



NEW YORK, NY

20 - 24 March – Conference A

27 - 31 March – Conference B

nmun.org/nmun_ny.html

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL PLENARY BACKGROUND GUIDE 2016

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NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS





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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2016 National Model United Nations Conference in New York (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Economic and Social Council Plenary (ECOSOC). This year's staff is: Directors Sara Leister (Conference A) and Aly El Salmi (Conference B), and Assistant Directors David Vásquez (Conference A) and Chase Mitchell (Conference B). Sara completed her B.A. in Political Science and Economics at Western Washington University and currently works for the microfinance partner of World Vision. This will be her third year directing at NMUN•NY. Aly received his B.Sc in Mechanical Engineering, with a minor in International Relations, from the American University in Cairo. He has previously worked as Assistant Corporate Social Responsibility Manager for Nestlé Egypt, and is now a Masters of Public Policy candidate at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. This is his third year on NMUN•NY staff. David studied International Relations and Multimedia Journalism at Universidad San Francisco de Quito. He works as a full-time teacher with Enseña Ecuador, an organization that is part of the alliance Teach for All, and this is his second year on NMUN•NY staff. Chase received his B.B.A. in Economics and Global Business in 2015. He currently works in the insurance industry in Northeast Wisconsin and will be pursuing further education in the future. This is his first year as part of NMUN•NY.

The topics under discussion for ECOSOC are:

- I. Ensuring Universal Access to Water
- II. Utilizing Youth Employment for Sustainable Development
- III. Education in Post-Conflict Situations

ECOSOC, one of the six primary organs of the United Nations, is a key UN body in addressing issues of sustainable development. Under the authority of the *Charter of the UN*, ECOSOC is mandated to address economic and social matters. It oversees several specialized agencies, as well as functional and regional commissions, and submits an annual report to the General Assembly. ECOSOC also plays an important role as the primary coordinating body of the UN and will be a leader in working with UN bodies and partners to translate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into actionable work plans.

We hope you will find this Background Guide useful as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We highly encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in-depth, as well as 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](#). Please take note of the [NMUN policies](#) on the website and in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct, dress code, sexual harassment, and the awards philosophy and evaluation method. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory.

The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) are available to download from the NMUN website. This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. It is thus an essential instrument in preparing for the conference, and a reference during committee.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, feel free to contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the ECOSOC Department, Dinah Douglas (Conference A) and Lauren Shaw (Conference B). You can reach either USG by contacting them at: usg.ecosoc@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A

Sara Leister, *Director*
David Vásquez, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Aly El Salmi, *Director*
Chase Mitchell, *Assistant Director*

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Abbreviations

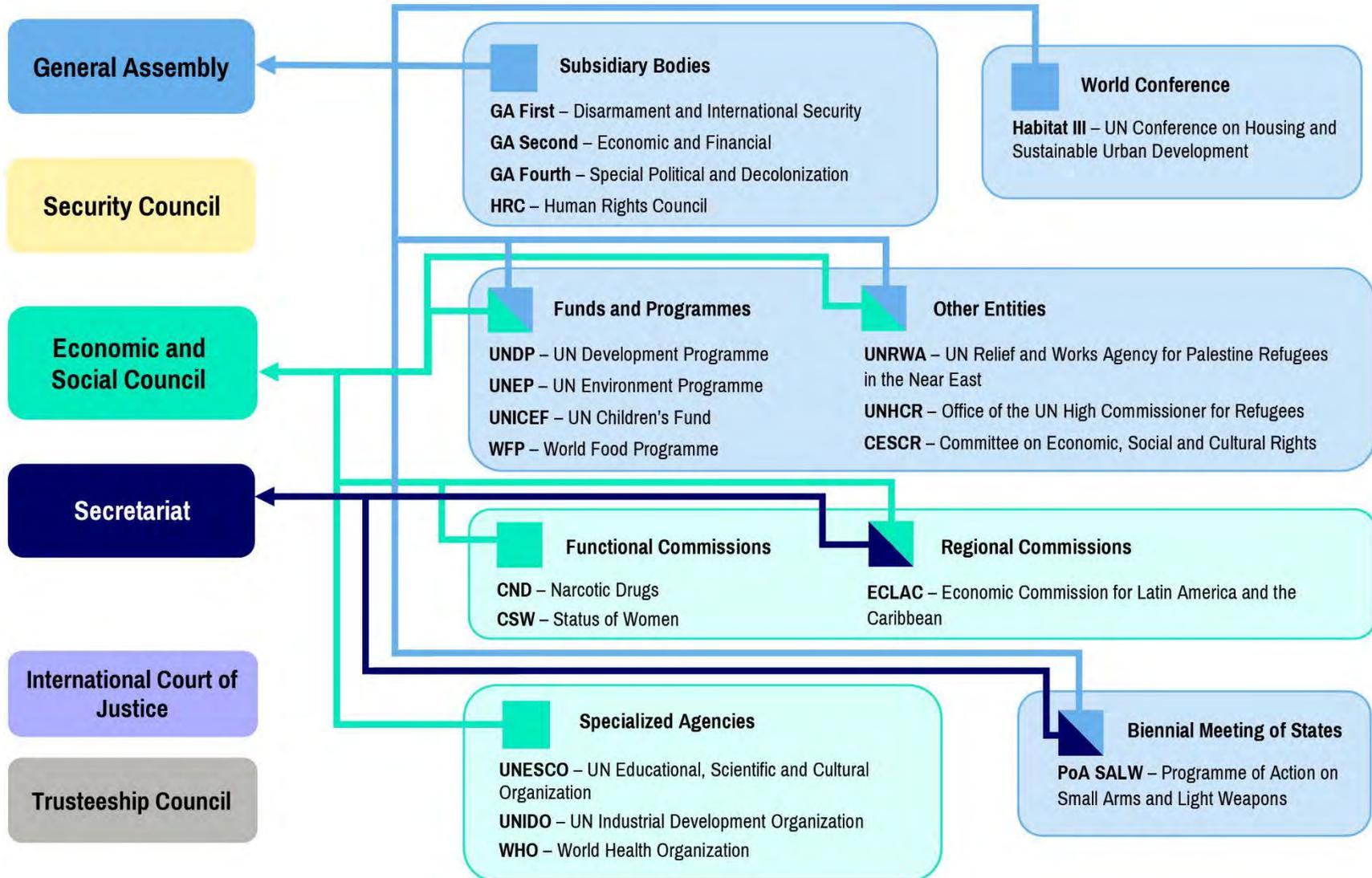
AMR	Annual Ministerial Review
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMM	Coordination and Management Meetings
CPD	Commission on Population and Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CSTD	Commission on Science and Technology for Development
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education for All
EFE	Education for Employment
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FFA	Education 2030 Framework for Action
GA	General Assembly
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HLS	High-level Segment
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OWG	Open Working Group
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN DPI	United Nations Department of Public Information



UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN-Water	United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism on All Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WA-WASH	West Africa Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Initiative
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWC	World Water Council
YEF	Youth Entrepreneurship Facility
YEP	Youth Employment Program

United Nations System at NMUN·NY

This diagram illustrates the UN System simulated at NMUN·NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system, to help understand the reportage and relationships between the entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN System.



Committee Overview

Introduction

Chapter X of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a founding body and one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).¹ ECOSOC indirectly oversees 70% of UN resources through its oversight of 14 specialized agencies and 13 functional and regional commissions.² The Council is mandated to serve as a main body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics; review and advise Member States and other UN entities on matters within this mandate; and lead discussion on the implementation of the international development framework.³

The **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** is one of the six primary organs of the UN. Under the authority of the *Charter of the United Nations*, ECOSOC is mandated to address economic and social matters. It submits an annual report to the General Assembly.

ECOSOC has undergone some reforms since its inception. In the 1960s and 1970s, developing countries broadened the agenda of the UN and sought a stronger focus on urgent issues such as the elimination of underdevelopment, poverty, and the unequal position of their countries in the world economy.⁴ Following this, the General Assembly (GA) adopted resolution 32/197 of 1977, on the “Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System,” which attempted to make ECOSOC more effective by increasing coordination with its subsidiary bodies.⁵ ECOSOC also saw an increase in its membership to 54 Member States as a result of GA resolution 2847(XXVI) (1971).⁶ To avoid any duplication of work due to unclear mandates, GA resolution 50/227 of 1995 clarified the role of the GA to provide policy guidance and for the role of ECOSOC to focus on coordination, an interpretation confirmed by the GA resolution 57/270 B (2002).⁷

The GA implemented further reform in the past decade to strengthen the working methods of ECOSOC through GA resolutions 61/16 of 2007 and 68/1 of 2013.⁸ The 2013 reforms included an expansion of its functions and powers to enable the Council to take the lead on identifying and discussing recently emerging challenges; act as a policy forum for global leaders, especially concerning the integration of sustainable development efforts; and to provide a platform of accountability for all levels of monitoring and reporting on universal commitments.⁹ These reforms keep ECOSOC’s role and work critical to preparing, monitoring, implementing, and facilitating global discussions around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰

Governance, Structure and Membership

ECOSOC comprises 54 members, each elected by the GA for overlapping three-year terms.¹¹ The members are distributed in accordance with the geographical position of the applicants to achieve equal representation from all continents: 14 seats are allocated to African Member States, 11 to Asian Member States, six to Eastern European Member States, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean Member States, and 13 to Western European and other Member States.¹² Each member has one representative and one vote in the Council, and all decisions are made by a simple majority of those members present and voting.¹³ ECOSOC is governed by a President, Vice-President, and Rapporteur, as well as a Bureau consisting of five representatives, the President and four Vice-Presidents, all of whom are elected to one-year terms by the Council at the outset of each session.¹⁴ The Bureau assumes

¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

² Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*.

³ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

⁴ Rosenthal, *The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, 2005, p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2014-15*, 2014.

⁷ Rosenthal, *The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, 2005, p. 20.

⁸ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

⁹ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

¹¹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter X; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*.

¹² UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter X, Art. 61.1-2.

¹³ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council*, 1992, p. 22; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter X.

¹⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council*, 1992.

responsibility for setting the Council's agenda, devises action plans, and collaborates with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹⁵ Its membership rotates equally among regional blocs.¹⁶

The Council meets twice annually, once for an organizational session, or when elections to the Bureau take place, and once for a substantive session, which is further divided into five "segments" focusing on separate thematic aspects of the Council's work.¹⁷ The working methods of the Council were further reformed under the GA resolution 68/1 in 2013, and its work is now organized as follows:

High-level Segment (HLS): The HLS includes a thematic Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), a biannual Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), and ministerial-level meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).¹⁸

Integration Segment: Focusing on harmonizing the work of ECOSOC members, subsidiary bodies, and stakeholders, this segment consolidates important messages on primary themes and action-oriented recommendations from the Council system.¹⁹

Operational Activities for Development Segment: Monitoring the follow-up to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) recommendations and alignment with the work of the specialized agencies, this segment helps ECOSOC provide efficient coordination to the UN programmes and funds.²⁰

Coordination and Management Meetings (CMM): At these regular meetings, the Council reviews the work of its subsidiaries (see below for detail) and considers the coordination of work across thematic issues within its mandate, such as gender mainstreaming.²¹ The Council works closely with the Secretariat of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) during these meetings.²²

Humanitarian Affairs: This segment serves as a thematic forum for discussion on addressing operation challenges and normative progress on humanitarian policy.²³ In June 2015, the segment focused on the future of humanitarian affairs and operation of the activities.²⁴

ECOSOC oversees 14 subsidiary bodies that hold their own sessions and provide recommendations, draft resolutions, and annual reporting to the Council.²⁵ The two most common types of subsidiary bodies are functional and regional commissions:

Functional Commissions: The nine functional commissions are "deliberative bodies whose role is to consider and make recommendations on issues in their areas of responsibility and expertise."²⁶ Functional commissions, in particular, have a responsibility for following up on the major UN conferences, in accordance with the role of ECOSOC.²⁷

Regional Commissions: The five regional commissions aim to foster economic integration, oversee the implementation of regional sustainable development initiatives, and help address economic and social issues in sub-regions by fostering multilateral dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration within and between regions.²⁸ As regional commissions target problems and challenges within their geographical scope,

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Bureau*.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council*, 1992, p. 8.

¹⁸ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ UN ECOSOC, *2014 Humanitarian Affairs Segment*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related field (E/RES/1998/46)*, 1998, p. 76.

²⁸ UN Regional Commissions, *About*.

members in most cases must be a country from this region.²⁹

Expert Bodies Composed of Governmental Experts: The seven bodies that fall into this category are focused on narrow topics that ECOSOC has identified as important and deserving of additional attention or particular expertise.³⁰ These bodies consider issues falling within the scope of the Council’s work in order to improve the information, guidance, policy or regulations on the issue, with a particular aim for coherence and consistency at the international level.³¹

Other subsidiaries include standing committees, ad hoc, and other related bodies.³² Specific methods of work have been adopted within each subsidiary organ to align with the mandate of each entity and are updated regularly; significant recent changes include the establishment of HLPF and the replacement of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) by the HLPF in September 2013, per ECOSOC resolution 2013/19.³³

Mandate, Functions and Powers

The *Charter of the United Nations* mandates ECOSOC to “make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters,” including human rights and freedoms, to the GA and its specialized agencies.³⁴ ECOSOC may also “furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist [it] upon request.”³⁵ As emphasized by recent reforms accentuating this role, ECOSOC also provides coordination, monitoring, and advice to UN programs, agencies, and funds on international development policies and their implementation.³⁶ Examples of this coordination role include facilitating cooperation between economic institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1998 and establishing the biennial high-level DCF, now part of the Council’s High-level Segment, in 2007.³⁷

The Council fulfills its mandate under the overall authority of the GA, and with the consultation of a broad range of civil society actors, with more than 3,900 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with consultative status who may attend and participate in various UN meetings, conferences, and special sessions to voice their concerns to the international community.³⁸ Consultative status is given by ECOSOC’s Committee on NGOs, established in 1946 and comprising 19 Member States, and which directly reports to ECOSOC on the procedural and substantive matters raised by CSOs.³⁹ ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of 24 July 1996 indicated the principles, eligibility requirements, rules, procedures, obligations, and responsibilities for NGOs and the UN in granting the consultative relationship.⁴⁰ In the latest report from the June 2015 session, the Committee granted consultative status to 160 NGOs, deferred for consideration an additional 200 NGOs, and reviewed quadrennial reports.⁴¹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs

²⁹ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2014-15*, 2014, p. 161.

³⁰ UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, *Overview*.

³¹ UNCTAD, *About International Standards of Accounting and Reporting*.

³² UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³³ UN General Assembly, *Format and Organizational Aspects of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013, p. 7.

³⁴ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Arts. 62, 63, 65.

³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/RES/2013/5)*, 2013, p. 1.

³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*; UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)*, 2007, p. 2.

³⁸ UN DESA NGO Branch, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*.

³⁹ UN DESA, *Committee on NGOs convenes for first session of 2014*, 2014; UN DESA NGO Branch, *The Committee On NGOs*.

⁴⁰ UN DESA NGO Branch, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*; UN ECOSOC, *Consultative Relationship between the United Nations and Non-governmental Organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, 1996, pp. 53-61.

⁴¹ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2015 resumed session (E/2015/32)*, 2015, pp. 1, 46.

One of the key priorities of the Council currently is to manage the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the post-2015 development framework and the SDGs.⁴² The SDGs were formally proposed by Member States and adopted by the GA at the UN Sustainable Development Summit as *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, on 25 September 2015.⁴³ The HLPF, which replaced the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, has been critical to the coordination, implementation, and accountability measures around the SDGs.⁴⁴ The recent President's Summary from the June-July 2015 session of the HLPF states that the ECOSOC segment will play a critical role in the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and will be the international leader on translating the Goals into actionable work plans.⁴⁵ During the 2015 session, members suggested that the HLPF develop a roadmap with critical milestones to deliver the post-2015 development agenda goals by 2030.⁴⁶

Youth Engagement

ECOSOC leads the discussion around youth participation and inclusion, as well as other youth-related issues at the UN as part of its role in leading international conversations around thematic topics.⁴⁷ The Council President hosted the most recent annual ECOSOC Youth Forum in February 2015, which included 500 youth representatives, Member States, civil society groups, the private sector, and the media.⁴⁸ The agenda included youth involvement with the SDGs, recognizing the 20-year anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), youth participation in the UN, gender equality for youth, and a regional focus of engaging youth in Africa.⁴⁹ Outcomes included the creation of the #youthnow and #youth2015 social media advocacy campaigns to engage youth in the sustainable development agenda and an official Call to Governments by Members of the Panel on "Gender Equality and Youth: 20 years since the Beijing Platform for Action and onwards to a Post-2015 Development Framework."⁵⁰

Financing for Development

In March 2014, ECOSOC convened the DCF's High-Level Symposium, on the topic "Accountable and effective development cooperation in a post-2015 era," to discuss ways to improve development cooperation and measure its impact.⁵¹ The President of ECOSOC stressed that the Symposium would demonstrate the relevance of DCF and its instrumental role in ensuring "development cooperation is fit for purpose in the post-2015 era."⁵² Participants discussed issues such as quality and effectiveness of development cooperation, how it will look post-2015, and how to design frameworks for effectively monitoring development cooperation and making sure it is accountable.⁵³ These discussions also fed into the first ministerial meeting of the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which was held in Mexico in April 2014.⁵⁴ In July 2014, the AMR was convened as part of ECOSOC HLS at the UN Headquarters in New York.⁵⁵ It took place in the overall substantive context of the final effort to accelerate progress towards the MDGs by 2015, the continued follow-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and the discussions for elaborating the post-2015 development agenda.⁵⁶ The conversation continued with the April 2015 convening of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which focused on the challenges to financing the SDGs and the framework required for the post-2015 development agenda.⁵⁷

⁴² UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 1.

⁴⁴ UN ECOSOC, *President's Summaries of the High-level segment of the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council and High-level political forum on sustainable development*, 2015.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Theme for the integration segment of the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council (E/2014/L.23)*, 2014, p. 1.

⁴⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Informal Summary: ECOSOC Youth Forum 2015*, 2015.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN DESA, *ECOSOC convenes symposium on development cooperation*, 2014.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ UN ECOSOC, *Accountable and Effective Development Cooperation in a Post-2015 Era: Official Symposium Summary*, 2014, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁴ UN DESA, *ECOSOC convenes symposium on development cooperation*, 2014.

⁵⁵ UN ECOSOC, *2014 Annual Ministerial Review*.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ UN DESA, *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2015.

Conclusion

The Economic and Social Council plays a key role in coordinating the expansive UN system. The Council has demonstrated a commitment to, and leadership in, mobilizing action on tackling key priority issues, such as transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs, youth inclusion in decision-making processes, decent work and employment, and gender issues. It has also initiated much-needed global collaboration across UN entities to ensure political commitment towards a new development framework and the SDGs. The contributions of the Council both as a forum for discussion and in terms of policy guidance are significant and its role will continue to grow in the post-2015 era, requiring clear organizational leadership and strong monitoring mechanisms to assess the progress of the SDGs.

Annotated Bibliography

Charter of the United Nations. (1945). Retrieved 21 October 2014 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

The Charter of the United Nations is the foundational document of the UN. It lays out the mandate and structure of not only the Economic and Social Council, but also the remaining five principle organs. Member States are obliged to uphold the Charter's articles and are to hold these articles above all other treaties. It is an essential starting point in researching the UN. Chapter X, Articles 61-72, of the Charter describes ECOSOC's composition, functions and powers, voting, and rules of procedure.

New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2014). *United Nations Handbook 2014-15*. Retrieved 31 August 2015 from: <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/UNHB2014/UN-Handbook-201415-17-nov-interactive.pdf>

This is an excellent source for delegates to gain background information on the complex UN system and its main organs. This comprehensive handbook presents detailed information on the UN family organizations, explains their functions, structure, and role. It also gives an overview on various subsidiary organs established under the Charter, UN programmes and funds, and other organizations related to the UN system as a whole. Delegates are encouraged to read the section on ECOSOC in detail to understand its structure, membership, working methods, and linkage with various subsidiary bodies.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development. (n.d.). *ECOSOC as a unifying platform for sustainable development* [Website]. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/intergovernmental/ecosoc>

This website summarizes the role of the ECOSOC in sharing knowledge and coordinating key actors in the work of defining strategic priorities in the post-2015 development agenda. It details the contribution brought by ECOSOC since the beginning of the process. This section is a useful resource for delegates as it also links to the relevant outcomes of the critical meetings that lead to the final recommended SDGs. Delegates can use this to understand how these topics have developed and look at how their countries contributed to the process, thus gaining an understanding of their state's policies regarding the SDGs.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (1992). *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council*. Retrieved 22 October 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/pdf/rules.pdf>

This document provides an overview of key ECOSOC sessions, its programme of work, agenda setting, voting procedures, the structure of the Bureau and Member States' representation as well as ECOSOC's relationships with other organs and bodies. It is important that delegates familiarize themselves with the original rules of ECOSOC to gain a better understanding of how the Council works and what it attempts to accomplish. The rules of procedure at National Model United Nations have been adapted for the simulation, and are not identical to the original rules as presented in this document.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2015). *Informal Summary – Youth Engagement in the Transition from MDGs to SDGs: What will it take*. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from:

http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/youth2015/pdf/informal_summary.pdf

This document provides a good overview of talks and topics that were at hand during this two-day event that was dedicated to the relevant role of youth in the promotion of sustainable development. It briefly summarizes the key messages emerging from the sessions such as the role of "Youth delegates" in the post-2015 development agenda, the role played by the World Programme of Action for Youth, and the necessity to promote youth well-being and gender equality. This resource is important for delegates because it provides a breadth of information around a thematic discussion in the post-2015 agenda on which ECOSOC is taking lead in its role as the primary coordination body.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2013). *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 22 October 2014 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/68/1>

This resolution presents the most recent reforms that the Council has undergone in order to strengthen its program of work and its leading role in tackling challenges towards sustainable development. It provides detailed recommendations how the Council will reshape its operating procedures and working methods, and it outlines the main priorities for the Council's operational activities. Delegates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the suggested changes in the resolutions, and should also consider how ECOSOC can maintain its leadership and capacity to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Bibliography

Charter of the United Nations. (1945). Retrieved 21 October 2014 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

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I. Ensuring Universal Access to Water

“When the well is dry, we learn the worth of water.”⁵⁸

Introduction

Water is of crucial importance to many aspects of life, directly in terms of drinking water and sanitation, and indirectly due to the necessity of water in agriculture and industry.⁵⁹ The United Nations (UN) has long striven to ensure universal access to water.⁶⁰ In fact, remarkable progress has been made since 1990: According to the UN’s 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, over 2.6 billion people gained access to improved drinking water between 1990 and 2014, although challenges still remain in relation to water access.⁶¹ Over 40% of the global population still suffers from water scarcity, and disparities in access to water and sanitation persist between both developed and developing countries and urban and rural areas.⁶² This is despite the recently concluded International Decade for Action on “Water for Life” (2005-2015); there are already calls for a follow-up decade on Water for Sustainable Development.⁶³ The international community has committed itself several times to ensuring universal access to water, but the right to water has not been explicitly recognized, and some Member States object to its codification.⁶⁴ The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has been directly involved in the development of frameworks meant to ensure access to water and has also issued opinions and recommendations on a variety of water-related subjects.⁶⁵ ECOSOC can address many aspects of ensuring universal access to water by working towards consensus-driven agreements on water access and making recommendations that will support internationally-agreed upon development goals.⁶⁶

International and Regional Framework

The 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) can be interpreted as implicitly guaranteeing the right to water, as it ensures “the right to life, liberty and security of person” in Article 3 and “the right to an adequate standard of living” in Article 25; however, it does not directly mention water.⁶⁷ Several human rights documents in following decades included similar guarantees, although it was not until the 1970s that frameworks to directly address water began to emerge.⁶⁸ In 1977, the UN hosted the Conference on Water in Mar del Plata, Argentina, with the aim to “promote a level of preparedness, nationally and internationally, which would help the world to avoid a water crisis of global dimensions by the end of the present century.”⁶⁹ The outcome document, the *Mar del Plata Action Plan*, included recommendations for Member States and regional institutions, including on efficient water use; pollution and the environment; and social aspects like health and education.⁷⁰ Of highest significance was that the Action Plan was the first international document to consider water as a human right by stating that “all peoples, whatever their stage of development and social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.”⁷¹ The conference was followed by the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990), after which new frameworks began to emerge.⁷²

In 1992, the Dublin Conference on Water and Sustainable Development was held as a precursors to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).⁷³ The panel of experts at the conference drafted the *Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development*, which included an action plan and four guiding principles

⁵⁸ “When the well is dry we know the worth of water,” Xinhua, 2008.

⁵⁹ UN DESA, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, 2015, pp. 52-55.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ UN-Water, *Water for Life Decade*, 2015.

⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *108th plenary meeting*, 2010, pp. 6-9.

⁶⁵ UN CESC, *General Comment No. 15*, 2003.

⁶⁶ UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Adopts Consensus Decisions on Range of Issues*, 2010.

⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

⁶⁸ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*.

⁶⁹ Biswas, *From Mar del Plata to Kyoto: An Analysis of Global Water Policy Dialogues*, 2003.

⁷⁰ UN-Water Conference, *Report of the United Nations Water Conference (E/CONF.70/29)*, 1977, pp. 11-50.

⁷¹ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*.

⁷² UN General Assembly, *Proclamation of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (A/RES/35/18)*, 1980.

⁷³ Biswas, *From Mar del Plata to Kyoto: An Analysis of Global Water Policy Dialogues*, 2003.

meant to highlight water as a finite and vulnerable resource.⁷⁴ The Statement considered water as an economic good, but that it should be at a cost that people can pay.⁷⁵ Some Dublin Principles were incorporated into UNCED outcome documents.⁷⁶ Chief among these was *Agenda 21*, which provides guidelines for sustainable development; Chapter 18 was dedicated to the protection, management, and development of water resources.⁷⁷

Agenda 21 was the first major international document that addressed the interconnected nature of water sources and its many uses, as water was a major concern at UNCED.⁷⁸ However, only a small section of *Agenda 21* addresses water scarcity, which refers to when demand for water by all sectors, including the environment, cannot be fully satisfied.⁷⁹ Moreover, one of the outcome documents of UNCED, the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, did not include water in any of its principles.⁸⁰ In spite of this, water and sanitation was incorporated into several documents over the next decade, including the *Millennium Declaration*, a comprehensive document adopted in September 2000 that served to guide and focus the international development agenda.⁸¹ The MDGs were established based on the *Millennium Declaration* and included target 7.C to “halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.”⁸² That goal was reached in 2010 and in the intervening time, improving access to water and sanitation remained high on the international agenda.⁸³

At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), water and sanitation were among the main topics of discussion, and the outcome document, the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (JPOI), includes several references to water access and management.⁸⁴ The JPOI established a framework for many water issues, including increasing access to sanitation in rural areas, ensuring that public institutions have water and sanitation, and encouraging the creation of financing mechanisms that allow for developing countries to improve water access.⁸⁵ ECOSOC was involved in tracking progress on both the JPOI and MDGs; its 2008 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) specifically focused on sustainable development and MDG 7.⁸⁶ During that meeting, ECOSOC heard voluntary national presentations from eight Member States on their domestic efforts to improve access to water.⁸⁷ It then incorporated the urgent need to ensure access to water in its 2008 Ministerial Declaration.⁸⁸ ECOSOC will continue to serve as a platform for cooperation and coordination for the implementation of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which establish the focus of international development efforts through 2030.⁸⁹ Access to water is a core component of the SDGs, with SDG 6 aiming to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” and including eight targets meant to ensure that the goal is met by 2030.⁹⁰ This goal and its associated targets are essential to mobilizing international resources for water and sanitation, but most implementation will be completed nationally and with regional support.⁹¹

Role of the International System

Within the UN system, several groups address water-related issues, and most of these coordinate their efforts through the UN Inter-Agency Mechanism on All Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation (UN-Water).⁹²

⁷⁴ ICWE, *The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development*, 1992.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Biswas, *From Mar del Plata to Kyoto: An Analysis of Global Water Policy Dialogues*, 2003.

⁷⁷ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992, pp. 196-224.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ UN-Water, *Managing Water Report under Uncertainty and Risk*, 2012; UN DPI, *UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992)*, 1997; UNCED, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

⁸¹ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*; UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000.

⁸² UN DESA, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, 2015, p. 58.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Shah, *World Summit on Sustainable Development*, 2002.

⁸⁵ UN WSSD, *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, 2002.

⁸⁶ UN ECOSOC, *2008 Annual Ministerial Review*.

⁸⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Ministerial Declaration: Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in Regard to Sustainable Development*, 2008.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC as a unifying platform for sustainable development*; UN-Water, *From MDGs to SDGs*, 2015.

⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² UN-Water, *Members and Partners*, 2014; UN-Water, *About UN-Water*, 2014.

With 31 UN bodies and agencies as members and 37 non-governmental partners, UN-Water's scope encompasses all freshwater issues, including management and monitoring, sanitation, and water-related emergencies.⁹³ UN-Water also manages programs that support Member States, including the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development, which provides technical and logistical assistance to Member States for development projects and conducts training seminars.⁹⁴ Members of UN-Water administer water access projects within their respective areas of work.⁹⁵ For example, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) focuses on the public health aspects of water, sanitation, and hygiene, particularly quality management.⁹⁶ The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) addresses integrated water resource management and promotes the environmentally sound handling of wastewater.⁹⁷ Additionally, there are several members of UN-Water with mandates that do not directly relate to water use or management.⁹⁸ Among these are the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which hosts the Water Resource Programme and uses isotope hydrology for groundwater analysis, and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which hosts an intergovernmental scientific cooperation program on water.⁹⁹

ECOSOC's own work is defined by its mandate in Chapter X of the *Charter of the UN*, which allows it to make recommendations to the UN General Assembly (GA) and Member States on "international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters."¹⁰⁰ This, especially when combined with ECOSOC's ability to call international conferences on matters within its mandate, gives ECOSOC a wide breadth of options in terms of addressing water and sanitation.¹⁰¹ However, ECOSOC has only directly mentioned water a few times in its annual Ministerial Declarations, including each year from 2007-2009 and most recently in 2013.¹⁰² Water and sanitation is more commonly addressed in Coordination and Management Meetings, which are used by ECOSOC to coordinate actions on development issues and review reports from ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies, including the functional and regional commissions.¹⁰³ The regional commissions carry out projects in their respective geographic areas, often in conjunction with other UN bodies, whereas the functional commissions, like the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), operate within their areas of expertise.¹⁰⁴ CPD generally addresses issues of population growth, and urged governments to improve access to water and sanitation for youth in its 2012 resolution on "Adolescents and Youth."¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) has issued a number of reports on water, including a 2011 report on Technologies to Address Challenges in Areas such as Agriculture and Water, which addressed the use of water management in agriculture.¹⁰⁶

Irrespective of the responsible UN body, most projects related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) align with the internationally-agreed-upon development goals and are coordinated through UN-Water.¹⁰⁷ Their progress is tracked by the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation, which is hosted by WHO and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).¹⁰⁸ The JMP is responsible for collecting and reporting data on water-related development targets for the UN and also defines terms for data collection purposes.¹⁰⁹ They define access to drinking water as having a source that is "less than 1 kilometer away from its place of use and [from which] it is possible to reliably obtain at least 20 liters per member of a household per day."¹¹⁰

⁹³ UN-Water, *About UN-Water*, 2014.

⁹⁴ UNW-DPC, *Adding Value in Water-Related Capacity Development*.

⁹⁵ UN-Water, *Members and Partners*, 2014.

⁹⁶ UN WHO, *Water Sanitation Health*.

⁹⁷ UNEP, *Water and Sanitation*.

⁹⁸ UN-Water, *Members and Partners*.

⁹⁹ UN-Water, *Members and Partners*, 2014; IAEA, *Water Resources Programme*, 2015; UNESCO, *About Us*.

¹⁰⁰ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² UN ECOSOC, *Ministerial Declaration: Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in Regard to Sustainable Development*, 2008.

¹⁰³ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Coordination and Management Meetings-CMM*; UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

¹⁰⁴ UN RCNYO, *What we do*.

¹⁰⁵ UN CPD, *Adolescents and youth (2012/1)*, 2012.

¹⁰⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Technologies to address challenges in areas such as agriculture and water (E/CN.16/2011/2)*, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ UN-Water, *About UN-Water*, 2014; JMP for Water Supply and Sanitation, *Mission and objectives*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ JMP for Water Supply and Sanitation, *2012 Annual Report*, 2013, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ UN WHO, *Water Sanitation Health*.

Outside the UN system, there are many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with ECOSOC consultative status that work to improve access to water, and each of them must submit quadrennial reports to and accept recommendations from ECOSOC.¹¹¹ Representatives from these NGOs may attend UN conferences and meetings and have access to all subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC.¹¹² The Secretary-General of the UN, in conjunction with the President of ECOSOC and its Committee on NGOs, may also request written statements from NGOs, especially on topics related to the work of ECOSOC.¹¹³ Some of these organizations act as advocates and spend time lobbying governments to take action.¹¹⁴ A few organize events, including the World Water Council (WWC), which hosts the World Water Forum and acts as a platform to bring together government officials, UN agencies, the private sector, and civil society groups to address water issues.¹¹⁵ Other organizations carry out the field work in water-related projects, often on behalf of the UN or national development agencies.¹¹⁶ One example of this kind of partnership is the West Africa Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Initiative (WA-WASH), which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) but implemented by UN agencies and NGOs.¹¹⁷ The partnership allowed for water access to be secured for tens of thousands in West Africa by providing low-cost WASH technologies and ensuring ongoing sustainability of water systems, by training well-drilling teams, pump fabricators, and installers, who then also benefited from gainful employment.¹¹⁸

The Human Right to Water and Sanitation

Water is not always explicitly recognized as a human right internationally, a fact that may contribute to a low level of political will and investment to achieve universal access.¹¹⁹ However, there are many documents that point to access to water as a human right, including the UDHR.¹²⁰ The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), an expert commission of ECOSOC, also provided a non-binding legal justification of water as a human right in *General Comment No. 15*.¹²¹ In that comment, CESCR interpreted that two articles of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) – Article 11 on the right to an adequate standard of living and Article 12 on the right to the highest attainable standard of health – as requiring recognition of the right to water in order to be fulfilled.¹²² It also includes a frequently cited definition of the right to water, which “entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.”¹²³

In 2005, Special Rapporteur to ECOSOC El Hadji Guissé published a report containing the *Draft Guidelines for the Realization of the Right to Drinking Water and Sanitation*.¹²⁴ The guidelines include a number of specific recommendations for governments, including explicitly calling for Member States to legally codify the right to water and sanitation, prioritize policies and programs to their citizens that lack basic access, and work to ensure that the private sector does not interfere with the right to water.¹²⁵ While these guidelines were not created to be directly adopted, implementing them would impose a duty to ensure the right to water on Member States.¹²⁶ However, these guidelines do not attempt to provide a legal definition for the right to water and sanitation.¹²⁷ The basic schism between the recognition of water as a right in the *Mar Del Plata Action Plan* and water being referred to as an economic good in the *Dublin Principles* persists.¹²⁸ Member States have struggled to address this, as some feel that

¹¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Basic Facts about ECOSOC Status*.

¹¹² UN ECOSOC, *Working with ECOSOC: an NGOs Guide to Consultative Status*, 2011, pp. 6-11.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹⁴ WASHfunders, *Non-Governmental Organizations*.

¹¹⁵ WWC, *7th World Water Forum: Ten Major Outcomes*, 2015.

¹¹⁶ WASHfunders, *Non-Governmental Organizations*.

¹¹⁷ Winrock International, *USAID West Africa Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Initiative*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Scanlon et al, *Water as a human right?*, 2004, p. 3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹²¹ UN CESCR, *General Comment No. 15 (E/C.12/2002/11)*, 2002.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*.

¹²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Realization of the right to drinking water and sanitation (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/25)*, 2005.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ UN-Water Conference, *Report of the United Nations Water Conference (E/CONF.70/29)*, 1977; ICWE, *The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development*, 1992.

complete recognition of water as a human right would imply that it must be free, which could strain already limited resources and put undue pressure on governments.¹²⁹ Some governments have relied on the private sector to develop water infrastructure and access, sometimes with subsidies, but the results and public response have not always been positive.¹³⁰ For example, when Bolivia privatized its water utilities in 2002, violent and deadly protests were an immediate response.¹³¹ In some places, citizens may see themselves as having an increased role in water governance, but the debate over recognition of the right to water is far from resolved.¹³²

Women and Vulnerable Populations

An Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) analysis of 25 Member States showed that women spend over 16 million hours collecting water each day, on average travelling 30 minutes to do so.¹³³ In terms of sanitation, women in urban slums often face gender-based violence (GBV), rape, or health risks when using the bathroom, as a vast majority rely on shared toilets, with some having no access to facilities at all.¹³⁴ This is in spite of the fact that Article 14 of the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) explicitly guarantees women the right to enjoy adequate living conditions, including water supply and sanitation.¹³⁵ Providing physical access to water and sanitation allows women and girls to devote more of their time to education and income generation, but this may need to be coupled with actions specifically aimed at ensuring gender equity.¹³⁶ For example, in many countries, women are barred from owning land, preventing them from harnessing the economic benefits of water access, especially in agriculture.¹³⁷ To address this, Member States have been increasingly working to involve women in the decision-making processes of WASH projects and ensuring that women are represented in water and environmental ministries.¹³⁸ Those Member States that have done so effectively have seen an increase in the sustainability of their projects as compared to those that have not.¹³⁹

In addition to women, opportunities remain in ensuring access to water for other vulnerable groups.¹⁴⁰ The 1989 UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* compels States Parties to “combat disease and malnutrition...through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water”; yet, 1.8 million children die each year due to a lack of water or because of waterborne diseases.¹⁴¹ UNICEF works continually to improve this situation and increase access to water and sanitation, especially in schools, with ongoing projects in over 100 Member States.¹⁴² Similarly, UN Enable, the implementing agency of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006), has worked to incorporate persons with disabilities into Member States’ development agendas and water plans.¹⁴³ Persons with disabilities face unique challenges, as they are often unable to travel long distances to retrieve water, and many public facilities are not built to be accessible.¹⁴⁴ The right to water is codified for other vulnerable groups as well, and is considered essential in the realization of human rights guaranteed to all people.¹⁴⁵

Water, Agriculture, and Food Security

As the global population increases, water scarcity is among the most likely causes of food insecurity, making access to water for agricultural purposes an important consideration for realizing several SDGs, particularly SDG 1, to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere,” and SDG 2, to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and

¹²⁹ Warburton, *A Right, a Need, or an Economic Good? Debating our Relationship to Water*, 2011.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ OECD, *Financing Water and Sanitation in Developing Countries: The Contribution of External Aid*, 2013.

¹³⁴ Amnesty International, *Risking Rape to Reach a Toilet: Women's Experiences in the Slums of Nairobi, Kenya*, 2010.

¹³⁵ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*.

¹³⁶ Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water, *Gender, Water and Sanitation: A Policy Brief*, 2006, p. 3.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ UN OHCHR, *The Right to Water, Fact Sheet No. 35*, 2010, p. 13.

¹⁴¹ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*.

¹⁴² UNICEF, *Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene*.

¹⁴³ UN Enable, *Relationship between Development and Human Rights*.

¹⁴⁴ UN OHCHR, *The Right to Water, Fact Sheet No. 35*, 2010, pp. 21-22.

¹⁴⁵ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*; UN OHCHR, *The Right to Water, Fact Sheet No. 35*, 2010, pp. 29-30.

promote sustainable agriculture.”¹⁴⁶ Agriculture accounts for 80% of water use in developing countries, and according to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), addressing water scarcity by improving the efficiency of irrigation system is essential to ensuring that agriculture does not threaten individual access.¹⁴⁷ The FAO has established several irrigation initiatives, including the Special Programme for Food Security, which currently works to provide low-cost irrigation and drainage systems in 68 Member States.¹⁴⁸ In partnership with other actors, including the World Bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), FAO has also developed regionally focused initiatives on water and irrigation.¹⁴⁹ For instance, the TerrAfrica initiative currently operates in 23 African countries and provides support for watershed planning and soil and water conservation.¹⁵⁰

Many developing Member States continue to struggle with irrigation in rural areas, but there have been several pilot programs conducted with promising results.¹⁵¹ In rural Peru, an irrigation financing pilot was put into place that combined education and training with microloans for farmers to purchase efficient irrigation technology.¹⁵² The new systems allowed farmers to dramatically increase their yields while using less water, allowing for more people to have consistent water access.¹⁵³ For some other Member States, addressing irrigation is no longer a primary focus, and they instead focus on emerging threats to water access resulting from environmental damage and excess use.¹⁵⁴

The Yangtze River Basin accounts for 40% of China’s gross domestic product (GDP) and 70% of its rice and fishing activities, but over the last 50 years, withdrawals from the river have increased dramatically, there has been a 73% increase in pollution, and it has become among the highest sediment-carrying rivers in the world due to land conversion for farming and forestry.¹⁵⁵ Millions of people who rely on the Yangtze now find the water unfit for human consumption, inhospitable for fish, and the river drying up earlier each year.¹⁵⁶ China has long had a pollution fee system in place, but as issues have worsened, the government began to develop an integrated basin management plan.¹⁵⁷ This planning has allowed for decision-making that balances development and protection, and there are early efforts to restore the floodplain wetlands, which will assist in cleaning up the pollution and make more water available for agriculture.¹⁵⁸ Unfortunately, action has been slow-going, and as China’s use of irrigation and damming has increased, so has the level of emissions that exacerbate global climate change, which increasingly threatens agricultural productivity and access to water.¹⁵⁹

Climate Change and the Environment

In 2011, a FAO report titled “Climate Change, Water and Food Security” highlighted the effects of climate change on both agricultural and general access to water.¹⁶⁰ The report states that irrigation areas will be increasingly limited as river run-off and aquifer recharges are reduced and as arable land is eroded due to sea-level rise and flooding.¹⁶¹ The increasing prevalence of droughts also threatens rain-fed crop harvests and basic water access in rural communities that are reliant on wells.¹⁶² For these reasons, developing countries have sought assistance in adapting to climate change, especially in utilizing adaptation techniques that will ensure access to water in the new climate reality.¹⁶³ In practice, this means providing developing countries with technical assistance in terms of water resource

¹⁴⁶ UN FAO, *Water and food security*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ UN FAO, *Water and Food Security*, 2008.

¹⁴⁸ UN FAO, *Facts and figures about FAO's Special Programme for Food Security*.

¹⁴⁹ GEF, *TerrAfrica: a partnership for sustainable land and water management Sub-Saharan countries*.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Sarapura & Menacho, *Partnering to Improve Access to Irrigation in Rural Peru*, 2010.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ WWF, *World's top 10 rivers at risk*, 2013, pp. 41-43.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Brooks, *Impending Water Crisis in China*, 2005.

¹⁵⁷ WWF, *World's top 10 rivers at risk*, 2013, pp. 41-43.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Watts, *China irrigation system responsible for rising emissions, research shows*, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ UN FAO, *Climate change, water and food security*, 2011.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁶³ UN-Water, *Climate change adaptation is mainly about water*, 2009.

management and mobilizing financial and technological resources that can allow for adaptation.¹⁶⁴ While there are already international mechanisms that assist with adaptation, UN-Water has stated that there is a lack of urgency in addressing both the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.¹⁶⁵

Outside of agriculture, the increasing incidence of catastrophic weather events often disrupts access to water and sanitation in urban and rural areas alike.¹⁶⁶ The impoverished, whose access is often already limited, are the most adversely affected by these events while having the least resources to adapt to them, so ECOSOC has worked to improved humanitarian response to these disasters, especially by improving coordination.¹⁶⁷ At the Humanitarian Affairs Segment in June of 2015, ECOSOC discussed the need for innovation in humanitarian response, including water filtration techniques, and the need to build up water infrastructure that is disaster resilient.¹⁶⁸

Water and Sanitation Infrastructure

Water infrastructure, including pipes, pumps, and treatment plants, are at the core of ensuring sustainable, universal access to water, but high costs make them difficult to procure, especially in rural areas.¹⁶⁹ Developing countries often struggle to secure financing for these projects, especially large installations of pipes, and rely on either official development assistance (ODA) from donor states or loans from international financial institutions.¹⁷⁰ The utilization of wells can be a far less expensive option, but is reliant on the mapping and use of aquifers, which, in many areas, are currently being depleted faster than their rate of replenishment.¹⁷¹ Like drinking water, there are major differences in access to sanitation infrastructure between urban and rural areas, with almost 50% of rural populations lacking access to improved sanitation systems.¹⁷² The links between sanitation and public health are clear and there is general international consensus on the need for universal access to sanitation, but nearly all sanitation systems not only require large initial infrastructure developments, but also have high long-term maintenance costs.¹⁷³

Developing effective WASH financing mechanisms could allow for much higher levels of infrastructure development and save millions of lives each year.¹⁷⁴ In a 2010 analysis, the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program examined six Member States that had implemented subsidized financing initiatives at the local level.¹⁷⁵ The Member States used various methods, including providing funds directly to municipalities or microcredit institutions or working with NGOs to finance and construct sanitation systems or provide training and education.¹⁷⁶ The World Bank found that public subsidization of sanitation hardware is necessary for achieving universal access, as impoverished households may have to spend a significant portion of their household income to otherwise afford basic sanitation.¹⁷⁷ Unfortunately, many developing countries lack funds to operate subsidies in the long term.¹⁷⁸

OECD has identified that aid for water and sanitation infrastructure has steadily increased since the 1990s, but also recognizes that challenges in project implementation and financial planning remain.¹⁷⁹ These include increasing aid recipient participation in project implementation and addressing issues with financial planning, especially in terms

¹⁶⁴ UN-Water, *Climate change adaptation is mainly about water*, 2009.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ UCS, *Water Use*.

¹⁶⁷ UN FAO, *Climate change, water and food security*, 2011, p. 5; UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/77-E/2015/64)*, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/77-E/2015/64)*, 2015.

¹⁶⁹ Winpenny, *Report of the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure*, 2003, pp. 5-8.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁷¹ Barringer, *World's Aquifers Losing Replenishment Race, Researchers Say*, 2015.

¹⁷² Scott & Seth, *Infrastructure services post-2015*, 2012, p. 9.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷⁴ UN WHO, *Tracking National Financial Flows into Sanitation, Hygiene and Drinking-Water*, 2012.

¹⁷⁵ WSP Sanitation Global Practice Team, *Financing On-Site Sanitation for the Poor: A Six Country Comparative Review and Analysis*, 2010, p. 23.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁷⁹ OECD, *Financing Water and Sanitation in Developing Countries: The Contribution of External Aid*, 2013.

of setting rates for water, taxes, and effective utilization of ODA.¹⁸⁰ ECOSOC has long called for higher levels of financial support to address this issue, including in its 1996 resolution on “Integrated Water Resources Development and Management,” but also discussed how to improve water infrastructure at its Integration Segment in May 2014.¹⁸¹ Issues related to the logistics of building out water infrastructure, water waste due to pipe leakage, and the critical role of local government and leaders were among the topics of discussion.¹⁸² Coordinating between cities and even regionally between countries was highlighted as essential for overcoming the many barriers to implementing large-scale projects, especially in smaller cities where it is difficult to recoup the costs.¹⁸³ Even if the financial and logistical barriers are overcome, maintenance is a major ongoing issue, especially in developing countries, and many people find themselves losing access due to faulty pumps that no local people have the ability to fix.¹⁸⁴

Conclusion

The progressive development of the right to water and sanitation within the international community has taken decades, and the right is still not universally recognized.¹⁸⁵ The stark reality is that hundreds of millions of people lack both consistent access to safe drinking water and to effective sanitation systems, despite goals made as early as 1977 with the *Mar Del Plata Action Plan* to ensure universal access.¹⁸⁶ ECOSOC has already played a key role in the recognition of the right to water globally.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, as the primary UN entity in the oversight of NGOs and coordination between other bodies and agencies in the implementation of the SDGs, ECOSOC is uniquely positioned to make recommendations on how to ensure universal access to water.¹⁸⁸ In order to holistically address the topic and make progress on the realization of the right to water and sanitation, ECOSOC will need to address all aspects of water access, including addressing infrastructure financing, recognition of the right to water, and threats to water access such as climate change.¹⁸⁹ With the adoption of the SDGs, water access is a critical component of the international development agenda and cooperation between Member States is critical to achieving success.¹⁹⁰

Further Research

In considering what actions can be taken by the international community and Member States to ensure universal access to water, delegates should consider the following questions: To what extent have past frameworks been implemented, and what challenges remain? Which bodies and programs in the UN system can be best utilized to increase access to water? To what extent has your Member State and region ensured universal access to water and what are the continuing obstacles? What practices have been successful in extending water infrastructure and access? How, and should, the right to water be guaranteed? What special considerations for access to water must be made for vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the disabled?

¹⁸⁰ OECD, *Financing Water and Sanitation in Developing Countries: The Contribution of External Aid*, 2013.

¹⁸¹ UN ECOSOC, *Integrated water resources development and management (1996/50)*, 1996; UNCRD, *Contribution to the 2014 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration Segment*, 2014.

¹⁸² UNCRD, *Contribution to the 2014 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration Segment*, 2014.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ IIED, *Making the right to water a reality: tackling barriers to access and equity*, 2013.

¹⁸⁵ Warburton, *A Right, a Need, or an Economic Good? Debating our Relationship to Water*, 2011.

¹⁸⁶ UN DPI, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, 2015, pp. 58-59.

¹⁸⁷ UN-Water, *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones*.

¹⁸⁸ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC as a unifying platform for sustainable development*.

¹⁸⁹ Bluemel, *The Implications of Formulating a Human Right to Water*, 2004, pp. 42-51.

¹⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

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Biswas, A. (2003). *From Mar del Plata to Kyoto: An Analysis of Global Water Policy Dialogues*. Retrieved 24 September 2015 from: <http://www.doccentre.net/docsweb/water1/water-biswas.htm>

In this analysis, Biswas provides a fairly comprehensive overview of the historical frameworks that sought to ensure access to water and recognize the human right to water and sanitation. In-depth insights into the struggles within the UN system are provided, and an understanding of what lessons should be learned from past mistakes can be gained from a careful reading. Delegates should examine what goals and actions the international community took in its early efforts to ensure universal access and understand why they may have been unsuccessful.

United Nations, Commission on Human Rights. (2005). *Realization of the Right to Drinking Water and Sanitation (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/25)* [Report]. Retrieved 26 September 2015 from:

<http://www.undocs.org/E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/25>

This document from the Commission on Human Rights includes the draft guidelines for the realization of the right to drinking water and sanitation. In addition to covering specifics regarding what the right to water and sanitation means, the guidelines provide several recommendations for Member States on ensuring the availability and equitable distribution of water. The document is relatively short and delegates should be familiar with most of the content contained therein, as it is important for an understanding of the right to water and actions that can be taken to ensure its universal access.

United Nations, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2002). *Substantive Issues Arising in the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 15 (2002): The right to water (arts. 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) (E/C.12/2002/11)*. Retrieved 26 September 2015 from: <http://www.undocs.org/e/c.12/2002/11>

Arguably the most important document in terms of international recognition of the right to water, General Comment No. 15 from the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights contains the interpretation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that recognized the right to water. The document is fairly dense with legal justification for the interpretation, but will give delegates an in-depth understanding of the basis for recognition of the right to water in international law.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. (1992). *Agenda 21* [Outcome Document]. Retrieved 25 September 2015 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

Agenda 21 remains at the core of international development efforts, and having a general understanding of its contents is essential in any sustainable development discussions. Chapter 18 is still utilized by implementing UN agencies today. Delegates should read the entirety of Chapter 18, as it includes specific recommendations on water management for all levels of governance.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*. Retrieved 20 October 2015 from:

[http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf)

While the MDGs expire at the end of 2015, they provide important context as 2016 leads in to the engagement of the SDGs. Delegates should, of course, familiarize themselves with the goals and targets that were applicable to water, but they should also be aware of which targets were met, which were not, and if there is any variability between regions. The MDG Report also discusses several of the impediments to successfully reaching the MDGs and offers some insights as to how the international community may overcome those obstacles, which might inspire future actions.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 2 November 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

This document contains the SDGs and all of their respective targets as adopted in September 2015. Given that the international community is committing itself to reaching these goals between 2015 and 2030, it behooves delegates to understand the basis for the goals and to also be able to make reference to any and all targets that apply to the topic under discussion. The beginning of the document, which outlines the basic premises of the SDGs and the principles under which they

will be implemented, may be useful, but the two sections that delegates will want to read carefully are those that contain the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and the means of implementation.

United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism on All Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation. (n.d.). *The Human Right to Water and Sanitation: Milestones* [Background Note]. Retrieved 23 September 2015 from:

http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/pdf/human_right_to_water_and_sanitation_milestones.pdf

This brief timeline from the Inter-Agency Mechanism on All Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation is an excellent point for delegates to begin their research, as it outlines most of the major international frameworks on the right to water in an incredibly succinct manner. When reading through the list, delegates should take note of what the issuing body is for each document, its relative importance, and how both the document and the body itself may be useful in terms of ensuring universal access to water. The time between the adoption of documents and the pace at which agreement is reached on some issues is also noteworthy.

United Nations Water Conference. (1977). *Report of the United Nations Water Conference (E/CONF.70/29)*. Retrieved 22 September 2015 from: <http://www.undocs.org/E/CONF.70/29>

This report, adopted at the 1977 UN Water Conference, contains the Mar Del Plata Action Plan, one of the earliest and most important documents meant to ensure universal access to water. In reading this document, delegates should pay attention to the aspirations and goals contained within and which of them have still not been met to this day. This Action Plan is referenced in nearly every modern agreement on water, and it is important to understand how it ties into all of the various aspects of access to water.

United Nations, World Summit on Sustainable Development. (2002). *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development* [Outcome Document]. Retrieved 25 September 2015 from:

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

Like Agenda 21, the framework established by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation is still utilized in most sustainable development discussions, including on water and sanitation. The second section of the plan on poverty eradication includes several specific goals on ensuring access to water and also draws links between water and other human rights. Delegates may also benefit from reading the sections related to the provision of financial resources, which are often a roadblock in terms of building infrastructure that allows for water access.

World Water Council. (2015). *7th World Water Forum: Ten Major Outcomes*. Retrieved 27 September 2015 from: http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/fileadmin/world_water_council/documents/publications/forum_documents/7th%20World%20Water%20Forum%20Outcomes%20Layout%20hyperlinks.pdf

The World Water Forum is responsible for many of the progressions of ensuring universal access to water. This document outlines the major outcomes of the 7th World Water Forum, which took place in April 2015. The document is generally optimistic, but also highlights several specific accomplishments on water access and makes reference to a large number of bodies and agencies taking action on water that delegates may find useful during preparation and negotiations.

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II. Utilizing Youth Employment for Sustainable Development

*“Young people must be at the center of building a sustainable future... Half the world's population is under 25. We must tap into that enormous source of energy, ideas and potential.”*¹⁹¹

Introduction

The total absolute and relative number of young people today is the highest that it has ever been; there are approximately 1.8 billion people currently in the world aged 10-24 years old, which makes up 25% of the global population.¹⁹² In the least developed countries (LDCs), the number increases to 60%, and that number is projected to rise even more by the middle of the century.¹⁹³ In the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the current work of the international community, there is increasing attention to helping young people find employment in order to drive economic growth and social stability.¹⁹⁴ However, there are significant and endemic challenges in relation to youth employment that need innovative solutions and multi-stakeholder political will.¹⁹⁵

This urgency in addressing youth employment comes from what is described as the demographic window of opportunity.¹⁹⁶ This issue is highly significant to the mandate of the United Nations (UN), which was founded in the aftermath of World War II to promote international peace and security.¹⁹⁷ Just as importantly, the UN provides a forum and platform for action on sustainable economic, social, and cultural development for all humanity.¹⁹⁸ This is primarily through one of the UN's principal organs, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).¹⁹⁹ By coordinating between different stakeholders, including Member States, private businesses, and civil society organizations (CSOs), ECOSOC has shed light on the many challenges facing youth employment globally, and how targeted economic and social policies may help leverage youth employment for sustainable development.²⁰⁰

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted in 1948, was a landmark document that paved the way for the UN system's commitment to rights-based development for all.²⁰¹ As early as 1965, the UN recognized the importance of young people's energy and creativity for development in the *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples*.²⁰² In it, the UN General Assembly (GA) highlights the “important part being played by young people in every field of human endeavor and the fact that they are destined to guide the fortunes of mankind.”²⁰³ The World Commission on Environment and Development issued a report titled *Our Common Future* in 1987, also known as the Brundtland Report.²⁰⁴ It notably defined sustainable development as: “development that meets the needs of the present without, compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”²⁰⁵ In 1995, the World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY) to The Year 2000 and Beyond was created.²⁰⁶ WPAY is comprised of 10 original and five additional priority areas for building national capacities for fostering youth development and participation in society.²⁰⁷ Employment was the

¹⁹¹ UN DPI, *Secretary-General's Remarks At MDG Advocates High-level Side Event "Sustainable Futures: Accelerating Progress On The MDGs Through Youth Innovations,"* 2012.

¹⁹² UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

¹⁹³ UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

¹⁹⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All*, 2015, p. 1; UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁹⁵ ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 5.

¹⁹⁶ UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

¹⁹⁷ UN DPI, *Overview*, 2015.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*, 2015.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

²⁰² UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (A/RES/2037 (XX))*, 1965.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ World Bank, *What is Sustainable Development*, 2001.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ UN DESA, *World Program of Action for Youth*, 2010, p. 8.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

second priority area, following education.²⁰⁸ WPAY stresses the damage resulting in not utilizing this significant human resource, both to young people themselves and their Member State, as well.²⁰⁹

Another important international framework is the SDGs, adopted on 25 September 2015, which are the cornerstones of the UN Member States' collective development agenda for the next 15 years.²¹⁰ During the past two years, the GA Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to the UN Secretary-General, were instrumental in providing input to formulating the goals.²¹¹ Mindful of past issues with the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) design, there was greater UN engagement with CSOs to include the voice of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society while creating the SDGs.²¹² There are 17 SDGs split into 169 targets, a significant increase from the 8 MDGs and their 18 targets.²¹³ Additionally, there is now clearer language regarding youth employment & sustainable development.²¹⁴ Goal 8 of the SDGs aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."²¹⁵ Targets 5 and 6 of Goal 8 explicitly mention youth employment, first in the context of decent work and equal pay for equal value, then in terms of the proportion of young people not in employment, education, or training.²¹⁶ Target 3 of Goal 4 focuses on access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university education to all people.²¹⁷ Target 4 of the same goal focuses on the link between the previous and employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth.²¹⁸

Role of the International System

An important organization in relation to this topic is the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was created following World War I.²¹⁹ It became the first UN specialized agency in 1946, having a consultative and cooperative relationship with the GA and ECOSOC.²²⁰ Its objectives are to "promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues."²²¹ It counts youth employment among its key issues, and has a dedicated Youth Employment Program (YEP).²²² The YEP provides valuable assistance to Member States seeking to address youth unemployment through different avenues such as data collection, policy advice, awareness-raising, and strategic partnership.²²³ During the ILO's annual International Labor Conference in 2012, it issued its call for action for youth employment, affirming that creating decent jobs for youth was of the highest global priority.²²⁴ This is because persistent youth unemployment and underemployment (not utilizing skills fully) lead to disillusioned youth, and carry high social and economic costs.²²⁵

Another first was the appointment of Mr. Ahmed El Hendawi by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the first ever UN Envoy on Youth in 2013.²²⁶ El Hendawi's role is to advocate for the needs and rights of young people within the UN system.²²⁷ Youth employment is being afforded increased focus within his program of work.²²⁸ As such, he is tasked with working with core UN agencies on promoting it; these include some 40 members of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.²²⁹ A recent example of this work is his support in organizing the High-

²⁰⁸ UN DESA, *World Program of Action for Youth*, 2010, p. 18.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 2.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Millennium Project, *Goals, Target and Indicators*, 2006.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 12.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²¹⁹ ILO, *Origins and History*, 2015.

²²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Draft Agreement Between the United Nations and International Labor Organization (A/72)*, 1946.

²²¹ ILO, *Origins and History*, 2015.

²²² ILO, *Youth Employment Program*, 2015.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 3.

²²⁵ ILO, *Youth Employment Program*, 2015.

²²⁶ UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, *Meet the Envoy*, 2015.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, *Work Plan*, 2015.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*; UN-DESA, *IANYD Members*, 2015.

Level Event of the GA marking the 20th anniversary of WPAY, to discuss youth in the post-2015 process.²³⁰ In his words, “Youth are proving once again that they have the power and the tools to be equal partners in development. They do not want to be talked AT—they want to be engaged in a meaningful way.”²³¹

ECOSOC is the main UN organ tasked with addressing economic and social questions of sustainable development.²³² It fulfills that via its central role in supervising the work of UN subsidiary and expert bodies, plus UN specialized agencies, in the areas of social, economic, and environmental concerns.²³³ ECOSOC’s work follows an annual programmatic cycle, with high-level, integration, humanitarian affairs, and operational activities for development segments.²³⁴ The Council is also a platform to discuss pertinent issues; it fulfills that role for youth via its annual Youth Forum.²³⁵ During the 2014 Forum, over 350 youth representatives called upon governments to provide youth with access to quality education and decent work opportunities.²³⁶ The representatives called attention to the barriers of entry to labor markets caused by skill mismatches and lack of experience, among other issues, with a spotlight on Africa.²³⁷ ECOSOC’s 2015 Integration Segment was titled “Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All.”²³⁸ It brought together Member States, ILO constituents, CSOs, and the business sector to address this.²³⁹ The outcomes included policy recommendations for adequate social safety nets, active labor market policies, minimum and living wages, and training and skills development for youth among others.²⁴⁰ The policies are essential to facilitating the creation of decent jobs, as a way of promoting the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.²⁴¹

Another main UN organ, the GA, convened the High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment in June 2015.²⁴² The demographic dividend is when a country’s working-age population is larger than its dependent one.²⁴³ It featured two panel discussions: the first on how to best leverage the demographic dividend, and the second on policies and measures needed to boost youth employment.²⁴⁴ Both discussions included themes of health, education, employment, and empowerment.²⁴⁵ Recommendations included how to hasten the demographic transition, plus how to empower youth to participate in solution-setting and monitoring.²⁴⁶

Youth Employment and the Demographic Window of Opportunity

The global youth population is projected to increase until 2070, due to a global aggregate shift from high fertility and mortality rates to low ones.²⁴⁷ This demographic transition translates to the share of the working-age population (15 to 65 years old) becoming larger than the share of dependents.²⁴⁸ New labor force entrants are usually more educated than existing workers and more capable of changing jobs.²⁴⁹ In turn, this improves the overall labor force

²³⁰ UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, *Opening Remarks at High-level Event of the General Assembly to mark the 20th Anniversary of the World Program of Action for Youth*, 2015.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*, 2015.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Youth Forum “#Youth2015: Realizing the Future They Want”*, 2015, p. 1.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²³⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All*, 2015, p. 2.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² UN President of the General Assembly. *High-level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment: President’s Summary*, 2015.

²⁴³ UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

²⁴⁴ UN President of the General Assembly. *High-level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment: President’s Summary*, 2015.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Tzannatos, *Labor Demand And Social Dialogue: Two Binding Constraints For Decent Work For Youth In The Arab Region*, 2014, p. 9.

quality and productivity.²⁵⁰ Finally, a lower dependency ratio means more money is saved and then re-invested in the economy.²⁵¹ East Asian countries have already reaped the benefits of providing family planning resources and investing in their youth; Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 970% between 1950 and 2008.²⁵² The Republic of Korea's per-capita GDP has grown by an astonishing 2,200% within the same time period.²⁵³ This is what the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has termed the "demographic dividend," and across regions, each Member State has its own demographic window of opportunity.²⁵⁴

However, the reality is that most Member States have yet to properly exploit their demographic window of opportunity.²⁵⁵ Unemployed, disaffected youth with no decent job prospects or opportunities for social mobility is a significant factor in fomenting social and political unrest, such as during the Arab Spring protests.²⁵⁶ Jobs are sources of identity validation, and mark the transition into adulthood.²⁵⁷ Research suggests that unemployment and other negative experiences of labor markets, such as discriminatory barriers to entry underemployment, monotonous and unsafe working practices, and informal employment, are linked to serious forms of violence.²⁵⁸ These experiences may drive people into practicing forms of violence that are both financially and socially rewarding for them.²⁵⁹ This can range from organized crime, to insurgency, to terrorism.²⁶⁰ Accordingly, there is much that remains to be done by Member States in addressing youth employment.²⁶¹

Current Youth Employment Challenges

In its 2015 "World Employment and Social Outlook," the ILO predicts that global unemployment will continue to rise in the next five years.²⁶² There are over 201 million unemployed people worldwide.²⁶³ 74 million young people are unemployed; their rate of 13% in 2014 is almost three times higher than older adults.²⁶⁴ Even within some of the world's richest economies, youth unemployment is still significantly higher than adult unemployment.²⁶⁵ It is 2.6 times higher in the United States, 1.8 in Japan, 2.3 in Canada, and 3.6 in New Zealand.²⁶⁶ In East Asia, the average youth unemployment rate was 10.5% in 2014.²⁶⁷ Within South-East Asia and the Pacific, the youth unemployment rate is more than three times that of the adult one, at 13.6%.²⁶⁸ The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is plagued with the highest youth unemployment rate worldwide, at 29.5%.²⁶⁹

Additionally, those actually employed do not always enjoy the benefits of working.²⁷⁰ According to the ILO, nearly 152 million young workers live below the poverty line of \$1.25 per day, almost double the number of the unemployed youth.²⁷¹ The working poor, living under \$2 a day, number more than 200 million.²⁷² Also, within

²⁵⁰ Tzannatos, *Labor Demand And Social Dialogue: Two Binding Constraints For Decent Work For Youth In The Arab Region*, 2014, p. 9.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁵² UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Tzannatos, *Labor Demand And Social Dialogue: Two Binding Constraints For Decent Work For Youth In The Arab Region*, 2014, p. 1.

²⁵⁷ Cramer, *Unemployment and Participation in Violence*, 2010, p. 24; UN DESA, *Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives On The Pursuit Of Decent Work In Changing Times*, 2011, p. 17.

²⁵⁸ Cramer, *Unemployment and Participation in Violence*, 2010, p. 24.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ UNFPA, *Demographic Dividend*, 2015.

²⁶² ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015*, 2015, p. 15.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁷⁰ UN DESA, *Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives On The Pursuit Of Decent Work In Changing Times*, 2011, p. 22.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 3.

Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, almost half of all young workers work in the informal economy.²⁷³ They lack job stability, different forms of social protection, and are susceptible to unsafe working conditions.²⁷⁴

Another group faces additional difficulties: young people with disabilities.²⁷⁵ The UN estimate ranges from 180 to 220 million youth living with disabilities worldwide.²⁷⁶ The majority of these youth live in poverty and lack access to resources and services, even in developed countries.²⁷⁷ A large number of children with disabilities do not enjoy access to education, for example.²⁷⁸ Discriminatory and other barriers result in youth with disabilities finding the transition into adulthood difficult.²⁷⁹ People with disabilities suffer from disproportionately high unemployment rates: in some countries in the Asia-Pacific region, that can be as high as 80%.²⁸⁰

A more traditional sector, agriculture, is also vital for youth employment.²⁸¹ This is where young workers face the greatest risk of living in poverty, at a rate more than twice their adult counterparts.²⁸² But due to a lack of incentives and opportunities for social mobility, youth are increasingly turning their backs on opportunities in agriculture.²⁸³ Working on providing better employment opportunities, plus maximizing the returns on labor-intensive practices, provides two benefits.²⁸⁴ It helps youth break the often-intergenerational cycle of poverty, and also improves food security.²⁸⁵

Nearly six million young people worldwide have given up trying to look for jobs.²⁸⁶ There are clear effects of youth unemployment on young people, their families, and their countries.²⁸⁷ Young people who cannot find work may suffer from low self-esteem, and may engage in negative behaviors, such as criminal behavior or unsafe sexual activity.²⁸⁸ Households have less disposable income and a greater burden of care, increasing the risk that they fall or stay in poverty.²⁸⁹ Finally, this increases national poverty, lowers public health, lessens tax revenue and indeed increases the cost of policies to deal with the ill effects of youth unemployment, such as policing crime, income welfare and other social security programs.²⁹⁰ Investing in promoting youth employment creates sustainable development across all areas of society.²⁹¹ ECOSOC's Integration Segment has focused on linking good quality jobs with sustainable development.²⁹² It has highlighted the importance of raising the wages of the working poor, which live on less than \$2 a day and form up to 27% of the global labor force.²⁹³

Economic Policy Approaches

In addition to global macroeconomic uncertainty, there are structural reasons why youth unemployment rates are not the same as their adult counterparts; chiefly, there are labor market supply-demand mismatches.²⁹⁴ Young people's

²⁷³ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015*, 2015, p. 52.

²⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives On The Pursuit Of Decent Work In Changing Times*, 2011, p. 20.

²⁷⁵ UNPY, *Factsheet: Youth with Disabilities*, 2011.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ UN FAO, *Decent Rural Employment for Food Security: A Case for Action*, 2012, p. 2.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ CDB, *Youth Are The Future: The Imperative Of Youth Employment For Sustainable Development In The Caribbean*, 2015, p. 43.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² UN ECOSOC, *Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All*, 2015, p. 6.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ CDB, *Youth Are The Future: The Imperative Of Youth Employment For Sustainable Development In The Caribbean*, 2015, p. 82.

skills and education are simply not what firms require.²⁹⁵ Youth can also be overqualified in terms of education, so they may not be willing to work in underwhelming jobs.²⁹⁶ This skills mismatch is exemplified in the case of China.²⁹⁷ Nine percent of recent college graduates are unemployed, double the general population rate.²⁹⁸ Businesses have exploited this vulnerability, offering little compensation to desperate job applicants.²⁹⁹ This can have long-term effects in the shape of brain drain, as disinvested, skilled, youth migrate to seek better opportunities outside their communities and countries.³⁰⁰ The World Bank estimates that some countries have lost up to one-third of their skilled workforce.³⁰¹

By supporting stronger aggregate demand and improving access to financial services, Member States help young people find decent work, foster space for entrepreneurship, and boost investment generally.³⁰² There must be public investment in labor-intensive, large-scale infrastructure to absorb the supply of eager young workers.³⁰³ Employee-guarantee schemes and wage subsidies must also be considered where appropriate.³⁰⁴ In addition, tripartite wage setting mechanisms that involve government, labor, and private business promote better pay.³⁰⁵

ECOSOC has focused on several economic policy areas for implementation on the national level.³⁰⁶ It is encouraging Member States in providing adequate social protection systems for all members of society, as per ILO recommendations.³⁰⁷ It is also helping them introduce and improve policies aimed at increasing youth and other vulnerable groups' employability, and access to decent work opportunities.³⁰⁸ This is via active labor market support and public-private partnerships, and facilitating access to labor markets.³⁰⁹ Finally, it has called for a strengthening of the capacity of national financial institutions to provide access to banking and insurance services to those who previously could not.³¹⁰ This includes credit and microfinance services.³¹¹

Leveraging Youth Employment for Sustainable Development

Literacy and education are also important in approaching youth employment; there are currently 130 million young people, aged 15 to 24 years old, without basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills.³¹² From the onset of the educational cycle, policies must ensure that all have access to quality education.³¹³ Social protection and incentives are important in ensuring that poor children stay in school.³¹⁴ Currently, most of the education for children with disabilities is substandard compared to mainstream education, and subject to teachers' misconceptions on what is appropriate for their students with disabilities.³¹⁵ Overall, those who have not enjoyed access to education,

²⁹⁵ CDB, *Youth Are The Future: The Imperative Of Youth Employment For Sustainable Development In The Caribbean*, 2015, p. 82.

²⁹⁶ Tzannatos, *Labor Demand And Social Dialogue: Two Binding Constraints For Decent Work For Youth In The Arab Region*, 2014, p. 9.

²⁹⁷ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015*, 2015, p. 45.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Cramer, *Unemployment and Participation in Violence*, 2010, p. 24.

³⁰⁰ CDB, *Youth Are The Future: The Imperative Of Youth Employment For Sustainable Development In The Caribbean*, 2015, p. 42.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 15.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁰⁵ ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015*, 2015, p. 47.

³⁰⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all (E/RES/2014/5)*, 2014, p. 3.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 7.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ UNPY, *Factsheet: Youth with Disabilities*, 2011.

particularly young women and girls, should be targeted in second-chance initiatives that deliver basic knowledge and train essential competencies.³¹⁶ These can include non-traditional trainings within non-formal settings.³¹⁷

In turn, these alternative forms of education should be recognized by the private sector.³¹⁸ Secondary and higher education, plus vocational training, must be geared towards meeting current and future business demands.³¹⁹ Adding to that, school-to-work transition and training programs are a tried and tested method to forge public-private partnerships that ultimately leave youth with valuable experience and skills, without compromising on their education.³²⁰ It is crucial that apprenticeships and internships do not become vehicles of exploitation of youth labor.³²¹ An investment in educating and training young people raises an economy's social capital.³²² The measurable economic return in developing countries amounts to \$15 to every \$1 spent on education.³²³ ECOSOC has recognized the need to promote investment, public and private, in human capital via education and resource capacity building.³²⁴ ECOSOC's 2015 Integration Segment highlighted several innovative cases of doing so, including in Turkey, Finland, and Cambodia.³²⁵

There are several promising sectors for boosting youth employment, especially in developing countries.³²⁶ This is due to the proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in many diverse fields.³²⁷ The offshore sector particularly has some interesting side effects; notably, demand for education in the skills needed means that for every direct job created, there are four created indirectly.³²⁸ Thanks to ICTs, the very concept of a "workplace" has changed.³²⁹ The rise in mobile technology use, and new forms of outsourcing such as crowdsourcing and micro-work, have helped create employment opportunities even for youth with limited skills, and access to basic digital infrastructure.³³⁰

Sustainable development also requires a transition to a smarter and "greener" economy, with fewer adverse effects on the environment.³³¹ There is a desire amongst some young people to integrate ICT solutions within the green economy.³³² It has been estimated that, over the next two decades, this could lead to creating 15 to 60 million jobs.³³³ ECOSOC has also recognized the potential of ICT in improving quality of life and increasing participation in the global economy.³³⁴ ECOSOC's secretariat includes those with the UN ICT Task Force; its role is to link ICT with sustainable development issues.³³⁵

Case Study: The European Union Youth Guarantee

An effective example of addressing youth unemployment is the European Union's (EU) Youth Guarantee, started in 2013.³³⁶ It is targeted towards young people under the age of 25, and commits Member States to address their employment situation within four months of finishing school or leaving their job.³³⁷ That can either be through

³¹⁶ ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 7.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ UN ITU, *Digital Opportunities - Innovative ICT Solutions For Youth Employment*, 2014, p. 27.

³¹⁹ ILO, *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action*, 2012, p. 7.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ OECD & ILO, *Promoting Better Labor Market Outcomes For Youth*, 2014.

³²² ILO, *Skilling Up Youth Critical For Tackling Jobs Crisis*, 2014.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all (E/RES/2014/5)*, 2014, p. 4.

³²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All*, 2015, p. 3.

³²⁶ UN ITU, *Digital Opportunities - Innovative ICT Solutions For Youth Employment*, 2014, p. 1.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid., p. 26.

³³² Ibid., p. 26.

³³³ Ibid., p. 27.

³³⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all (E/RES/2014/5)*, 2014, p. 4.

³³⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Information and Communication and Technologies Task Force -- Note by the Secretary-General*, 2015.

³³⁶ European Commission, *EU Youth Guarantee: Questions and Answers*, 2015.

³³⁷ Ibid.

offering a good-quality job relevant to their education, skills, or experience, or via training or continued education that would allow them to find a good-quality job in the future.³³⁸ The program therefore both supports currently unemployed youth and structural reforms for improving school-to-work transitions.³³⁹ These reforms target public employment services, in terms of having them offered personalized advice for young people, to guarantee a tailor-made offer for them by the end of four months.³⁴⁰

The reforms also work on extending access to public employment services to those furthest from the labor market; for example, it works with inactive young people who are not currently registered.³⁴¹ The Youth Guarantee is being implemented in all EU Member States, and the speed of implementation already has been noted.³⁴² Finland provides an especially compelling case for the program's success; within three months of entering the program, 83.5% of unemployed youth received job offers.³⁴³ EU-wide cost-benefit analysis supports the Youth Guarantee: it may incur €1 billion in yearly costs, but the economic costs of unemployment, including paid benefits and foregone tax revenue, stands at €150 billion per year.³⁴⁴

Conclusion

Member States should increase youth participation in their decision-making process, and include youth perspectives in their policies and actions.³⁴⁵ This should happen across all levels, from schools and local communities, to regional and international fora.³⁴⁶ ECOSOC has also worked on promoting participation in policymaking processes and governance and having more responsive and representative national institutions.³⁴⁷ Good governance, manifested in transparency and accountability mechanisms, drives young people to be successful drivers of development policies.³⁴⁸ Youth leadership is also critical for sustainable development.³⁴⁹ In the words of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "I have often said that young people are leaders of tomorrow. But I have changed it. Young people are leaders of today."³⁵⁰

Further Research

Delegates should consider the following questions: Starting with the international system, what is the role of CSOs in working on youth issues? How can they help through advocacy and providing solutions? On a national level, what are the current gaps, in terms of policies and institutional capacities, towards youth employment and youth in general? How can you harmonize the pro-jobs macroeconomic policies that differ from country to country? How can you ensure a regional and global push for youth employment that will translate towards achieving sustainable development?

³³⁸ European Commission, *EU Youth Guarantee: Questions and Answers*, 2015.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ European Commission, *Youth Guarantee*, 2015.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ UN DESA, *Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives On The Pursuit Of Decent Work In Changing Times*, 2011, p. 87.

³⁴⁶ UNESCO, *UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021*, 2014, p. 17.

³⁴⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all (E/RES/2014/5)*, 2014, p. 2.

³⁴⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Youth Forum "#Youth2015: Realizing the Future They Want"*, 2015.

³⁴⁹ UN DPI, *Secretary-General's Remarks At MDG Advocates High-level Side Event "Sustainable Futures: Accelerating Progress On The MDGs Through Youth Innovations"*, 2012.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

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Caribbean Development Bank. (2015). *Youth Are The Future: The Imperative Of Youth Employment For Sustainable Development In The Caribbean*. Retrieved 11 August 2015 from: <http://www.caribbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Youth-Study-Imperative-of-Employment-CDB-2015.pdf>

This 136-page report gives a holistic view of both general global youth employment, and the more in-depth Caribbean youth perspective. It also empirically details the consequences of youth unemployment and underemployment, such as engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors and criminal activity. It is especially useful to delegates looking for case studies and best practices regarding youth employment from around the world.

Cramer, C. (2010). *World Development Report 2011 Background Paper: Unemployment and Participation in Violence*. The World Bank. Retrieved 22 June 2015 from:

<http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01306/web/pdf/wdr>

Christopher Cramer, of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, contributed this background paper to the World Bank's 2011 World Development Report. In it, the links between unemployment and various forms of violence are explored using an analytical approach. The paper draws upon abstract models, research in industrialized societies, and developing country research. Delegates reading this paper will more fully understand the complexity of the link between youth unemployment and violence.

International Labour Organization. (2012). *The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action* [Report]. Retrieved 13 August from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_norm/--relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_185950.pdf

With a mandate to promote decent, sustainable work opportunities, the ILO is best positioned in this report to both dissect the root causes of disproportionately high youth unemployment, and to work with all stakeholders on concrete policy options. This timely source is especially beneficial to delegates since it has specific, actionable proposals, and the means to achieve them. This report is an excellent source with which to begin research on this issue.

International Labour Organization. (2015). *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015* [Report]. Retrieved 22 June 2015 from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms_337069.pdf

This is the newly revamped annual world employment report published by the ILO. It looks at global, regional, and sector-specific job trends, and frames them within the 2008 global financial crisis discussion. It also provides useful data on the demographic window of opportunity and the issue of income inequality. This is a highly useful source for delegates, as it combines different bodies of literature, modes of analysis, and perspectives on employment generally.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development & International Labor Organization. (2014). *Promoting Better Labor Market Outcomes For Youth* [Report]. Retrieved 22 June 2015 from:

<http://www.oecd.org/g20/topics/employment-and-social-policy/OECD-ILO-Youth-Apprenticeships-G20.pdf>

This joint report by the OECD and ILO was prepared for the most recent G20 Labor Ministerial meeting. The main messages are that more still needs to be done in terms of direct labor market policy, the significance of providing quality apprenticeships and internships, and the importance of monitoring previous successes for future reference. This source is particularly interesting for delegates looking at or representing G20 economies, but has useful information for all delegates.

Tzannatos, Z. (2014). *Labor Demand and Social Dialogue: Two Binding Constraints For Decent Work For Youth In The Arab Region*. ILO Employment Department Working Paper Series. Retrieved 23 June 2015 from:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_329982.pdf

Zafir Tzannatos is a former employment specialist at the ILO. His critical review of the causes of the Arab Spring yields two linked observations: young people did not find suitable work, and they lacked the means to express their frustration, let alone affect the policymaking process. Displaying the importance of considering the complete picture, delegates would do well to consider the social aspects and consequences of youth employment, and the different metrics that can be used to measure employment alongside the typical labor market statistics.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2011). *United Nations World Youth Report: Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives On The Pursuit Of Decent Work In Changing Times*. Retrieved 23 June 2015 from: http://www.unworldyouthreport.org/images/docs/un_worldyouthreport_single.pdf

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs engaged with young people and representatives of youth-led organizations to produce this report. It is the result of a month-long direct discussion of the different themes of youth employment. This included extensive outreach efforts to interview participants from different geographic areas and of differing ages, genders, and other demographic distinctions. The result is that delegates are afforded a concise yet expansive and direct report on how employment challenges affect youth.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2015). *Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All* [Conference Room Paper]. Retrieved 22 June 2015 from: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/integration/2015/pdf/crp_2015.pdf

The ECOSOC Secretariat consolidated input from Member States and the UN system on the issue of achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all. This source provides an overview of the best practices and policy recommendations as brought forward by diverse stakeholders. These practices and recommendations are multidisciplinary, and engage different stakeholders and sectors. For delegates, particularly useful is the outline of ECOSOC's role in promoting sustainable development through employment creation.

United Nations, Food and Agricultural Organization. (2012). *Decent Rural Employment for Food Security: A Case for Action* [Report]. Retrieved 14 August 2015 from: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2750e/>

The Food and Agricultural Organization makes a strong claim for the necessity of linking rural employment development, investing in productivity, and food security. This report details the challenges facing youth working in agriculture, especially the informal nature of the work. This is a good source for delegates who want to explore different labor markets and how to integrate youth into such markets.

United Nations, International Telecommunications Union. (2014). *Digital Opportunities - Innovative ICT Solutions For Youth Employment* [Report]. Retrieved 14 August 2015 from: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Youth-and-Children/Documents/YouthReport_2014.pdf

Adding to the literature on youth employment statistics, this source offers useful projections regarding future labor markets. The emphasis is on areas where ICT solutions may offer high value and low start-up cost, and this source provides feasible areas of policy innovation. Delegates will find a wealth of information on all sorts of careers in which young people may have an advantage compared to their adult counterparts.

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III. Education in Post-Conflict Situations

“[D]eveloping civilian capacity is crucial for the global journey away from conflict.”³⁵¹

Introduction

As the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told world leaders in 2012, the quality of and universal access to education is a key factor to achieving development.³⁵² This emphasis on education reinforces efforts and initiatives undertaken in the last several decades by the UN system, including the organization of conferences in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), and Dakar, Senegal (2000), that helped write and renew commitments to the Education for All (EFA) goals.³⁵³ Examples of the UN prioritizing education are also seen in the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, and the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).³⁵⁴

While further advancements in the educational sector are broadly needed, special attention is urgent in conflict-affected areas.³⁵⁵ Conflict hinders development, exposes citizens and institutions to violence, and weakens a state’s capacity and legitimacy.³⁵⁶ It leads to ongoing cycles of local and regional instability and hinders economic growth and prosperity.³⁵⁷ Against this backdrop, creating stable structures for the fostering of peace after conflict becomes critical.³⁵⁸ While some essential actions in post-conflict situations include the development of public and rule of law institutions to provide services with legitimacy and accountability and reinforcement of the security sector, education also plays a central role.³⁵⁹ Education is crucial in post-conflict areas and should include diversity-friendly systems and curricula with a strong focus on reconciliation and resolution that nurtures social cohesion.³⁶⁰

The international community has increasingly recognized education as an important catalyst for sustainable development.³⁶¹ The recently adopted SDGs address education through Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”³⁶² While the discussion around education has developed extensively at the UN in recent years with the post-2015 development agenda, several objectives have not been fully addressed.³⁶³ This background guide will analyze the role education has played in conflict situations through the work of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which is in charge of analyzing educational matters and building bridges between relevant stakeholders.³⁶⁴

International and Regional Framework

Several international documents, both binding and non-binding, strive to guarantee the right to education. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966), the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (1979), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1989), and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006) establish the importance of guaranteeing the right to education while emphasizing the international community’s necessary commitment in aspects as universality, increased access, and the inclusion of key groups like children, women, and persons with disabilities.³⁶⁵ Documents

³⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict: Report of the Secretary-General* (A/67/312–S/2012/645), 2012, p. 1.

³⁵² UN GEFI, *Statement from the Secretary-General*, 2012.

³⁵³ UNESCO, *Education For All: History*, 2015.

³⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/RES/55/2), 2000.

³⁵⁵ World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, 2011, p. 62.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, *Peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict: Report of the Secretary-General* (A/69/399–S/2014/694), 2014.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education: Report of the Secretary-General* (E/2011/82), 2011.

³⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, 2015, p. 75.

³⁶⁴ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62.

³⁶⁵ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A (III)), 1948, Art. 26; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (A/RES/2200 (XXI)), 1966, Art. 13; UN General

establishing norms for education in times of conflict and violence include the *Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (1949), the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), the *Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts* (Protocol II, 1977), the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* (1998), the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (1998), and the *Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict* (2002).³⁶⁶ These documents emphasize the need to respect the laws and customs of international armed conflict and to also protect vulnerable populations while facilitating their participation in and equal access to education.³⁶⁷ They also guarantee the functionality and continuous provision of education during times of conflict while safeguarding culture and religion.³⁶⁸ Furthermore, they bind parties to treat non-combatants humanely, especially children, and to not target non-military buildings like schools or hospitals.³⁶⁹ Violating these provisions can be considered a war crime.³⁷⁰

Member States have also committed themselves to education through consultations and conferences. World leaders renewed their commitments to education in the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) and the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (2000) by agreeing to the EFA goals, which strive to expand early childhood care and education; enhance quality education for youth, adults and vulnerable populations; and ensure measurable learning outcomes.³⁷¹ Momentum later increased with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, including Goal 2 on “achieving universal primary education” and improving access to education by 2015.³⁷² More recently, a World Education Forum was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015, with a resulting document titled the *Incheon Declaration*.³⁷³ In November 2015, a new set of educational goals, the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA), were established.³⁷⁴ These new goals will build upon the work of EFA and will serve as international educational goals for the next 15 years.³⁷⁵ Member States have also pledged to targets that will “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learnings for all” by adopting Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015.³⁷⁶ By 2030, Member States are expected to provide equal primary and secondary educational opportunities for men and women, as well as literacy programs for youth and adults, that can boost employment as well as translate into skills that will promote sustainable development.³⁷⁷ Education is also included in aspects of Goal 3, to promote information and training on

Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (A/RES/44/25), 1989, Art. 28; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (A/RES/61/106), 2006, Art. 24.

³⁶⁶ *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (2nd part)*, 1949, Art. 24; *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)*, 1977, Art. 4; *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 1998; UN General Assembly, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict* (A/RES/54/263), 2000.

³⁶⁷ *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (2nd part)*, 1949, Art. 24; *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)*, 1977, Art. 4; *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 1998; *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951, Art. 22; UNHCR, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. (ADM 1.1, PRL12.1, PR00/98/109), 1998, Principle 23; UN General Assembly, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict* (A/RES/54/263), 2000.

³⁶⁸ *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (2nd part)*, 1949, Art. 24; *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)*, 1977, Art. 4.

³⁶⁹ *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (2nd part)*, 1949, Art. 24; *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)*, 1977, Art. 4; *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 1998; UN General Assembly, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict* (A/RES/54/263), 2000.

³⁷⁰ *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, 1998, Art. 8.

³⁷¹ UNESCO, *Education For All Goals*, 2015.

³⁷² UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/RES/55/2), 2000.

³⁷³ UNESCO, *Incheon Declaration*, 2015.

³⁷⁴ UNESCO, *Education 2030 Framework for Action to be formally adopted and launched*, 2015.

³⁷⁵ UNESCO et al, *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*, 2015.

³⁷⁶ UNESCO, *Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): Final Report*, 2014, p. 16.

³⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015.

practices that can boost health; in Goal 8, to promote economic growth by decreasing drop-out rates; and in Goal 13, to raise awareness on climate change.³⁷⁸

Role of the International System

Challenges in the field of education persist in spite of advancements.³⁷⁹ In 2012, 58 million children were out of school.³⁸⁰ From this group, 21 million primary-aged children were living in conflict-affected countries, which is an increase since 1999.³⁸¹ Furthermore, the number of children dropping out of school is critically high in some regions: there are 32 countries where 20% of primary-aged children drop out of school before finishing their last grade.³⁸² ECOSOC has the capacity to analyze these facts and to issue recommendations to stakeholders on relevant policy-making and implementation.³⁸³ The Council, through its Integration Segment, also brings strategic partners together to discuss issues and approaches from social, economic, and environmental perspectives.³⁸⁴ The Integration Segment provides a platform for balancing the three dimensions and their implementation, as well as for addressing cross-cutting issues like gender, youth participation, science, technology, finance, and trade in ECOSOC's discussions.³⁸⁵

A fundamental part of ECOSOC's work concentrates in the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), which in 2011 analyzed the progress and challenges related to education and the completion of internationally-agreed objectives.³⁸⁶ The Secretary-General's 2011 report on "Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education" was aligned to the vision of the AMR; it expressed grave concerns due to challenges like providing educational opportunities while having to cope with violence, intolerance, fear, and financial and infrastructure constraints.³⁸⁷ Furthermore, the report urged Member States to undertake efforts to make schools non-violent, secure, and child-centered spaces.³⁸⁸ ECOSOC also evidences its effort in humanitarian affairs when it designs strategies for smooth transitions between crisis and stability, as with the establishment of Ad Hoc Advisory Groups in 2002.³⁸⁹ The Groups supported the design and implementation of long-term recovery processes in countries affected by crisis, including Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, and Haiti.³⁹⁰ The Council has also called upon national and international stakeholders to create and support safe environments for learning and quality education in fragile contexts in order to guarantee the safety of educational personnel and learners.³⁹¹

ECOSOC's efforts to improve education in conflict situations is complemented by specialized agencies such as the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), which also aim to guarantee the right to education in countries affected by conflict.³⁹² UNESCO strives to guarantee safe learning environments through several initiatives, such as developing educational personnel's capacity to face emergency situations.³⁹³ In Gaza, some schools were used as shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs), while 116 other schools were affected by shelling and 168 children were reportedly killed during conflict between Israel and Hamas in July 2014.³⁹⁴ UNICEF develops educational programs benefiting children and has partnered with national governments to widen its scope.³⁹⁵ By joining national governments and other key stakeholders, UNICEF

³⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

³⁷⁹ UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, 2015, p. 75.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 2.

³⁸² UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, 2015, p. 75.

³⁸³ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC and Integration for Sustainable Development*.

³⁸⁶ UN ECOSOC, *2011 Annual Ministerial Review*.

³⁸⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2011/82)*, 2011.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ UN DESA OESC, *Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery*.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2014/13)*, 2014.

³⁹² UNESCO, *Irina Bokova calls for the Protection of Education in Conflict*, 2015.

³⁹³ UNESCO, *UNESCO reiterates its commitment to protect education and promote schools as safe zones in Gaza*, 2014.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ UNICEF, *Education and peacebuilding*, 2012.

aims to include education in peacebuilding policies through the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Program.³⁹⁶ This four-year initiative, started in 2012, also aims at increasing national capacities to offer learners conflict-sensitive education and gathering information and evidence to develop further programs.³⁹⁷ Like UNESCO, UNICEF issues reports focusing on challenges for topics such as education.³⁹⁸ Both UNESCO and UNICEF are part of the organization Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, which strives to raise awareness about the impact conflict has on education, improve systems and practices, and make education resilient in situations of conflict.³⁹⁹

Another entity that addresses this topic from a humanitarian perspective is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), who promotes excellence in education.⁴⁰⁰ With the assistance of institutions such as UNICEF and Save the Children, IASC promoted the creation of an education cluster to map necessities, improve capacities, and to coordinate more effective responses.⁴⁰¹ IASC has worked closely with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).⁴⁰² INEE has emphasized the importance of providing equal access to education in secure and protected environments with facilities and services guaranteeing the wellbeing of learners, the active participation of the community, and the fair remuneration and training of teachers.⁴⁰³

Education and Conflict

Education can wield a significant impact on development by enabling economic growth in a sustained and equitable manner, as well as by accelerating poverty eradication and inequality reduction.⁴⁰⁴ It represents a fundamental right on which other human rights depend.⁴⁰⁵ Lacking basic numerical and reading skills hinders opportunities for decent employment and increases the incidence of risky behaviors, teen marriage and unplanned pregnancies, unemployment, social exclusion and instability.⁴⁰⁶ Of all young people worldwide, 10.6% face this challenge and depend on Member States' willingness and capacity to design and implement policies targeting marginalized groups.⁴⁰⁷ They also depend on the effective definition and mitigation of the reasons that keep children and teenagers out of school, including gender disparities, disability, natural disasters, poverty and conflict.⁴⁰⁸ The poor quality of education at the primary level has also resulted in some 250 million children leaving school without learning to read, write or count, while an estimated 782 million adults, including 64% of women, do not have simple writing or reading skills.⁴⁰⁹

Due to an inevitable link between peace, security, and development, the impact of conflict on development and education represents an urgent challenge.⁴¹⁰ Conflict causes the destruction of infrastructure, including schools, as well as the displacement of educational personnel and students.⁴¹¹ The consequences go far beyond young or senior male combatants as it equally affects other demographics like women and children.⁴¹² While 50% of countries globally are expected to guarantee universal primary education for their children by 2015, only 30% of conflict-affected countries will achieve this goal.⁴¹³ Necessary approaches to alleviate this gap include revitalization of the

³⁹⁶ UNICEF, *Education and peacebuilding*, 2012.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ UNICEF, *Conflict drives 13 million children out of school in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2015.

³⁹⁹ GCPEA, *Who We Are*, 2015.

⁴⁰⁰ INEE, *IASC Education Cluster*, 2015.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² INEE, *Who We Are*, 2015.

⁴⁰³ INEE, *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery*, 2010, p. 53.

⁴⁰⁴ UNESCO & Focal Point on Youth, UN DESA, *Youth and Education*, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁵ Tang, Goal 4—Education in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, *UN Chronicle*, 2014.

⁴⁰⁶ UNESCO & Focal Point on Youth, UN DESA, *Youth and Education*, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁹ Tang, Goal 4—Education in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, *UN Chronicle*, 2014.

⁴¹⁰ UN DPI, *Inclusive Development Critical for Preventing Conflict, Speakers Emphasize, as Security Council Debates Maintenance of International Peace, Security (SC/11740)*, 2015.

⁴¹¹ World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, 2011, p. 59.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁴¹³ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 2.

economy, institution of the rule of law, and improvement of basic services, all of which are commonly inefficient or inexistent in post-conflict scenarios.⁴¹⁴

Countering the Effects of Conflict on Education and Economies

ECOSOC's Integration Segment held discussions during 2015 focusing on how providing training on skills can positively impact the lives of communities towards improving livelihoods and contributing to sustainability.⁴¹⁵ The segment concluded that investing adequately in education and skill training can boost economic growth, create social cohesion, and increase the quality of jobs.⁴¹⁶ The UN has also reported that civilian capacities can become a key resource to uplift post-conflict communities through decent job creation and the development of skills.⁴¹⁷

Young People, Education, and Employment

ECOSOC's Integration Segment in particular addressed the importance of employment creation to empower youth and achieve sustainable development.⁴¹⁸ ECOSOC hosted in 2012 its first Youth Forum to develop and discuss the theme "Creating a Sustainable Future: Empowering Youth with Better Job Opportunities."⁴¹⁹ The core of the Forum, jointly organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Department of Public Information (UN DPI), was to engage youth on the exploration of international issues and their solutions, propose actions, enhance their voice, and exchange best practices, considering that 13% of the world's youth working force was unemployed in 2014.⁴²⁰ This is three times higher than the unemployment rate for adults.⁴²¹

Initiatives like the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the Youth Entrepreneurship Facility (YEF), or Education for Employment (EFE) have shown evident examples of how obstacles can be addressed to generate education and employment for youth in complex contexts.⁴²² In the field of education for employment and development, BRAC has instituted a wide system of private, secular schools providing e-learning materials, innovative teaching practices, need-based training, and student mentoring initiatives to support education in disadvantaged communities.⁴²³ A similar program was developed in South Sudan.⁴²⁴ In South Sudan, children and teenagers face risks such as "abduction, physical injuries, sexual violence, psychological distress and child marriage," along with educational challenges like teachers with insufficient training, teacher-to-student ratios that puts at risk the quality of education, and a lack of "vital livelihoods education" and vocational training.⁴²⁵ In this context, BRAC provided educational programs to learners between 4 to 25 years of age, working alongside the national government and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Known to be home of the globe's largest youth population and the region with the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region houses initiatives undertaken by EFE, including the professional and technical training of youth.⁴²⁶ EFE's trainings align practices and trainings to the labor market's demands and focus on the creation and development of skills and job placement training programs.⁴²⁷ ECOSOC has linked EFE to other key stakeholders in the fields of job creation and education by including EFE in ECOSOC's 2015 Integration Segment forum on "Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all."⁴²⁸ On the other hand, the YEF aims to reinforce an entrepreneurship culture among young

⁴¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/881-S/2009/304)*, 2009.

⁴¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all*, 2015.

⁴¹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all: Key Facts*, 2015.

⁴¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/881-S/2009/304)*, 2009.

⁴¹⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all*, 2015.

⁴¹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Creating a Sustainable Future: Empowering Youth with Better Job Opportunities*, 2012.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all. Key Facts*, 2015.

⁴²² EFE, *About us*.

⁴²³ BRAC, *Education Programme*, 2012.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Implementation of integrated, coherent and coordinated support to South Sudan by the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2015/74)*, 2014.

⁴²⁶ EFE, *About us*.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Statements and presentations*.

people through education, business development services, access to finance, support for youth-led organizations, and knowledge sharing.⁴²⁹ In Northern Uganda, where armed conflict has threatened the educational opportunities of girls and boys, YEF has included entrepreneurship components in secondary schools' curriculums.⁴³⁰ On the content of these curriculums, it has trained teachers in joint support with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Ugandan National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC).⁴³¹

Women and Girls

It is expected that, by 2015, only 69% of Member States globally will achieve gender parity in primary education.⁴³² The UN Secretary-General's 2011 report on "Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education" raises awareness on this fact and on the need to address the needs of women and girls, as well as assist them during conflict.⁴³³ In general, women are almost three times more likely to miss schooling if living in a country affected by conflict, while 90% of young women will miss secondary school when living in these scenarios.⁴³⁴ The Secretary-General's report has therefore emphasized the urgency for educational policies and planning in situations of emergency that can specifically benefit women.⁴³⁵ It has also emphasized the need to include women in peacebuilding efforts, improve their working conditions, and offer better opportunities for employment, especially considering that women represent the majority of the world's employed population working in vulnerable conditions.⁴³⁶

Funding Education in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations

Educational funding in emergencies is often insufficient and does not completely meet the needs of a country experiencing conflict or in a post-conflict situation.⁴³⁷ This lack of resources is exacerbated when conflict crises become protracted or chronic, thus causing a constant demand on resources.⁴³⁸ At this point, humanitarian aid shifts to needs that seem more immediate, such as food, shelter and health.⁴³⁹ This occurs even when communities see education as a top priority, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic.⁴⁴⁰ The funding asymmetry between protracted and more visible, immediate crises creates concern within the humanitarian sector.⁴⁴¹ The 2010 earthquake in Haiti provides an example of this: while Chad saw 9% of its education requests based on its Humanitarian Response Plan established in 2004 met in 2011, Haiti's education humanitarian appeal received 110% of its requests in 2011.⁴⁴²

In May 2015, during the World Education Forum hosted in Incheon, Republic of Korea, Member States recognized the need to increase financing for education to meet the goals proposed in the post-2015 development agenda.⁴⁴³ Towards this end, attendees expressed determination to increase public spending on education and urged other states to allocate "at least 4–6% of their Gross Domestic Product and/or at least 15–20% of total public expenditure to education."⁴⁴⁴ Nevertheless, this measure remains unrealistic for countries affected by conflict, as only 21 out of 33 of these countries devoted an average of 3.2% of their national income to education in 2012, which is far below the

⁴²⁹ YEF, *About us*, 2015.

⁴³⁰ UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education*, 2011, p. 134.

⁴³¹ YEF, *National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) trains entrepreneurship classroom teachers*.

⁴³² UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, 2015, p. 155.

⁴³³ UN ECOSOC, *Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2011/82)*, 2011.

⁴³⁴ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 3.

⁴³⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2011/82)*, 2011.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁷ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 5.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 6.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴⁴³ UNESCO, *Incheon Declaration*, 2015.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

expected goal announced in Incheon.⁴⁴⁵ To face these drawbacks and to achieve quality education for all by 2030, the financing of a \$26 billion annual gap has to be ensured through the commitment of Member States and donors.⁴⁴⁶

An artificial gap exists between humanitarian and development aid that agencies, organizations, and programs are striving to close through the funding of reconstruction or peacebuilding activities.⁴⁴⁷ This gap creates overlap or ineffectiveness when assisting humanitarian needs.⁴⁴⁸ Additionally, as humanitarian aid often requests insufficient funding for education, development aid acquires an increasingly influential role in this regard.⁴⁴⁹ In countries where crises have become protracted and fragility constantly threatens the wellbeing of their people, humanitarian funding covered 8% of educational needs, while the remaining 92% of funding was provided by development aid.⁴⁵⁰

These challenges are recognized by ECOSOC, and the Council has urged Member States to increase existing funding mechanisms and to create new ways to fund humanitarian responses.⁴⁵¹ The Council has actively collaborated with the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).⁴⁵² This is a mechanism to collect contributions from governments, companies, charities, and private donors to finance humanitarian responses to conflict and natural disasters in a swift and effective manner.⁴⁵³ Through discussions on matters as timing, criteria and size of allocations, CERF and ECOSOC's collaboration has brought relief to several regions, including the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, and the Sahel region.⁴⁵⁴

Conclusion

The attention of the international community has focused increasingly on education. However, there are needs that still need to be addressed through the participation of influential actors, including how to improve education in post-conflict situations. The education goals expected to be achieved by 2015 may not be fulfilled by a considerable number of Member States, especially those living in conflict-affected regions, highlighting the continual need to discuss the new SDGs as it is considered how to assist post-conflict societies.⁴⁵⁵ For children in these countries, the chances to attend school and get an education are limited and their opportunities to find decent jobs in the future depend on the opportunities they receive today to develop skills and to cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets.⁴⁵⁶ These opportunities also depend on the management of emergencies through initial humanitarian stages. The work that ECOSOC develops in these matters reflects how important it is to build common ground between development stakeholders through forums of discussion, support in policymaking, and the provision of different kinds of resources, in order to more fully address education in post-conflict situations.

Further Research

Delegates are encouraged to think of strategies to support the dialogue on fundamental topics addressed in this text, such as funding, capacity building, and inclusion of vulnerable populations. Through which initiatives can ECOSOC enhance its role as a bridge between development stakeholders in areas such as funding? How can the Council improve the efforts it has already developed in regards to funding? Which alternatives does ECOSOC have to reduce the impacts of conflict on the education of vulnerable populations, such as women? How can ECOSOC and Member States further encourage and develop access to education in post-conflict societies?

⁴⁴⁵ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁶ UNESCO, *Funding gap for education growing, according to new figures released by UNESCO*, 2015.

⁴⁴⁷ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁸ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁵¹ UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2014/13)*, 2014.

⁴⁵² UN CERF, *Concept Note for ECOSOC 2013: The Right Place, the Right Time: Understanding CERF's Impact*, 2013.

⁴⁵³ UN CERF, *Who We Are*.

⁴⁵⁴ UN CERF, *Concept Note for ECOSOC 2013: The Right Place, the Right Time: Understanding CERF's Impact*, 2013.

⁴⁵⁵ UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21*, 2015, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all*, 2015.

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Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee. (2012). *South Sudan Annual Report 2012*. Retrieved 20 August 2015 from: <http://www.brac.net/sites/default/files/ar2012/BRAC%20South%20Sudan.pdf>

This document thoroughly describes a program that BRAC developed in a country that continues to suffer the consequences of conflict: South Sudan. The report explains the characteristics of educational programs and how stakeholders are working together. It contains case studies of countries in Asia and Africa, among others. It is a useful resource to guide delegates on the process of coordinating efforts between stakeholders.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.). *2011 Annual Ministerial Review* [Website]. Retrieved 6 August 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunc/amr2011.shtml>

Delegates will find this source useful, as the Annual Ministerial Review's topic for 2011 was education. ECOSOC's consideration of the topic is described, and strategies to support education are aligned with the post-2015 development agenda's focus. Additionally, the website emphasizes the importance of capacity building and employment creation as resources to alleviate poverty and support conflict-affected communities. This source reflects some important specifics of ECOSOC's work on the topic.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2011). *Current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on education: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2011/82)*. Retrieved 6 August 2015 from:

<http://www.undocs.org/E/2011/82>

This report is a fundamental resource, as it addresses two important issues: the impact of armed conflict on education and the importance of peacebuilding efforts for the consolidation of peace. It provides delegates with insightful content describing and analyzing challenges, such as the importance of teacher training, the impact of educational infrastructure destruction, the need for access to quality education, and the challenges for girls and women in this context. The report also recommends identifying potential grievances occurring within educational systems in conflict situations and ensuring that cultural background is considered in emergency education curriculums.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all* [Concept Note]. Retrieved 2 August 2015 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/events/20150330/conceptnote.pdf>

This concept note from the Economic and Social Council describes how employment becomes a fundamental catalyst for development and peace, and that the collaboration of diverse stakeholders in the funding of related initiatives is a necessity. Delegates will learn best practices from different countries that focus on quick and effective solutions. Examples of this include capacity building, technical and vocational training, and entrepreneurship components in school curriculums.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2014/13)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 10 August 2015 from:

<http://undocs.org/E/RES/2014/13>

This document endorses innovation at the heart of humanitarian efforts, ensuring sustainable management of resources and easing the exchange of information and best practices at all levels. Furthermore, the document encourages designing solutions through the inclusion of experiences of victims of humanitarian emergencies to ensure an enhanced local impact suited to the real needs of communities. Finally, it recommends the creation or reinforcement of global partnerships. By examining this document in detail, delegates will be moved to identify challenges to effective humanitarian assistance and conceive new solutions for such challenges.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2011). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education* [Report]. Retrieved 1 August 2015 from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf>

Part 2 of this UNESCO report gives a thorough explanation on how conflict becomes an obstacle for education, especially with vulnerable groups such as refugees or internally-displaced persons

(IDPs). It argues that the timely provision of quality education prevents relapsing into conflict; otherwise, conflict can become a vicious cycle. Furthermore, this report emphasizes the need of connecting education and poverty reduction programs, as well as increasing funding.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Policy Paper 21*. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002335/233557E.pdf>

This policy paper from UNESCO concludes that educational funding in conflict-affected scenarios is neglected and that new endeavors are needed to provide proper funding in post-conflict situations. Although humanitarian aid is being reinforced in areas where education can become a solution, education remains underfunded. In addition, the channeling of resources related to humanitarian aid are described as ineffective – and minimal if aimed to education – due to a lack of coordination between donors. This is a useful resource for delegates, as it describes carefully the challenges that educational funding faces in emergency contexts.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges* [Report]. Retrieved 1 August 2015 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf>

This report from UNESCO provides a very comprehensive overview and analysis of the condition of worldwide access to education. Delegates will be able to explore how education has advanced in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, where dropout rates in primary school have decreased remarkably since 1999. They will also be encouraged to relate the capacities of ECOSOC with the opportunities presented throughout the document, by analyzing success stories. This is a very contemporary resource in understanding the current status of education throughout the world.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-first session. (2007). *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 10 August 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/61/16>

This resolution emphasizes the responsibility that ECOSOC shares with other programs, funds, and agencies in humanitarian affairs. The Council is called upon to partner with the Peacebuilding Commission to include an economic, social, and environmental approach in humanitarian activities, as well as assisting and coordinating the joint efforts of diverse participants, including balancing its three approaches for sustainable development. Delegates can identify how developing the capacity of ECOSOC as discussed in this resolution can impact positively education in conflict situations, with the strong component of sustainability.

World Bank. (2011). *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*. Retrieved 21 July 2015 from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf

This document from the World Bank includes significant data on the negative influence that conflict and violence create in relation to development and education. It provides information on the kinds of conflicts and their impact in societies, the role of poverty and violence in conflict-affected regions, and the direct and indirect consequences that populations are forced to live with in such scenarios. Delegates are urged to read and utilize content related to their country assignments for further research.

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