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Update for the General Assembly Second Committee

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

During the main part of the 71st session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the Second Committee covered a wide range of topics under its mandate as the UN's primary body for discussion of economic, financial, and development issues.¹ Overall, the Second Committee adopted 37 draft resolutions on topics ranging from debt sustainability and food security to its continuing work on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²

At the end of the 70th session, the Second Committee discussed concerns from a number of Member States regarding its working practices, timekeeping, and agenda, particularly within the scope of aligning its working methods to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).³ As part of this ongoing work, the Secretary-General presented a report to the Second Committee during the 71st session on “mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development” and recommended a focus on “overcoming silos and seeking...collaborative approaches to integration” within and between UN bodies.⁴ The Second Committee debated and adopted a number of draft resolutions across a variety of issues relating to sustainable development and the SDGs, ranging from the role of entrepreneurship in development to follow-up actions on climate change following the *Paris Agreement* (2015).⁵ Furthermore, the Second Committee adopted a draft resolution on “Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,” which highlighted the necessity of the UN development system to mainstream the SDGs throughout all of its strategic policy work.⁶ On this note, the Committee also adopted a draft resolution, titled “Towards a New Economic Order,” that called on Member States to refrain from unilateral economic measures that were not in accordance with international frameworks and for a greater coordination of macroeconomic policies.⁷ It also affirmed the Committee’s commitment to expanding the role of developing countries in international economic policy-making in order to build a system able to lessen institutional economic inequality.⁸

Consistently noting that financial policies play a fundamental role within these three dimensions of sustainable development, the Second Committee also adopted a number of draft resolutions relating to macroeconomic policy questions.⁹ These included texts on combatting illicit financial flows, domestic tax evasion, strengthening South-South cooperation, and a text calling on Member States to honor prior official development assistance commitments.¹⁰ A draft resolution was also adopted that outlined reporting mechanisms for implementation of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015) during future sessions.¹¹

At the beginning of the General Debate, economist Dambisa Moyo spoke on the topic of “Tackling Global Imbalances to Achieve the 2030 Agenda” and highlighted the necessity for Member States to focus on the achievement of the SDGs.¹² She noted that the world was experiencing an environment in which wealth inequality

¹ UN DPI, *Second Committee Opens Seventy-First Session, Approving Organization of work (GA/EF/3446)*, 2016.

² UN DPI, *General Assembly Takes Action on Second Committee Reports by Adopting 37 Texts (GA/11880)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Resolutions: 71st Session*, 2016.

³ UN DPI, *Need to Align Working Methods with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Focus at Meeting of Second Committee (GA/EF/3445)*, 2016.

⁴ UN General Assembly, *Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/76)*, 2016, p. 16.

⁵ UN General Assembly, *Second Committee: Status of draft proposals*, 2016.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/71/243)*, 2016.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Towards a New International Economic Order (A/RES/71/236)*, 2016, p. 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ UN DPI, *Second Committee Focuses on Reform of Global International Financial System, Development Assistance, as it Concludes Macroeconomic Policy Debate (GA/EF/3459)*, 2016.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (A/RES/71/217)*, 2016.

¹² UN DPI, *Global Economic Imbalances Threaten Sustainable Development for All, Second Committee Hears as General Debate Begins (GA/EF/3448)*, 2016.

and rapid population growth were creating economic difficulties, which in turn developed into a number of geopolitical instabilities that were complicating the global development landscape.¹³ Wu-Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, also noted that moves toward protectionism and unilateral economic policy by some states risk destabilizing the entire global development agenda.¹⁴ Notably, the Committee also adopted a draft resolution declaring the “International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development,’ 2018-2028” beginning in March 2018.¹⁵ This initiative calls on Member States to provide greater focus on the sustainable management of water resources for the achievement of social, environmental, and economic objectives through such means as knowledge generation, sharing of best practices, promoting partnerships, and increased research.¹⁶

The Second Committee also debated a number of topics relating to specific countries, or to groups of countries most at risk. The Committee adopted a draft resolution following up on the Fourth Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the *Istanbul Programme of Action*, providing a wide-reaching set of goals relating to the sustainable development of these Member States.¹⁷ Other draft resolutions discussed the issue of external debt for developing states and called for more nuanced data that would be able to predict and limit the impacts of debt crises.¹⁸ It also adopted draft resolutions following up on previous discussions on Landlocked Developing States and Small Island Developing States, including the role of sustainable tourism in the development of green economies in these states.¹⁹

Through the 71st session of the General Assembly, the Second Committee reaffirmed its role in promoting sustainable development across a number of topics. In future sessions, work will continue on “ensur[ing] the Organization is fit-for-purpose” within the context of the SDGs, with a primary component of this being the harmonization of its varied and complex activities and providing policy coherence towards the achievement of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.²⁰

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, December 21). *General Assembly Takes Action on Second Committee Reports by Adopting 37 Texts (GA/11880)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11880.doc.htm>

This source outlines all of the final resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the report of the Second Committee during the 71st session. As such, it provides an excellent overall look at the accumulated work of the Second Committee and allows delegates to understand the variety of topics that were discussed, as well as the consistent themes amongst them. Despite the summary, delegates are still encouraged to read the individual resolutions in order to understand the details of each text.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2016). *Resolutions: 71st Session* [Website]. Retrieved 25 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/71/resolutions.shtml>

This page serves as a comprehensive overview of resolutions adopted in the General Assembly across all committees. This allows delegates not only to understand what has been discussed, but also to see the development of texts from draft resolutions to the final adopted text. Delegates are

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028 (A/RES/71/222)*, 2016.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/RES/71/238)*, 2016.

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *External debt sustainability and development (A/RES/71/216)*, 2016.

¹⁹ UN DPI, *Second Committee Approves Three Draft Resolutions on Benefits of Sustainable Tourism, Gastronomy, Development Support for Small Island States (GA/EF/3466)*, 2016; UN DPI, *Countries in Special Situations Battered by Falling Commodity Prices, Effects of Climate Change, Speakers Tell Second Committee (GA/EF/3457)*, 2016.

²⁰ UN DESA, *Closing Remarks by Mr. Wu Hongbo to the Second Committee of the 71st Session of the General Assembly on 13th December 2016*, 2016.



encouraged to read resolutions adopted by the Second Committee in order to understand the mandate, scope, and context of its recent work.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Towards a New International Economic Order (A/RES/71/236)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/465). Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/236>

This wide-reaching resolution provides a broad outline of the relationship between international economic policies and sustainable development. As such, it allows delegates to better understand the connectivity between the different aspects of the Second Committee's mandate and reinforces the need for policy coherence amongst Member States. Delegates are encouraged to utilize this resolution in better understanding the role that sustainable development has across all of the Committee's work.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, June 14). *Need to Align Working Methods with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Focus at Meeting of Second Committee (GA/EF/3445)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gaef3445.doc.htm>

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, November 23). *Second Committee Approves Three Draft Resolutions on Benefits of Sustainable Tourism, Gastronomy, Development Support for Small Island States (GA/EF/3466)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gaef3466.doc.htm>

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, September 28). *Second Committee Opens Seventy-First Session, Approving Organization of Work (GA/EF/3446)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gaef3446.doc.htm>

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, November 8) *Second Committee Passes Resolution Demanding Israel Stop Exploiting Natural Resources in Occupied Territories (GA/EF/3464)* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gaef3464.doc.htm>

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028 (A/RES/71/222)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/463/Add.1) Retrieved 7 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/222>

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Towards a New International Economic Order (A/RES/71/236)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/465). Retrieved 5 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/236>

I. Implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

Recent Developments

During the fourth annual Paris Forum, held 29 November 2016, the Group of 77 (G77) participated in a panel discussion where it encouraged members of the Paris Club to incorporate the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015) into their debt management practices.²¹ The G77 is the “largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations” (UN), and it provides countries with a common, unified voice for major international issues.²² The Paris Club is “an informal group of sovereign creditors whose role is to find coordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by debtor countries.”²³ The session in question focused on Part E of the AAAA on Debt and Debt Sustainability.²⁴ The G77 particularly stressed the message that “while borrowing countries have the responsibility to maintain sustainable debt levels, lender countries also have the responsibility to lend in a way that does not undermine another country’s debt sustainability.”²⁵

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works with the Asia Pacific Development Effectiveness Facility (AP-DEF) to support national governments’ efforts to link development financing with results.²⁶ It does that by helping design Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs).²⁷ On 22 November 2016, UNDP and AP-DEF released their flagship report: *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Era of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda*.²⁸ Certain key trends were highlighted in the report; the first is the growing and increasingly diverse portfolio of financing options available to states, with significant differences remaining between regions.²⁹ While “domestic public finance is a key driving force for sustainable development,” private finance is becoming more important for development in many countries.³⁰ Governments across the region are implementing AAAA recommendations and establishing INFFs for leveraging the full potential of all financial flows.³¹ Key features include management by high-level political leadership, establishing a long-term vision as a foundation for policy-making and financial strategy design, and better definition of the contributions that different resources can make.³²

The inaugural Global Sustainable Transport Conference was held on 26 and 27 November 2016 in Turkmenistan.³³ The concluding statement of the conference reaffirmed the AAAA and underscored the vital importance of public finance in meeting sustainable transport needs and catalyzing all sources of finance.³⁴ In the context of climate change and financing, the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* was held in Morocco from 7-18 November 2016.³⁵ One highlight was a side event on resilience in cities and human settlements, where the topic of financing urban resilience through all available resources was discussed.³⁶ Speakers representing the World Bank, the insurance sector, and a Member State local government were present.³⁷ The meeting provided updates on financing needs and flows of capital as well as an assessment of innovative options to increase them, in particular through emerging climate finance tools and mechanisms.³⁸

²¹ *G77 Encourages Paris Club to Consider Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Debt Management*, Inter Press Service, 2016.

²² *G77, About the Group of 77*, 2017.

²³ Paris Club, *Home*.

²⁴ *G77 Encourages Paris Club to Consider Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Debt Management*, Inter Press Service, 2016.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Wahlén, UNDP, AP-DEF Support Countries to Link Development Financing with Results, *IISD*, 2016.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ AP-DEF & UNDP, *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Era of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, 2016.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Transport Conference*, 2016.

³⁴ Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference*, 2016.

³⁵ COP 22, *Cities and Human Settlements: Resilience Dialogue*, 2016.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

With the acceleration in mainstreaming the AAAA into development financing on all levels, recent policy debates outside the UN system are also worth noting. One example is the potential amendments to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition of official development assistance (ODA).³⁹ Possible “liberalization” of the definition to include additional sources of investment could see more public funds being used to subsidize private investment.⁴⁰ Under the definition of “blended finance,” public spending could be used to incentivize private investment.⁴¹ This is a form of fiscal policy that helps boost the OECD members’ own low-growth economies and can be in the form of tax credits rather than money transfers.⁴² However, because private investors need to make a profit, this complicates matters for ODA recipient countries.⁴³ This could lead to less spending on health, education, and water projects, for example, and a shift away from lower- to middle-income countries.⁴⁴ As ODA accounts for more than two thirds of external finance for Least Developed Countries, this could prove to be a critical point of discussion.⁴⁵ Independent research group Development Initiatives warns that this discussion of expanding the ODA definition has been based on “very little evidence to date.”⁴⁶ Donors following the blended finance model may be doing so with inadequate information.⁴⁷ Even at consistently high rates of growth of blended finance, it would not be enough to close the funding gap for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is estimated to be as high as \$3.1 trillion annually by 2030.⁴⁸

The General Assembly Second Committee recently concluded its work by adopting 36 draft resolutions during its 71st session.⁴⁹ Among those adopted by consensus were draft resolutions on follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development and external debt sustainability and development.⁵⁰ Both topics directly reference the AAAA.⁵¹ The draft resolution on external debt sustainability underscored the role that donor countries play. The text noted that they should continue to provide both financial and technical aid, in terms of concessional and grant-based financing, plus institutional capacity building for sustainable debt management, to developing countries.⁵² One of the draft resolutions included a clause on preventing and mitigating the cost and prevalence of debt crises.⁵³ It invited creditors and debtors to further explore using new debt instruments such as debt swaps, where debt would be exchanged for equity in SDG projects.⁵⁴ The body of work concluded by the Second Committee was later adopted by the General Assembly, with a total of 37 draft resolutions forwarded to the plenary and adopted as resolutions.⁵⁵

Annotated Bibliography

Asia Pacific Development Effectiveness Facility & United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Era of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda* [Report]. Retrieved 9 January 2017 from: http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/democratic_governance/RBAP-DG-2016-AP-DEF-Achieving-SDGs.pdf

The AAAA is one of the cornerstones of the sustainable development framework of governance. This report displays how UN system actors report their progress in advancing its goals. A collaboration between the Asia Pacific Development Effectiveness Facility and the United Nations Development Program focuses on working with Asia-Pacific Member States on establishing

³⁹ Hodal, Aid reforms could see big increase in private sector subsidies, *The Guardian*, 2016.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Provost, 'Little evidence' public-private finance can plug development funding gap, *The Guardian*, 2016.

⁴² Hodal, Aid reforms could see big increase in private sector subsidies, *The Guardian*, 2016.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Provost, 'Little evidence' public-private finance can plug development funding gap, *The Guardian*, 2016.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Lebeda, Second Committee Concludes Work for UNGA 71 Main Part, *IISD*, 2016.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² UN DPI, *General Assembly Takes Action on Second Committee Reports by Adopting 37 Texts (GA/11880)*, 2016.

⁵³ UN General Assembly, *External debt sustainability and development (A/RES/71/216)*, 2016.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ UN DPI, *General Assembly Takes Action on Second Committee Reports by Adopting 37 Texts (GA/11880)*, 2016.

integrated national financing frameworks. This report is also a useful review of the Asian financing landscape, and its connection to the international one as well. Delegates should use this source to become informed on the different policy alternatives, country perspectives, and available tools for promoting financing for development.

G77 Encourages Paris Club to Consider Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Debt Management. (2016, December 6). Inter Press Service. Retrieved 9 January 2017 from: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2016/12/g77-encourages-paris-club-to-consider-addis-ababa-action-agenda-for-debt-management/>

For delegates unfamiliar with the G77 concept, this source provides a brief primer of the Group's composition, shared positions, and types of actions it carries out. It also introduces another important geo-political grouping: the Paris Club of creditor nations. This source focuses on interactions between the G77 and Paris Club on external debt and debt sustainability. Delegates should use this source as a starting point to capture a comprehensive view of international stances on the issue.

Lebada, A. (2016, December 15). Second Committee Concludes Work for UNGA 71 Main Part. *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 9 January 2017 from: <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/second-committee-concludes-work-for-unga-71-main-part/>

With the regular session of the General Assembly completed, this article summarizes not just the adopted draft resolutions, but also vote counts and selected reactions from Member State delegates. It gives NMUN delegates an idea of the size of the body of work the actual committee completes, the language employed by delegates, and the voting trends by certain countries. It also provides the most up-to-date picture of the committee's priorities and active agreement on the issues previously highlighted in its agenda.

Provost, C. (2016, November 16). 'Little evidence' public-private finance can plug development funding gap. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 9 January 2017 from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/nov/17/little-evidence-public-private-finance-can-plug-development-funding-gap>

There is an estimated annual SDG funding gap of \$3.1 trillion. One of the solutions being pushed forward is blended finance, or using donor country aid to leverage private investment. This news report illustrates the different perspectives on blended finance. These include think tanks, development NGOs, the office of the UN Secretary-General, and private investors as well. Aside from getting a brief introduction to the topic, this source should underscore to delegates that there is never universal agreement on an issue.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *External Debt Sustainability and Development (A/RES/71/216)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/461/Add.3). Retrieved 28 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/216>

One of the adopted resolutions from the 71st session provides insight into the working language, resolutions used for reference, and policy recommendations that the UN General Assembly Second Committee would typically employ. Delegates should use this source also for its substance on external debt sustainability and development. Global macroeconomic developments mean that this will remain a topic of significance for the near future.

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II. Harnessing the Green Economy to Eradicate Poverty (SDG 1)

Recent Developments

International actors have continued to take action towards a sustainable economic system that works for all, including the least developed countries, whilst protecting the environment. The *Paris Agreement* (2015) entered into force on 4 November 2016.⁵⁶ In its framework to curtail climate change, this agreement urges states to incorporate green economy principles into their policy-making.⁵⁷ In particular, articles 2c, 4.4, and 4.7 emphasize the key role of diversifying national economies to curtail the causes and mitigate the impacts of climate change.⁵⁸

In its 71st session, the General Assembly Second Committee worked to help states implement green economy principles to become “low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive” societies.⁵⁹ During the General Debate, many states reaffirmed their commitment to establishing a green economy and eradicating poverty in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.⁶⁰ The Second Committee adopted several draft resolutions, which were later adopted by the General Assembly plenary, with the aim of implementing green economy principles in order to eradicate poverty.⁶¹ General Assembly resolution 71/233 contains measures to assist Member States in sustainably developing their renewable energy sectors to make the transition to a low-carbon economy and to expand access to energy for all.⁶² This resolution suggests that financial institutions and donors invest with green economy principles in mind.⁶³ Additionally, resolution 71/245 emphasizes the key role that increasing agricultural production and maintaining food security in developing states plays sustainable poverty eradication.⁶⁴ This resolution emphasizes that increases in agricultural productivity are necessary for poverty reduction, and encourages the use of traditional seed supply systems and new technologies to achieve greater food security whilst preserving biodiversity.⁶⁵ Resolution 71/240 encourages states to recognize and utilize ecotourism to promote sustainable growth, eradicate poverty, and to promote environmental protection.⁶⁶ This resolution acknowledges the important role of sustainable tourism in creating jobs and strengthening the economy while providing environmental benefits like preserving biodiversity.⁶⁷

During the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (COP 22), which took place in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2016, states discussed how best to implement policies and principles within the *Paris Agreement*, culminating in the adoption of the *Marrakech Action Proclamation*.⁶⁸ Notable outcomes within the proclamation included the reaffirmation of all states to eradicate poverty, ensure food security, and to confront climate change challenges in agriculture.⁶⁹ Another important outcome was the launching

⁵⁶ UNEP, *The Paris Agreement*, 2016.

⁵⁷ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ UNEP, *What is an “Inclusive Green Economy”?*.

⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, *Statement by H.E. Mr. Dacian Cioloș, Prime Minister of Romania*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Address of His Excellency David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, to the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Statement by H.E. Mr. Bakir Izetbegović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the General Debate of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Statement by H.E. Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, at the General Debate of the 71st General Assembly*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Speech delivered by President Maithripala Sirisena at the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 2016.

⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/RES/71/233)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/RES/71/245)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/RES/71/240)*, 2016.

⁶² UN General Assembly, *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/RES/71/233)*, 2016.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/RES/71/245)*, 2016.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/RES/71/240)*, 2016.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ UN DPI, *Countries at UN conference pledge to press ahead with Paris Agreement*, 2016.

⁶⁹ COP 22, *Marrakech Action Proclamation*, 2016.

of the Global Climate Action Agenda, the primary purpose of which is to improve cooperation between state and non-state actors, including businesses, sub-national and local governments, and civil society in order to promote development that is low-carbon and resilient to environmental impacts.⁷⁰

On 16 November 2016, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released its report, *Pursuing the 1.5°C Limit: Benefits & Opportunities*.⁷¹ This report discusses the economic effects of limiting climate change to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels by 2050 and making the transition to a low-carbon economy.⁷² This report highlights how many of those measures most important to tackling climate change will also provide opportunities for reducing poverty: for example, the possibility of renewable energy assisting in providing universal access to energy and protecting developing states from market volatility through decoupling their economies from fossil fuels.⁷³ The report also discusses the ramifications of moving to a low-carbon economy, namely that replacing current sources of energy with renewable energy will result in greater job creation and support socially inclusive economic growth.⁷⁴

Poverty and environmental degradation will both continue to be an issue for the foreseeable future. The General Assembly Second Committee will continue to work with its partners to increase the implementation of green economy frameworks and policies to provide people with a decent standard of living whilst protecting the environment for future generations.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016, November 18). *Countries at UN conference pledge to press ahead with implementation of Paris Agreement* [News Article]. Retrieved 27 December 2016 from: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55602#.WHPTs_mLRPZ

This article provides an accessible way to learn about the formation and ratification of the Paris Agreement and the aims and objectives of countries at COP 22. It summarizes the key outcomes of this conference and includes excerpts from former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. This source is particularly useful because it highlights progress made since the adoption of the Paris Agreement whilst providing perspectives on how best to implement it.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Pursuing the 1.5°C Limit: Benefits & Opportunities* [Report]. Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://www.thecvf.org/wp-content/uploads/low-carbon-monitor-lowres.pdf>

This report stresses that tackling climate change is a necessary precursor to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It argues that climate change adaptation and mitigation measures can play a vital role in reducing poverty. This report also contains numerous graphs and diagrams to illustrate its points and to present its information in a clear way. This source will be helpful for delegates to understand the link between reducing the impact of climate change through green economy and achieving development.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *UN Environment Finance Initiative: 2016 Global Roundtable* [Report]. Retrieved 3 January 2017 from: <http://www.unepfi.org/grt/2016/wp-content/uploads/GRT-Full-Report.pdf>

As the economic and financial committee, the General Assembly Second Committee has a large role in advising how finance mechanisms may protect the environment and eradicate poverty. This outcome document from the UN Environment Global Initiative contains interesting proposals on how international finance can be best harnessed to invest in projects which protect the environment and promote equitable economic activity. This event provides an example of how different UN bodies, governments, and the global financial system can work together to create sustainable development.

⁷⁰ UN DPI, *Countries at UN conference pledge to press ahead with Paris Agreement*, 2016.

⁷¹ UNDP, *Pursuing the 1.5°C Limit: Benefits & Opportunities*, 2016, p. i.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/RES/71/233)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/463/Add.9). Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/233>

It is very important for delegates to be aware of how a committee can work on solutions applicable to all of its members. This resolution provides insight into how the General Assembly Second Committee is able to accomplish this by working with state and non-state actors. Nowhere is this more evident than the section which deals with often difficult topic of finance. This resolution highlights how to harness financial resources to create a more sustainable and inclusive green economy.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/RES/71/240)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/467). Retrieved 20 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/240>

In this resolution, the General Assembly Second Committee outlines the role that ecotourism may play in promoting the green economy. This resolution provides a template for how this committee can promote the green economy in different sectors and in different regions. Delegates curious as to how their committee can push for concrete solutions to the issue of poverty reduction through the green economy will find this resolution very useful.

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United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/RES/71/233)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/463/Add.9). Retrieved 6 January 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/233>

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III. Designing Effective Policies and Institutions to Reduce Inequalities (SDG 10)

Recent Developments

During recent months, the international community continued discussions on the topic of creating effective and efficient policies geared towards the reduction of inequalities.⁷⁵ In as much as the international community has taken up the challenge of ending poverty, the issue of reducing inequalities still needs to be addressed as it remains a contributor to the spread of poverty, conflict, and injustice.⁷⁶ During the General Debate at the 71st session of the General Assembly in September 2016, Danilo Medina Sánchez, the President of the Dominican Republic, urged the international community to direct its focus on persons that are already lifted out of poverty as they are most likely to face vulnerabilities and are prone to inequalities.⁷⁷ According to President Medina, individuals in this economic and political class need to be provided with well-established social structures covering health and education, financial assistance to set up their own businesses and promote employment, and the skills needed to develop themselves and the communities they reside in.⁷⁸ President Medina also addressed the importance of improving trade and capital flows, adding that the line between the rich and poor should be revised.⁷⁹ He further stressed the importance of policy regulation, especially in terms of international trade, as it can impede reduction of inequalities among states.⁸⁰ With stable and regulated markets, smaller states will be able to share the same opportunities as others.⁸¹

During its 71st session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/241 to commemorate the end of the second United Nations (UN) Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, held 2008-2017.⁸² The resolution acknowledges progress made in the last ten years to eradicate poverty, including reducing income inequalities.⁸³ The resolution further calls on Member States to develop “transparent measures of progress” and emphasizes the effect of structural transformations on reducing inequalities during the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁸⁴

In September, MDG Monitor released a report on the progress made in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 10 and provided recommendations on how other parties, such as the private sector, can reduce those inequalities within and among states.⁸⁵ The report concluded that 750 million people have been lifted out of poverty, there are better employment opportunities for the poor, and the number of girls in schools has increased, all due to the strategies taken to address the issue of inequalities.⁸⁶ However, an area that requires immediate attention is income inequality, which has seen an increase in both developing and developed economies.⁸⁷ According to the report, one way of tackling the issue of inequality is through job creation and improving the quality of jobs provided, especially to the less privileged.⁸⁸ The report stressed the importance of “creating the type of productive capacity and infrastructure that results in more diversified economies, in particular leaving the overdependence on single commodities.”⁸⁹ The implementation of conventions on global tax evasion, tax competition, and tax avoidance, as well as trade, investment, monetary, and fiscal system reforms, will assist in guaranteeing sufficient long-term financing for projects that are geared towards achieving a sustainable economy.⁹⁰

⁷⁵ Smyth, *Reducing Global Inequality: how do we achieve a fairer world?*, *Prospect Magazine*, 2016; *Policies to reduce inequality and poverty*, Economics Online, 2016.

⁷⁶ European Commission, *Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies*, 2016, p. 63.

⁷⁷ UN DPI, *At UN Assembly, Dominican Republic President underlines need to reduce inequalities*, 2016.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² UN General Assembly, *Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/RES/71/241)*, 2016.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ MDG Monitor, *SDG 10 – Reduce inequality in people, within and among countries*, 2016.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

The issue of social, political, and economic exclusion is also a focus of the UN Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), which has released the *Report on the World Social Situation 2016*.⁹¹ The report included information on the provision of universal social services; social protection programs such as job creation schemes, retraining programs, and agricultural insurance; social policy reforms such as Brazil's social justice and citizenship rights policy; India's National Rural Employment Act; and Thailand's Universal Coverage Schemes.⁹²

The Agenda for International Development (A-id) also focuses on affirmative action policies giving preferential access to credit to those living in poverty, offering transportation vouchers to the disabled, and offering interpretational services to indigenous peoples.⁹³ With the help of its geographic targeting, A-id is able to lobby states to implement nondiscriminatory laws such as the reservation of seats for women in national and local government bodies, which has improved political participation for women.⁹⁴

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Focusing entirely on international development, the website's main target is to direct the attention of policy makers to the issues of injustices around the world. With its nine strategies set up to reduce the issue of inequalities, delegates will find the site a great source in determining which areas to concentrate on as there is abundant information and research done in the areas of program monitoring and evaluation, the consideration of all inequalities and not just income, differentiate policies of poverty from inequality, and the promotion of fiscal policies.

European Commission. (2016). *Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies*. Retrieved 28 December 2016 from:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-societies_en.pdf

The European Commission's work program is a set of initiatives consisting of a yearly plan which demonstrates actions to be taken by Member States in achieving their sustainable goals. The work program is a great source of information for delegates as it outlines the yearly action plans of European states and indicates each state's participation. The work plan also opens doors to new initiatives and policies as well as encouraging the participation of smaller states in the commission.

MDG Monitor. (2016). *SDG 10 – Reduce inequality in people, within and among countries* [Website]. Retrieved 2 January 2017 from: <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/sdg10-reduce-inequality-in-people-within-and-among-countries/>

Created by the UN Development Programme, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the UN Children's Fund, the MDG Monitor was established to track the progress of the MDGs and now tracks the SDGs. This monitor serves as tool for delegates to trace the progresses made by Member States in achieving the SDGs. It is also a great source for delegates to be able to determine what areas need attention, who is being left behind and in what ways. MDG Monitor also helps to analyze which Goals have been achieved at both regional and global levels and it plays an important role in determining what areas to be focused on in terms of achieving the SDGs.

United Nations, Division for Social Policy and Development. (2016). *World Social Situation 2016: Leaving No One Behind – the Imperative of Inclusive Development* [Report]. Retrieved 23 December 2016 from:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/2016/09/06/world-social-situation-2016-leaving-no-one-behind-the-imperative-of-inclusive-development/>

A division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN DSPD acts as the central body that supports the UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty by working with Member States

⁹¹ UN DSPD, *World Social Situation 2016: Leaving No One Behind – the Imperative of Inclusive Development*, 2016; UN DSPD, *2016 Report on the World Social Situation*, 2016.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 124; UN General Assembly, *Human rights and extreme poverty (A/RES/71/186)*, 2016.

⁹³ A-id, *Nine Strategies to Reduce Inequality*, 2016.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; UN DSPD, *2016 Report on the World Social Situation*, 2016, p. 124.

and their governments to effectively and efficiently implement policies adopted in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (1995) as well as those adopted at the 24th special session of the General Assembly. DSPD resources are a great reference for delegates with respect to policy implementation and negotiation, provision of support to states, and monitoring of national and international trends.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/RES/71/241)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/71/467/Add.1). Retrieved 11 February 2017 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/71/241>

During its 71st session, the General Assembly Second Committee discussed the impact of the UN's second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which ends in 2017. The resolution discusses the current state of poverty and inequality globally, and makes recommendations for the eradication of poverty through the implementation of the SDGs. These recommendations include using structural transformations to ensure all persons benefit equally from sustainable development initiatives. Delegates should review this resolution to understand the Second Committee's most recent work on inequality.

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