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GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE BACKGROUND GUIDE 2017

Written by: Aly El Salmi, Mariam Bojang, Benjamin Wrigley, Lauren Shaw, and Chase Mitchell

Contributions by: Tobias Holl



NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



THE 2017 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly Second Committee. This year's staff is: Directors Yih-Hsiang Tobias Holl (Conference A) and Aly El Salmy (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Mariam Bojang (Conference A) and Benjamin Wrigley (Conference B). Tobias holds a B.A. in Political Science from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, where he is currently pursuing Master's degrees in Political Science, Sociology, and Philosophy. This will be his fourth year on staff. Aly is currently in the final year of his Master's of Public Administration at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. He is also interning at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This is his fourth year on staff. Mariam completed her M.A. in Political Science at the University of Texas at Tyler in 2016. She is currently the FGM Survivor Representative and Spokesperson of the Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation. This will be her first year on staff. Ben is finishing a binational Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering at the Universities of Seigen and Portsmouth. This is his first year on staff.

The topics under discussion for the General Assembly Second Committee are:

- I. Implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda
- II. Harnessing the Green Economy to Eradicate Poverty
- III. Designing Effective Policies and Institutions to Reduce Inequalities (SDG 10)

As one of the six Main Committees of the General Assembly, the Second Committee addresses issues of economic and financial matters. It provides a forum for the international community to discuss topics including international trade, sustainable development, and financial regulation. Its focus is on the promotion of development and growth, reduction of global poverty levels, and the improvement of social conditions and living standards. The Second Committee makes recommendations to the General Assembly Plenary and initiates conferences, assembles working groups, and prepares studies to advance the topics within its scope.

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 2017 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two essential resources for your preparation are the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) and the [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) available to download from the NMUN website. The [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. The [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 tandem, these documents thus serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions.

Please take note of information in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) on plagiarism and the prohibition of pre-written working papers and resolutions. Additionally, please review the [NMUN Policies and Codes of Conduct](#) on the NMUN website regarding the Conference dress code; awards philosophy and evaluation method; and codes of conduct for delegates, faculty, and guests regarding diplomacy and professionalism. Importantly, any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. Adherence to these policies is mandatory.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the General Assembly Department, Lauren Shaw (Conference A) and Felipe Ante (Conference B), at usg.ga@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A

Yih-Hsiang Tobias Holl, *Director*
Mariam Bojang, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Aly El Salmy, *Director*
Benjamin Wrigley, *Assistant Director*



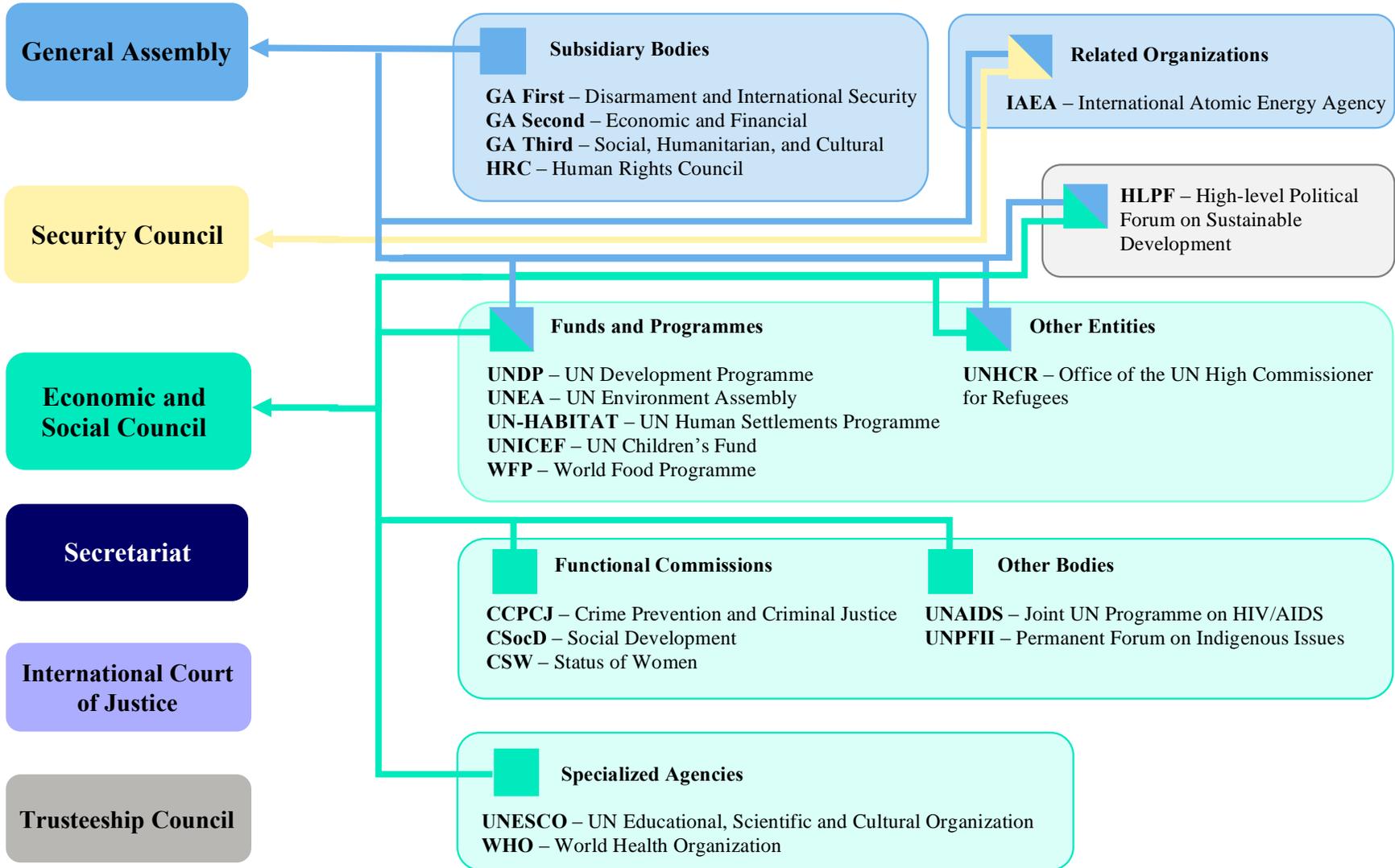
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

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.



Abbreviations

AAAA	<i>Addis Ababa Action Agenda</i>
ADB	Asia Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FD	Financing for Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGKP	Green Growth Knowledge Platform
GGND	Global Green New Deal
GNI	Gross national income
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JFPR	Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
JPoI	<i>Johannesburg Plan of Implementation</i>
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PEI	Poverty-Environment Initiative
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small island developing states
STI	Science, technology, and innovation
UDHR	<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i>
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation



UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for
Social Development
WSSD World Summit on Sustainable
Development
WTO World Trade Organization



Committee Overview

“We must provide ideas for the redesign of policies to strengthen the impact on poverty and in employment, and on the promotion of structural change for a more sustainable future for all.”¹

Introduction

The General Assembly Second Committee is one of the six Main Committees of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly.² Established as one of six principal organs during the foundation of the UN, the General Assembly continues to remain a vital element of this organization.³ This Committee Overview will briefly outline the history of the Second Committee, and provide a synopsis of its structure, governance, mandate, functions, and its work in recent sessions.

The **General Assembly Second Committee** (Second Committee) is one of the six Main Committees of the General Assembly. A report is issued to the General Assembly Plenary for each item allocated to a Main Committee.

Following the Second World War, the UN was formed to prevent the outbreak of future wars by fostering peace and security amongst states and resolving pressing global issues including securing fundamental human rights.⁴ Each of the General Assembly’s Main Committees and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) were tasked with focusing on specific issues to fulfill the UN’s objectives as outlined under Articles 55 to 60 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).⁵ While differing in their areas of focus, the Main Committees share similar arrangements in structure, governance, membership, functions, and powers.⁶

With a focus on economic and financial issues of both the international system and Member States, the Second Committee specifically addresses the promotion of development and growth, the reduction of global poverty levels, and the improvement of social conditions and living standards.⁷ The Committee is instrumental in addressing the root causes of global economic instability and works with key actors such as ECOSOC, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank Group to reduce structural problems in developing states and restore economic stability.⁸

With the rise of economic crises and financial issues across the international system in the past 70 years, the Second Committee has delegated some of its work to other key international organizations such as the World Trade Organization.⁹ With these devolved powers, the Committee has revitalized its focus by aligning economic development goals with the post-2015 development agenda to ensure progress is made in achieving the goals and strengthening stability in the international system.¹⁰ The Second Committee focuses on the causes and effects of crucial events, as well as their triggering factors, to prevent similar occurrences and to promote economic growth and development.¹¹ This ensures that the Committee fulfills its role in maintaining economic stability, whilst offering a unique platform for Member States to generate new, innovative ideas while resolving existing issues.¹²

¹ UN DESA, *The UN General Assembly’s Second Committee – economic and financial issues*, 2013.

² UN General Assembly Second Committee, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

³ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Arts. 55-60.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ UN General Assembly, *About the General Assembly*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Arts. 55-60.

⁸ UN DPI, *Proposal for Sovereign Debt Restructuring Framework among 6 Draft Texts Approved by Committee (GA/EF/3417)*, 2014; UN General Assembly & UN Economic and Social Council, *Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (New York, 14 and 15 April 2014) (A/69/83-E/2014/71)*, 2014.

⁹ UN General Assembly Second Committee, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

¹⁰ UN DPI, *Regulation of Financial Institutions Critical to Avoiding Spread of Global Risk, Speaker Says as Second Committee Debates Economic Crisis (GA/EF/3386)*, 2013.

¹¹ UN General Assembly Second Committee, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

¹² *Ibid.*

Governance, Structure, and Membership

Although its area of focus is different from other Main Committees, the Second Committee follows a similar structure with a plenary body of 193 Member States, as well as a number of Observer States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with observer status.¹³ With the exception of Observer States and NGOs, each Member State in the General Assembly has one vote.¹⁴ In recent years, however, the General Assembly has sought to move towards a model of achieving resolution by consensus rather than a formal vote to emphasize the importance of collaboration and cooperation of Member States.¹⁵

The General Assembly meets annually, beginning with the General Debate in the third week in September.¹⁶ The agenda lays out the main issue areas for discussion by the Main Committees.¹⁷ The allocation of items on the agenda to each of the Main Committees, including the Second Committee, is the responsibility of the General Committee.¹⁸ The General Committee is formed by the President of the General Assembly and 22 Vice-Presidents from different regional blocs.¹⁹ From January to September, the Committee focuses on thematic debates, consultations, and meetings through organized working groups.²⁰ During these Committee sessions, Member States can discuss and address solutions to specific topics.²¹

As a part of the UN reporting structure, there are five primary types of organizations that report to the General Assembly and its six Main Committees: subsidiary bodies, funds and programs, research and training institutes, related organizations, and other entities.²² The General Assembly receives and considers reports on ongoing topics and may take action on any of the items reported by these bodies, including ordering further study and investigation, creating a working group, or including it in documentation or resolutions drafted by the committee.²³ At the end of each year, the Second Committee submits a report to the General Assembly Plenary on each agenda item allocated to it, and the Plenary then considers each report and votes on the adoption of the included draft resolutions.²⁴ The Second Committee also considers reports from ECOSOC, as outlined in its Organization of Work.²⁵ Importantly, while the General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy organ of the UN, its decisions are not legally binding upon Member States.²⁶

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is an arm of the UN Secretariat that focuses on development.²⁷ Working closely with the Second Committee, it supports initiatives and resolutions related to the organization's future development goals.²⁸ Along with this, the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination provides the main operational and policy support for ECOSOC and the Second Committee on development issues.²⁹ It also prepares and advises the General Assembly Plenary on the periodic review of funding operational development activities.³⁰ The Fifth Committee specifically works with the General Assembly and its Main Committees on budgetary allocations, especially where resolutions that require expenditures are passed.³¹

¹³ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016, p. 12.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Functions and powers of the General Assembly*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016, p. 22.

¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Agenda of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly (A/71/251)*, 2016.

¹⁸ Switzerland, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2011.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Past Sessions*.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² UN DPI, *The United Nations System*, 2015.

²³ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016, p. 12; UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *UN Documentation: General Assembly*, 2016.

²⁴ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *UN Documentation: General Assembly*, 2016.

²⁵ UN General Assembly, *About the General Assembly*.

²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Functions and powers of the General Assembly*.

²⁷ UN DESA, *About us*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ UN General Assembly Fifth Committee, *About the Fifth Committee*.

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Articles 55-60 of Chapter IV of the *Charter of the United Nations* outline the Committee's mandate, which includes addressing macroeconomic policy issues such as international trade, external debt sustainability, and financing for development.³² In line with this, the Second Committee plays a key role in the post-2015 development agenda by addressing sustainable development, globalization and interdependence, and poverty eradication.³³ In addition, the Committee provides direction on special situations including least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and on the "permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources."³⁴

As a normative body, the Second Committee works to develop norms and standards for the UN and helps implement these standards within Member States by supporting Member State-level legislation and policy.³⁵ The work of the Committee is chiefly substantive, with the exception of its work on the revitalization of the General Assembly, where it works to streamline the overall program of work including the possibility of biennial and thematic groups of agenda items, updating working methods, and reducing the number and length of draft resolutions.³⁶

The Second Committee completes its work primarily through draft proposals and submissions of reports to the General Assembly Plenary as outlined in the committee's Organization of Work.³⁷ The Committee has the ability to convene relevant conferences and summits on the global development agenda, and usually comes to a consensus on votes.³⁸ Along with this, the Second Committee can request the Secretary-General submit reports on significant issues and can host side events.³⁹ This is useful in fulfilling the Committee's role of encouraging, strengthening, and improving the implementation of Member States' commitments in relation to development and socioeconomic goals.⁴⁰ Moreover, this power allows the Second Committee to take on more of an effective role and to concentrate on resolving numerous issues through these devolved powers.⁴¹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

During its 70th session, which took place from September 2015 to August 2016, the Second Committee acted on its mandate in dealing with topics of international concern and UN system relevance.⁴² These included sustainable development, international finance, and the General Assembly's program of work.⁴³ The body's efforts culminated in successful and unanimous approval of 18 draft resolutions.⁴⁴ Many of the draft resolutions' language underscored key tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as the importance of poverty eradication, and implementing an economic, social, and environmentally sound approach to implementing the SDGs.⁴⁵

Another key milestone that occurred over the course of the General Assembly's 70th session was the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13-16 July 2015.⁴⁶ The conference successfully adopted the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)* (2015).⁴⁷ In turn, the Second Committee reaffirmed the outcome document's commitments in a draft resolution titled "International trade and

³² UN General Assembly Second Committee, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ UNEG, *UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System*, 2014.

³⁶ UN General Assembly Second Committee, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Organization of work of the Second Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.2/71/L.1)*, 2016.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Organization of work of the Second Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.2/71/L.1)*, 2016.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² UN DPI, *Concluding Its Session, Second Committee Unanimously Approves 18 Resolutions (GA/EF/3444)*, 2015.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ UN Third International Conference on Financing for Development, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, 2015.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

development.”⁴⁸ The draft resolution identified international trade as a key area for sustainable development.⁴⁹ Another draft resolution, titled “Financial inclusion for sustainable development,” underscored the Second Committee’s commitment to considering financial inclusion in the follow-up and review of both the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the AAAA.⁵⁰

The *Paris Agreement* of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) was also addressed by the Second Committee.⁵¹ The committee approved a draft resolution expressing profound alarm over the global rise in greenhouse gas emissions and stating that climate change is one of the greatest current challenges.⁵² Also, a draft resolution on “Protection of global climate for present and future generations” voiced concern over both the impact of climate change events and the urgency of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.⁵³ Within that same theme, the committee also approved a draft resolution regarding the implementation of the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa* (1994).⁵⁴ Other draft resolutions addressed topics including biological diversity, sustainable tourism, food security, and the link between climate change and security.⁵⁵

Outgoing Committee Chair, Andrej Logar of Slovenia, brought proposals to improve time management, draft text submission, and ideas on negotiations plus the various types of formal and informal meetings the committee hosts.⁵⁶ The committee approved a draft decision titled “Revitalization of the work of the Second Committee” by consensus. This follows the theme for the General Debate of the 71st regular session of the General Assembly.⁵⁷ Looking ahead to the upcoming 71st session, the President-elect for the General Assembly is the current Permanent Representative of Fiji, Peter Thomson.⁵⁸ This will mark the first time that the President will be from a small Pacific Island state.⁵⁹ Thomson stated that he intends to be particularly focused on climate change, which is also an item for discussion in the Second Committee’s agenda, particularly in the promotion of new, sustainable sources of energy.⁶⁰

Conclusion

As an essential component to the functioning of the UN, the role and work of the Second Committee is critical to addressing fundamental priorities such as the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The Second Committee continues to consolidate its objectives and streamline its work with the overarching goal of stabilizing the international financial system and making progress towards development. In line with the recently adopted SDGs, the Committee has sought to foster innovative ideas by attempting to combine sustainable growth with meeting development targets. It is crucial for the Committee to effectively mobilize its resources and use its authority over other UN bodies to effectively address these key concerns and promote a stable global financial system. Moreover, the Second Committee must utilize emerging trends, patterns, and innovative ideas to discover new and effective solutions to ongoing challenges of sustainability. Many challenges remain ahead for the Second Committee, with accountability and implementation of the 2030 Agenda chief among them. Yet, as this vision is developed and deployed across the organization, the Second Committee will continue to play a pivotal role in securing a more integrated and accountable approach in achieving these objectives.

⁴⁸ UN DPI, *Concluding Its Session, Second Committee Unanimously Approves 18 Resolutions (GA/EF/3444)*, 2015.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN DPI, *Draft Resolution Expressing ‘Profound Alarm’ over Global Rise in Greenhouse Gas Emissions among 14 Texts Approved by Second Committee*, 2015.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ UN DPI, *Need to Align Working Methods with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Focus at Meeting of Second Committee (GA/EF/3445)*, 2016.

⁵⁷ UN PGA, *Letter from His excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, President-Elect of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 2016.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ UN DPI, *General Assembly Elects Permanent Representative of Fiji as President of 71st Session*, 2016.

⁶⁰ Ibid.; UN, General Assembly, *Program of work of the Second Committee*, 2016.



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New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2016). *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*. Retrieved 8 November 2016 from: https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/securedfiles/Handbooks/United_Nations_Handbook-2016-2017.pdf

This handbook provides a comprehensive look at the UN and its principal organs and committees. Delegates can find a detailed explanation of the structure, processes, and procedures of the Main Committees of the General Assembly in this source. The breakdown of the structure, membership, and functionality of these committees can be a useful point for delegates to begin their research and gain an overall understanding of where the committee falls within the UN framework.

Switzerland, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. (2011). *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. Retrieved 22 August 2016 from: http://www.unitar.org/ny/sites/unitar.org/ny/files/UN_PGA_Handbook.pdf

This guide is a practical introduction to the General Assembly, its different committees, and their relationship with each other and different UN system actors. It should provide delegates with a solid, comprehensive, and insightful way to leverage the UN system and staff to its full potential in finding solutions to the issues on the committee's agenda. Its straightforward and practical language provides enough technical information without being an academic source as well.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, December 14). *Concluding Its Session, Second Committee Unanimously Approves 18 Resolutions (GA/EF/3444)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/gaef3444.doc.htm>

This source provides the most recent documentation of the work done by Member States' delegates within the Second Committee. As such, it offers insight into the different regional blocs' positions, the procedural hurdles facing delivering on the committee's commitments, and the challenge of incorporating the entire body's positions. The source proves that the Second Committee's mandate can be broadly applied to diverse issues related to economic development. It should helpfully serve as inspiration to delegates on seeing the scale of the committee's achievements, in terms of the number of resolutions approved, and their unanimous adoption.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Programme of work of the Second Committee*. Retrieved 28 September 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/71/calendar.pdf>

This resource provides delegates with the General Assembly Second Committee agenda and schedule for the 71st session. The program of work provides delegates with a schedule of the meetings on each topic, allowing them full access to the events surrounding the relevant topics. By gathering a sense of the General Assembly's objectives and the goals achieved during the session, delegates are able to further understand how the General Assembly addresses its work, which can be useful when considering solutions to the topics proposed. Delegates can find this useful to grasp the important elements of the work in the General Assembly.

United Nations, General Assembly, Fifth Committee. (n.d.). *Proposed Strategic Framework for the period 2016-2017* [Website]. Retrieved 28 August 2016 from: http://www.un.org/en/ga/fifth/69/psf_2016_2017.shtml

This source provides a proposal of the strategic framework for 2016-2017. That includes detail on programs such as Economic and Social Affairs, plus Trade and Development, among others. This is useful to delegates by making them more aware of current trends and goals of the UN in the coming years. Moreover, the individual proposals of each topic allow delegates to gather what direction the UN is taking and consider this while drafting solutions to global issues. Delegates can thus approach the topics with more of a realistic scope and improve the quality of their work.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2014, December 5). *Proposal for Sovereign Debt Restructuring Framework among 6 Draft Texts Approved by Committee (GA/EF/3417)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 28 August 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/gaef3417.doc.htm>

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, June 13). *General Assembly elects Permanent Representative of Fiji as President of 71st Session* [News Article]. Retrieved 28 September 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54215#.V-xy9fArI2w>

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I. Implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

“We can make history by adapting an ambitious, sustainable development agenda and a universal climate agreement. But without the right financing and policies, we cannot achieve our ambitions... Addis Ababa can be the starting point for a new era of global partnership.”⁶¹

Introduction

Adopted in July 2015 by 193 Member States at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and subsequently endorsed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) marked an important step by the international community to implement the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁶² The AAAA contains a comprehensive set of policy actions to support and finance all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.⁶³ The Agenda constitutes the global framework for financing the SDGs, including data and monitoring processes and specific action steps on domestic resources; private business and finance; international cooperation; international trade; debt and debt sustainability; systemic issues; and science, technology, and capacity-building.⁶⁴ Significantly, the AAAA included commitments by Member States to establish the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, in support of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for the achievement of the SDGs, and the Global Infrastructure Forum, which will promote “investment and cooperation” to rectify “infrastructure gaps.”⁶⁵ Mandated to address economic and financial matters, including financing for development, the General Assembly Second Committee is uniquely poised to lead international efforts towards implementing this comprehensive and ambitious agenda.⁶⁶

International and Regional Framework

The UN system has worked to establish international frameworks on development financing for many years. In 1970, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the “International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.”⁶⁷ The Strategy established specific growth targets, made policy recommendations regarding international trade, and identified financial resources for development.⁶⁸ However, implementation was hampered by the global financial upheaval of the 1970s, including the collapse of the gold standard and a sharp decrease in commodity prices.⁶⁹

The current international financing framework is primarily a product of the International Conference on Financing for Development and its two follow-up conferences.⁷⁰ The initial conference produced the *Monterrey Consensus* (1992), which established a holistic framework for development financing and set up the follow-up process.⁷¹ The document was organized around six key areas: mobilizing domestic financial resources for development; mobilizing international resources for development, including foreign direct investment; international trade; increasing international financial and technical cooperation; external debt; and addressing systemic issues.⁷² The conference

⁶¹ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, *Secretary-General’s Video Message on Financing for Development*.

⁶² UN General Assembly, *Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/70/221)*, 2015, p. 1.

⁶³ 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.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ UN Third International Conference on Financing for Development, *Countries reach historic agreement to generate financing for new sustainable development agenda*, 2015.

⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/70/221)*, 2015, p. 1.

⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (A/RES/2626 (XXV))*, 1970.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Jackson, *A Prehistory of the Millennium Development Goals: Four Decades of Struggle for Development in the United Nations*, *UN Chronicle*, 2007.

⁷⁰ UN DESA, *History of the FfD Process*, 2015.

⁷¹ UN ICFFD, *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/CONF.198/11)*, 1998.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

also initiated cooperation between the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, in order to promote coherence and common goals in international monetary policy.⁷³

The first follow-up conference to Monterrey produced the *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development* (2008).⁷⁴ The Declaration's key message was a commitment from developed states to maintain official development assistance (ODA) despite the global financial crisis.⁷⁵ The Declaration acknowledged the important role of financing in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reviewed the progress made following the *Monterrey Consensus*, and reaffirmed the goals of Monterrey.⁷⁶ However, the Declaration did not lay out a specific financing plan for the MDGs, and notably did not identify any concrete actions to be taken states or international organizations.⁷⁷

The *Doha Declaration* called for a UN conference on the impact of the crisis on development, which was held in June 2009.⁷⁸ The outcome document, later adopted as a resolution by the General Assembly, recognized the negative impact of the crisis on developing states and on the implementation of the MDGs.⁷⁹ The conference acknowledged “systemic fragilities and imbalances” as primary causes of the crisis, and identified action steps for the international community.⁸⁰ These steps included widespread use of economic stimulus packages, improving future resilience, improving regulation and monitoring, and reforming the international economic and financial system.⁸¹ The conference also affirmed the importance of continuing financing for development despite the global crisis.⁸²

In 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1, formally establishing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as the successor to the MDGs.⁸³ Goal 17, “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,” includes specific targets on financing and trade.⁸⁴ The General Assembly also formally adopted the AAAA in 2015, following its negotiation at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.⁸⁵ Financing for development has also been a topic of discussion within broader documents regarding sustainable development. For example, *Agenda 21* (1992) of the UN Conference on Environment and Development contains a sub-section on “financial resources and mechanisms” as a means of implementing the Agenda.⁸⁶ The *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (2002) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development also discusses the role of financing and trade in achieving sustainable development.⁸⁷

Role of the International System

The implementation of the AAAA will require a coordinated effort by many international and regional organizations. As the UN's plenary body for matters of economics and finance, the General Assembly Second Committee will play a large role in overseeing implementation.⁸⁸ The Second Committee's agenda items for the 71st session include 10 topics in the category of sustainable development, in addition to topics on macroeconomic policy

⁷³ UN DESA, *Monterrey Conference*, 2016.

⁷⁴ UN DESA, *History of the FfD Process*, 2015.

⁷⁵ UN ICFFD, *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (A/CONF.212/L.1/Rev.1)*, 2008.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UN DESA, *History of the FfD Process*, 2015.

⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (A/RES/63/303)*, 2009.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ 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.

⁸⁶ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

⁸⁷ UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Draft plan of implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199/L.1)*, 2002.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Second Committee*, 2016.

and the follow-up process to the International Conferences on Financing for Development.⁸⁹ The General Assembly's normative role in the international system will enable the Second Committee to continue to hold high-level dialogues and establish international policies on financing for development.⁹⁰

The UN's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will also play a key role in overseeing the implementation of the AAAA. HLPF was established following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, with a goal of replacing the Commission on Sustainable Development with a more inclusive body.⁹¹ The Forum is the UN's central body for guiding the implementation of the SDGs, including the provision of political leadership, tracking of indicators, promoting policy coherence, and addressing emerging issues.⁹² The theme of the 2016 meeting was "ensuring that no one is left behind," and included thematic reviews of progress towards the SDGs, as well as 22 voluntary country reviews.⁹³ The theme of the 2017 meeting will be "eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world."⁹⁴ The Forum will review different Goals each year, but will always review Goal 17, "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development," which contains targets related to financing.⁹⁵

Other UN bodies that will participate in implementing the AAAA include the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). ECOSOC is responsible for reviewing follow-up processes to the *Monterrey Consensus*, including hosting the Development Cooperation Forum, which assesses development cooperation and considers methods to advance progress.⁹⁶ ECOSOC held its inaugural forum on Financing for Development in April 2016, with a theme of "Financing for sustainable development: follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda."⁹⁷ The forum included officials from the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and national governments, and resulted in conclusions and recommendations that were submitted to the HLPF.⁹⁸ ECOSOC works closely with DESA's Financing for Development Office, which is the UN Secretariat branch responsible for implementation of the outcome documents of the Conferences on Financing for Development.⁹⁹ The Office aims to promote policy coherence among key stakeholders, provides substantive secretariat support, and provides advice and technical assistance to developing states.¹⁰⁰

The World Bank, the IMF, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are all considered major stakeholders in the financing for development framework.¹⁰¹ The World Bank and IMF are both referenced throughout the AAAA as key financing parties for development, as well as institutions that can assist in generating national and international policies that promote sustainability and good governance.¹⁰² As the only international organization that works on the rules of trade between states, the WTO assists in building trade capacity, particularly through its Aid for Trade program.¹⁰³ UNCTAD is currently contributing to progress on 52 targets of 10 of the SDGs, including all 19 targets of Goal 17.¹⁰⁴ UNCTAD is also leading the inter-agency dialogue on tracking the implementation of the SDGs, with an aim of increasing accountability for the 2030 Agenda.¹⁰⁵ The UNDP is the lead

⁸⁹ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items to the Second Committee (A/C.2/71/1)*, 2016.

⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Second Committee*, 2016.

⁹¹ UN DESA, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20*, 2016.

⁹² UN DESA, *High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 - Ensuring that no one is left behind*, 2016.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ UN DESA, *High-level Political Forum 2017*, 2016.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Financing for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

⁹⁷ UN DESA, *2016 ECOSOC FfD forum*, 2016.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ UN DESA, *Financing for Development Office*, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² 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.

¹⁰³ WTO, *Understanding the WTO: What We Do*, 2016.

¹⁰⁴ UNCTAD, *UNCTAD Delivers on Sustainable Development Goals*.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

development agency within the UN system and is working to implement the SDGs in 170 countries and territories.¹⁰⁶ This work includes facilitating knowledge exchanges between aid providers and recipients, researching debt sustainability, and maximizing private finance.¹⁰⁷

The identified major stakeholders are not the only UN agencies that are involved in implementing the AAAA. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened over 50 UN bodies to form the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF).¹⁰⁸ The IATF is mandated by the AAAA to “report annually on progress in implementing the Addis Agenda and other Financing for Development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and... advise the intergovernmental follow-up process on progress, implementation gaps and recommendations for corrective action, while taking into consideration the national and regional dimensions.”¹⁰⁹ The mandate has since been further clarified by the 2016 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development to include discussion of global context and analysis of thematic issues.¹¹⁰ The IATF published its first report in March 2016, organized around the thematic areas of the International Conferences on Financing for Development.¹¹¹ The report focuses on monitoring progress towards implementing the AAAA and the SDGs, as well as identifying the data sources that will be used to monitor future progress.¹¹²

Mobilizing Financial Resources

At the core of the AAAA is the mobilization of financial resources for development, especially foreign direct investment (FDI) and ODA, which constitute most of the flow of resources into developing countries.¹¹³ FDI refers to long-term investments by a business based in one state into a business in another state.¹¹⁴ FDI not only provides new gainful employment, but also helps to build up infrastructure and develop local human capital.¹¹⁵ While some states are cautious about allowing foreign entities to operate in their territory, most actively encourage FDI and utilize investment promotion agencies to attract multinational corporations.¹¹⁶ Currently, most investment is targeted at industrialized economies, which constitute a much lower risk for businesses.¹¹⁷ To alleviate this risk, the AAAA calls for developing countries to implement policies that create an enabling business environment, especially in sectors that align with their development goals.¹¹⁸ This can include developing legal regimes on intellectual property, land ownership, and labor.¹¹⁹ Donor states have not only committed to providing technical assistance in this kind of policy development, but also helped to provide assurances to companies when they invest abroad.¹²⁰ The AAAA also recognizes the need for better risk mitigation mechanisms, including investment insurance from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and industrialized countries that host multinational corporations.¹²¹ In so doing, states not only help to implement the AAAA, but also fulfil their obligations regarding ODA.¹²²

ODA is defined as concessional financial support provided by official agencies that is administered with the goal of promoting economic development in developing countries.¹²³ Military aid, the cost of peacekeeping, and anti-

¹⁰⁶ UNDP, *Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ UNDP, *Financing for Development and UNDP*.

¹⁰⁸ UN DESA, *About the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development*, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ UN IATF, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions*, 2016.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ 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, pp. 17, 27.

¹¹⁴ UNCTAD, *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)*.

¹¹⁵ OECD, *Foreign Direct Investment for Development: Maximizing Benefits, Minimizing Costs*, 2002, pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁶ Lougani & Razin, *How Beneficial Is Foreign Direct Investment for Developing Countries?*, 2001.

¹¹⁷ UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2016*, 2016, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ 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, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁹ Bremmer, *Managing Risk in an Unstable World*, 2005.

¹²⁰ 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, pp. 22-23.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² OECD, *Is it ODA?*, 2008, pp. 2-3.

¹²³ OECD, *Official Development Assistance - Definition and Coverage*, 2016.

terrorism activities, and most research activities are not counted as ODA, while humanitarian assistance, social and cultural programs, and training and technical assistance, in addition to basic monetary contributions, are counted as ODA.¹²⁴ Less developed states often express frustration with international ODA definitions, which were created by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as donor states can provide disaster relief or fund social programs that don't align with the recipient state's development priorities and still count it towards fulfilling their ODA commitments.¹²⁵ This compounds international frustration caused by the reality that ODA outflows from most donor states are already far lower than the level called for by multiple international agreements.¹²⁶ The AAAA reiterated the need for the quantity of ODA to increase and that willing and able states should contribute 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) towards ODA with 0.15% of GNI being offered as aid for least developed countries (LDCs).¹²⁷ In 2015, only 6 Member States met the 0.7% target.¹²⁸

In addition to increasing the quantity of development assistance, the AAAA reaffirms the need to improve the effectiveness of aid, including calling for national ownership by recipient states and alignment between donors and recipients on meeting development goals.¹²⁹ There is often a lack of coordination between donors, which decreases efficiency and can prevent meaningful progress towards development goals.¹³⁰ Viewpoints on how to maximize aid effectiveness vary greatly, but donor states often seek to maximize effectiveness by specifying how aid is used, in some cases for specific projects or in specific categories.¹³¹ In many cases, donor states tie aid in such a way as it must be spent on the procurement of goods from the donor state, allowing them to benefit economically from the aid they give.¹³² Because these practices decrease efficiency, untying aid has become a priority of the international community.¹³³ However, many donor states remain hesitant to offer budget support, which allows recipient governments full control over aid funds, due to a lack of recipient accountability.¹³⁴ Recipient states similarly call for higher levels of donor accountability and assurances that aid efforts help and not hinder development.¹³⁵ This is especially true of aid in the form of concessional lending or debt relief, which is also considered as ODA.¹³⁶

Although borrowing constitutes an essential element of financing for sustainable development, it creates a set of risks requiring careful mitigation, especially for low-income countries (LICs).¹³⁷ The AAAA expressly recognizes that “borrowing needs to be managed prudently” to ensure debt sustainability and minimize vulnerability to debt distress or acute debt crises.¹³⁸ Debt sustainability refers to “the ability of a country to meet its debt obligations without requiring debt relief or accumulating arrears.”¹³⁹ Improving accuracy in monitoring and assessment of debt sustainability requires frameworks and methodologies that are able to account for both debt capacity and financing needs for development projects.¹⁴⁰ The AAAA includes a commitment to assist individual countries in achieving debt sustainability, particularly with respect to LICs, LDCs, and small island developing states (SIDS), through tailored strategies supporting debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring, and debt management.¹⁴¹ Importantly,

¹²⁴ OECD, *Is it ODA?*, 2008, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁵ Goody, *International Development: The Aid Effectiveness Debate*, 2009.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ 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, pp. 26-27.

¹²⁸ OECD, *Aid to Developing Countries Rebounds in 2013 to Reach an All-Time High*, 2016.

¹²⁹ 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, p. 3.

¹³⁰ Goody, *International Development: The Aid Effectiveness Debate*, 2009.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ 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, pp. 28-29.

¹³⁴ Goody, *International Development: The Aid Effectiveness Debate*, 2009.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ OECD, *Is it ODA?*, 2008, pp. 2-3.

¹³⁷ UN IATF, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions*, 2016, p. 103.

¹³⁸ 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, p. 26.

¹³⁹ Development Finance International, *Debt Sustainability*, 2016.

¹⁴⁰ UN IATF, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions*, 2016.

¹⁴¹ 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, p. 27.

the AAAA emphasizes the requirement for debtors and creditors to cooperate with each other to ensure debt sustainability: although borrowers are responsible for avoiding unsustainable levels of debt, lenders must also refrain from “undermin[ing] a country’s debt sustainability,” which reflects a recent trend in upholding accountability for all parties involved in external lending.¹⁴² However, despite reference to principles underlying general support for achieving debt sustainability and international cooperation to that end, the AAAA does not clearly delineate any actual initiatives or programs for debt relief or restructuring.¹⁴³

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The achievement of the AAAA’s ambitious objectives is contingent upon improved cooperation between all stakeholders, including between developing countries themselves.¹⁴⁴ South-South cooperation refers to collaboration between developing countries, collectively deemed the Global South, “in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains” to achieve shared development goals.¹⁴⁵ South-South initiatives facilitated by donor countries or multilateral organizations “through the provision of funding, training, and management and technological systems” are described as triangular cooperation.¹⁴⁶ The importance of South-South and triangular cooperation to sustainable development is recognized not only in the AAAA, but also in other paramount development frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda, the *Paris Agreement* (2015), and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015).¹⁴⁷ In resolution 70/222 (2016), adopted on the recommendation of the Second Committee, the General Assembly noted that “South-South cooperation is increasingly critical to bolstering productive capacities of developing countries and has positive impacts on trade and financial flows, technological capabilities, and economic growth.”¹⁴⁸

With universal membership and regular allocation of “South-South cooperation for development” as an agenda item, the Second Committee is uniquely well positioned to promote and facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation for the implementation of the AAAA.¹⁴⁹ The full potential of South-South and triangular cooperation to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication remains unrealized.¹⁵⁰ Opportunities to optimize South-South and triangular cooperation include improving policy coordination within the UN system, enhancing accountability of development actors, prioritizing information-sharing and technology transfer, and strengthening the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).¹⁵¹ In his most recent report on the “State of South-South cooperation,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the creation of “an inter-agency, one-stop online platform on South-South and triangular cooperation” as a resource for leaders in developing countries.¹⁵² He also drew attention to the potential of “emerging Southern-led subregional, regional and national development banks” to support South-South initiatives for sustainable development by augmenting “development finance provided by traditional multilateral and existing regional development banks.”¹⁵³ While the benefits of South-South and triangular cooperation are clear, challenges remain in areas such as inadequate “data collection, analysis and use” in developing countries, which impede monitoring and limits effectiveness of policy and project design.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴² 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, p. 27; UN IATF, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions*, 2016, p. 106.

¹⁴³ Global Policy Forum, *Reactions to the Addis Ababa Outcome Document*, 2015.

¹⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *South-South cooperation* (A/RES/70/222), 2015.

¹⁴⁵ UNOSSC, *What is South-South Cooperation?*, 2016.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ UN DPI, *On International Day, senior UN officials highlight importance of South-South cooperation for sustainable development*, 2016.

¹⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners* (A/RES/70/224), 2015, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items to the Second Committee* (A/C.2/71/1), 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Wang & Banihani, *Working Paper: Scaling-up South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development*, 2015, p. 2.

¹⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *South-South cooperation* (A/RES/70/222), 2015; UN General Assembly, *Report of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation: Nineteenth session* (A/71/39), 2016; UN General Assembly, *State of South-South cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General* (A/71/208).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 19.

¹⁵⁴ UNCTAD, *International Day for South-South Cooperation*, 2016.

Strengthening Partnerships

In addition to UN entities, intergovernmental organizations, and state actors, civil society and the private sector are essential to the implementation of the AAAA and the 2030 Agenda.¹⁵⁵ In resolution 70/224 (2015), the General Assembly stressed “the importance of the contribution of voluntary partnerships to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,” as they supplement the commitment of Member States to the 2030 Agenda.¹⁵⁶ The AAAA highlights the “enhanced and revitalized global partnership for sustainable development,” led by states and inclusive of diverse stakeholders, to “ensure a sustainable, equitable, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous future for all.”¹⁵⁷ Member States committed to “encouraging knowledge-sharing and the promotion of cooperation and partnerships between stakeholders, including between Governments, firms, academia and civil society,” in support of the SDGs.¹⁵⁸ On 10 October 2016, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the upcoming launch of the Financial Innovation Platform, which will provide a forum for all stakeholders to discuss innovative approaches to financing the SDGs.¹⁵⁹

Further opportunities remain to mobilize partnerships for the implementation of the AAAA more effectively. Civil society organizations are key actors in implementation of sustainable development initiatives; for instance, they are an independent source of data collection and analysis, which is critical for “smart and transparent decision-making,” development planning, and policy design.¹⁶⁰ To maximize the contribution of civil society partnerships to the implementation of the AAAA, Member States will look to foster “an enabling national environment,” which includes open support to civil society organizations from governments, ongoing dialogue involving civil society and national and subnational actors, and broad access to information.¹⁶¹

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) generally refer to cooperative arrangements involving both public (or government) and private sector actors.¹⁶² The AAAA includes recognition of the value of PPPs to sustainable development, reflecting the ongoing and “significant evolution of public-private collaboration” as companies incorporate development goals and sustainability in their priorities.¹⁶³ From 2004 to 2012, investment in PPPs increased from \$22.7 billion to \$134.2 billion in developing countries.¹⁶⁴ Alongside their increase in prevalence, PPPs have generated controversy, as critics have argued that they result in decreased transparency, lowered accountability, ineffective monitoring, and lack of inclusivity in attaining development goals for all.¹⁶⁵ However, subject to regulation, minimum standards enforcement, required disclosure of partnership activity, and adherence to such UN principles as those “articulated and promoted to business by the Global Compact,” PPPs have the potential to produce positive results for sustainable development, especially with respect to financing development projects in areas such as infrastructure and clean energy technology.¹⁶⁶ As set out in the AAAA, it will be important for Member States not only to build capacity for PPPs, but also to engage in “inclusive, open and transparent

¹⁵⁵ UN IATF, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions*, 2016, p. 54.

¹⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners (A/RES/70/224)*, 2015, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁹ UN DPI, *UN, private sector to create platform for financing SDGs*, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ 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, p. 35; UN IATF, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions*, 2016, p. 79.

¹⁶¹ Nilo, *Civil Society & Other Stakeholders: Leaving no one behind when implementing the Agenda 2030*, 2015, p. 8.

¹⁶² Romero, *What lies beneath?: A critical assessment of PPPs and their impact on sustainable development*, 2015, p. 4.

¹⁶³ 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, p. 15; UN General Assembly, *Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/296)*, 2015, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Romero, *What lies beneath?: A critical assessment of PPPs and their impact on sustainable development*, 2015, p. 28.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/296)*, 2015, pp. 13, 19; 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, p. 16.

discussion” and the development of “guidelines and documentation” to ensure that PPPs are utilized to the benefit of sustainable development.¹⁶⁷

Conclusion

The financing needs of the 2030 Agenda are extremely large: in developing countries, there is a \$2.5 trillion annual funding gap for the achievement of the SDGs.¹⁶⁸ However, sufficient global resources already exist to achieve the 2030 Agenda, assuming that investment and alignment of financial resources with sustainable development are prioritized and recognized as being of paramount importance.¹⁶⁹ While the AAAA represents a “strong political commitment” by Member States to address the financial aspects of the 2030 Agenda, full implementation of all undertakings expressed in the AAAA will be required for the successful achievement of the SDGs.¹⁷⁰

Further Research

As delegates prepare for the conference, they should consider the following questions: What lessons can be learned from the financing of the MDGs? What obstacles still remain to implementing the international development financing framework? How can the Second Committee work with HLPF and IATF to facilitate the implementation of the AAAA? How can implementation of the AAAA be monitored and tracked effectively? How can Member States address the challenges associated with mobilizing financial resources as set out in the AAAA? How can Member States leverage South-South and triangular cooperation for the implementation of the AAAA? How can partnerships with non-state actors contribute to financing for development?

Annotated Bibliography

Jackson, P. (2007, December). A Prehistory of the Millennium Development Goals: Four Decades of Struggle for Development in the United Nations. *UN Chronicle*. Retrieved 20 November 2016 from: <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/prehistory-millennium-development-goals-four-decades-struggle-development-united-nations>

In order to effectively implement the AAAA, it is important to understand the UN’s prior efforts towards development. This article discusses the history of sustainable development at the UN prior to the MDGs, with a particular focus on challenges and problems faced. As they prepare for the conference, delegates should consider which of these challenges may still impact the implementation of the AAAA and SDGs, and what policies the Second Committee can recommend in order to address these issues.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Financing for Development Office* [Website]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/index.html>

The Financing for Development Office of UN DESA is the main branch of the UN Secretariat tasked with providing support for follow-up to, and implementation of, the Financing for Development Conferences. The website of the Financing for Development Office is a great resource with an accessible collection of material and documents on the issue. The information provided include short summaries of recent conferences, the work of relevant UN bodies, and important documentation. Moreover, this page also contains sub-pages that focus on different aspects of the topic such as external debt or inclusive finance that provide the starting point for further research.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ UN DPI, *UN, private sector to create platform for financing SDGs*, 2016.

¹⁶⁹ UN Third International Conference on Financing for Development, *Countries reach historic agreement to generate financing for new sustainable development agenda*, 2015; FAO, *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners (A/RES/70/224)*, 2015, p. 1

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). *Financing sustainable development and developing finance. A DESA Briefing Note on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/DESA-Briefing-Note-Addis-Action-Agenda.pdf>

UN DESA has provided a short and concise Briefing Note of the AAAA. The 11-page briefing note summarizes the content of the AAAA and serves as a great overview and starting point for further research. Furthermore, it contains an annex with a selected list of 40 “deliverables”, which serves as a valuable starting point to make sense of the vast AAAA with more than 100 concrete policy measures.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *High-level Political Forum 2017* [Website]. Retrieved 21 November 2016 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

HLPF is the representative UN body charged with overseeing the implementation of the SDGs. As part of this mandate, it considers the progress towards Goal 17 and its financing targets at each of its annual meetings. This website provides information on the upcoming 2017 meeting, including the Goals to be discussed. It also provides links to the voluntary national reviews that have been conducted, which delegates may find useful in their conference preparations.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda: The 2016 Inaugural ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up* [Report]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ffd_forum_publication_2016.pdf

The Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (FfD) was held in April 2016, resulting in intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations. The FfD Office of UN DESA has produced this publication, which provides a detailed and comprehensive coverage of the debate within the forum. It also contains a summary of side events held during the forum in an annex. This document provides a great glimpse into how the issue and the different parts of the AAAA have been deliberated on an intergovernmental level during the follow-up process.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2015). *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)*. Retrieved 6 November 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/69/313>

The AAAA, adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, constitutes the central piece of documentation for the topic. The AAAA contains a new international framework for financing for development as well as a comprehensive set of actions, including more than 100 concrete policy measures, which seek to align the FfD framework of the UN to the SDGs. Knowledge of the exact content and action framework of the AAAA is essential in understanding the difficulties and chances of implementing a new concept of FfD.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/320)*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/320>

In addition to a short summary of the AAAA, this report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development also summarizes the preparation process for the conference and discusses additional initiatives and commitments that have been made at the conference. Finally, it also summarizes the input of civil society organizations to the conference.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *State of South-South cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/208)*. Retrieved 21 November 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/71/208>

The most recent report of the Secretary-General on South-South cooperation provides insight into one of the key means of implementing the AAAA. Recognizing the value of improved cooperation to sustainable development, the report provides an overview of South-South and triangular cooperation within the UN development system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The detailed discussion of how various UN entities have incorporated South-South and triangular cooperation into their work will lead delegates to consider innovative approaches to furthering sustainable development. The report concludes with general recommendations for the optimization of South-South and triangular cooperation.

United Nations, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. (2016). *Addis Ababa Action Agenda: Monitoring commitments and actions* [Report]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Report_IATF-2016-full.pdf

The Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development was convened by the Secretary-General to follow up on the AAAA and comprises over 50 UN agencies, programs, and offices. This is the first edition of its report; it maps out the action items contained in the AAAA and specifically lays out how the Task Force intends to monitor the implementation of the commitments. This marks the beginning of a long and complex process of monitoring the implementation of the AAAA; it will surely evolve over the next few years and is an interesting point of departure for the topic at hand. Delegates can find ways to expand on AAAA monitoring and implementation, or try to find weaknesses in the monitoring process that need to be addressed.

United Nations, International Conference on Financing For Development. (1998). *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/CONF.198/11)*. Retrieved 20 November 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/CONF.198/11>

The outcome document of the first International Conference on Financing for Development, more commonly known as the Monterrey Consensus, established the international development financing framework. The AAAA is a product of the second follow-up conference, and the implementation of the AAAA is being tracked through many of the same processes established for Monterrey. It is important that delegates understand the framework documents that preceded the AAAA in order to fully understand the current process for financing the SDGs.

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II. Harnessing the Green Economy to Eradicate Poverty

Introduction

According to the United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the international community has made sustainable development its predominant goal since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).¹⁷¹ As the work of the General Assembly Second Committee focuses on economic growth and development, the green economy is also one of the highest priorities of the Committee.¹⁷² With the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, the world still faces issues of poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, and resource efficiency, among others, hence the formation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to further the work of the MDGs.¹⁷³ One approach to addressing multiple facets of the SDGs is the creation of a green economy, which the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines “as one that results in the improvement of human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities” without degrading the economy.¹⁷⁴ As a way of attaining a strong and vibrant economy that stipulates a healthier standard of living, the green economy is also seen as a way of connecting economic, environmental, and social considerations in order for the achievement of continuing development within globally friendly and economic equitable solutions.¹⁷⁵

A primary hindrance to achieving resilient economies is poverty.¹⁷⁶ By definition, poverty is considered as the inability to satisfy basic human needs due to having little or no income.¹⁷⁷ Poverty is also associated with conditions including an increased likelihood of death from illnesses, a high child mortality rate, lack of or no proper education, areas of high violence and crime, lack of access of proper justice, lack of adequate shelter, and deprivation of participation in political activities.¹⁷⁸ Rapid and sustained economic growth is the most powerful way by which poverty eradication, and improving the living standard of the people can be achieved.¹⁷⁹ According to the World Bank, attaining both poverty reduction and economic prosperity requires green growth to achieve ecological and social advancement, while at the same time addressing local and international issues.¹⁸⁰ The green economy plays an important role in eradicating poverty as it contributes to sustainable growth that is resilient to climate change, prevents the misuse of natural resources, contributes to food security, and contributes to the alleviation of poverty.¹⁸¹

International and Regional Framework

The green economy in relation to sustainable development and poverty eradication is one of the key areas of concentration of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992).¹⁸² The declaration helps to explain the rights of all people in attaining a healthy and productive living and the obligations of human beings to protect and maintain the common environment.¹⁸³ It develops essential ideas relating to the ways by which individuals and states behave towards the environment, and in Principles 16 and 8 it promotes a consideration of environmental costs, the application of economic mechanisms, and the reduction and eradication of unsustainable production and consumption.¹⁸⁴ The declaration also puts emphasis on sovereign rights which, in accordance with both the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) and international law, allows states to utilize their natural resources in accordance with policies as far as those policies do not infringe on other states.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷¹ UN DESA, *A guidebook to the Green Economy: Issue 1*, p. 5.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ UNECE, *What does green economy mean?*

¹⁷⁶ UN DESA, *A guidebook to the Green Economy: Issue 1*.

¹⁷⁷ Kakwani, *What is Poverty?* 2006; UN DPI, *Human Rights and Poverty*, 2006.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ United Kingdom, *Growth: Building jobs and prosperity in developing countries*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ World Bank, *Ending poverty and sharing prosperity*, 2014, p. 35.

¹⁸¹ IISD, *Can the green economy help to eradicate poverty?*.

¹⁸² UNCED, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ UN DESA, *A guidebook to the Green Economy: Issue 1*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ UNCED, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992, Principle 2.

These principles are also further elaborated in UNCED's *Agenda 21* (1992), which includes detailed guides to achieve sustainable economies at all economic levels.¹⁸⁶ The agenda is aimed at the growth and expansion of national strategies for sustainability and includes procedures by which the incorporation of the environment and development can be made possible.¹⁸⁷ *Agenda 21* also provides an effective legal and regulatory framework which works with economically efficient methods of allocating natural and financial resources and includes methods by which environmental and economic accountings can be incorporated.¹⁸⁸ At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), both *Agenda 21* and the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* were stressed and reaffirmed.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (JPOI) was also adopted in 2002 at the WSSD.¹⁹⁰ The plan addresses the need for a change in the way society produces and consumes resources and strengthens the ongoing global control, supervision, and growth of sustainable agreements so as to promote improvement in livelihood.¹⁹¹ The JPOI requested the formation of an international collaborative framework that will further enhance international cooperation and accelerate sustainable consumption and production (SCP) globally.¹⁹²

Adhering to this request, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) was developed in 2002.¹⁹³ The sentiments from the JPOI were further echoed during the first, second, and third international meetings on the 10YFP, held in 2003, 2005, and 2007, which generated the Marrakech Process.¹⁹⁴ The Marrakech Process, as well as the second international expert meeting, were formed as a continuous process toward attaining SCP.¹⁹⁵ Through global collaboration, both documents will help determine how international behaviors on SCP can be directed towards achieving a green economy.¹⁹⁶ It will also create ways by which international collaboration and support will be enhanced, especially for developing states, for priority issues in attaining poverty eradication.¹⁹⁷ The Marrakech Process contributes to the green economy and poverty eradication by helping states set and execute policies, as well as promoting programs and mechanisms that foster poverty eradication and sustainable living.¹⁹⁸

In June of 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) led the General Assembly to adopt resolution 66/288, "The Future We Want," as its outcome document.¹⁹⁹ On line 56 of the resolution, practicing green economy is considered as one of the most effective ways by which poverty can be eradicated and sustainable development achieved.²⁰⁰ Additionally, lines 57 and 58 emphasize green economy polices that are in line with poverty eradication and sustainable development.²⁰¹ These policies are to be in agreement with, and guided by, the Rio Declaration, *Agenda 21* (1992), and the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (2002).²⁰² The policies are to also promote the collaboration of states to attain international goals that support economic growth such as the MDGs, while respecting international law and national sovereignty over natural resources.²⁰³

In 2015, the General Assembly unanimously adopted *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which further acknowledges the significance of global efforts to end poverty and protect the health of

¹⁸⁶ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ WSSD, *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, 2002.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ UNEP, *International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production: Summary by the Co-Chairs of the Meeting*, 2003.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ UN DESA, *Second International Expert Meeting on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

¹⁹⁷ UNEP, *2003 Marrakech*, 2003; UN DESA, *Second International Expert Meeting on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

¹⁹⁸ UNEP, *International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production: Summary by the Co-Chairs of the Meeting*, 2003.

¹⁹⁹ UN DESA, *A guidebook to the Green Economy: Issue 1*, p. 3.

²⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 10.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

the planet.²⁰⁴ Member States are putting into consideration ecological practices that actually sustain green economy by enacting national policies, global collaboration, and strengthening of the SDGs, specifically goals 1, 2, and 8 as their main focuses are poverty eradication, hunger, decent work, and economic growth.²⁰⁵ To help attain the SDGs, resolution 66/288 emphasizes public-private partnerships, which are an important aspect in mobilizing public financing while taking into account the interest of local and indigenous people and encourages governments to support and promote private sector contributions, especially those geared towards green economy policies in the context of poverty eradication.²⁰⁶ In support of resolution 66/288, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) adopted the theme “Ensuring that no one is left behind” for its July 2016 forum where its main platform was to follow-up and review the progress on the SDGs as a whole.²⁰⁷ The outcome of the HLPF included a Ministerial Declaration to provide political guidance on inclusive implementation of the SDGs.²⁰⁸

Role of the International System

International systems and other organizations play a vital role in achieving poverty eradication, particularly within the UN umbrella of organizations.²⁰⁹ The General Assembly Second Committee has worked with other partners to ensure that outcomes of Rio+20 and other international frameworks are being implemented.²¹⁰ UNEP, as a program of the General Assembly, presents a yearly report in which it identifies issues that affect sustainable growth.²¹¹ The General Assembly Second Committee then “considers these issues and convenes consultations among delegations” and may adopt draft resolutions addressing those issues.²¹² Part of UNEP’s work is to bring awareness to the concept of green economy through its Global Green New Deal (GGND).²¹³ GGND “calls for a package of public investments and complementary policy and pricing reforms which are aimed at kick-starting a transition to a green economy while reinvigorating economies and jobs, and addressing persistent poverty.”²¹⁴

It is important for sustainability principles to be included in the economic policies of Member States so as to promote green economy expansion, create green jobs, and promote poverty reduction.²¹⁵ Seeing its importance, UNEP launched its Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE): 2013-2020 initiative along with the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Republic of Korea, the Millennium Institute, and other relevant UN agencies, national governments, and stakeholders.²¹⁶ The initiative makes it possible for discussions to be held among top level diplomats and other government officials with the aim of establishing policies on sustainability and the eradication of poverty.²¹⁷ In 2014, PAGE held its first international , which attracted states from all parts of the world.²¹⁸ These dialogues give states the opportunity to discuss and share challenges and strategies related to poverty eradication, sustainable growth and development, and employment to the poor and most vulnerable.²¹⁹ The discussions also enable the private sector, finance sector, government officials, and other stakeholders to share ideas and ways of implementation based on experience.²²⁰

²⁰⁴ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

²⁰⁵ UN DESA, *A guidebook to the Green Economy: Issue 1*, p. 5.

²⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 13.

²⁰⁷ Lee, *Common Questions on the Sustainable Development Goals: What is the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development?*, 2016.

²⁰⁸ UN DESA, *High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 – Ensuring that no one is left behind*, 2016.

²⁰⁹ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011.

²¹⁰ UN DPI, *Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, Implementation of Rio+20 Outcome Draw Attention as General Assembly Takes Up Second Committee Reports (GA/11332)*, 2012.

²¹¹ UNEP, *Intergovernmental Policy Co-ordination*.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011.

²¹⁴ Barbier, *A Global Green New Deal, Report prepared for the Green Economy Initiative of UNEP*, 2009.

²¹⁵ UN PAGE, *Who Are We?*.

²¹⁶ UN DESA, *Attachment A – Audit of current initiatives and key actors involved in Post-Rio+20 green economy work*.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ UN PAGE, *Who Are We?*.

²¹⁹ UNEP, *Global Green New Deal*, 2009, pp. 4-16.

²²⁰ UN DESA, *Attachment A – Audit of current initiatives and key actors involved in Post-Rio+20 green economy work*.

Similar to the PAGE initiative, the Global Green Growth Institute, Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), UNEP, and the World Bank also collaborated to form the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP).²²¹ GGKP is an initiative that brings together a network of researchers and experts whose key roles are to assess and focus on major educational and informational barriers such as finance, lack of information sharing projects, and policies directed towards the practice of green growth.²²² GGKP, with the aid of extensive consultation and research, makes available the most efficient strategies and policies to better implement and promote sustainable development and economic growth so as to eradicate poverty.²²³

In terms of financial support, billions of dollars are raised each year to fund projects that are beneficial to environmental sustainability and poverty alleviation.²²⁴ On 15 March 2015 the World Bank announced the launch of the Green Growth Bond 05/2023.²²⁵ Green bonds are ways by which the World Bank helps fund poverty alleviation through the use of environmentally friendly initiatives, such as water irrigation efficiency.²²⁶ Similarly, the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP is a global initiative that promotes and assists states in establishing policies that are aimed at poverty reduction through monitoring, budgeting, and planning at local and national levels.²²⁷ In 2000, the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) was established by the Asia Development Bank (ADB) to financially support local practices geared towards sustainable development and poverty eradication, which provides and promotes a healthy standard of living, literacy, nourishment for the poor and needy, and expansion of agriculture and natural resources.²²⁸

To increase collaboration among partners, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), along with UNDP and UNEP, formed the Green Economy Joint Programme.²²⁹ This program aims at expanding and enhancing consultative services on policy methods and implementation to foster green growth in economies and reduce the amount of poverty at global, national, and local levels.²³⁰ According to the Second PrepCom of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), one of the most effective ways to promote a green economy internationally in the context of poverty eradication, is through the establishment of a toolkit.²³¹ The UNDP, in collaboration with the OECD, the World Bank, UN, and the African Development Bank (AfDB) formed the G20 Toolkit on Inclusive Green Growth Tools.²³² The Toolkit provides policymakers with local policy agendas and strategies and expands the flow of knowledge and information about the connections between poverty and the environment.²³³

Actions Required to Promote Green Economy to Eradicate Poverty

The UN has “stressed that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, which includes extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an essential requirement for the achievement of sustainable development.”²³⁴ The benefits of green growth in alleviating poverty vary from avoiding the exploitations of natural resources and making growth resilient to climate change and other environmental impacts, to ensuring food, water, and energy security, and creating better opportunities for green jobs while opening doors to infrastructure development and investments.²³⁵ Further action is needed especially in the implementation of projects and policies so as to accelerate the improvement of an internationally sustainable economy and stimulate the growth towards poverty eradication.²³⁶

²²¹ Green Growth Knowledge Platform, *Mission*, 2016.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ World Bank, *Green Bonds Are Changing Investor Expectations and Making Sustainable Investment Easier*, 2015.

²²⁵ World Bank Treasury, *World Bank Launches ‘Green Growth Bond 05/2023’ For Retail Investors across Europe*, 2015.

²²⁶ World Bank, *Green Bonds Are Changing Investor Expectations and Making Sustainable Investment Easier*, 2015.

²²⁷ UNDP & UNEP, *About the Poverty-Environment Initiative*.

²²⁸ ADB, *Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction*, 2016.

²²⁹ UNDP, *Supporting a Green Economy Transition in Developing Countries and LDCs: Building towards Rio +20 and Beyond*, 2016.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ United States of America, *The Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011.

²³² UNDP, *A Toolkit of Policy Options to Support Inclusive Green Growth*, 2016.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*.

²³⁵ IISD, *Can the green economy help to eradicate poverty?*.

²³⁶ Barbier, *A Global Green New Deal, Report prepared for the Green Economy Initiative of UNEP*, 2009.

The ILO has stated that with a green economy better jobs are created and people are lifted out of poverty, which is an example of why employment and social inclusion are important aspects of a sustainable development strategy.²³⁷ According to the ILO, the provision of green jobs has increased employment steadily since 2004 where over three million people worldwide were able to acquire jobs and improve the standard of living of many families.²³⁸ The transitioning to a green economy can yield about 15 to 60 million additional jobs worldwide, in addition to the millions of jobs already created.²³⁹ An example of this is the renewable energy sector, which now employs about 5 million workers, more than doubling its 2006-2010 numbers.²⁴⁰

As stated by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, some of the elements of economic growth need to begin with policies that make labor markets work better, such as removing gender inequalities and increasing financial inclusion, as these are some of the main challenges faced by developing states.²⁴¹ The inclusion of women and their participation in achieving a sustainable green economy should be given great attention as they play a key role in the general advancement of the economy.²⁴² "Women support families through wage labor, preserve traditional knowledge, maintain biodiversity, ensure household food security, and nutrition, while at the same time produce 50 percent of agricultural output in Asia, and represent nearly 80 percent of the agricultural labor force in parts of Africa."²⁴³ Labor and market policies, such as the gender and land rights policy of South Africa, include women in emerging green economy sectors.²⁴⁴ Projects such as the Mapfura Makhura Incubator, which is a sustainable energy project aimed at gender balance and inclusion, allow small-scale farmers to become biofuel producers as a way of acquiring a stable income.²⁴⁵

Regulatory policies also play an important role in the expansion and promotion of a green economy.²⁴⁶ There has to be sustainable development policies set so as to enable states and local governments to continue playing a key role in the expansion of green growth.²⁴⁷ These policies are the foundations to a green economy as they allow states set and implement policies that pertain to their ability to achieve a sustainable economy.²⁴⁸ The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) also stresses the importance of implementing sustainable development policies as it is one of the ways by which green economy can be promoted and foster the transition to a more sustainable economy.²⁴⁹ UNCTAD also introduces three "growth poles," which are the efficiency of energy, agricultural sustainability, and renewable energy technologies, that it believes are adequate to offer strategies geared towards sustainable agriculture thereby lessening the ongoing global food crisis and eventually eradicating poverty.²⁵⁰ The recommended poles have the potential of cutting cost while at the same time generating income, making them self-financing or "economically self-sustaining once initial investments are made, even under conditions of minimal or imperfect internalization of health and environmental costs or benefits."²⁵¹ In terms of agriculture, the proposed growth poles have proven that the move towards an organic agricultural mechanism is more profitable and faster in poverty alleviation than conventional farming.²⁵²

Over the years much progress has been made toward sustainability, especially in reducing resource degradation, pollution, and waste.²⁵³ This has been done through investments from both the private and public sectors and has established and supported activities that require low carbon emissions, which safeguards the ecosystem and also

²³⁷ ILO, *Working towards sustainable development: Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy*, 2016.

²³⁸ ILO, *Promoting Decent Work in a Green Economy*, 2011, p. 18.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ ILO, *Transitioning to green economy could yield up to 60 million jobs, ILO says*, 2012.

²⁴¹ United Kingdom, *Growth: Building jobs and prosperity in developing countries*, p. 2.

²⁴² UNRISD, *Social Dimensions of Green Economy*, 2012, p. 5.

²⁴³ Worldwatch Institute, *The Critical Role of Women in Sustainable Development*, 2012.

²⁴⁴ UNRISD, *Social Dimensions of Green Economy*, 2012, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ UNEP, *Laws for a Green Economy*.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ UNCTAD, *Promoting poles of clean growth to foster the transition to a more sustainable economy*, 2009.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ UNEP, *The Marrakech Process Progress Report*, 2011, p. 7.

preserves biodiversity, leading to an increase in resources.²⁵⁴ By reducing carbon emissions there is a great possibility of reducing the burden of poverty and environmental degradation around the world.²⁵⁵ This can be done through the maximization of the role of clean and renewable energy in line with poverty reduction.²⁵⁶ The UN-REDD program, a collaboration between UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), includes a multi-donor trust fund from which many developing states have benefited.²⁵⁷ An example of a benefitting program is the Juma Project, a REDD+ initiative which is part of the Bolsa Floresta Programme that aims at improving the standard of living of individuals living in the selected Sustainable Development Reserves (SDRs) of the Amazonas in Brazil.²⁵⁸ It was noted by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) that the REDD+ program aims at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.²⁵⁹ The program, through its funding rewards, compensates developing states for conserving and sustaining their forests which has worked greatly in reducing poverty while achieving sustainable development.²⁶⁰

Impacts of Poverty Eradication through Green Economy Strategies

Sustainable development “recognizes that growth must be both inclusive and environmentally sound to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity for today’s population and to continue to meet the needs of future generations.”²⁶¹ One of the challenges and criticisms faced by the social dimensions of green economy, especially at Rio+20, was that it was not well understood or integrated in discussions of sustainable development.²⁶² In response to these criticisms, the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) introduced a project that aimed to develop a policy framework that would position social dimensions at the center of green economy and sustainable development.²⁶³ An important aspect of social dimension that is mostly overlooked or given lesser importance is policy intervention in terms of rights, regulations, and participation, which are key elements for structural transformation and are compatible with the SDGs.²⁶⁴

According to UNRISD, policies for informative exchange need to address certain sets of issues.²⁶⁵ Such issues include equipping policy makers with the information needed to set effective laws and regulations that will govern green economy and manage resources to promote poverty alleviation.²⁶⁶ This also requires taking into consideration those at the local level and making sure that policies support and suit their needs and ways of life.²⁶⁷ Other issues include the ecological effects of green economy, essential policy reforms, and the facilitation of a sustainable environment for growth, which need to be addressed through social and eco-social metrics and indicators.²⁶⁸ This can be done through various ways, including raising awareness through public education, encouraging environmentally safe methods of production and consumption, supporting states in the establishment of sound decisions, encouraging local and national cooperation, and encouraging state in their implementation of green policies.²⁶⁹

According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development, there are many proven ways by which green economy strategies, such as the reform and implementation of green policies, green investment and growth scenarios, the use of solar electricity, and environmentally friendly farming indicate multiple benefits including poverty eradication.²⁷⁰ It is also noted that different states are at different levels of the poverty scale and this can

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Greenpeace International, *Sustainable Energy for Poverty Reduction: an Action Plan*, p. 24.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ IIED, *Designing REDD+ to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty*.

²⁵⁸ IIED, *REDD: Protecting climate, forests and livelihoods*.

²⁵⁹ IIED, *Designing REDD+ to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty*.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ World Bank, *Sustainable Development Overview*, 2016.

²⁶² UN DESA, *A guidebook to the Green Economy*, p. 5.

²⁶³ UNRISD, *Social Dimensions of Green Economy*, 2012, pp. 1-2.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ IISD, *Can the green economy help to eradicate poverty?*.

affect their level of growth.²⁷¹ Nonetheless, each state experiences growth and poverty reduction at their own pace, and as long as the poor are given a chance to part take in the growth process and reap from its benefits as well, poverty eradication is attainable.²⁷²

Conclusion

With the eradication of poverty at the forefront of the SDGs, the UN General Assembly has taken the lead role as the main representative policy-making body of the UN in encouraging states to harness the green economy for poverty eradication and sustainable development.²⁷³ To achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development with maximum effectiveness, changes are recommended in social, environmental, and economic approaches.²⁷⁴ The move to a green economy makes it possible to address and improve certain environmental challenges which highlight the issues of climate change, create jobs, and reduce the misuse of natural resources.²⁷⁵ The policies and suggested by the General Assembly are to provide directions, especially for the developing states, which respect the states' social and economic challenges and allow them to exercise growth at their own pace.²⁷⁶ Moving towards a green economy will demand the efforts of world leaders, the general society, and the public and private sectors to join efforts and see to the smooth transition.²⁷⁷ This requires the contribution of all sectors so as to accommodate the needs of all partners involved and see to it that no state is left behind in the eradication of poverty.²⁷⁸

Further Research

Delegates should reflect on the role the Second Committee plays with regards to this topic and consider what some of the barriers are, especially in low-income states, to achieving sustainable development? How can policies contribute to poverty eradication, economic growth, employment, and sustainable consumption and production? Delegates should also consider how international partnerships can be most effective in promoting and investing in green jobs and contributing to poverty alleviation. How can the Second Committee work best in achieving SDG 1, 2, and 8? How can the international sector, especially monetary agencies, work best in offering financial assistance?

Annotated Bibliography

International Institute for Environment and Development. (n.d.). *Designing REDD+ to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty* [Website]. Retrieved 29 August 2016 from: <http://www.iied.org/designing-redd-promote-sustainable-development-reduce-poverty>

This is a program that is aimed at compensating developing countries for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of their ecosystem so as to lessen the amount of emissions as well as maintain a sustainable environment and reduce poverty. The Program aims at promoting forest cover and the decrease of deforestation through its monetary and material incentives offered to farmers. REDD+ also calculates how cost effective are the poverty eradication policies it is recommending for states to adopt. It also allows for states to implement policies which includes the inclusion of women in achieving a sustainable economy at all government levels. REDD+ also allows the states to carry out policies at their own pace as it is aware that no one state has the same amount of resources The program is a great source of information about how policies and incentives can be implemented as it supports states transition into a green economy, engage the talents of women while promoting a safer and more secure world.

²⁷¹ United Kingdom, *Growth: Building jobs and prosperity in developing countries*, p. 2.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 14.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

International Labour Organization. (2016). *Working towards Sustainable Development: Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy*. [Website]. Retrieved 25 August 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_181836/lang--en/index.htm

This is a joint ILO/UNEP study which shows that, if accompanied by the correct combination of policies, a green economy can also create more and better jobs, lift people out of poverty, and promote social inclusion. It also demonstrates that employment and social inclusion must be an integral part of any sustainable development strategy and must be included in policies that address climate change and ensure the preservation of the environment. It also assesses the sectoral, employment and income implications of the transition to a green economy and highlights the necessary conditions, policy prescriptions and good practices required to ensure that the green economy is characterized by gains in job quality, reductions in poverty and improvements in social inclusion.

United Kingdom, Department for International Development. (n.d.). *Growth: Building Jobs and Prosperity in Developing Countries*. Retrieved 23 August 2016 from: <http://www.oecd.org/derec/unitedkingdom/40700982.pdf>

This report provides an array of ways by which to promote sustainable development and eliminate world poverty. It provides programs and policies recommended by the organization, which sees economic growth as the most powerful instrument for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life especially in developing states. The report also shows how under different conditions, similar rates of growth can have very different effects on poverty, the employment prospects of the poor and broader indicators of human development. These are great additions to the diversity of topic at hand as its concentration is specifically in the developing states.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *A guidebook to the Green Economy: Issue 1* [Report]. Retrieved 5 August 2016 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/GE%20Guidebook.pdf>

This document calls upon governments to develop national strategies for sustainable development, incorporating policy measures outlined in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. The document also gives a clear and detail defining of the what green economy means as well as describes the emerging practice in the design and implementation of national green economy strategies by both developed and developing states across most regions, including Africa, Latin America, the Asia-Pacific and Europe. It also provides important insights and much-needed clarity regarding the types of green economy policy measures, their scope with regard to various sectors and national priorities, and their institutional barriers, risks and implementation costs as well as environmental, social and economic benefits.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2003). *International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production: Summary by the Co-Chairs of the Meeting* [Report]. Retrieved 18 August 2016 from:

<http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/consultations/international/pdf/MarrakechReport.pdf>

This report is in response to the call in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for actions at all levels to encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programs in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production. It also promotes social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and, where appropriate, delinking economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste. The document is a great source for delegates as it addresses key issues of eradicating poverty while providing alternative policies to promote economic and social development and reducing environmental impacts and conserving natural resources.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2011). *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication* [Report]. Retrieved 15 July 2016 from:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/126GER_synthesis_en.pdf

This report is an excellent resource and overview of transforming towards a green economy. The report looks at different areas of the green economy, including transport, management of natural

resources, and tourism, as well as many others, and provides area- specific recommendations, including the utilization of the said resources. Delegates should be familiar with the basic ideas covered in this report, and focus primarily on the parts of the report that pertain to the committee topic, particularly the section on transitioning and, the implementation of policies that will lead to the eradication of poverty, as it discusses how no one plan fits all as well as no one country being left behind.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session. (2012). *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)* [Outcome Document]. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/66/288>

As the main outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, The Future We Want includes a chapter on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The chapter helps to frame the green economy concepts, identifying a range of principles for applying the concept in a way that achieves sustainable development and contributes to poverty eradication. Importantly, the document invites the UN system, in cooperation with relevant donors and international organizations, to coordinate a number of green economy deliverables relating to tools, best practices, methodologies and platforms that can assist with green economy capacity building.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth Session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

This resolution is the formal adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is the groundbreaking document set by world leaders to succeed and build on the MDGs. It redefines the development of the UN system also serves as the main plan of action in achieving the universal agenda in all its three dimensions-economic, social, and environmental. It is an excellent source of information with regards the general identification of each goal targeted to be achieved in the next 15 years.

World Bank. (2015). *Green Bonds Are Changing Investor Expectations & Making Sustainable Investing Easier* [Website]. Retrieved 20 August 2016 from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/01/22/green-bonds-changing-investor-expectations-three-trends>

This article highlights the importance investing in a sustainable and responsible way wherein bond help fill green the gaps in much-needed development finance for climate-friendly projects. The article also elaborates on the changes in how money is being invested and what the investors expect their money to accomplish. The article also shows the involvement of world leading financial institutions as the majority of green bonds have been issued by development banks like the World Bank and IFC and used for climate- and environment-friendly projects. The article is a great source of information as it stresses the importance of both public and private sector finance and further educate the private sector in the value of investing in clean development while working towards putting economies in a cleaner growth pathway.

World Summit on Sustainable Development. (2002). *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 12 August 2016 from:

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/WSSD_PlanImpl.pdf

This document builds on earlier declarations made by member states with regards to achieving the MDGs and SDGs. It examines the development and improvement achieved since the adoption of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. Unlike the Rio Declaration, this document also functions as an agreement with its concentration focused on global challenges that hinder the sustainable growth and advancement of all persons. The document plays an important role in the area of attaining a green economy and poverty eradication as it serves as a policing document that monitors the progress of states.

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III. Designing Effective Policies and Institutions to Reduce Inequalities

“Let us recognize that inequality is not just a statistic or a value-free measure of economic activity, it is increasingly harmful, sowing the seeds of division, pushing societies towards polarization and fracture.”²⁷⁹

Introduction

Equality has always been an underlying principle of the United Nations (UN).²⁸⁰ This principle is clearly outlined in Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) and more recently by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.²⁸¹ Equality is the recognition of the equal value and dignity of each human being.²⁸² Ensuring this concept is respected within society includes guaranteeing the rights to non-discrimination, equal representation and protection before the law, and providing opportunities for every citizen to participate in society.²⁸³ Reducing inequality is a main focus of the SDGs, in accordance with the motto “leave no one behind.”²⁸⁴ This commitment is explicit in SDG 10 that reads, “Reduce inequality within and among countries” and SDG 5, to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”²⁸⁵ Economic changes over the last 20-30 years have led to inequality becoming an increasingly significant issue.²⁸⁶ This growing disparity in income undermines efforts to alleviate poverty and creates social and political instability.²⁸⁷ High levels of inequality also correspond with higher rates of crime and lower overall economic growth.²⁸⁸ For these reasons, it is necessary to consider both the drivers and the consequences of rising inequality.²⁸⁹

One of the clearest ways in which inequality can be identified is in economic inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient.²⁹⁰ This measure functions by plotting the distribution of income against a straight line representing a completely equal distribution.²⁹¹ By comparing the plotted wealth distribution with the straight line, a value is derived ranging from 0, representing total equality, to 1, representing a society where just one person owns all of the wealth.²⁹² The Gini coefficient allows the progression of inequality between and within states to be compared over time.²⁹³ Changes in the Gini coefficient since 1990 reveal an interesting trend; inequality between states has been decreasing, while inequality within states has increased.²⁹⁴ Between 1990 and 2012, over two-thirds of the world’s population witnessed increases in the Gini coefficient of their countries, despite sustained economic growth.²⁹⁵ However there are regions that reduced inequality whilst sustaining economic growth.²⁹⁶ For example, 14 out of 20 Latin American states reduced their Gini coefficients through a combination of economic policies.²⁹⁷

These statistics also demonstrate that economic growth will not be enough to accomplish the SDGs if this growth is not fully inclusive.²⁹⁸ It is estimated that, globally, the richest 1% own about 40% of assets, while the poorest 1% own no more than 1%.²⁹⁹ As of 2015, over 2 billion people still live on less than \$2 a day despite the global

²⁷⁹ Eliasson, *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality – Part 1*, 2016.

²⁸⁰ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. I.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*; UN DPI, *Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries*.

²⁸² The Equal Rights Trust, *Declaration of Principles on Equality*, 2008, p. 5.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ UN DPI, *UN political forum opens with focus on achieving 2030 Agenda’s call to ‘leave no one behind’*, 2016.

²⁸⁵ UN DPI, *Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries*; UN DPI, *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*.

²⁸⁶ UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 1.

²⁸⁷ Carpentier et al., *Goal 10—Why Addressing Inequality Matters*, 2015.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Stokel-Walker, *Who, What, Why: What is the Gini coefficient?*, *BBC News*, 2015.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 25; UN DESA, *Income convergence or persistent inequalities among countries? Development Issues No. 5*, 2015, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 29.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 19.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

economy experiencing near uninterrupted economic growth since the Second World War.³⁰⁰ A shift to more inclusive economic growth is needed.³⁰¹ For growth to be inclusive it must benefit everyone in society, especially those earning the lowest incomes; doing so will reduce poverty, unemployment, and inequality.³⁰² Inequalities in income and wealth are prominently displayed throughout societies.³⁰³ However inequality is not just about disparities in income or wealth, but “access to and outcomes in health, education and other essential human needs.”³⁰⁴ One example of how income inequality manifests itself in measures of well-being is through the child mortality rate.³⁰⁵ Those born into poorer households in developing countries are twice as likely to die before reaching age five.³⁰⁶

The General Assembly Second Committee specializes in advising Member States on matters of economic and financial policy, which is an important tool for governments to address the issue of inequality.³⁰⁷ The Second Committee approves resolutions promoting principles of sustainable development and suggesting strategies to remove barriers to inclusion within societies.³⁰⁸ Through these activities, the Second Committee plays a decisive role in helping Member States address inequality.³⁰⁹

International and Regional Framework

The *Charter* clearly states that the UN’s purpose is “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”³¹⁰ This commitment to equality was deepened in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).³¹¹ Articles 1 and 2 respectively state that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and that they are entitled to these rights without any distinction based upon their characteristics.³¹² Also highlighted within the UDHR is the necessity of access to public services in order to fulfill these rights, like the right to equal access to public services in Article 21, to social security in Article 22, and to education in Article 26.³¹³ The principle of ensuring that all fairly benefit from the proceeds of development was further expressed in the General Assembly’s *Declaration on the Right to Development*, adopted by the body in 1986.³¹⁴ Article 8 of the declaration makes clear that states have the responsibility to ensure equal access to basic resources, especially education, health services, and housing.³¹⁵ It also makes clear the necessity of states ensuring that there is a fair distribution of income across their economies.³¹⁶

Furthermore, the *Millennium Declaration* featured equality as one of its key principles, stating that no one person, and no country, may be denied the opportunity to benefit from development.³¹⁷ The declaration focused on bringing the benefits of development to those most left behind, and the accompanying Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused on various ways to eradicate poverty, such as increasing access to primary education and

³⁰⁰ UN DPI, *Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*; World Bank, *GDP growth (annual %)*, 2016.

³⁰¹ UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 12.

³⁰² Durán, *What does inclusive economic growth actually mean in practice?*, 2015.

³⁰³ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 22.

³⁰⁴ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality: Informal Summary of the President*, 2016, p. 1.

³⁰⁵ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 47.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Ensuring effective secretariat support for sustained follow-up to the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/57/273)*, 2003.

³⁰⁸ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

³¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948, p. 2.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

³¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Right to Development (A/RES/41/128)*, 1986.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000, p. 2.

eliminating hunger.³¹⁸ Although the MDGs were successful in helping to improve living standards for millions across the world, economic inequality within societies has continued to increase.³¹⁹

In evaluating the MDGs, the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda concluded that equality was not featured prominently enough within the MDGs.³²⁰ The team also noted that the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable were often overlooked by focusing on the overall performance of states.³²¹ As a consequence, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* features equality much more prominently.³²² Inequality is not just the focus of SDG 5 and 10; it also features as a transversal issue across all SDGs.³²³ Two key targets to be achieved by SDG 10 are: “progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average” and “empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.”³²⁴

The Second Committee has also played a key role in setting up the process by which the SDGs are funded.³²⁵ The Financing for Development (FfD) process was established by the Second Committee, and has led to three conferences, which have determined sources of financial support for the activities of the UN.³²⁶ The most recent conference was the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that was held in July 2015, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to secure a strategy on financing for development of the SDGs.³²⁷ Within the outcome document of the conference, called the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015), states committed to a package of measures that focused on improving conditions for the very poorest.³²⁸ The most prominent of which included the delivery of essential public services, ending hunger and malnutrition, and providing decent and productive work for all.³²⁹ Lack of access to public services leads to negative outcomes in many areas, particularly in health and education.³³⁰ Decent work is necessary to counteract economic inequality and to enable the fulfillment of each worker’s economic potential.³³¹

Role of the International System

In its 70th session, the Second Committee took action on 44 different draft proposals, most of which contained different approaches to addressing inequality.³³² One such approach was outlined in resolution 70/191 approved on 22 December 2015 titled “Commodities.”³³³ It notes that excessive price volatility in the commodities market predominantly affects those in the least developed countries.³³⁴ The volatility can also leave many producers vulnerable to shocks, potentially forcing them to rely on savings, or risk bankruptcy.³³⁵ It can also impact entire economies that are heavily export-dependent.³³⁶ This resolution calls upon states to address these issues by investing in economic diversification, providing more transparent oversight of commodity markets, and for the creation of national plans and policies to help workers that produce commodities mitigate the risk of volatility in the price of

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

³¹⁹ UN DESA, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, pp. 4-9; Jolly, MDG targets are overlooking inequality, *The Guardian*. 2011.

³²⁰ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all*, 2015, pp. 2-5.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

³²³ Eliasson, *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality – Part 1*, 2016.

³²⁴ UN DPI, *Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries*.

³²⁵ UN General Assembly, *Ensuring effective secretariat support for sustained follow-up to the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/57/273)*, 2003.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ UN Third International Conference on Financing for Development, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

³²⁸ Ibid., pp. 6-10.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 147.

³³¹ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, pp. 107-108.

³³² UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial*, 2016.

³³³ UN General Assembly, *Commodities (A/RES/70/191)*, 2015, p. 1.

³³⁴ Ibid., pp. 4-6.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

their product.³³⁷ The importance of public services and investment in human resources is outlined in resolution 70/220 of 2015, on “Human resources development.” The Second Committee emphasized the importance of having a workforce that was capable of fulfilling the demands placed upon it in order to achieve inclusive economic growth.³³⁸ It further states the necessity of quality education being available to all, in order to maximize human potential and to eliminate poverty.³³⁹ To support this, it called for actions at every level to prioritize literacy and science proficiency, including education for adults.³⁴⁰ Ensuring access to health services also features in the resolution; it calls upon Member States to strengthen national health systems, to consider universal health coverage and to engage in the exchange of best practices in different areas of health.³⁴¹

General Assembly resolution 70/223 of 2015, on “Agriculture development, food security and nutrition” stated that food insecurity and malnutrition are primarily caused by poverty and inequity.³⁴² It then stressed the need to counter these issues through an increase in sustainable agricultural production.³⁴³ Furthermore, it highlights the importance of public and private investment benefiting local food producers in particular, whilst reducing malnutrition and inequality.³⁴⁴ The Second Committee also hosts special events focusing on specific topics, many of which are relevant to addressing inequality.³⁴⁵ One example is “Promoting inclusive growth: Transitioning from the Informal to the Formal Economy” held at the UN headquarters on 16 October 2016.³⁴⁶ This meeting discussed workers moving from informal or unregulated jobs to ones that are formal or regulated.³⁴⁷ The aims of the meeting included an examination of the potential economic benefits of workers successfully moving to formal work and to look into the creation of international frameworks that would assist workers in making the transition.³⁴⁸

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a central organ of the UN with a mandate primarily to advance the principles of sustainable development.³⁴⁹ It does so by cooperating with other UN and non-UN bodies, and also by engaging in follow-up work to UN conferences, including those created by the General Assembly.³⁵⁰ One recent example of this close coordination was during a joint meeting titled “The Changing Political Economy Of Globalization: Multilateral institutions and the 2030 Agenda.”³⁵¹ In March 2016 ECOSOC hosted the Special Meeting on Inequality, which brought together speakers from governments, the UN system and the private sector to analyze the key drivers on inequality, provide policy recommendations, and discuss the role of institutions in reducing inequality.³⁵² The outcomes of this meeting included an affirmation of the need to align the goals of policies and institutions with those of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and SDG 10 in particular.³⁵³ Other key outcomes included the importance of forming strong partnerships inside the UN system and an examination of how poorly-designed economic systems and policies can exacerbate inequality.³⁵⁴

The Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) is a part of the UN secretariat dedicated to promoting principles of sustainable development.³⁵⁵ DESA works closely with the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and Member States in compiling a wide range of data and analysis to assist them in their decision making.³⁵⁶ One example of how

³³⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-6.

³³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Human resources development (A/RES/70/22)*, 2015, p. 3.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴¹ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁴² UN General Assembly, *Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/RES/70/223)*, 2015, p. 2.

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Promoting social integration through social inclusion (A/RES/66/122)*, 2011, pp. 1-2.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ UN ECOSOC, *About Us*.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ UN ECOSOC, *Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the Second Committee – “The changing political economy of globalization: Multilateral institutions and the 2030 Agenda”*, 2016.

³⁵² UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality: Informal Summary of the President*, 2016, p. 1.

³⁵³ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ UN DESA, *Who we are*.

³⁵⁶ UN DESA, *What we do*.

the DESA helps to tackle inequality is by publishing biennial reports containing detailed analysis of the world social situation and providing context to important issues.³⁵⁷ The Department chose to concentrate upon SDG 10 in *Inequality Matters*, containing an all-encompassing view to monitoring and reducing inequality.³⁵⁸

Causes and Consequences of Economic Inequality

Causes

A certain amount of inequality is necessary for economic production, as it provides incentives for people to succeed, compete, save, and invest to increase their economic status.³⁵⁹ However, high levels of inequality within countries prevent the benefits of economic development from reaching those most vulnerable in society, creating division and exacerbating injustice.³⁶⁰ Increases in inequality have often been primarily attributed to globalization and technological changes.³⁶¹ Globalization refers to the process where domestic markets are open to external trade and competition, leading to greater global economic interconnectedness and interdependence.³⁶² A lack of wage increases for workers has been attributed to globalization due to its promotion of greater competition between labor forces.³⁶³ Technological change has caused inequality by increasing the incomes of technically skilled workers at the expense of those who are not, as well as the lack of access to these devices for low-income populations, which deepens the gap among societies.³⁶⁴ Recent labor market reforms, including making it easier to hire and fire workers and reductions in the bargaining power of trade unions, have all been associated with higher market inequality.³⁶⁵ The decline of organized labor has been found to primarily benefit the top 10% of the global population by income.³⁶⁶ This results in worker's wages staying constant over time, while those with higher incomes see increases.³⁶⁷

For most households, wages are the predominant source of income, however income includes any and all forms by which money is earned, such as through investments or interest.³⁶⁸ This widening gap is one of the main causes of economic inequality; those on lower incomes spend a relatively larger amount of their income, therefore any measures which lead to them possessing less money will suppress economic demand.³⁶⁹ Many economies overcame this gap by providing access to cheap credit, which has been linked to the 2008 financial crisis as well as more general economic instability.³⁷⁰ The household debt attained by poor and middle-class households ultimately exacerbates inequality and prevents economic growth from being inclusive.³⁷¹ However the wide variety of outcomes between different states undergoing these economic changes makes it difficult to directly link them to rising inequality, as several states have managed to prevent increases in economic inequality from wage stagnation through redistributive economic policies and greater investment in public services.³⁷²

Consequences

The consequences of inequality can create a vicious cycle. For example, disparities in access to health and education can cause lower income, and a lower income can lead to worsening access to health and education.³⁷³ Receiving

³⁵⁷ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, pp. 7-8.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Dabla-Norris et al., *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*, 2015, p. 6.

³⁶⁰ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all*, 2015, p. 7

³⁶¹ Jaumotte & Buitron, *Power from the People*, pp. 29-31.

³⁶² UNESCO, *Globalisation*, 2016.

³⁶³ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 107; OECD, *Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising*, 2011, pp. 28-29.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Dabla-Norris et al., *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*, 2015, p. 26; Jaumotte & Buitron, *Power from the People*, pp. 29-31.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Piana, *Wages*, 2001; Merriam-Webster, *Income*.

³⁶⁹ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 64.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Dabla-Norris et al., *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*, 2015, p. 8.

³⁷² UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 107.

³⁷³ Ibid., pp. 48-50, 70.

subpar education and medical services ultimately reduces opportunity and the productivity of workers, trapping them in a negative spiral of inequality.³⁷⁴ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) notes that economic inequality undermines poverty reduction, and hinders progress made in areas of health, education and nutrition.³⁷⁵ It is important to be aware that high inequality does not just hurt those poorest in society.³⁷⁶ Relationships have been found between levels of inequality within societies and higher instances of infant mortality, obesity, and mental illness across the entire population.³⁷⁷ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently published *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*.³⁷⁸ The paper highlights that income inequality, and more specifically income distribution, has a significant impact on economic growth.³⁷⁹ Increases in income share of the top 20% were found to reduce Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth over the medium-term.³⁸⁰ In contrast, an increase in the income share of the bottom 20% was found to have the opposite effect.³⁸¹ Furthermore, high levels of inequality were found to have increased debt-driven consumption and significantly decreased financial stability.³⁸²

Inequality within Groups

Inequalities based upon discrimination or prejudice against certain characteristics, such as gender or race, are a significant concern.³⁸³ The most fundamental group-based inequality within groups is gender inequality, due to the number of those affected and how it exacerbates other forms of inequality.³⁸⁴ These non-economic forms of discrimination feed back into economic inequality, creating a cycle that entrenches existing inequalities between different groups in society.³⁸⁵ This translates into lack of opportunities, such the inability to fully participate in the labor market, or in access to capital.³⁸⁶ Addressing these inequalities requires specific interventions to remove the particular barriers to inclusion and to ensure that opportunities are available.³⁸⁷ Removing those barriers including social attitudes and discrimination will empower groups to fully participate in society.³⁸⁸

Economic Policies Targeting Inequality

One common factor in Member States that have bucked the recent trend towards rising inequality, is the role of redistributive policies.³⁸⁹ For example, progressive tax systems take a higher percentage from those with larger incomes than those with smaller ones, thereby redistributing wealth across society.³⁹⁰ A mixture of a progressive tax systems and social security can have a significant stabilizing effect on the income distribution across a society.³⁹¹ This occurs by providing more income to poorer households through social security programs, such as child allowances and public pensions, among others.³⁹² Another focus is that of removing barriers to economic inclusion, which is largely dependent on the individual circumstances of each group.³⁹³

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 1.

³⁷⁶ The Equality Trust, *Health*, 2015.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Dabla-Norris et al., *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*, 2015, p. 1.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² UN DESA, *Inequality Matters Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 64.

³⁸³ Ibid., p. 75; Badgett, *The Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India*, 2014, p. 6.

³⁸⁴ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all*, 2015, pp. 10-11.

³⁸⁵ ILO, *Equality and discrimination*, 2016.

³⁸⁶ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 70.

³⁸⁷ UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 261.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 262.

³⁸⁹ OECD, *All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen*, 2014, pp. 108-109.

³⁹⁰ United States of America, *Lesson 3, Progressive taxes*.

³⁹¹ OECD, *All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen*, 2014, pp. 108-109.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, pp. 101-102; UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013, p. 112.

An important step towards reducing economic inequality is ensuring good outcomes for all from education, health services, and social security.³⁹⁴ In this regard, it is essential to find ways to promote access to public services.³⁹⁵ Latin America was able to reduce income inequality through increased investment in education and the adoption of large transfer income programs for poverty reduction.³⁹⁶ In April 2015, the government of Ecuador passed a bill that expanded retirement plans to cover unpaid housewives, thereby ensuring their financial independence from their husbands when elderly.³⁹⁷ Governments may consider instituting policies that specifically target the delivery of protection policies to the most disadvantaged, including more investment in the necessary infrastructure.³⁹⁸

Conclusion

Preventing further rises in inequality is necessary to accomplish the SDGs.³⁹⁹ Economic policies that can ensure economic growth is more inclusive are necessary to reverse recent rises in inequality.⁴⁰⁰ Differing outcomes and economic policies across the world have shown that preventing and reversing inequality is possible without undermining economic progress.⁴⁰¹ Institutions can ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable are adequately heard on a regional, national, or international level.⁴⁰² Ensuring that these institutions are both accountable and inclusive will aid the fight against inequality.⁴⁰³ This requires measures to promote civic engagement, such as freedom of information policies, and measures to increase the diversity of those responsible for the creation of policy, especially gender diversity.⁴⁰⁴ The General Assembly Second Committee is best suited to provide the platform with which states can come together to share best practices and to recommend regulatory system adjustments.⁴⁰⁵ Reducing inequality is a major challenge that countries face around the world, and it is the UN's duty to promote policies that will assist Member States on achieving this goal.

Further Research

Delegates should consider the role that the General Assembly Second Committee can play in facilitating the sharing of best practices between different Member States. Also important is to consider which redistributive policies currently exist and can be applied to other states to tackle inequality. Another key aspect of tackling inequality is considering how economic growth can be reconfigured to benefit all sections of societies more equitably. A focus must be put on public services and how can access to public services be provided to all citizens. What can be done to ensure consistency in public services across the country? Measures which can improve the representativeness of institutions are necessary, but how can a wider selection of the population be integrated into decision-making? What ways are there to promote institutions to be more inclusive and sustainable? How can a commitment to ending discrimination be integrated further into economic policy?

Annotated Bibliography

Carpentier, C., et al. (2015). Goal 10—Why Addressing Inequality Matters. *UN Chronicle*, LI (4). Retrieved 17 July 2016 from: <http://unchronicle.un.org/article/goal-10-why-addressing-inequality-matters/>

This article from the UN chronicle covers how inequality has progressed over the last 30 years, and it then covers the effects of inequality. This source also discusses the targets of SDG 10, and their feasibility. This article draws attention to how member states will need to use country specific mixtures of economic policy in order to create an economy, which will increase the

³⁹⁴ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 100.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ UN DESA, *Income convergence or persistent inequalities among countries? Development Issues No. 5*, p. 1; United States of America, *International Update: Recent Developments in Foreign Public and Private Pensions*, 2015, p. 3.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013 p. 101.

³⁹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality: Informal Summary of the President*, 2016, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰⁰ OECD, *All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen*, 2014, p. 115.

⁴⁰¹ UN DESA, *Inequality Matters Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, 2013, p. 23.

⁴⁰² Huntingdon, *Political Development and Political Decay*, 1965, p. 394; ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality: Informal Summary of the President*, 2016, p. 1.

⁴⁰³ UN Web TV, *Building effective accountable and inclusive institutions to achieve sustainable development*, 2015.

⁴⁰⁴ OECD, *All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen*, 2014, pp. 166-169.

⁴⁰⁵ Carpentier et al., *Goal 10—Why Addressing Inequality Matters*, 2015.

incomes of those at the bottom of the pyramid. Examples of economic policies mentioned include tackling tax havens, promoting wage increases, and measures to ensure sufficient productive capacity within the economy to sustain those wages. This article serves as a great introduction to the United Nations approach to inequality.

Dabla-Norris, E., et al. (2015). *Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective*. International Monetary Fund. Retrieved 16 August 2016 from: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2015/sdn1513.pdf>

Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective is a staff discussion note analyzing the drivers and outcomes of high levels of inequality. It also seeks to explain the emergence of these drivers; it covers the impacts of labor market reforms on inequality, including the introduction of lax hiring and firing policies and the trend towards less unionization. This source also provides statistics, which reveal the direct link between income distribution and economic growth, and the role of education in overcoming the skills gap, which entrenches inequality and lower wages. Through this source delegates can learn about the main drivers of inequality, as well as the IMF's recommendations to mitigate them.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2014). *All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen*. Retrieved 22 August from: <http://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/all-on-board-making-inclusive-growth-happen.pdf>

This report was created by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to analyze and provide insight into necessary measures for inclusive economic growth. This report contains very detailed analysis of economic policies and the impact that these policies can have on inequality. Also mentioned are the role of institutions in regulating economic growth and potential measures to make them more inclusive. Delegates will find the background information given to these economic policies invaluable in promoting their own policies.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2013). *Inequality Matters: Report on the World Social Situation 2013*. Retrieved 16 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/reports/InequalityMatters.pdf>

This report contains an all-encompassing approach to monitoring and tackling inequality. In addition, it contains succinct commentary on recent increases of inequality. This report also examines the causes and effects of inequality over recent history. These measures can arrest the trend towards greater inequality within societies. The report concludes with some recommendations, which can potentially form the basis for delegates to start brainstorming their own ideas. This report is a complete guide to the issues with regards to inequality.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (n.d.). *Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries* [Website]. Retrieved 13 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/>

Understanding SDG 10 is vital to understanding both this topic and the United Nations efforts to alleviate this issue. This webpage contains a concise explanation of why the United Nations has chosen to make inequality a focus of the 2030 sustainable agenda. Especially important is its statement that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce poverty if it is not inclusive. Also important are the goals and targets, which translate the will to reduce inequality into concrete tasks to be accomplished. A clear understanding of this goal is needed in order to tackle the issue of inequality within the UN framework.

United Nations Development Programme. (2013). *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries* [Report]. Retrieved 18 August 2016 from: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Poverty%20Reduction/Inclusive%20development/Humanity%20Divided/HumanityDivided_Full-Report.pdf

This paper goes into a great amount of detail about multiple aspects of inequality. Particularly useful for this background guide was Chapter 7: A policy framework for addressing inequality in developing countries. It provides a blueprint for developing nations to start closing the gap in equality from multiple directions. An important idea contained within this chapter is that true progress towards inequality cannot just occur on a national level, but rather in conjunction with a concerted international effort. Delegates looking for concrete measures to address inequality would benefit from revising this source.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2016). *ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality: Informal Summary of the President*. Retrieved 22 September from:

<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2016doc/inequality-meeting-summary.pdf>

The ECOSOC special meeting on inequality took place on 30 March 2016 and included speeches from Speakers included H.E. Mr. Oh Joon, President of ECOSOC, Mr. Jan Eliasson, the UN Deputy Secretary-General and representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as academics from numerous institutions. The meeting was called in order to analyze key drivers of inequality at the national, regional and global level, provide policy recommendations and strengthen institutions. This discussion offers a comprehensive introduction to the United Nations discourse on inequality. Several conclusions were drawn, including the need to increase awareness on the effects of inequality on economic growth, the importance of gender equality, and the need to move away from extractive economic models. By presenting both the implications and potential starting points for reversing recent increases in equality, it presents a valuable resource for delegates looking for the United Nations approach to tackling this issue.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Commodities (A/RES/70/191)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/70/470/Add.4). Retrieved 20 August 2016 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/191>

This resolution, passed by the General Assembly in its 70th session, provides a useful example of how the principles of equality have been integrated into the fight against poverty. Attention is drawn to the effect of commodity price volatility on the poorest and most vulnerable. This resolution provides a clear example of the role that the General Assembly has played in tackling inequality so far.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

This resolution of the General Assembly introduces the Sustainable Development Goals. It also gives a clear overview of the background factors, which are part of the barriers to achieving those goals. Point 14 in particular, titled “Our world today,” gives clear context to the challenges and barriers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by mentioning rising inequalities within and among countries. This is a landmark document introducing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A thorough understanding of this Agenda is necessary for delegates to fully grasp the priorities of the UN with regards to inequality.

UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. (2012). *Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all* [Report]. Retrieved 22 August from:

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/10_inequalities_20July.pdf

This document was written by a UN task team consisting of the ECE, ESCAP, UNDESA, UNICEF, UNRISD and UN Women talking about the role inequality would play in the post 2015 agenda. It evaluates the outcomes of the Millennium Development Goals and comes to the conclusion that a greater focus on inequality would be required in future. It also makes the case for inequality causing detriments to everyone in society, not just the very poorest. Although written before the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, this source highlights the key role inequality would take in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This source is helpful to delegates by making the case that addressing inequality is in everyone’s best interest, and it also provides many policy recommendations for delegates to consider. Finally it gives clear context to the environment that leads to the creation of the SDGs.

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