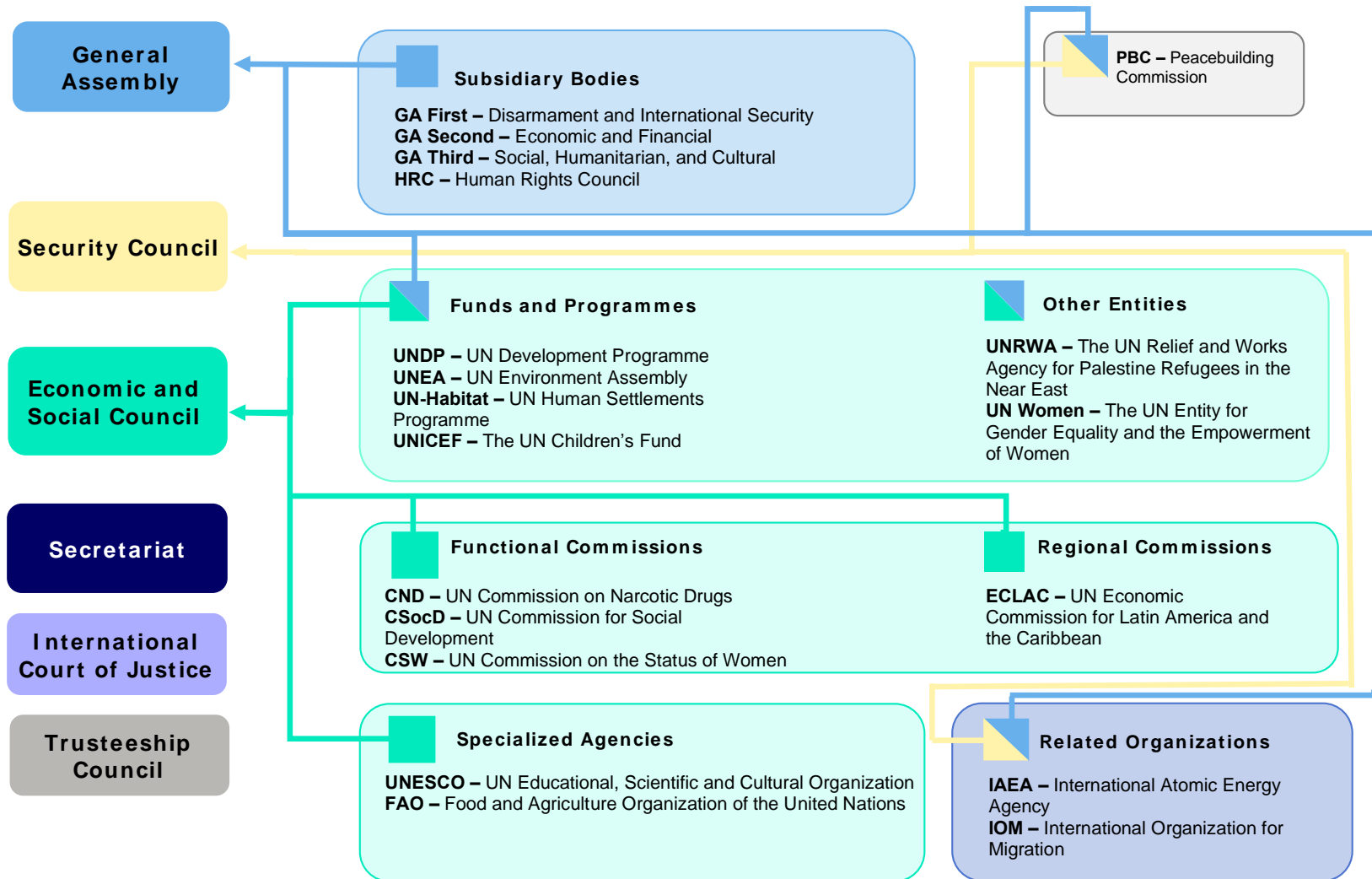


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

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, UNDP assists Member States with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).⁴ At NMUN•NY 2022, 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 2022, and corresponding with the education 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 is comprised of an Administrator and an Executive Board.⁵ The current Administrator of UNDP is Achim Steiner, who was recently re-appointed by the Secretary-General to serve for a second four-year term.⁶ The Administrator leads a team of five Regional Bureaus and provides support to other Bureaus, such as the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and the Crisis Bureau, to carry out UNDP’s programs.⁷

The Executive Board oversees all of UNDP’s projects, approves budgets and ensures that projects adapt to changing situations and the unique needs of each Member State, while following policy guidance provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁸ The Executive Board consists of 36 rotating Member States 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.⁹ Generally, Member States of the Executive Board are elected by ECOSOC each year for three-year terms.¹⁰ Only the group of Western European and other states decides on its rotation internally.¹¹

¹ UNDP, *About us: Our mission, our goals, our mandate*, 2021; *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 UNDP, *The SDGs in Action*, 2021; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁵ UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP*, 2020.

⁶ UNDP, *General Assembly confirms new four-year term for Achim Steiner as UNDP Administrator*, 2021.

⁷ UNDP, *Leadership*, 2021.

⁸ UNDP, *Executive Board*, 2021.

⁹ UNDP, *Members of the Executive Board*, 2021.

¹⁰ UNDP, *Executive Board*, 2021.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

The Executive Board holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.¹² The Executive Board is under the authority of ECOSOC and reports annually on its program of work and recommendations for field-level improvement.¹³ In addition, the Executive Board serves as the governing body of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).¹⁴

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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ The Presidency for 2021 is held by Her Excellency, Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN.¹⁷ The Vice-Presidents for 2021 are from The Netherlands, The Gambia, and Bangladesh.¹⁸

To achieve its mandate, UNDP relies completely on voluntary contributions from Member States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other sources.¹⁹ In 2019, the total annual contributions to UNDP decreased to \$4.8 billion from \$5.2 billion the year before.²⁰ From 2018 to 2020, UNDP spent \$16.09 billion on development outcomes and \$13.53 billion on signature solutions.²¹ In addition, as the technical lead for the socio-economic response, UNDP reallocated almost \$1 billion to face the COVID-19 crisis.²² Such response has been built under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs), and it includes measures to assist government and health systems to operate, prevent job losses and protect livelihoods.²³

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2029 (XX) on “Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Program of the Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme” of 22 November 1965, UNDP retained the “principles, procedures and provisions” of the EPTA and the UN Special Fund following their unification.²⁴ Having broadened in scope, UNDP’s present mandate is to “end poverty, build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions” through sustainable development.²⁵ UNDP’s work is focused on three areas: “sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building, and climate and disaster resilience”.²⁶ Moreover, as an assistance program, UNDP is intended to help and complement government efforts of developing Member States to

¹² UNDP, *Reports on Sessions*, 2021.

¹³ UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP*, 2021.

¹⁴ UNFPA, *Executive Board*, 2021.

¹⁵ UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP*, 2021.

¹⁶ UNDP, *The Bureau*, 2021.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Report of the first regular session 2021 (1 to 4 February 2021, New York (DP/2021/12)*, 2021, p. 2.

¹⁹ UNDP, *Funding: Overview*, 2021.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Development Programme Financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors (A/75/5/Add.1)*, 2020, p. 19.

²¹ UNDP, *Evaluation of UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, 2021, p. 8.

²² UNDP, *Annual Report*, 2020.

²³ UNDP, *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*, 2021, p. 5; UNDP, *Covid-19 Socio-Economic Impact*, 2021.

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 UNDP, *About us: Our mission, our goals, our mandate*, 2021.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

resolve their main issues related to development.²⁷ Regardless of UNDP's assistance, national governments still retain primary responsibility for development within their Member State.²⁸

UNDP's work is carried out by its offices in different Member States, which are focused on helping governments develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities.²⁹ UNDP also administers and utilizes the UN Volunteers program and the UN Capital Development Fund.³⁰ Likewise, partnerships are crucial to the work of UNDP to finance its various activities and implement projects around the world.³¹ UNDP also works with prominent individuals as Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates to raise awareness on important issues in global development.³²

As the leading UN development agency, a core function of UNDP's role is assisting Member States in achieving the SDGs.³³ Through its Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNDP plans to continue delivering integrated development solutions according to Member States' priorities.³⁴ The Strategic Plan has been structured around three directions of change including: structural transformation, leaving no one behind, and building resilience.³⁵ Additionally, it contains six signature solutions that UNDP will be working on, such as poverty and inequality, gender equality, energy, environment, resilience, and governance.³⁶ Furthermore, enablers like digitalization, strategic innovation, and development financing are part of this Strategic Plan to maximize development impact.³⁷ UNDP believes that this plan represents a guide for governments working to advance the 2030 Agenda.³⁸

UNDP's assistance to Member States is also guided by the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), previously known as the United Nations Development Group.³⁹ At a global level, the UNSDG operates as a high-level inter-agency forum for the UN development system and comprises all UN entities whose work relates to the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁰ Under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, the UNSDG supports, oversees, and coordinates development activities.⁴¹ Moreover, UNSDG's strategic approaches are related to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and global development.⁴²

The QCPR is the method through which the General Assembly evaluates UN development system and delivers a coherent, effective, and efficient support to Member States seeking to achieve sustainable development.⁴³ The General Assembly adopted resolution 75/233 (2020) on the "Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system."⁴⁴ This resolution provides guidance to the UN development system for 2021-2024, and establishes

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ UNDP, *The SDGs in Action*, 2021.

²⁹ UNDP, *About us: Our mission, our goals, our mandate*, 2021.

³⁰ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2021, p. 251.

³¹ UNDP, *Our partners: Overview*, 2021.

³² UNDP, *Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates*, 2021.

³³ UNDP, *About us: Our mission, our goals, our mandate*, 2021.

³⁴ UNDP, *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*, 2021, p. 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁹ UN CEB, *United Nations Development Group (UNDG)*; UNDP, *UNDP And The UN*, 2021.

⁴⁰ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2021, p. 249; UNSDG, *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*, 2021.

⁴¹ UNSDG, *Our Impact in Coordination*, 2021; UNSDG, *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*, 2021.

⁴² UNSDG, *Our Key Functions*, 2021.

⁴³ UNSDG, *Our Key Functions*, 2021; ECOSOC, *Guiding Operational Activities for Development*, 2021.

⁴⁴ ECOSOC, 2020 QCPR; UN, *Information on 2020 QCPR*; UN General Assembly, *Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/75/233)*, 2020.

measures to assist governments implementing the 2030 Agenda and respond to COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁵ Additionally, this resolution builds on the recent UN development system reform work created by General Assembly resolution 72/279 “Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive review of operation activities for development of the United Nations System.”⁴⁶

General Assembly resolution 72/279 (2018) outlines a reform process to better align UN development system activities with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.⁴⁷ This resolution includes delinking the UN RC system from the UNDP, as the RCs coordinate development activities of all UN organizations at a national level, and is focused towards the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁸ Also, this reform process establishes that the UN Development Coordination Office, which is the Secretariat of the UNSDG that assist the UN develop system to implement the QCPR, will support the RCs and UN Country Teams (UNCT).⁴⁹ Under the leadership of the UN RC, who is the representative of the Secretary-General in an assigned Member State, the UNCT main objective is to deliver tangible results consistent with the development agenda at the national level.⁵⁰ Most of the collective implementation of the reform is conducted jointly by the UNSDG, the Development Coordination Office and its Transition Team, and they have played a key role in the successful shift to RCs.⁵¹

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.⁵² UNDP’s Executive Board met in June 2021 for its annual session, in which efforts made by UNDP implementing the UN framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19 were recognized.⁵³ In 2020, UNDP offered a response with an integrated “Prepare, Respond, Recover” approach to face the COVID-19 crisis.⁵⁴ This response was designed to cover 139 Member States, focusing on health systems support, multi-sectoral crisis management, and socioeconomic impact assessment and response.⁵⁵ Foreseeing challenges due to the emergency, and UNDP proposed a second response to continue confronting the COVID-19 crisis, that is, Beyond 2030: Towards 2030.⁵⁶ This second response sets a pathway further recovery and towards 2030, it focuses on four specific areas.⁵⁷ Beyond recovery: Towards 2030 was designed to help decision makers to come to

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/75/233)*, 2020; IISD, *Governments Adopt Four-Year Guidance to UN Development System*, 2021.

⁴⁶ ECOSOC, *Guiding Operational Activities for Development*, 2021; UN General Assembly, *Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/72/279)*, 2018.

⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, *Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/72/279)*, 2018.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/72/279)*, 2018, pp. 2-3; UNSDG, *Our Key Functions*, 2021.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ UNSDG, *Our Key Functions*, 2021; IISD, *Governments Adopt Four-Year Guidance to UN Development System*, 2021.

⁵¹ UNFPA, *Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 72/279 on Repositioning of the UN Development System*, 2021, p. 1.

⁵² UNDP, *Sustainable Development Goals*, 2021.

⁵³ Executive Board of UNDP et al., *Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 2021 (DP/2021/27)*, 2021, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Executive Board of UNDP et al., *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*, 2021, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁶ Executive Board of UNDP et al., *Report of the first regular session 2021 (1 to 4 February 2021, New York)*, 2021, p. 5.

⁵⁷ UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, 2020, p. 6.

decisions and manages challenges during uncertain times by determining their priorities specifically in these integrated areas: governance, social protection, green economy, and digital disruption.⁵⁸

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a disruption in attaining the targets of the SDGs, exposing many already existing crises within world's communities, for instance, it has pushed back more than 120 million people into poverty.⁵⁹ As the UN's technical lead on the socio-economic response to COVID-19, UNDP has been requested by the Executive Board to provide an update on its work towards implementing such response.⁶⁰ UNDP has been working under the leadership of RCs, and in collaboration with stakeholders and other development partners to pursue the second response.⁶¹ In fact, UNDP and the broader UN system carried out more than 130 socio-economic impact assessments in 97 Member States, often with the assistance of the International Financial Institutions, the European Union, and other partners.⁶² In addition, more than 50 UNDP Country Offices have offered their support to COVID-19 vaccination efforts lead by national governments, World Health Organization, and UN International Children's Emergency Fund.⁶³ Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need to accelerate systems transformation to a more inclusive, accountable and sustainable models through innovation, digitalization, and financing for development.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The UNDP Executive Board's position at the helm of three organizations: UNDP, UNFPA, and UNOPS, as well as its cooperative function with UNSDG, uniquely situates it to further development on all levels.⁶⁵ UNDP's work covers a wide range of working areas including poverty reduction, crisis prevention, democratic governance, environmental protection, and human rights.⁶⁶ Furthermore, as the leading UN development agency, UNDP has designed a Strategic Plan 2022-2025 to continue helping Member States in achieving the SDGs.⁶⁷ Even though the development landscape has been negatively affected due to COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has been working bilaterally and multilaterally, implementing responses to mitigate the impact of the crisis and accelerate results towards 2030 Agenda.⁶⁸ Notwithstanding UNDP's successes, a holistic approach, flexible management, and financial models to resource the systemic transformation are needed for development solutions.⁶⁹

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This document offers information on the new UNDP's Strategic Plan (2022-2025). It sets the pathway for the future direction of UNDP's work. It also contains information on the previous strategic plan and what lessons should be learned from it to achieve better results. This document will give delegates a good insight into the work that UNDP plans on accomplishing for the next four years. This four-year plan details out UNDP's specific

⁵⁸ Executive Board of UNDP et al., *Report of the first regular session 2021(1 to 4 February 2021, New York)*, 2021, p. 5; UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, 2020, p. 6.

⁵⁹ UNDP, *COVID-19 and the SDGs*; UN Secretary-General, *Our Common Agenda*, 2021, p. 12; Fleming, COVID-19 is threatening the SDGs – here's what needs to happen, *World Economic Forum*, 2021.

⁶⁰ UNDP, *Update on UNDP's Socio-economic Response*, 2021, p. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ UNFPA, *Executive Board*, 2021.

⁶⁶ UNDP, *About us: Our mission, our goals, our mandate*, 2021.

⁶⁷ UNDP, *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*, 2021, pp. 7-9.

⁶⁸ UNDP, *COVID-19 and the SDGs*; UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, 2020; UN Secretary-General, *Our Common Agenda*, 2021, p. 12

⁶⁹ UNDP, *Update on UNDP's Socio-economic Response*, 2021, p. 6.

priorities, strategies, and work methods, offering up the challenges which UNDP will face. It specifically explains the approach UNDP must take to help Member States achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*. Retrieved 18 September 2021 from: <https://www.undp.org/publications/beyond-recovery-towards-2030>

This document contains the forward-looking response to COVID-19 proposed by UNDP. It encompasses the technical lead role of UNDP on the socio-economic framework of the UN. It was designed to help decision makers to reach decisions looking towards 2030 and beyond recovery. Moreover, it plans to assist Member States through setting priorities in four specific and integrated areas. Delegates will familiarize themselves with the measures proposed throughout this response for governments to overcome the crisis and the results that can be achieved by implementing the response in a successful way.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. Retrieved 18 September 2021 from:

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2021-09/UNDP-Strategic-Plan-2022-2025.pdf>

This document presents the new Strategic Plan of UNDP, which will be covering the period from 2022-2025. It is built upon UNDP's ongoing commitment to poverty eradication and helping Member States to achieve SDGs. Furthermore, this source outlines how UNDP will be working with its partners to build the world envisioned by the 2030 agenda, especially in these challenging times. Delegates can use this document to know the work UNDP plans to fulfill during the four next years, as well, they will see what practical steps UNDP will be taking to become a more agile and forward-thinking organization.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *Update on UNDP's Socio-economic Response*.

Retrieved 18 September 2021 from: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/UNDP%20COVID-19%20Socio-Economic%20Response%20-%20EB%20Annual%20session%202021_0.pdf

This document sets out what UNDP is doing to implement its Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030 response. It highlights the last measures applied by UNDP and its partners to address the socioeconomic impact due to the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, it provides examples on what is being done in specific Member States with specific partners. This is a good resource for delegates to be updated about how UNDP is working on implementing this response to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

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1. Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19

Introduction

2020 was supposed to mark the start of the Decade of Action as an ambitious effort to mobilize progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁷⁰ Instead, the last year was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which as of September 2021 has infected over 226,000,000 people, claimed over 4 million lives, and severely impacted the global economy in the process.⁷¹ As a result, the pandemic has exacerbated serious global inequities and unsustainable practices that before the pandemic were already threatening progress toward global development.⁷² The pandemic has proved to be not only a health crisis but also an economic and humanitarian crisis requiring a whole-of-society approach to recovery.⁷³ Initial assessments by the United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) show deep and long-lasting consequences if the international community does not act swiftly and address the human and economic devastation caused by COVID-19.⁷⁴

As the UN's central global development agency responsible for supporting solutions to global development challenges, such as the eradication of poverty and supporting crisis resilience, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the technical lead in the UN's socio-economic COVID-19 recovery response.⁷⁵ A socio-economic response considers how people and societal systems are interdependent, and how all societies share the risks and responsibilities connected to COVID-19.⁷⁶ This interdependence requires a pandemic response that prioritizes sustainability, which addresses current needs and challenges without compromising future generations' ability to develop their own solutions.⁷⁷ A key part of sustainable recovery, especially when considering the socio-economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, requires efforts towards social inclusion, the process of ensuring everyone can get equal opportunities to achieve full potential in life.⁷⁸

There are three pillars of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental.⁷⁹ The challenges stemming from COVID-19 have touched on all three dimensions.⁸⁰ Acute social and economic challenges include a rapid increase in unemployment rates and changing working conditions, as well as slowing supply chains across the globe.⁸¹ Due to shifting policy needs, there has also been a decrease in governmental environmental oversight, leading to data gaps in active environmental monitoring projects as well as a rise in illegal poaching and deforestation.⁸² With a long history of collaborating with both public and private entities, UNDP has developed a broad COVID-19 response that has evolved alongside the pandemic.⁸³ This includes playing a key role in coordinating financial stakeholders providing essential recovery financing for developing countries to sustain their own pandemic response efforts.⁸⁴ As the path towards sustainable development is compromised by the consequences of COVID-19, UNDP is

⁷⁰ UN DGC, *Decade of Action*.

⁷¹ UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19*, 2020, p. 5; WHO, *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*, 2021.

⁷² UNOP, *UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery*, p. 8.

⁷³ UN DGC, *UN Response to COVID-19*, 2021.

⁷⁴ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #78: Achieving the SDGs through the COVID-19 response and recovery*, 2020.

⁷⁵ UNDP, *COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2021; UNDP, *Development Challenges and Solutions*.

⁷⁶ UNOP, *UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery*, 2020, p. 9.

⁷⁷ United Nations Academic Impact, *Sustainability*.

⁷⁸ UN DESA, *Social Inclusion*.

⁷⁹ United Nations Academic Impact, *What Combating COVID-19 Can Teach Us About Tackling The Climate Crisis*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ UNDP, *COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2021.

⁸⁴ Migueles, *Why International Financial Institutions matter for COVID-19 recovery*, UNDP, 2021; UN ESCAP et al., *Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leaving No Country Behind*, 2021, pp. iv, ff.

prioritizing assisting decision-makers in looking towards 2030 and managing uncertainty in governance, social protection, the green economy, and the digital world to recover sustainably from COVID-19.⁸⁵

International and Regional Framework

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which serves as a plan of action for all Member States and stakeholders to act in collaborative partnership toward a more sustainable and resilient future.⁸⁶ The 2030 Agenda outlines 17 SDGs to address challenges across all three pillars of sustainable development.⁸⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic has far reaching effects on achieving the SDGs: UN DESA has determined that all SDGs have been impacted by the novel coronavirus, pandemic control measures, and aggregate economic effects.⁸⁸ However, as the primary benchmark for implementing the 2030 Agenda, the progress towards the SDGs also has the potential to contribute to recovery from COVID-19.⁸⁹

The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015) supplements the 2030 Agenda by providing a global framework for financing sustainable development.⁹⁰ This framework document for sustainable development serves as a commitment among Member States to address the financial challenges for sustainable development.⁹¹ It outlines policy commitments and deliverables in areas, such as infrastructure, social protection, and technology, and it includes cooperative agreements for financing areas where significant investments are necessary.⁹² The Addis Ababa Action Agenda thus provides critical guidelines for sustainable recovery both in immediate COVID-19 relief and long-term sustainable development.⁹³

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), adopted in 2015 as a successor to the *Hyogo Framework for Action* (2005), is the primary framework establishing targets to build disaster resilience, aiming to mitigate loss of lives, livelihoods, and health in disaster situations.⁹⁴ The *Sendai Framework* promotes sustainable development in conjunction with the 2030 Agenda and the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* by providing Member States with concrete goals and action items that ensure that overall development gains are not impeded by the risk of disasters, or as in the case of COVID-19, by the consequences of an ongoing crisis.⁹⁵ The Sendai Framework is further complemented by the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (2016), which aim to strengthen health systems, particularly in the face of a pandemic.⁹⁶

Furthermore, the *Paris Agreement*, adopted in 2015 by the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), is a legally binding agreement to curb global

⁸⁵ UNDP, *COVID-19 and the SDGs*.

⁸⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015, p. 5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁸⁸ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #78: Achieving the SDGs through the COVID-19 response and recovery*, 2020.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ International Institute for Sustainable Development, *UN Leaders: Vulnerable People Should be the Most Protected from COVID-19*, 2020.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015; International Institute for Sustainable Development, *UN Leaders: Vulnerable People Should be the Most Protected from COVID-19*, 2020.

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015.

⁹⁶ International Conference on the Implementation of the Health Aspect of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, *Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2016.

temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial temperature.⁹⁷ The *Paris Agreement* requires States parties to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which have contributed to the ongoing climate crisis.⁹⁸ It further provides States parties with a framework for capacity building, technical support, and financial assistance to build climate strategies into their long-term recovery plans.⁹⁹ As the international community pursues sustainable COVID-19 recovery strategies, it is important to take into consideration the objective of the Paris Agreement, which was emphasized by the High-level Roundtable on Climate Action convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in October 2020.¹⁰⁰

Role of the International System

The entire UN system has mobilized its resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰¹ In 2020, UN Secretary-General released the *UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19*, which outlines three types of responses: a comprehensive health response, a humanitarian and socioeconomic recovery effort, and a transformative recovery process post COVID-19.¹⁰² As the technical lead of the UN's socio-economic response, UNDP has taken a phased approach to its COVID-19 crisis response.¹⁰³ For its first phase, UNDP took on immediate priorities including health systems support, multi-sectoral crisis management, and socio-economic impact assessment and response.¹⁰⁴ In June 2020, UNDP then unveiled the second phase of its response that changes the focus from immediate COVID-19 recovery to helping stakeholders build a long-term recovery in line with the 2030 Agenda.¹⁰⁵ This phase of UNDP's COVID-19 response is outlined in its strategy *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*.¹⁰⁶ In the second phase of its COVID-19 response, UNDP works in close partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), which leads UN's health response, and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which is responsible for the UN's humanitarian response.¹⁰⁷

As a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), UNDP also plays a key role in tracking and assessing these operations which includes supporting to Member States' COVID-19 preparedness and response plans.¹⁰⁸ UNSDG is a group of 12 UN entities responsible for supporting and monitoring the coordination of development operations across the UN Development System and within 162 countries.¹⁰⁹ Through the Resident Coordinator system and UN Country Teams, UNDP contributes to UNSDG's COVID-19 response on the ground.¹¹⁰

International financial institutions (IFIs) are crucial to the COVID-19 recovery by providing recovery financing to developing countries.¹¹¹ The World Bank Group is both developing new projects as well as restructuring existing efforts within their disaster finance system, focusing on four areas: saving lives threatened by the pandemic, protecting the poor and vulnerable, protecting jobs and businesses, and building a more resilient recovery.¹¹² Likewise, civil society organizations (CSOs) contribute to the global COVID-19 response by supporting framework implementation at local, national, and global levels.¹¹³

⁹⁷ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Toward 2030*, 2020, p. 5.

¹⁰² UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19*, 2020, p. 6.

¹⁰³ UNDP, *COVID-19: UNDP's Integrated Response*, 2020, p. 2; UNSDG, *A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19*, 2020, p. 33.

¹⁰⁴ UNDP, *COVID-19: UNDP's Integrated Response*, 2020, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Toward 2030*, 2020, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ UNSDG, *Who We Are*, 2021; UNSDG, *A Coordinated Response to Coronavirus*, 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Migueles, Why International Financial Institutions matter for COVID-19 recovery, *UNDP*, 2021.

¹¹² World Bank Group, *World Bank Group COVID-19 Crisis Response*, 2020.

¹¹³ UN DGC, *CSOs Response to COVID-19*.

CSOs help provide essential services including food, personal protection equipment, sanitary items, and more when local and national governments are unable to handle demand.¹¹⁴ CSOs are also critical for helping at-risk and excluded groups including women, migrants, and other minority groups.¹¹⁵ Similarly, the private sector assists COVID-19 response through collaborative information and resource sharing; for example, UNDP works alongside corporations including Deutsche Post DHL Group, Microsoft Corporation in the COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility, a public-private partnership that shares global expertise on relevant topics such as economic recovery and multi-hazard risk management.¹¹⁶

Incorporating Green Recovery in COVID-19 Response Efforts

COVID-19 has caused the steepest drop in global human development seen since 1990.¹¹⁷ As the pandemic and its consequences exacerbate existing inequalities and global challenges, the international community has an opportunity to reexamine its relationship with the environment by promoting the green economy in its recovery efforts.¹¹⁸ COVID-19 recovery spending allows for a shift in focus to green investments as a means to drive economic growth and job creation in a post-pandemic world.¹¹⁹ This is referred to broadly as “green recovery.”¹²⁰ Green recovery from COVID-19 could cut global carbon emissions by 25 percent by 2030 and have a positive impact on other development aspects, such as food security and public health.¹²¹ The green economy is a central pillar of UNDP’s COVID-19 crisis response, emphasizing the opportunity to incorporate climate-friendly solutions into the social safety net, focusing on pathways such as urban planning, land use, green infrastructure and jobs, and promoting community-based solutions.¹²² Additionally, in its most recent Human Development Report from 2020, UNDP identifies green recovery as key to rebuilding global systems strained by the pandemic and outlines broad development components necessary for developing a structured green recovery program, including carbon-positive investments and advancing climate-related monetary policies.¹²³

UNDP is a member of the Partners for Inclusive Green Economy initiative, which works to build social, economic, and environmental resilience on all policy levels through reforms that mend system vulnerabilities.¹²⁴ The Partners for Inclusive Green Economy is a group of global development agencies working to establish connections between human and environmental health and guides pandemic response toward climate risk resilience.¹²⁵ As part of its response to COVID-19, the initiative developed ten priority options for green recovery, providing opportunity and resilience for all within the planet’s ecological limits.¹²⁶ These priority options include among others financial stimulus packages that accelerate a transition to a green economy, addressing the energy transition and fossil fuel subsidies, and improving global coordination to combat the impacts of COVID-19.¹²⁷

The *Green Economy Principles of Wellbeing, Justice, Sufficiency & Efficiency, Planetary Boundaries, and Good Governance* (Green Economy Principles) by the Partners for Inclusive Green Economy are a set of five key principles guiding green and fair economic reform that is reflective of the SDGs and the 2015

¹¹⁴ Civicus, *Solidarity in the time of COVID-19: Civil society responses to the pandemic*, 2020, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ UNDP, *COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility announced at SDG Business Forum*, 2020.

¹¹⁷ UNEP, *Green Recovery*.

¹¹⁸ UNDP, *Global Institutions unite for a green and fair COVID-19 recovery*, 2020.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ UNEP, *Green Recovery*.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Toward 2030*, 2020, p. 8.

¹²³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2020: The next frontier – Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020, p. 166.

¹²⁴ Partner for Inclusive Green Economies, *COVID-19: Ten Priority Options for a Just, Green & Transformative recovery*, 2020.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Paris Agreement.¹²⁸ The Green Economy Principles are the guiding framework for green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²⁹ The Partners for Inclusive Green Economy also emphasize the importance of national and regional green economy plans, or “Green Deals.”¹³⁰ Green Deals promote green jobs and long-term industrial strategies and can take many forms, including economic stimulus packages, economic rescue policies, and transition planning.¹³¹ For example, the European Commission’s European Green Deal is a collaborative effort among the 27 European Union (EU) Member States to transform the EU into a resource-efficient and competitive economy, while focusing investments on a pathway out of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³²

Leveraging Finance for Sustainable COVID-19 Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has critically impacted sources of external financing for individual Member States’ relief efforts, particularly for developing countries.¹³³ Foreign direct investment is projected to have dropped 40 percent since the onset of the pandemic, and hours of work have fallen by 14 percent during 2020, which is equal to a loss of 400 million full-time jobs.¹³⁴ At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted inequalities in the global financial system, such countries that are overindebted while creditors focus on short-term gains.¹³⁵ Economic setbacks threaten progress towards the SDGs, emphasizing the need for pathways and investments that provide financial support for a sustainable recovery.¹³⁶

In this context, UNDP has partnered with more than 50 governments to establish Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) to bring COVID-19 responses in line with the SDGs.¹³⁷ Since the onset of the pandemic, UNDP has signed \$219 billion worth of agreements with IFIs including the World Bank, African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and the German Development Bank to support COVID-19 response in developing countries.¹³⁸ This financing provides UNDP with the ability to support its government partners in procuring key resources for developing countries, such as healthcare equipment and expertise as well as livelihood support, such as food, water, and education services.¹³⁹ UNDP’s partnership with IFIs also helped guide governments in developing public policy in response to crises.¹⁴⁰ Since 2020, UNDP and UN Country Teams have tripled the number of socio-economic response plans in countries.¹⁴¹ These plans help provide data and analyses to governments to be able to better understand the social and economic impact of COVID-19 in their country.¹⁴²

On a larger scale, IFIs are key to achieving the SDGs as they help meet a \$2.5 trillion annual funding gap.¹⁴³ By mid-2021, multilateral development banks will have provided \$230 billion to pandemic recovery efforts, with \$75 billion from public finance channeled to the world’s poorest countries.¹⁴⁴ UNDP’s coordination with IFIs helps both governments and IFIs identify and develop projects that support green

¹²⁸ Partners for Inclusive Green Economy, *Principles, priorities and pathways for inclusive green economies: Economic transformation to deliver the SDGs*.

¹²⁹ Partner for Inclusive Green Economies, *COVID-19: Ten Priority Options for a Just, Green & Transformative recovery*, 2020.

¹³⁰ Partners for Inclusive Green Economy, *Principles, priorities and pathways for inclusive green economies: Economic transformation to deliver the SDGs*.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² European Commission, *A European Green New Deal*.

¹³³ UN DGC, *Discussion Group I: External Finance and Remittances, Jobs and Inclusive Growth*, 2020.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021*, 2021, p. xiv.

¹³⁶ UNCTAD, *Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond*, 2020, p. 33.

¹³⁷ UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Toward 2030*, 2020, p. 9.

¹³⁸ Migueles, Why International Financial Institutions matter for COVID-19 recovery, *UNDP*, 2021.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

economies.¹⁴⁵ Regional financial institutions, like the African Development Bank, also provide critical support for developing countries to rethink their development policies and prioritize social, economic, and environmental resilience.¹⁴⁶ As part of its support, the African Development Bank is coordinating greater investment in the region's health care services as well providing policy recommendations tailored to each country to help support long-term recovery, such as scaling investments in testing and strategic communication to build public trust, accelerating free trade, and establishing debt forgiveness programs.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a public health crisis: it is a humanitarian, security, human rights, and a socio-economic crisis.¹⁴⁸ It has exacerbated existing inequalities within and between nations and societal systems.¹⁴⁹ As the lead of UN's socio-economic recovery response, UNDP is committed to help decision-makers look beyond immediate recovery and build successful pathways to a resilient and sustainable future.¹⁵⁰ However, the consequences of the pandemic have threatened decades of progress towards sustainable development.¹⁵¹ As the pandemic continues on and its effects evolve from immediate to long-term, UNDP plays a central role in facilitating a sustainable long-term recovery process, including by supporting green recovery mechanisms to ensure a healthy population and planet.¹⁵² UNDP also places a strong focus on coordinating recovery financing across developing countries to ensure an equitable COVID-19 response.¹⁵³ Without a sustainable approach to COVID-19 recovery, progress in human development will likely be reversed.¹⁵⁴

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How is UNDP addressing the technology and resource gap facing developing countries? How can social inclusion be better implemented in UNDP's recovery efforts? How can UNDP tailor its recovery efforts to meet the differing needs of developed and developing countries? What are key elements to a successful financial public-private partnership in COVID-19 recovery? How can public-private partnerships be strengthened to provide effective financial support for various pandemic response strategies?

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United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://www.undp.org/publications/beyond-recovery-towards-2030>

This document introduces the second phase of UNDP's socioeconomic response to COVID-19, emphasizing long-term recovery. It explicitly outlines how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts human development and connects UNDP's mandate to pandemic recovery. It also connects sustainability to recovery by advocating for a forward-looking COVID-19 response. The document's seven tipping points will be useful for delegates to brainstorm different pathways for UNDP to use UN development system to mobilize its mandated socioeconomic response.

¹⁴⁵ Migueles, Why International Financial Institutions matter for COVID-19 recovery, UNDP, 2021.

¹⁴⁶ ADB, *Building back better policies for Building Resilient Economies in Post-COVID-19 Africa*, 2020.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁴⁸ UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19*, 2020, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ UNDP, *COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2021.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² UNDP, *Global Institutions unite for a green and fair COVID-19 recovery*, 2020.

¹⁵³ Migueles, *Why International Financial Institutions matter for COVID-19 recovery*, UNDP, 2021.

¹⁵⁴ UNDP, *COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2021.

United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning Recovery*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/covid-19_and_human_development_0.pdf

This report was published by UNDP at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a comprehensive presentation of the human development crisis that has been brought on by the pandemic. The report puts the gravity and breadth of the pandemic's multidimensional effects into a global context with data and case studies. The report offers broad recommendations for the international community should follow when responding to the pandemic. Delegates will find the report's data and its principles useful when developing solutions within the scope of UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Human Development Report 2020: The next frontier – Human development and the Anthropocene*. Retrieved 19 September 2021 from: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2020.pdf>

The most recent Human Development Report released by UNDP focuses on the pressures that COVID-19 has placed on existing challenges facing human development. It introduces the concept of the Anthropocene into UN terminology as a new age where humans as the dominant force in determining the planet's future. Delegates will find this report useful for its emphasis on critical development trajectories including equity, innovation, and stewardship towards the planet which they can use to brainstorm holistic COVID-19 recovery strategies.

United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, et al. (2021). *Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leaving No Country Behind*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://www.undp.org/publications/responding-covid-19-pandemic-leaving-no-country-behind>

This UNDP report analyzes Asia and the Pacific as a case study for sustainable development in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing how the region was previously off-track to meeting the SDGs by 2030 and how the pandemic's effects have further impacted that trajectory. The report spotlights how vulnerable countries with insufficient resources to handle the pandemic on their own run the risk of being left behind. Delegates can use this case-study as an example of how to structure regional cooperation efforts to close existing development gaps between countries.

United Nations Sustainable Development Group. (2020). *A UN framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>

This is the initial framework set out by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to provide socio-economic support in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework emphasizes connecting health social, economic, and environmental well-being and promoting a sustainable and carbon-neutral trajectory for recovery. While this report is focused on the immediate pandemic response within the UN's capacity, delegates will find this information useful when determining what preexisting mechanisms exist that can be used to develop new and lasting solutions.

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2. Monitoring Inclusive Sustainable Development in the Anthropocene

“...By tackling inequality, capitalizing on innovation and working with nature, human development could take a transformational step forward to support societies and the planet together.”¹⁵⁵

Introduction

Officially, the current period is referred to as the Holocene, which began 11,700 years ago, after the last major ice age.¹⁵⁶ However, many experts have considered the world to now be in the age of the Anthropocene, which is unofficially described as the most recent period in earth’s history when human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet’s climate and ecosystems.¹⁵⁷ While this new age has yielded numerous advancements in human progress, it has also presented immense challenges.¹⁵⁸ In August 2021, the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the first part of its *2021 Sixth Assessment Report*, which demonstrated that the effects of climate change were accelerating.¹⁵⁹ Secretary-General António Guterres issued a “Code Red” for humanity after the report was released.¹⁶⁰ The report also highlights that human activity is influencing the planet and ecosystems in unprecedented ways.¹⁶¹ As these profound changes take hold, entities like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have emphasized that the way human progress and sustainable development are monitored must be altered, in order to achieve desirable change.¹⁶²

Traditionally, the world has measured human development heavily through economic trends.¹⁶³ Indicators, such as gross domestic product, market indexes, and purchasing power, are often used to determine how well-off people are.¹⁶⁴ UNDP is positioned to tackle this issue as one of the main UN entities that assist Member States in developing policies, capacities, and resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁶⁵ Knowing this, UNDP piloted the first Human Development Index (HDI) in 1990, which is a statistical composite of life expectancy, education, and per capita income.¹⁶⁶ Subsequent versions of the HDI have been released since, benchmarking progress.¹⁶⁷ As the international community aims to incorporate more inclusive measures to monitor the progress of sustainable development, UNDP will play a crucial role, as it is the leading international entity for developing capacity for local solutions.¹⁶⁸

While the HDI was considered crucial in expanding how the world views human progress through a measurement that was not exclusively economic driven, it was still considered fairly limited in its scope.¹⁶⁹ Experts within the UN system and within academia have advocated for a more inclusive way to measure human progress, particularly sustainable development, that emphasizes broader social, ecological, and political dimensions.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, the SDGs, which provide another prominent method to development, expire in 2030, which proposes how development should be measured beyond that and how it can be made more inclusive.¹⁷¹

¹⁵⁵ UN DGC, *People, planet on ‘collision course’, warns UN Development Programme*, 2021.

¹⁵⁶ National Geographic Society, *Anthropocene*, 2021.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ UN DGC, *People, planet on ‘collision course’, warns UN Development Programme*, 2021.

¹⁵⁹ UN IPCC, *Sixth Assessment Report*, 2021.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

¹⁶³ Gupta & Vegelin, *Sustainable development goals and inclusive development*, 2016.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Gupta & Vegelin, *Sustainable development goals and inclusive development*, 2016; UNDP, *Human Development Reports*, 2021.

¹⁶⁷ UNDP, *Human Development Reports*, 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Gupta & Vegelin, *Sustainable development goals and inclusive development*, 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

¹⁷¹ UN DESA, *The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, 2019.

The international community is confronted with a pressing challenge to develop frameworks to more holistically measure human progress.¹⁷² Until then, addressing the impacts of inequality, the costs of environmental degradation, and natural wealth will be more challenging, as experts will lack measurements on how vulnerable and underrepresented groups are affected.¹⁷³ Moving forward, it will be important for Member States to outline how the international community can more inclusively measure sustainable development so that humans may better address challenges like climate change, inequality, and sustainability.¹⁷⁴

International and Regional Framework

There are a wide variety of precedents and frameworks that help strengthen inclusive monitoring of disadvantaged groups.¹⁷⁵ The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* is the first major convention that recognizes the universal rights held by persons with disabilities.¹⁷⁶ Disabilities can often lead to societal exclusion, both socially and economically.¹⁷⁷ The convention provides the groundwork to not only streamline legal protections for persons with disabilities, but has helped catalyze inclusive social development that allows them to participate in society.¹⁷⁸ The publication of the 2018 UN Flagship Report on the *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities* further emphasizes that 15% of the world population are persons with disabilities, and that they must be fully integrated into the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, making implementation of the convention crucial in the next decade.¹⁷⁹ This includes better reporting on their needs and progress, in terms of being included in socio-economic development.¹⁸⁰

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) is one of the first major UN initiatives that outlines inherent rights for indigenous peoples.¹⁸¹ This precedent is incredibly important in tying the rights of indigenous peoples to inclusive sustainable development.¹⁸² The rights of the indigenous were further framed in the 2030 Agenda, where they were mentioned specifically in terms of equal access to food, education, and land rights.¹⁸³ Moreover, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has identified several gaps in monitoring the SDGs, in terms of reporting on the progress of indigenous peoples into society, such as the right to self-determination.¹⁸⁴

Inclusive monitoring of human development is also crucial, and the 2030 Agenda is one of the most important frameworks in this regard.¹⁸⁵ It is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity.¹⁸⁶ In terms of people, the SDGs are meant to ensure that all humans can fulfill their potential on a planet that can support the needs of not only the present, but future generations.¹⁸⁷ The 2030 Agenda also seeks to ensure that all people can enjoying fulfilled lives, and that economic, social, and technological process occurs in harmony with nature.¹⁸⁸ There are 17 goals for sustainable development, with 169 associated

¹⁷² UN DESA, *The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, 2019.

¹⁷³ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ World Bank Group, *Disability Inclusion*, 2021.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ UN DESA, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2021.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ UN Foundation, *The Sustainable Development Goals In 2019: People, Planet, Prosperity In Focus*, 2019.

¹⁸⁸ UN Foundation, *The Sustainable Development Goals In 2019: People, Planet, Prosperity In Focus*, 2019.

targets, and 231 unique indicators to measure progress.¹⁸⁹ Goal development was conducted by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which was performed in consultation with numerous experts, government representatives, and members of civil society.¹⁹⁰ The SDGs are monitored through a global reporting structure, where individual Member States record their own progress locally and nationally, which then culminates at the annual UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF).¹⁹¹ There are numerous international precedents and frameworks that determine how the international community can monitoring inclusive sustainable development.¹⁹² In 1992, the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* met to discuss the pressing need to harmonize economic development with environmental sustainability.¹⁹³ The conference adopted the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, which was one of the first major frameworks addressing climate change.¹⁹⁴ The declaration laid out 27 nonbinding principles to preserve wildlife and the ecosystem, such as the expectation that Member States will pass robust environmental legislation.¹⁹⁵

The *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1993) is another multilateral treaty that closely relates to monitoring the status of how development impacts the ecosystem, and is derived from the Rio Declaration.¹⁹⁶ It contains three main goals: conservation of biological diversity; sustainable use of its components; and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.¹⁹⁷ It is the first convention that emphasizes the crucial importance of conserving biodiversity, in order to benefit humankind.¹⁹⁸

The *Paris Agreement* (2015) is another crucially important and prominent framework for development.¹⁹⁹ After years of negotiation, the *Paris Agreement* was adopted by the UN Climate Change Conference and entered into force in November 2016.²⁰⁰ Its goal is to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels, in order to prevent adverse effect of the warming climate, such as desertification and disrupted storm systems.²⁰¹ Member States that have ratified this treaty are bound to a specific commitment, and often adapt a regional approach.²⁰² Moreover, Member States are required to prepare Nationally Determined Contributions, which are country-specific plans to reduce emissions and combat climate change.²⁰³ For example, the European Union (EU) has committed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 40% by 2030, when compared to their 1990 levels.²⁰⁴ The agreement is monitored through an “enhanced transparency framework”, where Member States commit to share reports on their progress each year, which is then reviewed by a technical expert.²⁰⁵

At the same conference, the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), was opened for signature and adopted on 9 May 1992.²⁰⁶ The treaty legally binds all Member States to reduce their GHG emissions, in order to avoid harmful human interference with the climate system.²⁰⁷ The Member States that have ratified the treaty have met annually to discuss the progress of its

¹⁸⁹ UN Foundation, *The Sustainable Development Goals In 2019: People, Planet, Prosperity In Focus*, 2019.

¹⁹⁰ UNDP, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*, 2021.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

¹⁹³ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ UN Foundation, *The Sustainable Development Goals In 2019: People, Planet, Prosperity In Focus*, 2019.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ European Commission, *Paris Agreement*, 2021.

²⁰⁵ UN Climate Change, *Moving Towards the Enhanced Transparency Framework*, 2021.

²⁰⁶ UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

²⁰⁷ UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

implementation, in what is known as the Conference of Parties (COP).²⁰⁸ Each Annex I Member State of the UNFCCC is required each Annex I Party, by 15 April each year, to provide its annual GHG inventory covering emissions and removals of direct GHG.²⁰⁹ The Open-Ended Working Group of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework within the fifteenth meeting of COP aims to adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework at part II of the UN Biodiversity Conference in April 2022.²¹⁰

The first COP of the UNFCCC came to the decision that it was crucial to stabilize emissions to their 1990 levels, which led to the *Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC* in 1997.²¹¹ The protocol operationalized the UNFCCC by committing industrialized Member States and economies in transition to limit and reduce GHG emissions to a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.²¹² The first reporting period began in 2008 and ended in 2012, and Member States intended to extend it until 2020 under the *Doha Amendment*, but it did not meet the necessary ratifications to enter into force.²¹³ Member States intended to negotiate another extension, but instead decided to focus on this stance, in contrast to the UNFCCC itself, which only asks those Member States to adopt policies and measures on mitigation and to report periodically.²¹⁴

Role of the International System

UNDP is one of the primary UN entities capable of addressing monitoring of inclusive sustainable development.²¹⁵ Over the past 30 years, UNDP has addressed monitoring sustainable development in a variety of ways, particularly through creating annual editions of the Human Development Report (HDR), which monitors and explores different themes and approaches to development, including its 2020 report, outlining development progress in the Anthropocene.²¹⁶ The data collection, reporting, and analysis of the report is done through UNDP's HDR Office.²¹⁷ The Statistics Division of the Department of Social and Economic Affairs within the UN Secretariat for the Sustainable Development Goals plays a large role tracking the progress of the SDGs and promoting their implementation.²¹⁸ Moreover, the United Nations Statistical Commission created the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators in 2015 to develop and implement the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.²¹⁹ In 2015, the UN Statistical Commission created the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which aims to establish a global partnership for sustainable development.²²⁰

UNDP's role in monitoring and assisting with the implementation of the SDGs will be crucial to redesigning a path to progress that intertwines the fate of both people and the planet.²²¹ There are also three broad frameworks that guide UNDP's development assistance work, each tied to a specific challenge.²²² These areas include the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development, and building resilience to crises and shocks, such as pandemics or natural disasters.²²³

²⁰⁸ UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

²⁰⁹ UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

²¹⁰ Convention on Biological Diversity, Preparations for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, 2021.

²¹¹ UNFCCC, *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1997.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ UNDP, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*, 2021.

²¹⁶ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

²¹⁷ UNDP, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*, 2021.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ UN DESA, *IAEG-SDGs Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators*, 2021.

²²⁰ UN DESA, *HLG-PCCB*, 2021.

²²¹ UNDP, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*, 2021.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ UNDP, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*, 2021.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is the leading global authority for setting the international environment agenda.²²⁴ The primary mission of UNEP is to promote the environmental aspect of sustainable development through assisting, encouraging, and inspiring people to improve their quality of life in a manner that does not compromise future generations through environmental harm.²²⁵ This is a crucial body that has been driving sustainable development through action and advocacy for policies that help conserve and respect the environment.²²⁶ It also monitors the progress towards the *Aichi Biodiversity Targets*, which are a set of targets under five strategic goals agreed to at the tenth meeting of the conference of parties to the *Convention on Biological Diversity*.²²⁷

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has outlined a crucial role in navigating how to recover from the current COVID-19 pandemic in a manner that is sustainable and inclusive.²²⁸ This is evidenced by the report of the 23rd session of the Committee for Development Policy (22–26 February 2021) where it discussed ECOSOC’s annual theme of “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.”²²⁹ The report contains several items that are mutually reinforcing for monitoring inclusive sustainable development, including enhanced mechanisms for monitoring, such as establishing a crisis response process which can better understand how a Member State progresses towards sustainable development in times of crisis.²³⁰

The HLPF under the auspices of alternatively ECOSOC and General Assembly, also plays a crucial role within this topic.²³¹ The role of the HLPF is to review the progress of the SDGs each year through annual high-level ministerial meetings.²³² The theme for the HLPF in 2021, led by ECOSOC, is the exploration of ways to recover from COVID-19 in a manner that reinforces inclusive and sustainable development.²³³

Regionally, the EU has developed a “whole of government” approach when dealing with the 2030 Agenda.²³⁴ This encompasses a wide range of frameworks, including a gender equality strategy, and assisting Member States to monitor and implement an inclusive development agenda.²³⁵ Similarly, Africa’s *Agenda 2063* aims to promote inclusive economic growth which will require mechanisms to ensure Member States are measuring progress in vulnerable and under-represented groups.²³⁶

Rethinking the Human Development Index

As outlined by the 2020 HDR, a new era of human development requires new measures of sustainable development.²³⁷ The report emphasizes that humans need to rethink distinctions of monitoring the people and planet separately, as human actions are becoming increasingly linked to planetary consequences.²³⁸ Therefore, the report acknowledges that while the original 1990 HDI was revolutionary, it must be taken a step further to comprehensive encompass how humans can advance development under unprecedented

²²⁴ UNEP, *About Us*, 2021.

²²⁵ UNEP, *About Us*, 2021.

²²⁶ UNEP, *What We Do*, 2021.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Committee for Development Policy Report on the twenty-third session (22–26 February 2021)*, 2021.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ UN DESA, *High Level Political Forum 2021 Under the Auspices of ECOSOC*, 2021.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*.

²³⁴ European Commission, *EU holistic approach to sustainable development*, 2021.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ African Union, *Goals & Priority Areas of Agenda 2063*, 2021.

²³⁷ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

challenges.²³⁹ Three key areas that need to be addressed in order to promote a more cohesive and inclusive way of reporting on human development in the Anthropocene are highlighted.²⁴⁰ First, is to identify not only inequalities between different Member States, but at a societal level as well.²⁴¹ These are crucial to understanding how inequalities within society contribute to how unequally utilized pollutants, such as GHG, are emitted from backgrounds of class and privilege.²⁴² The report then highlights how measurements need to go beyond focusing on sustaining and needs, meaning that humans should aspire for a better future, not to just prevent a current decline.²⁴³ And lastly, the report emphasizes that while indices are powerful tools, they are not absolute and should not constrict the understanding of human progress.²⁴⁴

For example, measuring where carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions come from, not only from a national perspective, but also an individual perspective, is imperative to expanding how humans can measure inclusive sustainable development.²⁴⁵ In the EU, the richest 1% of households emit 55 tonnes of CO₂ per year, which is well above the 2.5 tonnes of CO₂ emitted per year to be sustainable and only achieved by 5% of households.²⁴⁶ Globally, the wealthiest 1% of individuals emit around 146 tonnes of CO₂ per capita annually, while the poorest 50% emit around 1.4 tonnes of CO₂ per capita.²⁴⁷ Moving towards transparency in better understanding which segments of society emit higher levels of CO₂ can help to design fair and practical policies, which can more meaningfully address climate change.²⁴⁸ This can also expand to understanding not just consumption habits, but also where capital is invested to promote activities with machines and practices that emit CO₂.²⁴⁹

Environmental degradation and unsustainable use of resources also have major implications for the ecosystems that humans live in, not only now, but also in the future.²⁵⁰ Institutions that make decisions on using and exploiting resources almost exclusively do so on a basis of monetary pricing.²⁵¹ Rarely are the environmental or ecological costs, such as land degradation and deforestation, taken into consideration when exploiting national resources.²⁵² The report outlines several suggestions to build upon how humans measure progress in human development, including how to incorporate planetary pressures, such as the social cost of carbons, and accounting for natural wealth instead of solely economic wealth.²⁵³

As one of the entities within the UN system that addresses new ways to achieve sustainable development, UNDP has dedicated resources to further expand upon how development frameworks can better fit planetary transformation.²⁵⁴ Recent UNDP publications, such as the *2020 Report on Rethinking Human Development in an Era of Planetary Transformation*, have helped chart new ideas and initiatives to address the future of sustainable development reporting in the Anthropocene.²⁵⁵ Other examples related specifically to monitoring sustainable development in the context of planetary change also includes UNDP piloting the experimental Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index (PHDI).²⁵⁶ The PHDI measures the progress of human development, but calculates CO₂ in its metrics,

²³⁹ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ UNDP, *Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index*, 2021.

²⁵¹ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ UNDP, *Rethinking Human Development in the Era of Planetary Transformation*, 2021.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ UNDP, *Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index*, 2020.

adjusting its ranking based on how much a Member State emits.²⁵⁷ Such innovation and experimentation within the UN system is crucial to improve upon and expand reporting techniques that can more comprehensively and inclusively monitor sustainable development in human age of planetary change.²⁵⁸

Inclusive Monitoring of the COVID-19 Recovery

Leaving no one behind has been identified in the SDGs as a key inclusivity aspect to achieve sustainable development by 2030.²⁵⁹ Such vulnerable groups include women and girls, people disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other minority groups.²⁶⁰ Despite growing concerns to better include these groups in existing frameworks, they often remain neglected from several sustainable development monitoring systems.²⁶¹ For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has left a devastating impact upon the world, not only threatening lives but upending livelihoods by forcing communities into isolation.²⁶²

COVID-19 has stressed governments and put pressure on a global system already exhausted by conflict, poverty, and climate change.²⁶³ Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed stated that COVID-19 itself threatens to upend all the progress made towards achieving the SDGs.²⁶⁴ In 2020, global human development fell for the first time since 1990.²⁶⁵

When COVID-19 began to substantially spread in the spring of 2020, the UN took on a variety of initiatives to counter its impact, including the *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, and a COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP).²⁶⁶ Both documents outlined key goals for a response and recovery effort that aimed to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better.²⁶⁷ Working in tandem with the SDG framework, the platform aims to provide resources to assist Member States in combatting COVID-19 locally and nationally.²⁶⁸ The UN also maintains a data portal of its COVID-19 response, which provides the progress of high-level targets on health, protecting people, economic response, macroeconomic response, and social cohesion.²⁶⁹

The GHRP comprises of two monitoring framework components which include the situation and needs monitoring, and the response monitoring.²⁷⁰ While these targeting indicators do aim to encompass people who are vulnerable to the effects and impact of COVID-19, they do not include key groups such as persons with disabilities or indigenous populations.²⁷¹ Moreover, country-level response plans and needs assessments have been rapidly changing, complicating the ability of local and national authorities to track their responses inclusively.²⁷² In response to these challenges, the Secretary-General has offered policy guidance for Member States, such as a policy brief on “A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19”.²⁷³ Examples of potential solutions to inclusive monitoring include enhancing accountability mechanisms for

²⁵⁷ UNDP, *Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index*, 2020.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ UN Foundation, *The Sustainable Development Goals In 2019: People, Planet, Prosperity In Focus*, 2019.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² UN Office of the Secretary-General, *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, 2020; UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁶⁷ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*, 2020; UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁶⁸ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁶⁹ UN Development Coordination Office, *COVID-19 Data Portal*, 2021.

²⁷⁰ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁷¹ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

resources designated to assist vulnerable populations and strengthening reporting on recovery efforts that are impacting them.²⁷⁴

Additionally, as outlined in its 2020 report *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, UNDP is undertaking a number of initiatives to address the impact and consequences of COVID-19.²⁷⁵ This includes conducting over 70 socio-economic impact assessment via UN country teams, supporting 88 governments to procure medical equipment, and support 47 Member States with crisis response frameworks.²⁷⁶ The next phase of UNDP COVID-19 crisis recovery response will focus on assisting Member States with advancing social protection, governance, green economy, and digital disruption in the context of the 2030 Agenda.²⁷⁷ Advancing these priorities will reinforce Member States ability to inclusively monitor human development in the age of the Anthropocene.²⁷⁸

Conclusion

It is clear from the IPCC August 2021 report that humanity is reaching a code red for how humans treat the earth.²⁷⁹ Moreover, the way humans stress the planet of its resources will likely have uneven consequences for those who are vulnerable, such as disabled and indigenous peoples.²⁸⁰ With the era of the Anthropocene, it is now crucial to change how humans think about sustainable development and human progress.²⁸¹ However, traditional forms of measuring human development have been almost exclusively focused on economic indicators, which have led to exploitative practices that have exacerbated planetary harm.²⁸² UNDP experts have highlighted in the 2020 HDR that humanity must chart a new course in how humans measure progress.²⁸³ This starts with redefining the HDI to be more broadly encompassing to focus on how inequality impact planetary pressures and adding stronger environmental dimensions to it that account for practices, like degradation.²⁸⁴ With the COVID-19 pandemic upending international systems, it will also be crucial to identify how humans can inclusively monitor a response to COVID-19.²⁸⁵

Further Research

Given the pressing issues related to climate change and inequality, delegates should have a vast swath of resources to consult when expanding their research. When doing so, here are some key questions that could be of use when considering sources: How has climate change and inequality impacted your country? How well has your country tracked the SDGs and how has it progressed in meeting the targets and indicators? How can policies ensure all vulnerable groups are accounted in monitoring efforts? How can non-tangible services be incorporated in budgets or decision-making?

Annotated Bibliography

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Twenty-first session. (2015). *Paris Agreement*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from:

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf

The Paris Agreement is one of the most crucial international agreements on climate change. Digesting its contents and provisions will provide strong foundational knowledge

²⁷⁴ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19*, 2020.

²⁷⁵ UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, 2020.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Gupta & Vegelin, *Sustainable development goals and inclusive development*, 2016.

²⁸² UNDP, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021*, 2021.

²⁸³ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

²⁸⁴ UNDP, *Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index*, 2021.

²⁸⁵ UNDP, *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*, 2020.

on what international action is being taken to combat it. It will further help readers know how Member States are attempting to combat climate change in a fair and equitable manner internationally. It will also help give further context as to how Member States are aiming to reduce planetary pressures, such as GHG.

Gupta, J., & C. Vegelin. (2016). *Sustainable development goals and inclusive development. International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*. Retrieved 9 August 2021 from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10784-016-9323-z#citeas>

The following research paper contains some of the earlier work and concepts from one of the main authors of the 2020 HDR. The research outlined contains a helpful narrative about human development in the Anthropocene and the importance of inclusive development efforts, especially in their reporting. This resource will prove useful for those who wish to digest some aspects of the report in a more condensed format.

United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. (2020). *The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/globalsdreport/2019>

The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report provides a comprehensive overview of recommendations and innovations that can help transform sustainable development practice, globally. This report ties into monitoring sustainable development in the Anthropocene, as it goes into great detail on what types of interventions are needed to reduce harmful global consumption. This will help serve readers by providing a rich source of detailed policies and topics to research further.

United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/planetary-pressures%E2%80%93adjusted-human-development-index-phdi>

The Planetary pressures-adjust HDI is a key resource to understanding experimental research done to monitoring human development in the Anthropocene. The index provides a ranking of development that accounts for factors like emissions of GHG, which would be considered a negative impact on human development. Understanding this index and other experimental monitoring methods are crucial to know how the international community aims to research and understand planetary pressures caused by humans.

United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2020.pdf>

The 2020 HDR by UNDP serves as a crucial document in understanding sustainable development within the Anthropocene. The report largely covers how the world is entering into the era of the Anthropocene and the implications it will have for development, climate, and sustainability, and covers the significance of inclusive monitoring for human development. The report charts out a series of recommended actions, which serve as a strong starting point for policy research. It also highlights key areas in which human development reporting can be improved in terms of planetary pressures.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the cornerstone documents to understanding sustainable development. It outlines the SDGs, and also provides important context as to the urgent need for the implementation. Readers will find this source helpful in understanding the context to how and why the SDGs were created. It also provides a comprehensive idea on the current agenda for development for the next decade.

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