



THE 2017 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This year's staff is: Directors Asra Shakoor (Conference A) and Angela Shively (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Claire Molk (Conference A) and Angelo Bechara (Conference B). Asra completed her MSc in Regulation from the London School of Economics and Political Science, where she specialized in environmental and financial issues. She currently works for a Secretary of State in the United Kingdom Parliament and is looking forward to returning to NMUN•NY for her fourth year on staff. Angela is completing her degree in Political Science and plans to attend law school in Texas. This will be her sixth year on staff at NMUN•NY. Claire received her BA from Syracuse University in International Relations and Political Philosophy with a minor in Forensic Science. She currently lives in Istanbul, Turkey, teaching English, and this is her second year on NMUN staff. Angelo is completing a double major in Political Science and French with a minor in Global Studies. After completing his studies, Angelo plans to seek a position with the United States Foreign Service.

The topics under discussion for ECOSOC are:

- I. Mobilizing Inclusive Partnerships for Sustainable Development
- II. Investing in Sustainable Energy for Rural Areas
- III. Promoting Sustainable Peace by Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict

As one of the six primary organs of the United Nations (UN), ECOSOC is an important entity within the UN system and plays an instrumental role in streamlining and coordinating the work of UN entities on economic and social issues. ECOSOC directs specialized agencies, functional and regional commissions, and other UN bodies in their line of work. ECOSOC is responsible for addressing some key emerging problems, which are outlined in its annual report to the General Assembly.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2017 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

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

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

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the ECOSOC Department, Tsesa Monaghan (Conference A) and Dominika Ziemczonek (Conference B), at usg.ecosoc@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A

Asra Shakoor, *Director*
Claire Molk, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Angela Shively, *Director*
Angelo Bechara, *Assistant Director*



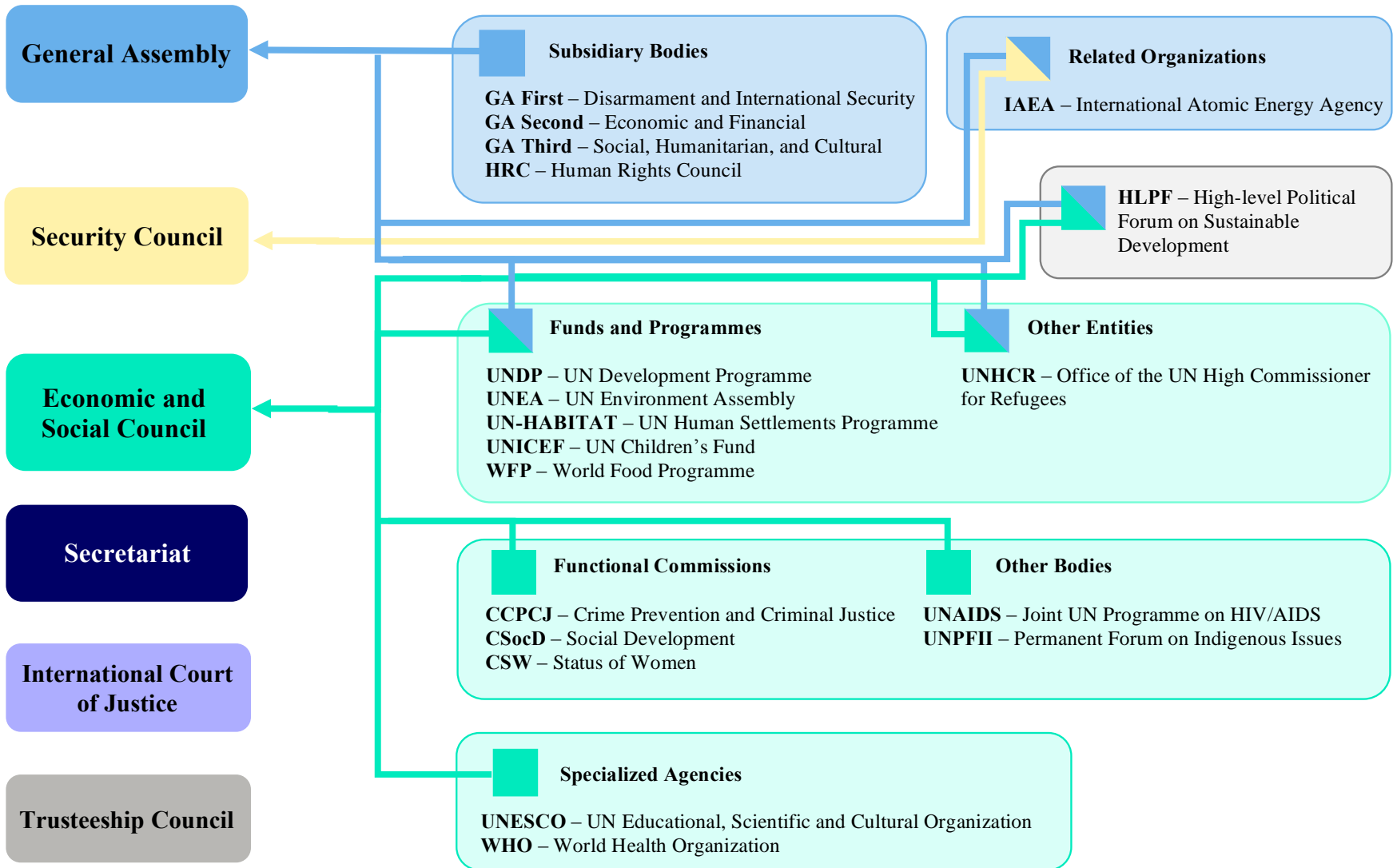
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.





Abbreviations

ARE	Alliance for Rural Electrification
CEMG HIO	Clean Energy Mini-Grids High-Impact Opportunity
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CSO	Civil society organization
CST	County Support Team
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FfD	Financing for Development
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HLS	High-level Segment
IEA	International Energy Agency
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOREC	International Off-Grid Renewable Energy Conference
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
JPOI	<i>Johannesburg Plan of Implementation</i>
LDC	Least developed country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFCP	National Federation of Coffee Producers
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official development assistance
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PfG	Partnership for Growth
PPP	Public-private partnership
RET	Renewable energy technology
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
STI	Science, technology, and innovation
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
WTO	World Trade Organization



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 the allocation of 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; to review and advise Member States and other UN entities on matters within this mandate; and to 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 several reforms since its inception. In the 1960s and 1970s, developing Member States broadened the agenda of the UN and sought a stronger focus on urgent issues such as the promotion of development and the elimination of poverty.⁴ The Council is currently comprised of 54 Member States as a result of General Assembly resolution 2847(XXVI) (1971).⁵ This was implemented in order to make the Council membership representative of UN membership as a whole, to bring a more economically diverse membership to the Council, and to better geographically represent each region.⁶ The General Assembly then adopted resolution 32/197 in 1977.⁷ This resolution addresses the “Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System” and attempted to make ECOSOC more effective by increasing coordination with its subsidiary bodies.⁸ To avoid any duplication of work due to broad mandates, General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 1995 clarified that the role of the General Assembly is to provide policy guidance while ECOSOC’s focus is on coordination of work.⁹ This interpretation was reinforced by General Assembly resolution 57/270 in 2002.¹⁰

The General Assembly implemented further reforms over the past several years to strengthen the working methods of ECOSOC through resolution 68/1 of 2013.¹¹ The 2013 reforms included an expansion of its functions and powers to enable ECOSOC to take the lead on identifying and discussing emerging challenges; to 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.¹² These reforms reinforce ECOSOC’s critical role in preparing, monitoring, implementing, and facilitating global discussions around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹³

Governance, Structure, and Membership

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 members, each of which is elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.¹⁴ The members are elected according to the geographical distribution of Member States to achieve equal representation from all regions and levels of development: 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,

¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

² Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

³ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

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

⁵ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Rosenthal, *The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, 2005, p. 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

¹² UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

¹³ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

¹⁴ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*.

and 13 to Western European and Other Member States.¹⁵ Each member has one representative and one vote in ECOSOC and all decisions are made by a simple majority of those members present and voting.¹⁶ ECOSOC is governed by a President, Vice-President, and Rapporteur, in tandem with a Bureau consisting of five representatives: the President and four Vice-Presidents.¹⁷ All of these representatives are elected to one-year terms at the outset of each session.¹⁸ The Bureau is responsible for setting ECOSOC's agenda, devises action plans, and collaborates with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹⁹ Its presidency rotates equally among regional blocs.²⁰

ECOSOC meets twice annually for one organizational session and once for a substantive session.²¹ During organizational sessions, items such as agenda setting and elections to the Bureau take place.²² During substantive sessions, meetings are divided into five segments focusing on separate thematic aspects of the Council's work.²³ The working methods of the Council were further reformed through General Assembly resolution 68/1 in 2013, and its substantive work is now organized as follows:

- High-level Segment (HLS): The HLS includes a thematic Annual Ministerial Review, a biannual Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), and ministerial-level meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).²⁴
- Integration Segment: This segment consolidates important messages on primary themes and action-oriented recommendations from the Council system to harmonize the work of ECOSOC members, subsidiary bodies, and stakeholders.²⁵
- Operational Activities for Development Segment: Monitoring the follow-up to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review recommendations and alignment with the work of the specialized agencies, this segment helps ECOSOC provide efficient coordination for UN programs and funds.²⁶
- Coordination and Management Meetings: At these meetings, the Council reviews the work of its subsidiary bodies and considers the coordination of work across thematic issues within its mandate, such as gender mainstreaming.²⁷ The Council works closely with the Secretariat of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination during these meetings.²⁸
- Humanitarian Affairs: This segment serves as a thematic forum for discussing operational challenges and normative progress on humanitarian policy.²⁹

ECOSOC oversees 14 subsidiary bodies that hold their own sessions and provide recommendations, draft resolutions, and annual reports to the Council.³⁰ The two most common types of subsidiary bodies are functional and regional commissions, but other subsidiary bodies include standing, ad hoc, and other related bodies and committees.³¹ Specific methods of work have been adopted within each subsidiary organ to align with the mandate of each entity and are updated regularly.³² Types of subsidiary bodies include:

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X, Art. 61.1-2.

¹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992, p. 22; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X.

¹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Bureau*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992, p. 8.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ UN ECOSOC, *2014 Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2014.

³⁰ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

³¹ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³² UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013, p. 7.

- **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.”³³ Functional commissions, in particular, have a responsibility to follow-up on the thematic considerations of major UN conferences and take measureable action in accordance with the role of ECOSOC.³⁴
- **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 promoting multilateral dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration within and between regions.³⁵ As regional commissions target problems and challenges within their geographical scope, members in most cases are Member States from this region.³⁶
- **Expert Bodies Composed of Governmental Experts:** The seven bodies that fall into this category are focused on specific topics that ECOSOC has identified as important and deserving of additional attention or particular expertise.³⁷ These bodies consider issues falling within the more narrow scope of the Council’s work with explicit mandates to improve the information, guidance, policy or regulations on the issue, with the particular aim of providing coherence and consistency at the international level.³⁸

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 General Assembly and its specialized agencies.³⁹ ECOSOC may also provide information and may assist the Security Council when necessary.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ Examples of this coordination role include facilitating cooperation between economic institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in 1998 and establishing what has become ECOSOC’s High-level Segment in 2007.⁴²

ECOSOC fulfills its mandate under the overall authority of the General Assembly and with the consultation of a broad range of civil society actors (CSAs).⁴³ There are more than 3,900 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with consultative status that may attend and participate in various UN meetings, conferences, and special sessions to voice their concerns to the international community.⁴⁴ Consultative status is given by ECOSOC’s Committee on NGOs, which was established in 1946 and is comprised of 19 Member States.⁴⁵ The Committee on NGOs directly reports to ECOSOC on the procedural and substantive matters raised by CSAs.⁴⁶ ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of 24 July 1996 defines the principles, eligibility requirements, rules, procedures, obligations, and responsibilities for NGOs and the UN in establishing the consultative relationship.⁴⁷ In the latest report from the June 2015 session, the

³³ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ UN Regional Commissions New York Office, *About*, 2016.

³⁶ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016.

³⁷ UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, *Overview*, 2016.

³⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Arts. 62-63, 65.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*; UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)*, 2006, p. 2.

⁴⁴ UN DESA NGO Branch, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ UN DESA, *Committee on NGOs convenes for first session of 2014*, 2014; UN DESA NGO Branch, *The Committee On NGOs*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; UN ECOSOC, *Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, 1996, pp. 53-61.

Committee granted consultative status to 160 NGOs, deferred an additional 200 NGOs for consideration, and reviewed quadrennial reports.⁴⁸

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

One of the key priorities of the Council is to manage the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.⁴⁹ 2016 marks the 70th session of ECOSOC and carries the theme of “Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results.”⁵⁰ During the 70th session, several events were held to highlight key issue areas relating to sustainable development.⁵¹ These events included the Youth Forum from 1-2 February 2016, the Operational Activities for Development segment on 22 February 2016, the Partnerships Forum on 31 March 2016, the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development held from 18-22 April 2016, and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development held from 11-20 July 2016.⁵²

The HLPF, which replaced the UN Commission on Sustainable Development through ECOSOC resolution 2013/19, has been critical to the coordination, implementation, and development of accountability measures for the SDGs.⁵³ A more balanced and holistic approach is being utilized to address poverty, inequality, climate change, financing for development, and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies through improved coordination and policy integration in the pursuit of sustainable development.⁵⁴ HLPF’s responsibilities as a subsidiary body to ECOSOC include tracking the progress of the SDGs; providing political leadership and guidance on the SDGs; creating coherent policies informed by science, evidence, and countries’ individual experiences; and addressing new and emerging issues under the sustainable development umbrella.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The Economic and Social Council plays a key role in coordinating activities and programs through the expansive UN system for humanitarian aid, development, and other various issues. The Council has demonstrated a commitment to mobilizing resources, leading action, and tackling key priority issues, including promoting development and the forming and maintaining of international partnerships. It has also initiated 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 providing 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 achieving the SDGs.

Annotated Bibliography

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<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 ECOSOC, but also the remaining five principal organs. Member States are obliged to uphold the Charter’s 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. (2016). *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*. Retrieved 25 October 2016 from: https://mfat.govt.nz/assets/securedfiles/Handbooks/United_Nations_Handbook-2016-2017.pdf

⁴⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2015 resumed session (E/2015/32 (Part II))*, 2015, pp. 1, 46.

⁴⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

⁵⁰ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC-70: Taking Action to Improve Lives*, 2016.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² UN ECOSOC, *Substantive Sessions*.

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC-70: Taking Action to Improve Lives*, 2016.

⁵⁵ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 – Ensuring that no one is left behind*.

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 UN entities and explains their functions, structures, and roles. It also gives an overview on various subsidiary organs established under the Charter of the United Nations, UN programs and funds, and other organizations related to the UN system. Delegates are encouraged to read the section on ECOSOC in detail to understand its structure, membership, working methods, and its relationships with various subsidiary bodies.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.). *Development Cooperation Forum* [Website]. Retrieved 23 September 2016 from: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/development-cooperation-forum>

The Council's website dedicated to DCF contains pertinent information on the research process for the topics under consideration by ECOSOC. Delegates will find information about explaining the most recent DCF outcomes under the purview of the expert body. There are also publications that detail findings and participation outcomes from partners in the global community. DCF policy briefs will be invaluable to delegates for preparing their research about partnership across and within the UN system.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Accountable and effective development cooperation in a post-2015 era* [Report]. Retrieved 23 September 2016 from:

http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/DCF_germany_hls_summary.pdf

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

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] Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/68/L.2). Retrieved 23 September 2016 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/68/1>

This resolution presents the most recent ECOSOC reforms undertaken to strengthen its program of work and its leading role in tackling challenges to sustainable development. It provides detailed recommendations of how ECOSOC will reshape its operating procedures and working methods to support sustainable development, 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 capacity to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

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I. Mobilizing Inclusive Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Introduction

In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which took effect upon the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on 1 January 2016.⁵⁶ The preamble of General Assembly resolution 70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” states that all entities need to act collaboratively with strong partnerships to successfully achieve goals and targets.⁵⁷ Due to multi-stakeholder partnerships formed through the MDGs, the international community made key progress towards eradicating world hunger and other goals and targets.⁵⁸ The call for partnerships under the MDGs was revitalized with the new 2030 Agenda, highlighting the need for growing global partnerships to keep the needs of the poor and vulnerable at the forefront of the work towards achieving the SDGs.⁵⁹ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasizes that Member States, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector entities, and public sector entities need to be involved in inclusive partnerships to successfully achieve the SDGs.⁶⁰ The international community made it a point to highlight in the 2030 Agenda that certain MDGs and targets would not have been accomplished if it were not for broad international collaboration, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and rigorous public consultations with civil society.⁶¹

In 1996, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) convened during its 49th plenary session to discuss and ultimately set the consultative relationship between the UN and NGOs.⁶² By granting NGOs consultative status with the UN, ECOSOC is able to receive critiques, consultations, and recommendations directly from organizations while making policy decisions.⁶³ It was agreed that there was a need to include NGOs from developing states without representation on the Council.⁶⁴ In addition to their consultative status, NGOs are kept abreast of ECOSOC’s meeting, agendas, updates, and reports.⁶⁵

Like the consultative process for NGOs, public-private partnerships (PPPs) are another form cooperation that can support progress towards the SDGs. According to the World Bank, PPPs are a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity.⁶⁶ PPPs can also exist between private entities and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) or regional bodies.⁶⁷ PPPs provide recipients a public asset or service where private entities have a large role in the management and accountability in the sector concerned.⁶⁸ PPPs arose from examining the needs of public sector institutions and realizing that the specialized expertise and comparative advantage of the private sector in many areas could provide significant public benefit.⁶⁹ Many Member States have begun to include PPPs in their national development plans to create more resources for achieving their development goals.⁷⁰

Partnerships are paramount to supporting all of the SDGs and targets. Greater cooperation between states, both developed and developing, is important in promoting strong trade relations to promote economic development and

⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁰ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, *Secretary-General’s remarks at Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2015, p. 1.

⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 3.

⁶² UN ECOSOC, *Consultative Relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, p. 53.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ World Bank Group, *What are public-private partnerships*, 2015.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ UN Office for South-South Cooperation, *Examples of Successful Public-private Partnerships*, 2011.

⁷⁰ World Bank Group, *What are public-private partnerships*, 2015.

growth.⁷¹ Additionally, advances in science, technology, and innovation (STI) are critical for promoting economic growth and diversifying and strengthening domestic economies.⁷² Collaboration between states and private entities developing new technologies and innovations may support their adoption in developing states most in need of them.⁷³ Finally, while the involvement of NGOs and civil society more broadly has been supported by entities such as ECOSOC, more consultation and collaboration with these groups will support people-centered development initiatives that recognizes and works with local contexts.⁷⁴

International and Regional Framework

The need for collaborative partnerships to support development was recognized first in MDG 8, which called for the development of a global partnership for development.⁷⁵ MDG 8 was intended to create partnerships beyond traditional inter- and intra-state relationships.⁷⁶ In 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/215 on “Towards Global Partnerships” to highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining partnerships in the context of globalization.⁷⁷ In this document, the General Assembly emphasized the need to engage with the private sector for fruitful partnerships, along with other relevant partners.⁷⁸ The General Assembly also acknowledged the importance and the benefits of PPPs and noted that collaboration with the private sector can benefit all parties involved.⁷⁹ The resolution puts heavy emphasis on the willingness and desire of the UN for Member States to engage in partnerships with the private sector, recognizing that the involvement of the private sector and other stakeholders within societies and communities supports development and make these efforts more sustainable.⁸⁰

In 2015, Member States renewed their commitment to global goals on sustainable development by adopting the new SDGs through General Assembly resolution 70/1 with 17 goals and 169 targets.⁸¹ SDG 17 explicitly calls for the development of partnerships and additionally focuses on means of implementation, calling for stronger monitoring mechanisms in all states to better assess the success of partnerships and progress towards all SDGs.⁸² ECOSOC has continued to have a significant role in the SDG process as the Council was designated to monitor and facilitate all dialogue and discussion around the SDGs.⁸³ The General Assembly designated ECOSOC as the main council responsible for the preparation, monitoring, facilitation, discussion, and publishing of an annual SDG report, recognizing the Council’s role in assessing and supporting UN development efforts.⁸⁴

In 2015, following the adoption of the SDGs, the General Assembly built upon resolution 55/215 and adopted resolution 70/224, “Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners.”⁸⁵ The resolution includes an updated and more detailed approach to enhanced cooperation in fulfilling the SDGs, including promoting the development and adoption of new technologies, highlighting the importance of corporate social responsibility, and reiterating the need to uphold human rights and principles of non-discrimination.⁸⁶ This framework calls for long-term and consistent private

⁷¹ UN DPI, *Importance of South-South Cooperation, Official Development Assistance Focus, as Second Committee Continues Debate on Implementing 2030 Agenda (GA/EF/3422)*, 2015.

⁷² UN ECOSOC, *Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2013/54)*, 2013.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Overseas Development Institute, *Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can Be More Effective*, 2006, p. 6.

⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships (A/RES/55/215)*, 2001.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁸² Ibid., p. 14.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Towards Global Partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners (A/RES/70/224)*, 2015.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

sector commitments, as opposed to short-term agreements and assistance that is consistent and in support of the purpose of sustainable development.⁸⁷

Role of the International System

Given that the three pillars of sustainable development are economic, social, and environmental development, ECOSOC is the primary UN entity for developing innovative ways to advance the global agenda.⁸⁸ ECOSOC plays a significant role in acting as a hub for global partnerships between public and private entities.⁸⁹ An example of ECOSOC's involvement is its role in coordinating the 2016 Partnership Forum, which provided a venue for multi-stakeholder partnership discussion.⁹⁰ The forum featured interactive panel discussions promoting partnerships in governance with accountability, transparency, and trust building as core tenants.⁹¹ ECOSOC's partnership platform emphasizes the longtime work of the Council to encourage governments to provide national frameworks and initiatives for mobilizing partnerships.⁹²

During the joint thematic debate on partnerships between the General Assembly and ECOSOC in April 2014, the two UN bodies discussed the importance of partnerships in advancing sustainable development.⁹³ Both the General Assembly and ECOSOC emphasize grassroots approaches to dealing with sustainability, citing examples like the "The World We Want 2015" campaign, which sought to include all citizens in the decision-making process of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁹⁴ The adoption of the SDGs also led to the establishment of the Partnerships for SDGs platform.⁹⁵ The partnerships platform is an interconnected network of Member States, NGOs, IGOs, and civil society organizations (CSOs) sharing ideas and initiatives to achieve one or more of the SDGs.⁹⁶ Implementation of the 17 goals and 169 targets is planned to be achieved through the various initiatives published on the Partnerships for Sustainable Development platform, where there are currently more than 2100 active initiatives published and frequently updated.⁹⁷

Several organizations are also working on a means to provide low-income states with opportunities to invest in much-needed infrastructure and social services.⁹⁸ According to the *2016 Report on the Sustainable Development Goals*, official development assistance (ODA) continued to grow since 2015 due to partnerships between Member States with high GDPs, such as Luxembourg, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands, and developing Member States.⁹⁹ While ODA remains a key form of development partnership, PPPs are also paramount to supporting growth in developing states; an initiative with MasterCard in 2013 is one example of what successful PPPs can achieve.¹⁰⁰ This PPP between the major credit card company and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) relieved the burden of producing and distributing paper vouchers to persons receiving them.¹⁰¹ By replacing paper vouchers with chip cards and mobile device apps

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Sustainable Development*.

⁸⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Breaking the Silos: Cross-sectoral partnerships for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 2016, p. 1.

⁹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *2016 ECOSOC Partnership Forum "From commitments to results: Leveraging partnerships for the 2030 Agenda"*.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners (A/RES/70/224)*, 2015, p. 7.

⁹³ UN General Assembly & ECOSOC, *The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2014, p. 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships (A/RES/55/215)*, 2001.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Breaking the Silos: Cross-sectoral partnerships for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 2016, p. 7.

⁹⁸ Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, *Domestic Resource Mobilization and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*.

⁹⁹ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2016*, 2016, p. 46.

¹⁰⁰ UN OCHA & Deutsche Post DHL Group, *Combining Capabilities: How Public Private Partnerships are Making a Difference in Humanitarian Action*, 2016, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

with NFC chips, OCHA was able to focus efforts and use funds on items other than production and distribution of paper vouchers.¹⁰² This partnership between MasterCard, OCHA, Save the Children, and Food for Peace was a prime example of a positive outcome that can come from inclusive partnerships between NGOs, IGOs, and private entities.¹⁰³ As an international private entity MasterCard operates in 210 countries and territories, which can be a major resource for domestic mobilization.¹⁰⁴

Enabling Finance and Trade

Enabling finance and trade is a crucial step towards mobilizing inclusive partnerships.¹⁰⁵ Moving forward, the goal of the international community is to find ways to change non-sustainable trade practices and shift to plans more aligned with the SDGs, specifically Goal 17.¹⁰⁶ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016* highlights that the primary step towards restructuring sustainability in finance and trade is debt relief and servicing.¹⁰⁷ In order to sustainably thrive, it should be every state's goal to only acquire sustainable debt, which is debt that states can pay off through the proceeds of future growth, since this type of debt does not have negative long-term effects on states' economies.¹⁰⁸ To this end, there are been progress; in 2015, the international community has witnessed progress with debt relief in 36 of 39 eligible countries.¹⁰⁹

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have partnered together since 1996 to ensure that no financially disadvantaged Member State is faced with an extreme, unmanageable debt burden.¹¹⁰ Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative the World Bank and IMF have been able to mobilize partnerships with multilateral organizations and governments to evenly distribute the tasks of debt relief across many involved stakeholders.¹¹¹ The HIPC has a two-step relief process, where the first step is determining whether a state qualifies for relief based on a list of criteria, and the second step ensures accountability and execution of the relief.¹¹² The HIPC initiative, through its two-step relief process has led many Member States to commit to poverty reduction by changing national policies just by adopting the necessary qualifying criteria.¹¹³ However, it is important for states to undertake more robust action domestically to ensure long-term progress towards debt relief, including enacting and strengthening legislation that positively impacts economic growth and maintains stable governance.¹¹⁴

ODA is an indicator used to measure the flow of international aid.¹¹⁵ Least developed countries (LDC) rely on ODA, and it represents over 70% of available external finance and more than one-third of Member States' total public revenue and expenditure.¹¹⁶ Mobilizing partnerships between states and international monetary institutions can increase the efficiency of aid flows to LDCs.¹¹⁷ In 2015, LDCs received 80% of pledged ODA that was targeted for capacity-building, recognizing that assistance to these Member States has tripled over the last decade.¹¹⁸ Despite these improvements, while states have committed to donating a minimum of 0.7% of their GDP as ODA, the vast majority of them have not reached this target.¹¹⁹ It is important for Member States to reach and maintain a financing

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2016*, 2016, p. 45.

¹⁰⁸ Development Finance International, *External Debt Relief*.

¹⁰⁹ UN MDG Gap Task Force, *MDG Gap Task Force Report 2015: Taking Stock of the Global Partnership for Development*, 2015.

¹¹⁰ IMF, *Debt Relief Under the Heavily Indebted Poor (HIPC) Countries Initiative*, 2016, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

¹¹⁵ OECD, *Why Modernise Official Development Assistance?*, 2015.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2016*, 2016, p. 47.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

minimum of 0.7% ODA to meet their commitments and ensure developing states receive needed development assistance.¹²⁰ Failure to reach a 0.7% ODA has been a main barrier for developing states and LDCs in particular.¹²¹

Trade relations are a means to mobilize partnerships for sustainable development; the very nature of trade requires cooperation and multilateral exchange, which is why it is important to revitalize trade.¹²² These relations can involve economic, social, political, or technological exchanges.¹²³ Recently, the international community has seen South-South cooperation as a beneficial way to mobilize partnerships between Member States that share the same economic and developmental status.¹²⁴ In many cases, trade between developed and developing states involve developing states exporting low-profit unrefined goods to developed states, keeping developing states' economies entrenched in the export of unrefined resources with low-profit yields and limited development potential.¹²⁵ South-South trade, which is trade between two or more developing states, supports the self-reliance of developing states and allows them to diversify and expand their economies.¹²⁶ South-South cooperation plays an important role in encouraging states in the global south to engage in the exchange of many political, economic, social, and cultural ideals amongst one another.¹²⁷ During the 70th session of the General Assembly Second Committee, representatives from Sudan, Cuba, Yemen, Nepal, and others attested that South-South cooperation is crucial to the effective participation of developing states in global growth.¹²⁸ This method of cooperation in trade relations allows states of similar socioeconomic status to engage in beneficial, non-competitive relationships.¹²⁹

Enhancing and Supporting the Role of Civil Society

Providing individuals with access to decision-making, advocacy, and civic participation is important in ensuring development is inclusive at all levels of society.¹³⁰ Social capital refers to the networks that exist between different members of society and the values that bring individuals together.¹³¹ Increasing social capital means increasing the networks through which society members interact amongst each other and later with their local and national governments.¹³² CSOs have been instrumental unifying citizens and social groups in defense of their interests, especially in areas where government presence is weak.¹³³ CSOs allow communities to participate in civic engagement and advocate for their needs; this is particularly important in states and communities with less developed participatory democracy where CSOs fill fundamental the gaps in decision-making and advocacy, particularly on behalf of vulnerable populations.¹³⁴ Civil society plays a major role in reinforcing the checks and balances for major global actors and work to hold governments and other actors accountable for their commitments and their actions.¹³⁵ CSOs are in touch with societies on a micro-level, which means their input can be valuable to IGOs who are willing to advance agendas in those areas.¹³⁶ By involving CSOs and including them in partnership building, states are assuring the global community that policymaking at a high-level will better include benefits and guarantees for individuals on more local levels.¹³⁷ While ECOSOC's inclusion of NGOs is an important step in providing civil society actors with access to these processes, many international entities, including UN bodies, fail to

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹²² UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2016*, 2016, p. 44.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ UN Office for South-South Cooperation, *What is South-South Cooperation?*, 2016.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ UN DPI, *Importance of South-South Cooperation, Official Development Assistance Focus, as Second Committee Continues Debate on Implementing 2030 Agenda (GA/EF/3422)*, 2015.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ World Bank Group, *Defining Civil Society*, 2013.

¹³¹ OECD, *What is Social Capital*, 2001, p. 1.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ World Bank Group, *Defining Civil Society*, 2013.

¹³⁴ Fox, *Civil Society and Political Accountability: Propositions for Discussion*, 2000.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Overseas Development Institute, *Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can Be More Effective*, 2006, p. 6.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

adequately consult CSOs in planning national or community actions.¹³⁸ Lack of consultation with these actors may lead to programs and initiatives that are ill-suited for local context or that leave the most vulnerable populations behind.¹³⁹

Science, Technology, and Innovation

As technology and new technological innovations become a more significant part of the global economy, Member States are realizing the importance of STI in the achievement of the SDGs.¹⁴⁰ At the national level, STI is critical for the development of states that want to fully participate in, and contribute to, the global economy.¹⁴¹ At the regional and global levels, ECOSOC along with other UN bodies, continues to incorporate the three pillars of sustainable development with projects relating to STI.¹⁴² Member States that engage in partnerships regarding science and technology support development efforts within their own states and partnering states as well.¹⁴³ STI developments are critical to various fields, from medicine and healthcare to communications technologies and critical infrastructure.¹⁴⁴

While the pace of technological and scientific advancement is rapid, there are significant challenges to promoting the broader use of these technologies and in involving developing states in its creation and development.¹⁴⁵ A lack of transparency from Member States and a lack of cooperation often hinders the ability of STI to truly take effect in areas where innovation is needed most.¹⁴⁶ Even when states are cooperative and engage in information sharing, developing states may lack the critical infrastructure to make certain innovations practical and readily adoptable.¹⁴⁷ For example, developing states with limited internet penetration in rural areas will be unable to adopt and disseminate innovations for small businesses and healthcare that rely on this technological infrastructure.¹⁴⁸

The international community, through UN-led forums, continues to give examples of why the spread of technology is important, leading to real life success in rural and urban areas.¹⁴⁹ Despite challenges, there are also examples of STI innovations that have been successful; innovators in Bangalore, India, invented portable cardiology machines that diagnose and measure heart diseases in remote and rural areas.¹⁵⁰ This portable electrocardiogram is an example of how STI can provide more efficient social services in areas where similar service did not exist previously.¹⁵¹ This example is a model that can be better spread to areas with similar needs via mobile inclusive partnerships.¹⁵² By continuously promoting this medical technological innovation through multilateral means, states can be motivated to begin changing their policies to support the experimentation and implementation of new technological advances.¹⁵³

¹³⁸ Koon-Hong, *The Role of Global Civil Society in Bringing Global Democratic Order*, *E-International Relations Students*, 2014.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2013/54)*, 2013.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ UN DESA, *TST Issues Brief: Science, Technology and Innovation, Knowledge-sharing and Capacity-building*, 2014.

¹⁴⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2013/54)*, 2013, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ UN DESA, *TST Issues Brief: Science, Technology and Innovation, Knowledge-sharing and Capacity-building*, 2014.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2013/54)*, 2013.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

In order to successfully move forward toward achieving sustainable development, it is essential to mobilize inclusive partnerships between levels of public, private, and civil society entities.¹⁵⁴ In addressing the topic at hand, it is crucial to note that while there are many international initiatives and resolutions aimed towards mobilizing inclusive partnerships, the international community should also consider opportunities to engage more with private sector organizations that are willing to create solutions that are beneficial to all entities and that are compatible with core tenants of sustainable development. CSOs also have much more potential for positive impact in this field and can be activated for consultation, and in several instances, action, to support development efforts on a local and national level. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated in his remarks during the adoption of the SDGs, “The true test of commitment to Agenda 2030 will be implementation. We need action from everyone, everywhere.”¹⁵⁵

Further Research

In researching this topic delegates must understand the history and motivation behind Member States and IGOs in pushing for inclusive partnerships. Why is it important for the means of implementation to be discussed at the forefront of planning for partnerships? How can the international community effectively and efficiently review methods by which such means of implementation are carried out? How can ECOSOC promote the meaningful inclusion of CSOs in revitalizing partnerships at the national and regional level? How has the role of CSOs been bolstered ECOSOC, and how can CSOs be used to their full potential in the field of sustainable development? How can the international community address fundamental barriers to STI, including insufficient infrastructure? What are the barriers that exist between different entities that can limit them from interacting amongst each other and mobilizing partnerships?

Annotated Bibliography

IBON International. (2014). *The Reality of Aid 2014*. Retrieved 17 July 2016 from: <http://www.realityofaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/FINAL-ROA-Report-2014.pdf>

The Reality of Aid is a biennial report published by IBON International. Authors from NGOs, IGOs, CSOs, aid agencies, and experts in the field contributed to the report, which includes diverse viewpoints. The report focuses on development cooperation and its impact in communities where aid is and is not prominent. This is important for delegates to see the highlighted examples of partnerships that exist in promoting more foreign aid. Furthermore, the report shows finances of certain partnerships that can be analyzed and compared.

Jensen, J. (2013). *Toward a New Paradigm of Sustainable Development, Lessons from the Partnership for Growth*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Retrieved 20 September 2016 from: <https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/23731/uploads>

Toward a New Paradigm of Sustainable Development, Lessons from the Partnership for Growth is a report on the Partnership for Growth (PfG) initiative carried out by CSIS. PfG is one of the first experiments by the U.S. to see how non-aid actors can be instrumental in delivering aid when partnered with resources from developed states. This type of partnership demonstrated in PfG is an example of a fruitful partnership for sustainable development. This report will benefit delegates in understanding the main successes and failures of the experiment while highlighting what can be done in the future.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Global Sustainable Development Report 2016*. Retrieved 17 July 2016 from:

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2328Global%20Sustainable%20development%20report%202016%20\(final\).pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2328Global%20Sustainable%20development%20report%202016%20(final).pdf)

The UN publishes the Global Sustainable Development Report to educate the public on the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2016. The report highlights the SDGs and the progress towards their achievement. This report responds to the mandate of the

¹⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *Towards global partnerships (A/RES/55/215)*, 2001.

¹⁵⁵ Ban, *Secretary-General's remarks at Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2015, p. 1.

Rio+20 conference specifically related to the transfer of science and technology. Delegates will find this document useful as it gives a detailed overview of progress on global sustainable development in 2016, including a section on the role of partnerships.

United Nations Development Programme. (2015). *Human Development Report 2015*. Retrieved 15 July 2016 from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf

The purpose of the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report is to publish yearly data that helps individuals understand the relationship between work and human development. It is important to highlight the most recent Human Development Report to better understand the synergistic relationship that exists between job creation and human development, which has an effect on broader aspects of development. The Human Development Report includes key information that will be useful for delegates to identify the how increased human development through decent jobs will be a long-term benefit for sustainable development achievement.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2013). *Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2013/54)*. Retrieved 21 October 2016 from: <http://www.undocs.org/E/2013/54>

The Secretary-General issued this report for the 2013 Annual Ministerial Review. The report provides an overview of the potential of science, technology, and innovation in achieving sustainable development. It also addresses the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in expanding the reach of science, technology, and innovation. The Secretary highlights the position of ECOSOC in the international system as a global leader in supporting developments in science, technology and innovation. This document is important for delegates to understand the UN's recommendations for national, regional, and global public policy actors.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-seventh session. (2013). *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/67/L.72). Retrieved 20 September 2016 from: <http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/67/290>

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was established and organized to give advice and provide leadership in the development of the SDGs. This resolution will be useful in the research process since it gives needed and valuable insight into the internal structure of the HLPF. Understanding the structure of the HLPF will help delegates better understand the leadership team behind the SDGs. HLPF's work under the auspices of ECOSOC and the General Assembly is outlined in this document, making it an even more valuable resource for delegates.

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

In September 2015 the General Assembly adopted the SDGs as goals to be accomplished by 2030. The document includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 targets. This document is important for delegates since it not only lists the SDGs and targets, but emphasizes the need to create many partnerships to successfully achieve them. Goal 17 focuses on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalization of global partnerships for sustainable development. Delegates will benefit from looking into Goal 17 and its targets to learn key language about partnerships in sustainable development in the most recent 2030 Agenda.

United Nations, General Assembly & Economic and Social Council. (2014). *The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda* [Report]. Retrieved 20 September 2016 from: https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/partnership2014/pdf/event_summary.pdf

The Joint Thematic Session between the General Assembly and ECOSOC on the role of partnerships in the implementation of the post-2015 development goals shines light on major thematic discussion between two crucial UN bodies. This thematic summary from the two-day forum/debate brings together members of the public, private, and non-profit sectors together to discuss implementation of the post-2015 agenda. Several workshops at this meeting highlighted the ways in which partnerships can accelerate the achievement of goals.

United Nations, Office of Special Adviser on Africa. (2015). *Infrastructure Development: Within the Context of Africa's Cooperation with New and Emerging Development Partners* [Report]. Retrieved 17 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/pubs/2015infrastructureanddev.pdf>

This UN publication focuses specifically on Africa, highlighting the use of South-South cooperation for infrastructure development. The report showcases Africa's growth within the past decade and the actions Member States took to achieve such growth. By showing a contemporary example of South-South cooperation delegates will be able to better understand this method of regional cooperation easily.

United Nations, Partnerships for SDGs. (2016). *The Survive and Thrive Global Development Alliance* [Website]. Retrieved 20 September 2016 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=11932>

The Survive and Thrive Global Development Alliance is one of the many initiatives supporting the SDGs. The initiative is a public-private partnership aimed at preventing maternal and child mortality. This PPP between the United States government and several private sector actors is an example of a UN driven initiative towards achieving SDG 2, 3, 4, and 17 through PPPs. This resource will not only help delegates learn about this one initiative but give them access to the broader Sustainable Development Partnerships database.

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II. Investing in Sustainable Energy for Rural Areas

Introduction

Sustainable energy is fundamental to the United Nation's (UN) agenda and the Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) integration and streamlining of development initiatives.¹⁵⁶ Investing in sustainable energy for rural areas connects “economic growth, social equity, and [the UN's] efforts to combat climate change.”¹⁵⁷ The UN's Brundtland Commission defines sustainable energy as efforts to meet current energy needs without hindering the ability of future generations to meet their own.¹⁵⁸ Having access to sustainable energy can help provide energy security that has no or limited impact on human health, unlike non-renewable energy sources.¹⁵⁹ While there is no single definition of rural areas, rural areas are distinguished from urban areas for having lower standards of living and less dense populations.¹⁶⁰ Estimates show that 46% of the global population lives in rural areas, 85% of which live in poverty or in impoverished conditions.¹⁶¹ While projected to decrease overall by 2050, the rural population of many countries in the less developed regions of the world will grow.¹⁶² In fact, 70% of the global rural population lies within just 14 countries, 11 of which are Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), or Small Island Developing States (SIDS).¹⁶³ Most of these countries lie within Asia or Africa, where, as of 2014, 620 million sub-Saharan people do not have access to electricity.¹⁶⁴ It is important to invest in sustainable energy to improve the standard of living in rural areas, which is often lower in rural than in urban areas, and to improve the economic abilities of their populations.¹⁶⁵ Increasing sustainable energy investment through integration in rural development strategies can help with reducing poverty levels in rural areas.¹⁶⁶ ECOSOC's coordination of UN entities, civil society, and the private sector, has helped to produce a comprehensive development approach, which includes the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.¹⁶⁷

Sustainable energy is an issue that has become a focus across UN entities, including the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All). Currently, 1.3 billion people lack access to energy and modern energy services such as electricity, 2.9 billion people rely on traditional biomass fuels for cooking and heating, and, as a result of this, 4.3 million premature deaths due to indoor air pollution.¹⁶⁸ Not only does this have implications for health, but lack of access to sustainable energy sources also has an effect on education and productivity.¹⁶⁹ The post-2015 development agenda emphasizes the importance of investing in sustainable energy with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7, which aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.¹⁷⁰

International and Regional Framework

The importance of energy access is essential to improving quality of life and reaching a standard of living that supports health and well-being, as outlined in Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and Article 11 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966).¹⁷¹ Articles 16 through 22

¹⁵⁶ UN DESA, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.A/366)*, 2015, p. 7.

¹⁵⁷ UN New Centre, *Ban: Sustainable energy can 'save millions of lives'*, 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Energy Alabama, *What is Sustainable Energy?*, 2016.

¹⁵⁹ Walton, *Sustainable Energy: Definitions, Focus, and the Social Dimension*, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ UN Statistics Division, *Population density and urbanization*, 2016.

¹⁶¹ UNDP, *Integrated Sustainable Rural Development: Renewable Energy Electrification and Rural Productivity Zones*, 2014, p. 3; Alkire et al., *Poverty in Urban and Rural Areas: Direct comparisons using the global MPI 2014*, 2014, p. 1.

¹⁶² UN DESA, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.A/366)*, 2015, p. 14.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 56-59.

¹⁶⁴ International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2014: Executive Summary*, 2014, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ UNDP, *Integrated Sustainable Rural Development: Renewable Energy Electrification and Rural Productivity Zones*, 2014, p. 4; UN Statistics Division, *Population density and urbanization*, 2016.

¹⁶⁶ UNCTAD, *Renewable Energy Technologies for Rural Development*, 2010, pp. 2-4.

¹⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ World Bank, *Unlocking Clean Cooking and Heating Solutions Key to Reaching Sustainable Energy Goals*, 2015.

¹⁶⁹ UN SE4All, *A Vision Statement by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations*, 2011, p. 3.

¹⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 19.

¹⁷¹ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992, p. 77; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

of the covenant highlight ECOSOC's role in helping to overcome barriers for energy access.¹⁷² Energy is also emphasized as imperative to social and economic development in the *Declaration on the Right to Development* (1986).¹⁷³ Article 8 of the declaration further highlights states as being responsible for ensuring equal opportunity for access to basic resources.¹⁷⁴

The importance of sustainable energy for rural areas is specifically emphasized in *Agenda 21* (1992), which stresses energy production's adverse effects on the atmosphere and the importance of using renewable energy sources.¹⁷⁵ In 2000, the UN Millennium Project identified energy as essential to achieving the targets in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹⁷⁶ The 2002 *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (JPOI) underlined rural energy's role in alleviating poverty, reducing unsustainable consumption and production, protecting health, and promoting overall sustainable development for Africa.¹⁷⁷ In General Assembly resolution 66/288 on "The Future We Want" in 2012, Member States further committed to providing services essential to rural areas including electrification and sustainable cooking and heating solutions.¹⁷⁸

Following the UN's declaration of 2014-2024 as the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, energy was brought to the forefront of the post-2015 development agenda.¹⁷⁹ In 2015, the *Paris Agreement* was adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) with the aim of strengthening global responses to climate change; this includes the engagement of Member States, civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, and other stakeholders.¹⁸⁰ The agreement highlighted the need to "promote universal access to sustainable energy in developing countries," especially in Africa.¹⁸¹ Building on these existing frameworks, the UN adopted the SDGs, which replaced the MDGs as the global development framework.¹⁸² Not only does SDG 7 address energy access, but it also encourages investment in renewable energy in global energy usage, energy efficiency, energy infrastructure and clean energy technology, and sustainable energy services for developing countries.¹⁸³ With the adoption of SDG 7 and the *Paris Agreement*, 2015 marked an important year for the promotion of renewable energy within the UN system.¹⁸⁴

The first target of SDG 7, to achieve universal access to energy for all, is primarily intended for developing countries, as most people do not suffer from a lack of energy access in developed countries.¹⁸⁵ The UN system has adopted several programs of action to address the various specific situations, especially concerning rural areas, of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.¹⁸⁶ The *Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020* (2011) outlines energy access-focused action plans for LDCs and development partners.¹⁸⁷ Expansion and upgrading of energy infrastructure for rural areas is included as an objective of the *Vienna Programme of Action*

¹⁷² UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

¹⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Right to Development (A/RES/41/128)*, 1986.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992, pp. 79-80, 146.

¹⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000; Modi et al., *Energy Services for the Millennium Development Goals*, 2006, p. iii.

¹⁷⁷ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: Energy*; UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199/20)*, 2002, pp. 12-13, 18, 43, 48.

¹⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, pp. 24-25.

¹⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *International Year of Sustainable Energy for All (A/RES/65/151)*, 2011, p. 2; UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable energy sources (A/RES/67/215)*, 2013, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 4-6.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/220)*, 2016, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ Osborn et al., *Universal Sustainable Development Goals: Understanding the Transformational Challenges for Developed Countries*, 2015, p. 22.

¹⁸⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2016/55)*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ UN Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Development Countries, *Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3)*, 2011, pp. 13-14.

for *Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade of 2014-2024* (2014).¹⁸⁸ Sustainable energy is highlighted in the *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* and calls for “innovative energy roadmaps” that considers the needs of people living in remote areas.¹⁸⁹ The utilization of these regional frameworks and programs of action is essential to sustainable rural energy development.

The UN committed to addressing the financial challenges of development by mobilizing financial resources and promoting the national and economic conditions for sustainable development, including access to basic energy services and clean and sustainable energy, in the *Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development* (2002) and the *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development* (2008).¹⁹⁰ In 2015, alongside the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* was tasked with following up on the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration, strengthening sustainable development financing and the post-2015 development agenda implementation, and strengthening the Financing for Development follow-up process of commitments.¹⁹¹

Role of the International System

ECOSOC addresses the needs of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDs, and middle-income countries (MICs) by improving rural energy access through development activities.¹⁹² ECOSOC holds the Development Cooperation Forum every two years to “assess global trends in development cooperation and related commitments, and consider ways to accelerate progress.”¹⁹³ The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), convened under the auspices of the Council and lead by the President of ECOSOC, is the primary monitoring platform of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, including the discussion of the sustainable development needs of LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, and MICs.¹⁹⁴ Here, ECOSOC is responsible for political leadership, guidance, and recommendations, review, and follow-up of commitments and integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.¹⁹⁵ Additionally, ECOSOC oversees the follow-up process of the Monterrey Consensus, including the continued commitments of the Doha Declaration and Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which places the Council at the heart of coordinating finance for development and investment in sustainable energy for rural areas.¹⁹⁶ ECOSOC is also responsible for holding the Financing for Development (FfD) forum, which focuses on implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and submitting the conclusions and recommendations to the HLPF.¹⁹⁷

Although sustainable energy is connected to many different UN bodies, the UN has two entities that are specifically devoted to this issue: UN-Energy and SE4All.¹⁹⁸ UN-Energy was established in 2004 as the UN’s inter-agency collaboration mechanism in the field of energy.¹⁹⁹ Its membership is comprised of many of ECOSOC’s specialized

¹⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024* (A/RES/69/137), 2014, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹ UN General Assembly, *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* (A/RES/69/15), 2014, p. 11.

¹⁹⁰ UN International Conference on Financing for Development *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing and Development* (A/CONF.198/11), 2002, pp. 1-5; UN General Assembly, *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus* (A/RES/63/239), 2008, pp. 30-31.

¹⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015, p. 10; UN Third International Conference on Financing for Development, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2015, p. 1.

¹⁹² UN General Assembly, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council* (A/RES/68/1), 2013, p. 5.

¹⁹³ UN ECOSOC, *Financing for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

¹⁹⁴ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 – Ensuring that no one is left behind*; UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development* (A/RES/67/290), 2013, p. 5.

¹⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development* (A/RES/67/290), 2013, p. 3.

¹⁹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Financing for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ UN DESA, *2016 ECOSOC FfD forum*, 2016.

¹⁹⁸ UN-Energy, *UN-Energy Knowledge Network*.

¹⁹⁹ UN-Energy, *About UN-Energy*.

agencies, programs, funds, and other bodies of the UN system.²⁰⁰ In 2011, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) Initiative as the “vehicle” to bring stakeholders in governments, ECOSOC agencies, businesses, civil society, and other multilateral organizations together to meet its three global objectives by 2030.²⁰¹ The three thematic clusters of UN-Energy mirror the three objectives of the SE4All Initiative: energy access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.²⁰² As SDG 7’s targets are closely aligned with SE4All’s objectives, the initiative holds a leading coordinating role in the goal’s achievement alongside ECOSOC.²⁰³ The SE4All Action Areas include efforts directly related to sustainable energy for rural development, such as the Lighting a Billion Lives initiative, which aims to install solar energy lighting in place of kerosene lamps and candles in rural areas.²⁰⁴

Under the SE4All Initiative, in 2011 the United Nations Foundation formed the Energy Access Practitioner Network, a global platform for energy providers and other stakeholders, to contribute to the SDG 7 by delivering decentralized energy services, especially to rural areas.²⁰⁵ The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) acts as the SDG 7 and SE4All Energy Hub and promotes the use of renewable energy, an important tool for the expansion of energy access to rural areas.²⁰⁶ In 2014, IRENA, the Asian Development Bank, and the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE), a business association promoting off-grid solutions, created the International Off-Grid Renewable Energy Conference (IOREC).²⁰⁷ This conference, held in 2016, provided an opportunity for over 550 stakeholders to view projects and products from the private sector, share best practices, and network.²⁰⁸

Additionally, civil society organizations (CSOs) support sustainable energy through research, advocacy, training, education, and service delivery.²⁰⁹ CSOs are able to act as accountability mechanisms and platforms for the voice of rural populations.²¹⁰ An example is the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPEN), a CSO based in Nairobi, Kenya, with expertise in energy and a focal area entitled “Renewables and Energy for Rural Development.”²¹¹ It “brings together African energy practitioners, professionals, researchers, investors, and policymakers” to examine options of modern energy services for low-income, rural populations.²¹²

The Role of Sustainable Energy in Rural Development

Access to sustainable energy is essential to overall human development as shown in the 2015 *Human Development Report*, which underlined a “strong positive association between energy consumption and the Human Development Index.”²¹³ However, many challenges to energy access in rural areas remain in policy, capacity, and finance.²¹⁴ For example, permit bureaucracy and import tariffs create hostile policies and legal frameworks for energy access activities.²¹⁵ Additionally, limited availability of technology, vocational training, and data on energy access weakens

²⁰⁰ UN-Energy, *Members*.

²⁰¹ UN SE4All, *A Vision Statement by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations*, 2011; UN General Assembly, *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/422)*, 2015, p. 11.

²⁰² UN-Energy, *About UN-Energy*.

²⁰³ UN SE4All, *Sustainable Development Goal 7 – Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda*.

²⁰⁴ UN SE4All & UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, *Sustainable Energy for All: A Global Action Agenda*, 2012, pp. 8-9.

²⁰⁵ United Nations Foundation, *Sustainable Energy for All: Energy Access Practitioner Network*.

²⁰⁶ UN SE4All, *A Vision Statement by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations*, 2011, p. 5.

²⁰⁷ UN-Energy, *Activities of Member Organizations and Partners of UN-Energy in support of “2014-2024 United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All”*, 2016, p. 47.

²⁰⁸ International Off-Grid Renewable Energy Conference & Exhibition, *IOREC 2016 – About*, 2016.

²⁰⁹ UN SE4All & UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, *Sustainable Energy for All: A Global Action Agenda*, 2012, pp. 11.

²¹⁰ Leopold et al., *Poor people’s energy outlook 2014*, 2014, p. 54.

²¹¹ AFREPEN/FWD, *AFREPEN/FWD – Energy, Environment and Development Network for Africa Website*, 2016.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/422)*, 2015, p. 3; UNDP, *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*, 2015, p. 135.

²¹⁴ UNDP, *Integrated Sustainable Rural Development: Renewable Energy Electrification and Rural Productivity Zones*, 2014, pp. 3-4; Hunt et al., *Poor People’s Energy Outlook 2012*, 2012, p. 72.

²¹⁵ Hunt et al., *Poor People’s Energy Outlook 2012*, 2012, p. 74.

a country's energy development capacity.²¹⁶ Not only do these barriers hinder rural energy access, but they slow development in rural education, health, and productivity.²¹⁷

Without modern energy services, education is hindered in both households and schools.²¹⁸ Women and children “typically bear the burden of inadequate energy access.”²¹⁹ Instead of pursuing education, they must spend hours overcoming the challenges related to cooking and lighting their households.²²⁰ Women and children can spend anywhere between two to eight hours a day collecting firewood.²²¹ Additionally, children of households without electricity are unable to study at night, impeding their education potential.²²² Schools, universities, and vocational training opportunities also require electricity in order to expand their operations beyond daylight hours and utilize Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).²²³

An absence of sustainable energy also produces harmful effects to rural health.²²⁴ Without modern heating and cooking solutions, rural dwellers must rely on solid biomass fuels, including wood, crop residue, and animal dung.²²⁵ The inhalation of fumes from solid biomass is one of the main contributors to poor health and death for those with low incomes.²²⁶ Rural health care systems, which are essential to overall development, are also impacted by insufficient energy access.²²⁷ Hospitals are unable to provide adequate care or perform emergency procedures without lighting, refrigeration, and sterilization equipment.²²⁸ Improving access to sustainable energy can help alleviate these problems caused by lack of access to energy in rural areas.

Lower productivity rates and the perpetuation of rural poverty are also results of a lack of sustainable energy access.²²⁹ Improving agricultural productivity through energy technologies can contribute to overall rural development by reducing the time and work load of traditional agro-processing methods used by rural households.²³⁰ Furthermore, small businesses often significantly benefit from electricity, mechanical power, and ICTs.²³¹ For example, fishermen in Mkwiro, Kenya, can use refrigeration to preserve the fish they catch to be sold and therefore increase their sales.²³² It is important to increase investments in sustainable energy in rural areas in order to speed up the development process and to help raise the standard of living through education, health, and productivity levels.

Financing for Investment

Financing remains one of the biggest barriers to increasing sustainable energy access in rural areas. Internationally, the current \$400 billion annual investment for SE4All would have to be tripled to achieve all three of the 2030 targets.²³³ The \$9 billion spent on energy access is a fraction of the required \$49.9 billion annually.²³⁴ While countries are primarily responsible for their social and economic development, they must be supported by an

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

²¹⁷ Leopold et al., *Poor people's energy outlook 2014*, 2014, p. 2.

²¹⁸ United Nations Foundation, *Sustainable Energy for All: Energy Access Practitioner Network*.

²¹⁹ International Renewable Energy Agency, *Contribution to the 2015 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration Segment*, 2015, p. 8.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Leopold et al., *Poor people's energy outlook 2014*, 2014, p. 7.

²²² Ibid., p. 29.

²²³ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

²²⁴ United Nations Foundation, *Sustainable Energy for All: Energy Access Practitioner Network*.

²²⁵ International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2014: Executive Summary*, 2014, p. 6; UNCTAD, *Renewable Energy Technologies for Rural Development*, 2010, p. 2.

²²⁶ Leopold et al., *Poor people's energy outlook 2014*, 2014, p. 8.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

²²⁸ Ibid.; UN SE4All, *SE4All Energy Access Committee Report*, 2014, p. 6.

²²⁹ UN SE4All, *SE4All Energy Access Committee Report*, 2014, p. 6.

²³⁰ Leopold et al., *Poor people's energy outlook 2014*, 2014, pp. 18-20.

²³¹ UN SE4All, *SE4All Energy Access Committee Report*, 2014, p. 5; Stevens et al., *Poor People's Energy Outlook 2016*, 2016, pp. 25-26.

²³² Ibid., p. 28.

²³³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*, 2015, p. 175.

²³⁴ UN SE4All, *Scaling Up Finance for Sustainable Energy Investments: Report of the SE4All Advisory Board's Finance Committee*, 2015, p. 3.

enabling economic environment.²³⁵ Financing rural energy projects is achievable through a variety of investment and ownership structures that include private, public, or mixed ownership.²³⁶ While international aid, national funding, and CSOs have an important role, the private sector, as “the global engine of growth and the primary source of new investments,” will need to provide more than 75% of the needed annual energy investments.²³⁷ However, political and economic stability and transparency are essential for investors to trust developing countries’ institutions.²³⁸ A study in Nigeria, where only 10% of the rural population has access to electricity, found the economics of harnessing energy resources to be one of the greatest challenges for rural energy access.²³⁹

Sources of financing are always crucial in projects in international development; however, a bigger problem lies in coordinating the demanded capital for energy and the financing that is available.²⁴⁰ ECOSOC’s Special High-level meeting with the World Bank, International Monetary Foundation (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) addressed this very issue in 2015.²⁴¹ Current ongoing efforts include the Powering the Future We Want grant program started by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the China Energy Fund Committee, a non-governmental organization (NGO) with ECOSOC consultative status, to support sustainable energy promotion in developing countries.²⁴²

ECOSOC’s role in capacity-building and transfer of knowledge and technologies is essential for the adoption of sustainable energy solutions in developing countries.²⁴³ With a large investment gap in the electricity supply sector, developing countries are unable to expand their national grid systems to rural areas, which have lower electricity demands and levels of economic development.²⁴⁴ The International Energy Agency (IEA) identified mini-grids, autonomous (off-grid), small-scale, and renewable energy powered electrical distribution networks as a more economically sustainable provision of rural energy.²⁴⁵ Current efforts in off-grid solutions include the SE4All Clean Energy Mini-Grids High-Impact Opportunity (CEMG HIO) and the ARE’s hybrid mini-grid systems, which utilize renewable energy technologies (RETs), such as solar photovoltaic, wind, and small or micro-hydro.²⁴⁶ RETs are technologies that use renewable energy sources, such as water, solar, or wind, without depleting the earth’s natural resources, and are instrumental in meeting the electricity needs of rural areas due to their decentralized nature.²⁴⁷ Through projects such as the CEMG HIO and ARE’s hybrid mini-grids, rural areas have the unique opportunity to establish energy systems with renewable sources, if given the needed technology transfer and investment.²⁴⁸

For the overall success of mini-grid systems, sustainability in financing and operations, maintenance, and management is indispensable.²⁴⁹ Failed projects in Nigeria, due to poor planning, technology gaps, corruption, and operational challenges, resulted in mass rural to urban migration and hesitance to invest in other off-grid projects.²⁵⁰

²³⁵ UN General Assembly, *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (A/RES/63/239)*, 2008, p. 5.

²³⁶ UN SE4All, *SE4All Energy Access Committee Report*, 2014, p. 12.

²³⁷ UN SE4All & UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, *Sustainable Energy for All: A Global Action Agenda*, 2012, pp. 16, 28.

²³⁸ Alliance for Rural Electrification, *Renewable Energy Technologies for Rural Electrification: The Role and Position of the Private Sector*, p. 9.

²³⁹ Elusakin et al., *Challenges of sustaining off-grid power generation in Nigeria rural communities*, 2014, p. 52.

²⁴⁰ UN SE4All, *SE4All Energy Access Committee Report*, 2014, p. 13.

²⁴¹ UN DESA, *ECOSOC Special high-level meeting with the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and UNCTAD*, 2015.

²⁴² UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: Powering the Future We Want*.

²⁴³ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/422)*, 2015, p. 11.

²⁴⁴ Alliance for Rural Electrification, *Renewable Energy Technologies for Rural Electrification: The Role and Position of the Private Sector*, p. 3.

²⁴⁵ UN SE4All, *SE4All Energy Access Committee Report*, 2014, p. 12.

²⁴⁶ SE4All, *Clean Energy Mini-Grids High Impact Opportunity: Annual Report*, 2015, p. 16; Alliance for Rural Electrification, *Hybrid Mini-Grids for Rural Electrification: Lessons Learned*, 2014, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ UNCTAD, *Renewable Energy Technologies for Rural Development*, 2010, p. 5.

²⁴⁸ UN SE4All, *A Vision Statement by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations*, 2011, p. 4; UNDP, *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*, 2015, p. 175.

²⁴⁹ Alliance for Rural Electrification, *Hybrid Mini-Grids for Rural Electrification: Lessons Learned*, 2014, p. 6.

²⁵⁰ Elusakin et al., *Challenges of sustaining off-grid power generation in Nigeria rural communities*, 2014, pp. 51-54.

In order to prevent such hazardous effects, access to funding and financial schemes is needed on three levels: end-user (consumers to use product), business (small enterprises to deliver and operate energy systems), and the project (capital investment).²⁵¹ However, due to their perceived higher risks, off-grid programs face difficulties accessing financing from private banks and investors.²⁵² SE4All's Financing Committee notes that existing economic infrastructures of many developing countries hinder the delivery of investment and are in need of improved governance and management.²⁵³ SE4All's CEMG HIO faced issues such as market fragmentation, inadequate regulation, and lacking business models, preventing their adoption.²⁵⁴ Therefore, in order to attract investment, especially from the private sector, leveraging of the public sector will be vital.²⁵⁵

Conclusion

Sustainable energy and sustainable development are interwoven with energy as the “golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive.”²⁵⁶ The SDGs, particularly SDG 7, can overcome the shortcomings of the MDGs by bringing “rural areas out of energy poverty” by “increasing access to energy for domestic use...and increasing access to electricity.”²⁵⁷ With a growing rural population in many developing states, energy is a vital component to overall human development and the achievement of international Sustainable Development Goals including education, health, and productivity.²⁵⁸ While substantial progress has been made, SE4All reports that the rate of progress falls substantially short of reaching the initiatives objects by 2030, especially concerning finance.²⁵⁹ It is fundamental to raise living standards in rural areas including health, education, and productivity, by overcoming the barriers of sustainable energy access. ECOSOC must continue to ensure the coordination, dialogue, and follow-up of conferences and summits in order to fuel investment in sustainable energy for rural development.²⁶⁰

Further Research

As delegates begin their own research, they should consider the following questions: What role does rural energy play in the overall development process? Is there an overlap within the UN development system concerning rural energy development? How can ECOSOC fill in information gaps between specialized agencies, funds, and programs? How can ECOSOC utilize sustainable energy for development in education, health, and productivity? How can ECOSOC support ongoing international, regional, and private sector efforts to finance sustainable energy for rural development? What kind of policy support and guidance can ECOSOC provide to build confidence for investing in sustainable rural energy? In what way can financing projects in rural areas coincide with sustainable energy investment? How can investing in sustainable energy sources be further streamlined in the UN's agenda?

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International Energy Agency. (2014). *World Energy Outlook 2014: Executive Summary*. Retrieved 15 August 2016 from: http://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO_2014_ES_English_WEB.pdf

This report is by the International Energy Agency, an autonomous organization that works to ensure reliable, affordable, and clean energy, with a regional focus on sub-Saharan Africa. This report discusses global energy demands and the need for efficiency in the global energy mix. It discusses the use of nuclear power and the role of the power sector in transforming global energy.

²⁵¹ Alliance for Rural Electrification, *Hybrid Mini-Grids for Rural Electrification: Lessons Learned*, 2014, p. 6.

²⁵² SE4All, *Clean Energy Mini-Grids High Impact Opportunity: Annual Report*, 2015, p. 3.

²⁵³ UN SE4All, *Scaling Up Finance for Sustainable Energy Investments: Report of the SE4All Advisory Board's Finance Committee*, 2015, p. 3.

²⁵⁴ SE4All, *Clean Energy Mini-Grids High Impact Opportunity: Annual Report*, 2015, p. 3.

²⁵⁵ UN SE4All, *Scaling Up Finance for Sustainable Energy Investments: Report of the SE4All Advisory Board's Finance Committee*, 2015, p. vi.

²⁵⁶ UN SE4All & UN Secretary-General's High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, *Sustainable Energy for All: A Global Action Agenda*, 2012, p. 4.

²⁵⁷ UNCTAD, *Renewable Energy Technologies for Rural Development*, 2010, p. 4.

²⁵⁸ Leopold et al., *Poor people's energy outlook 2014*, 2014, p. 1.

²⁵⁹ UN SE4All, *Progress Toward Sustainable Energy: Global Tracking Framework 2015 Key Findings*, 2015, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ UN ECOSOC 2016 Integration Segment, *Implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development through policy innovation and integration*, 2016, p. 13.

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International Renewable Energy Agency. (2015). *Contribution to the 2015 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration Segment*. Retrieved 13 July 2016 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/integration/2015/pdf/irena.pdf>

This source is the International Renewable Energy Agency's (IRENA) report to ECOSOC's integration segment. IRENA is a major organization implementing the transition to sustainable energy. This resource provides information on energy's connection to work and gender development. IRENA's contribution provides delegates with further understanding of the extensive nature of energy, its role in overall development, and importance in addressing social issues.

United Nations Development Programme. (2015). *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*. Retrieved 15 August 2016 from:

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf

This source is an annual report by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) concerning human development, especially in relation to work. The Human Development Report provides information on the current status of overall human development, including a section on energy development. UNDP is a partner of SE4All, a member of UN-Energy, and a key actor in the effort to provide sustainable energy for rural areas. The report provides delegates with information concerning current investment and efforts still needed. The documents will help delegates understand energy development's place in the greater development context and why it is important for rural development.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/422)*. Retrieved 14 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/422>

This is the Secretary-General's annual report concerning the progress of the UN Decade for Sustainable Energy for All. The report provides the latest information concerning the ongoing efforts on coordination of the activities of the decade within the UN system. The document is important to help delegates' understanding of sustainable energy in relation to international efforts and within the context of the SDGs. It also contributes to delegates understanding on the need for coordination and coherence concerning energy within the UN system.

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This is the official website of UN-Energy, the UN mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy. It provides background information, overarching goals, and the roles of the organization and its clusters of activities: Energy Access, Renewable Energy, and Energy Efficiency. It also provides additional resources, including publications from bodies and agencies committed to achieving SDG 7 and the objectives to SE4All. The website is a good starting point for delegates to understand the overall context of energy within the UN system and an introduction to the major stakeholders of SE4All and the SDGs.

United Nations, Sustainable Energy for All & United Nations, Secretary-General's High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All. (2012). *Sustainable Energy for All: A Global Action Agenda* [Report]. Retrieved 4 November 2016 from: <http://www.se4all.org/sites/default/files/1/2013/09/SE4ALL-ActionAgenda.pdf>

This source is a report by the Secretary-General's SE4All Initiative. This report provides the framework for the leading UN energy initiatives and mechanism for investment in sustainable energy for rural areas. This global action agenda outlines the SE4All Initiative, its three main objectives, and action areas. The document provides information on key stakeholders and examples of current initiatives. It also introduces delegates to the UN's primary sustainable energy efforts and their application to rural energy development.

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This is a report by SE4All concerning one of its ongoing effort using mini-grid technology. It provides extensive information on mini-grid solutions to expand energy access to rural areas. Additionally, it outlines the persisting barriers to mini-grid programs and overall energy development. This source is useful for delegates to help understand one of the major ongoing rural energy access actions and its challenges.

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<http://trackingenergy4all.worldbank.org/~media/GIAWB/GTF/Documents/GTF-2105-Full-Report.pdf>

This is a report that assesses developments made, activities of United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, and the achievement of SE4All goals. The report specifically outlines the speed of progress in achieving sustainable energy for all, including advancements and shortcomings. The report includes a section concerning Africa's slow progress. It also discusses the interrelation of energy and other areas of development such as water, health, and gender. The report provides delegates with a perspective on the extensive efforts still needed to achieve the goals of SE4All. Furthermore, the report will help delegates understand the circumstances of rural energy access through a focus on African energy development.

United Nations, Sustainable Energy for All et al. (2015). *Scaling Up Finance for Sustainable Energy Investments: Report of the SE4All Advisory Board's Finance Committee*. Retrieved 25 September 2016 from:

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III. Promoting Sustainable Peace by Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict

*"Prevention [of conflict] is not something to be turned on and off; it should be an integral part of United Nations action in all contexts."*²⁶¹

Introduction

The importance of overcoming conflict through peacebuilding is emphasized in the first line of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which expresses the determination of the United Nations (UN) "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."²⁶² However, to this day conflict remains a major challenge for the UN in its efforts to achieve sustainable peace and secure human rights for all.²⁶³ In 2015, more than a quarter of the world's population lived in fragile and conflict-affected settings, showing the need for international action to address the root causes of such conflicts.²⁶⁴ Sustainable peace is the absence of violence in diverse and tolerant communities that have access to equal civil rights, economic rights, and social justice.²⁶⁵ The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) plays a crucial role internationally as a central platform for fostering dialogue and discussion on sustainable peace and development.²⁶⁶ As the President of ECOSOC has stated, "There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development."²⁶⁷

While there is not one single universal cause of conflict, conflict often arises in communities where there is economic despair, social injustice, and political oppression.²⁶⁸ These tensions can result, among other things, from inequalities in sharing the wealth of natural resources, social discrimination, and through a lack of civil rights in oppressive states.²⁶⁹ In more recent years, terrorism and violent extremism have also been common causes of conflict.²⁷⁰ In many Member States, underdeveloped infrastructure triggers conflict, and it is through actions such as capacity-building, institution-building, and strategic planning, that these causes can be overcome.²⁷¹ By laying the infrastructure and foundations for tolerant and equal societies, conflict prevention and peacebuilding can help to alleviate these social tensions that trigger conflict or risk a state relapsing into conflict.

International and Regional Framework

From its inception, the UN has been devoted to preventing conflict through peacebuilding. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report *An Agenda for Peace* recognizes the UN's role in this, and identifies the lack of economic, social, and political rights as key causes of conflict.²⁷² Following the UN's repeated failure to prevent conflict throughout the 1990s, including the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operation* (Brahimi Report) (2000) was established to renew political and financial commitments of Member

²⁶¹ Ban, *Secretary-General's Remarks to Security Council Open Debate on "Security, Development and the Root Causes of Conflicts,"* 2015.

²⁶² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

²⁶³ UN General Assembly, *Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General (A/RES/52/871)*, 1998, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, pp. iii.-xiv.

²⁶⁵ UN-Women, *Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future*, 2012.

²⁶⁶ UN ECOSOC, *About Us*.

²⁶⁷ UN News Centre, *Global Goals 'rallying call' to tackle world's ills, says new President of UN economic and social body*, 2016.

²⁶⁸ Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, p. 6.

²⁶⁹ UN OSAA, *Tackling the Socio-economic Root Causes of Conflict Toward Achieving the Goal of a Conflict-free Africa (16-17 November 2015)*, 2016; UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, p. xiv.

²⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General (A/RES/69/162)*, 2014.

²⁷¹ Paul, *Advisory Group Calls for Preventive Peacebuilding for Sustainable Peace. SDG Knowledge Hub*, 2016.

²⁷² UN General Assembly, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peace-keeping: Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992 (A/47/277)*, 1992.

States to support the operations of the UN as a peace builder.²⁷³ The Brahimi Report suggested various methods to improve the UN's experience in conflict situations including "more effective" strategies, clearer mandates of operation, and greater technological analysis to adjust to the Information Age.²⁷⁴ The *Millennium Report of the Secretary-General* (2000) further supported the strengthening of the UN to "ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people."²⁷⁵ The Millennium Report was prepared in advance of the UN Summit in 2000, which became known as the Millennium Summit.²⁷⁶ This session renewed Member State's commitments to promote peace and security through the adoption of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), so that "every step taken towards reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth is a step toward conflict prevention."²⁷⁷

Sustainable peace has also been included in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, developed by the UN and many stakeholders upon reviewing the successes, challenges, and unmet targets of the MDGs.²⁷⁸ This renewed the UN's commitments to promoting sustainable peace and preventing conflict with the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁷⁹ While many of the targets aim to build sustainable peace, SDG 16 to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" particularly stresses the need to address the root causes of conflict.²⁸⁰ Some of the goal's targets include reducing forms of violence, promoting the rule of law, and developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.²⁸¹ Efforts made by Member States to achieve the targets of SDG 16 will help to address the root causes of conflict by laying the foundations for peaceful and sustainable societies.

Role of the International System

Many UN actors work on conflict prevention through a wide array of activities, ranging from poverty eradication to the promotion of democratic institutions.²⁸² As a primary organ of the UN, ECOSOC reviews the reports of UN entities and provides recommendations to improve progress in countries where conflict is most at risk.²⁸³ Since its creation, ECOSOC has played a leading role as a coordinator in peacebuilding.²⁸⁴ For example, ECOSOC supports effective coordination across UN entities by commissioning reports and directing the area of work, such as by inviting the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to monitor and inform ECOSOC of economic and social challenges in African countries at its 48th session.²⁸⁵ Through Ad Hoc Advisory Groups, ECOSOC acts as a coordinator of operations by analyzing the problem and determining the best steps to overcome conflict through long-term and short-term solutions.²⁸⁶ As one example, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau was established in 2003, following an armed conflict stemming from political and economic instability.²⁸⁷ The advisory group carried out consultations and briefings on the ground to determine what led to the violence, in addition to

²⁷³ UN Conferences, Meetings and Events. (n.d.). *"Brahimi Report": Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2000)*; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305)*, 2000.

²⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305)*, 2000, pp. ix-xi.

²⁷⁵ Annan, *"We the Peoples:" The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century (Millennium Report of the Secretary-General)*, 2000, p. 6.

²⁷⁶ UN Conferences, Meetings and Events, *Millennium Summit (6-8 September 2000)*.

²⁷⁷ Annan, *"We the Peoples:" The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century (Millennium Report of the Secretary-General)*, 2000, p. 45.

²⁷⁸ UNDP, *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

²⁷⁹ UNDP, *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 2016.

²⁸⁰ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*, 2016.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² UN Global Issues, *Peace and Security*.

²⁸³ UN ECOSOC, *About Us*.

²⁸⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery*.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*; UN ECOSOC, *African Countries Emerging from Conflict (2012/250)*, 2012; UN ECOSOC, *Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery; UN ECOSOC, Support to the Republic of South Sudan (E/RES/2011/43)*, 2011.

²⁸⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau (E/2003/8)*, 2003, pp. 8-10.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

working towards peace by promoting dialogues and partnerships.²⁸⁸ While this group's mandate has now ended, others have been set up by ECOSOC, including on Haiti, to advise on a long-term development strategy for socioeconomic recovery and stability.²⁸⁹

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention are also key areas of focus for the UN Development Programme (UNDP).²⁹⁰ UNDP addresses this by creating frameworks and institutional mechanisms to prevent conflict and monitor tensions by facilitating dialogue and consensus building, as well as through conflict analysis and assessments.²⁹¹ UNDP helps to establish functioning governments through its work to build responsive and accountable institutions at local levels that improve access to basic services such as in South Sudan and in Libya.²⁹² Through this support, the capacities of local authorities can help to raise the standards of living and foster sustainable and peaceful communities²⁹³.

A variety of actors offer financial aid to help support these efforts to overcome the root causes of conflict, including the World Bank, African Development Bank, and African Union Commission.²⁹⁴ These groups' financial commitments to address the cycles of conflict, and secure peace were reaffirmed at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015.²⁹⁵ The groundbreaking outcome document, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, is a global financing framework for development that recognizes and encourages the important contribution of investment in countries in conflict and after conflict.²⁹⁶

Around the world, civil society organizations (CSOs) also play a critical role in addressing the root causes of conflict by helping to promote peaceful societies with equal civic, political and social rights. ECOSOC enhances the work of civil society by providing an essential platform for CSOs to participate in discussions on the root causes of conflict, and to support the work of the ECOSOC through work on the ground.²⁹⁷ The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, for example, helped to foster dialogue on peacebuilding by organizing a side event at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2016.²⁹⁸ With combined efforts from ECOSOC and CSOs, the international community can address economics, social, and political root causes of conflict through the promotion of sustainable peace.

Strengthening Governance

While conflict and disagreements are common in society, the chance of such tensions devolving into violent conflict greatly increases when citizens have a lack of faith in their governing institutions and their abilities to resolve conflict.²⁹⁹ Weak leadership, unaccountable law and regulatory systems, and the absence of established functioning governments all can contribute to conflict because state institutions are unable to manage these inherent tensions.³⁰⁰ Further, weak institutions often struggle with meeting the varying needs of diverse interest groups and sections of the population, thus leading to marginalization.³⁰¹ Countries in transition are most vulnerable to this risk as their democratic institutions do not yet facilitate the equal participation of all, which is compounded by "uncertainty and collective fears of the future."³⁰²

²⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 5, 11-12.

²⁸⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery*.

²⁹⁰ UNDP, *Conflict prevention and peacebuilding*, 2016.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Acuña-Alfaro, After conflict, functioning governments are key for peaceful and inclusive societies, *Our Perspectives*, 2016; Kristofferson, Transforming local communities amid conflict, *Our Perspectives*, 2016; UNDP, *Responsive and accountable institutions*, 2016.

²⁹³ UNDP, *Responsive and accountable institutions*, 2016.

²⁹⁴ World Bank, *Leaders Commit Billions in New Development Initiative for the Horn of Africa*, 2014.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ UN DESA, *Countries reach historic agreement to generate financing for new sustainable development agenda*, 2015.

²⁹⁷ UN DPI, *Civil Society*.

²⁹⁸ Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, *Working with young people towards peaceful and inclusive societies*, 2016.

²⁹⁹ Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, p. 7.

³⁰⁰ Kratt, South Sudan risks entering a second round of conflict, *Global Risk Insights*, 2016; World Bank, *Strengthening the Institutions of Governance in Timor-Leste*, 2006; Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, p. 7.

³⁰¹ Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, p. 7.

³⁰² Ibid.

Through good governance, authorities and states can better deliver public services and national policies appropriate for the needs of democratic communities, thereby reducing the likeliness of conflict from breaking out.³⁰³ In countries where conflict is ongoing or peace has been newly established, cycles of conflict can be broken and sustainable peace can be achieved by restoring political stability.³⁰⁴ Good governance is generally understood to mean the strengthening of national and local political institutions and structures and the way they make decisions to best meet the needs of citizens.³⁰⁵ This includes, among other goals, the promotion of fair elections, openness and transparency of state institutions, rule of law, and accountability of decision-makers and elected individuals.³⁰⁶ The implementation of good governance at the state, national, and local levels can help to prevent conflict from taking place.³⁰⁷ In areas where conflict has ended, supporting and transforming fragile and conflict-affected settings through better governance can help to rebuild communities, contributing to sustainable peace and stability.³⁰⁸

UNDP works to support democratic transition in countries by providing policy advice, supporting public information campaigns, and through outreach to help and promote dialogue between communities.³⁰⁹ ECOSOC also helps to address conflict by supporting the establishment of strong political structures at the local levels, as illustrated with the example of Liberia.³¹⁰ After a 14-year civil war, ending in 2003, Liberia was devastated and left with poor infrastructure, non-existent public services, and limited functioning of local administrations.³¹¹ UN systems helped to rebuild Liberia and in 2006, the UN Country Team and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) established a County Support Team (CST) initiative to extend the state government presence across Liberia by rebuilding county administration offices and training staff at the county level.³¹² This was an instrumental step to recovery and after five years of UN support, with ECOSOC oversight, Liberia transformed and restored its political structures with functioning offices and well-trained at the county level.³¹³ In July 2016, the head of UNMIL lauded the government of Liberia for this milestone achievement of restoring full control of the country for the first time since the civil war ended.³¹⁴ ECOSOC's leading operations in Liberia helped to restore state capacities, build institutions, and train local civilians.³¹⁵ This approach to strengthening local authorities helped to improve the relationship between the state and society, thereby responding to the needs of civilians and helping to prevent further conflict.

CSOs are also instrumental in supporting the work of ECOSOC; one such CSO is the The Carter Center, which helps to encourage and promote fair elections in developing countries through election monitoring and training local groups in governance.³¹⁶ Another example of an effective CSO is Transparency International, which works with governments on projects to fight corruption including the Citizen Action Network for Safe and Effective Transportation project in Guatemala City.³¹⁷ This project tackles corruption on public transport, where overcrowding, poor services, and crime and violence are commonplace.³¹⁸ Transparency International helps to

³⁰³ UN Global Issues, *Governance*.

³⁰⁴ UN OSAA, *Tackling the Socio-economic Root Causes of Conflict Toward Achieving the Goal of a Conflict-free Africa (16 - 17 November 2015)*, 2015; UN News Centre, *Credible political transition remains 'central issue' in ending horrific Syrian conflict, says UN chief*, 2016.

³⁰⁵ UN Global Issues, *Governance*.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; Council of Europe, *The 12 principles for good governance at local level, with tools for implementation*, 2014.

³⁰⁷ UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, p. xiv.

³⁰⁸ Kratt, South Sudan risks entering a second round of conflict, *Global Risk Insights*, 2016; UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, p. xiv.

³⁰⁹ UN Global Issues, *Governance*.

³¹⁰ UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, p. 28.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ UN News Centre, *Liberia: UN mission lauds Government, people for 'historic' handover of country's security*, 2016.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ The Carter Center, *Democracy Program*, 2016.

³¹⁷ Transparency International, *What is Transparency International?*, 2016; Transparency International, *RedACTES: Citizen Action Network for Safe and Efficient Transport*, 2016.

³¹⁸ Transparency International, *RedACTES: Citizen Action Network for Safe and Efficient Transport*, 2016.

support this crucial public service by ensuring public funds are used for improving the safety of the transport systems and to reduce corruption.³¹⁹ Successful CSO projects and initiatives like these ultimately work to build a participatory political system in which citizens can shape the policies of their country and resolve grievances in ways other than conflict.

Economic Instability and Social Inequality

Along with political instability, conflict can also be triggered by economic and social inequalities that arise when communities face economic despair and social injustice.³²⁰ While the relationship between socioeconomic factors and conflict is complex, evidence points to such factors as economic inequality, marginalization, and poverty as contributing factors that either spur or intensify conflict.³²¹ Economic instability arises from such factors as job insecurity and the mismanagement of public, natural, and land resources, which results in unequal distribution of wealth and resources.³²² Socioeconomic inequality is also more likely to fuel violent conflict when it is disproportionately prevalent amongst certain ethnic, religious, or cultural groups, or if there is a sense of “relative deprivation,” meaning that members of the population perceive themselves as being disadvantaged over other groups.³²³ If sustained over time, a collective sense of injustice and unfairness can inspire groups to mobilize against each other and the state, thus potentially fueling violent conflict.³²⁴ Further, while not universal, some cases have shown that extreme poverty was a factor that facilitated effective recruitment of individuals to armed conflict.³²⁵

Natural Resources

In the past 60 years, at least 40% of intrastate conflicts have been tied to the exploitation of natural resources, and since 1990, at least 18 violent conflicts have been directly linked to not only highly valued resources like diamonds, minerals, and oil, but also essential resources including fertile land and water.³²⁶ While often not the single cause of conflict, tensions over natural resource management have been shown to exacerbate conflicts, both in severity and duration, in addition to making a relapse more likely after a conflict has been resolved.³²⁷ Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan defined competition over the management of water resources as one of “the seeds of violent conflict,” especially where violence results from scarcity and natural disasters like droughts and floods.³²⁸ Due to population growth, urbanization, and climate change, these problems are projected to continue increasing in the next few decades, necessitating the need for proactive action to achieve sustainable peace.³²⁹

There are multiple reasons the mismanagement of natural resources can be a root cause or contributing factor to conflict. Firstly, in countries where the economy is highly dependent on natural resources and less diversified, the income from these resources is often held by a small group of people, whereas other participants in the economy have fewer opportunities to generate income and wealth.³³⁰ When people are excluded from development or marginalized and deprived of economic opportunities, they can more easily be politically manipulated or inspired to join opposition groups.³³¹ This can also intensify “existing societal cleavages around ethnicity, nationality, geographic identity, religion or politics,” turning political or social conflicts into economic ones as well.³³² At the

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ UN Peacekeeping, *Justice*.

³²¹ Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, pp. 11-14.

³²² UN Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action, *Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflict: Land and Conflict*, 2012, p.32; UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, p. xiv.

³²³ Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, pp. 11-14.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

³²⁶ UN Peacekeeping, *Conflict and resources*.

³²⁷ Ibid.; UN PBSO & UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and Environment*, 2008, p. 1.

³²⁸ UN DESA, *Transboundary waters*, 2014.

³²⁹ UN PBSO & UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and Environment*, 2008, p. 1.

³³⁰ UNEP & UNDP, *The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities*, 2013, p. 16; Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014, p. 16.

³³¹ UN PBSO & UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and Environment*, 2008, p. 1; UNEP & UNDP, *The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities*, 2013, p. 16.

³³² Ibid.

same time, insurgent groups and other non-peaceful actors can often finance themselves in part through revenue from natural resources.³³³ Finally, in instances where there is disagreement over who can use a scarce resource, such as fertile land or forests, violent conflict or forced migration can result.³³⁴

UN entities and other international actors have helped to prevent conflict through supporting countries in improving the management of natural and environmental resources to support economic growth and prosperity, as well as reduce the monopolization of these resources.³³⁵ In Indonesia, the monopolization of natural gas in Aceh caused tensions to rise in the local population.³³⁶ Economic grievances from this resulted in a civil war breaking out, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue stepped in to help broker peace through the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 2005 between the Indonesian Government and the Free Aceh Movement. This agreement prevented further outbreaks of conflict and gave the people of Aceh an increased share of the revenue from the energy resources and greater transparency over the collection and distribution of resources.³³⁷

Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

Another economic contributing factor to conflicts is unemployment; youth unemployment rates in particular are considered to be key motives for joining a conflict in developing countries, fueling violence.³³⁸ For example, while not the only cause for the uprising, experts point to the 23.4% unemployment rate as a motivation for many youth to participate in the Arab Spring.³³⁹ Even for employed youth, poor working conditions, including low wages and weak social protections, have led to a widespread feeling of frustration.³⁴⁰ ECOSOC supports sustainable development through employment creation and has been instrumental in encouraging decent work for all through coordinating a joint response across the UN, CSOs, and the private sector.³⁴¹ At the 2015 Integration Segment on “employment creation and decent work for all,” leaders emphasized the importance of social protection, job security, and private sector partnerships to invest in sustainable development.³⁴²

In October 2016, the importance of this was further recognized by the signing of a new partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) to support the creation of jobs and opportunities for young people in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi, and Niger.³⁴³ This \$4 million grant will fund projects to support economic development with a focus on youth employment and skills development.³⁴⁴ An example of a successful project that creates youth apprenticeships is the PROSPERER project in Madagascar, which identifies rural microenterprises that have the potential of hosting apprentices and training them on the job.³⁴⁵ As of 2014, the project was successful in helping 3,468 young people begin an apprenticeship.³⁴⁶ Another example of a successful project is the Innovative Models for Young Coffee Producers initiative launched by the National Federation of Coffee Producers (NFCP) in 2006, in Columbia.³⁴⁷ This initiative enables young producers to become entrepreneurs with the support of the NFCP in collaboration with the National Agrarian Bank.³⁴⁸ As of 2014, the NFCP represented 27% of Columbia’s exports and has helped to build

³³³ UNEP & UNDP, *The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities*, 2013, p. 16; UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment*, 2009, p. 8.

³³⁴ UN PBSO & UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and Environment*, 2008, pp. 2-3.

³³⁵ UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment*, 2009, p. 19.

³³⁶ UNEP & UNDP, *The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities*, 2013, pp. 58-60.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ UNDP, *Employment in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations*, 2015.

³³⁹ UN ILO, *Youth unemployment in the Arab world is a major cause for rebellion*, 2011.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ UN ECOSOC, *Integration Segment 2015*.

³⁴² UN ECOSOC, *Integration Segment: Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all*, 2015.

³⁴³ UN News Centre, *UN, African Union partnership to foster job opportunities for African rural youth*, 2016.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ FAO et al., *Youth and agriculture: Key challenges and concrete solutions*, 2014, pp. 7-8.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

and encourage community networks, entrepreneurship, and jobs in Columbia.³⁴⁹ Through the encouragement of job promotion and creation, the international community can help to invest in creating safer, more prosperous futures to help alleviate this cause of conflict.

Conclusion

Addressing the root causes of conflict is key to achieving and building societies where there is sustainable peace. As it stands, the current number of displaced people exceeds levels recorded during the Second World War.³⁵⁰ This emphasizes the importance of addressing this topic, especially with many of the displaced fleeing from ongoing conflicts. The causes of conflict are complex, including the poor delivery of public and national services as a result of political instability and weak infrastructures, economic turmoil caused by the mismanagement of public goods and natural resources, and social inequality. Indeed, these causes are often intertwined and compound each other.³⁵¹ ECOSOC plays an instrumental role in coordinating responses to prevent conflicts from occurring, and in situations where conflict has taken place, rebuilding and healing societies and states to minimize the damage and any aftershocks. Through the collaboration of key UN entities, CSOs and state governments, ECOSOC helps to strengthen the foundational blocks of democracy and address the root causes of conflict through sustainable peace.

Further Research

What effective lessons can we learn from the previous work of ECOSOC, CSOs, and other UN entities on promoting sustainable peace? How can ECOSOC support the coordination of UN entities to ensure good governance is promoted across all states? What steps can be taken to ensure the proper management of natural resources? How can social and economic inequalities be addressed in societies to prevent conflict from occurring? In countries where there are ongoing conflicts, how can we address the root causes of the initial conflict to prevent conflict from breaking out again? How can education be used to address the root causes of conflict? In what ways can the work of CSOs help to further support the work of ECOSOC through addressing causes of conflict? How can ECOSOC and CSOs help to empower women to prevent conflict from being triggered?

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www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Strategy_Innovation/12principles_en.asp

This website reviews the Council of Europe's 12 principles for good governance. While just one example of what good governance means, this site will be a helpful resource for delegates interested in learning more about the different elements of good governance and considering how it can be improved to create sustainable peace. Some of the principles include free and fair elections, ethical conduct, long-term orientation, and human rights protections.

Haider, H., & B. Rohwerder. (2014). *Conflict: Topic Guide*. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham. Retrieved 8 November 2016 from: www.gsdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CON69.pdf

This document, published by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, a partnership of research institutes, think-tanks, and consultancy organizations, provides an overview of many different facets of conflict. This includes the causes of conflict, conflict prevention, and the impact of conflict on different population groups. Further, for every element of conflict, it summarizes and links to different academic articles. This document would be an excellent starting point for delegates beginning their research on the causes of conflict.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective,*

³⁴⁹ Ibid.2014, pp. 2, 71-72.

³⁵⁰ UNDP, *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development*, 2016, p. xiv.

³⁵¹ Haider & Rohwerder, *Conflict: Topic Guide*, 2014.

accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels [Website]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>

This online platform provides further information on SDG 16, which is closely linked with the topic of sustainable peace. The website provides links to recent meetings on this SDG, in depth knowledge, and other relevant documents related to the topic. Delegates should use this resource as an essential backbone to understanding how SDG 16 can be used to address the root causes of conflict.

United Nations Development Programme. (2015). *Employment in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations* [Report]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from:

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/stewart_hdr_2015_final.pdf

This report, published by UNDP, offers a detailed look at the complex relationship between employment and conflict. It identifies the issue as a factor that intensifies existing conflicts based on political or ideological causes. The document would be useful for delegates looking to gain a nuanced view of the impact of employment on conflict and seeking to learn more about the issue, such as the role played by underemployment and poor working conditions.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Local Governance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: Building a Resilient Foundation for Peace and Development* [Report]. Retrieved 27 July 2016 from:

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/local_governance/local-governance-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-settings.html

This source provides a recent account of the UNDP's work in promoting good governance at the local level. With reference to a variety of cases and details on mechanisms in place, this report provides a thorough guide of the most recent work on promoting sustainable peace through a bottom-up approach. Delegates should refer to this source to gather ideas on best practices on the ground, to prevent conflict from breaking out.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.). *Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery* [Website]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/peacebuilding.shtml>

This is a source from ECOSOC's website and outlines ECOSOC's role in the process of peacebuilding and preventing conflict. The information in this link is useful to understanding what ECOSOC has done in the past and where its limits lie. Delegates should refer to the source to help their understanding of the ECOSOC's role in relation to the topic.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2009). *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment* [Report]. Retrieved 27 July 2016 from:

http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/pcdmb_policy_01.pdf

This report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides an overview of the role of natural resources as a cause of conflict, as well as a peacemaker. The document is useful to help delegates to understand the considerable importance of managing natural resources and overcoming tensions. Delegates should use the source to gather methods of good governance to reduce the risk of conflict.

United Nations Environment Programme & United Nations Development Programme. (2013). *The Role of Natural Resources in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Addressing Risks and Seizing Opportunities* [Report]. Retrieved 27 July 2016 from:

http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_UNDP_NRM_DDR.pdf

This joint report of the UNEP and UNDP is insightful to understanding the work of these bodies with direct examples. Not only is the source useful for delegates to explain how the exploitation of natural resources can lead to conflict, but it also highlights approaches that have been unsuccessful in the past. Delegates should consider the approaches used in the case studies to analyze the best practices for peacebuilding.

United Nations News Centre. (2016, July 27). *FEATURE SERIES: What is UN peacebuilding and its role in preventing conflicts?* [News Article]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54573#.V8Gv9ZMrKRu>

This source is a news article that outlines an updated account of the various peacebuilding bodies of the UN. The source considers the recent reforms and outlines where the UN is going in the

future of peacebuilding. Delegates should use this source to consider the direction of the UN as a peacemaking body, and to fully understand the roles and capacities of the UN bodies in relation to this topic.

United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. (2015). *Tackling the Socio-economic Root Causes of Conflict Toward Achieving the Goal of a Conflict-free Africa (16-17 November 2015)* [Website]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/events/2015/conflictfree20151116.shtml>

This website provides a summary of the High-level Expert Group Meeting held by the African Union to discuss how to preventing conflict on the African continent. It will be useful for delegates to learn more about the root causes of conflict and proposed solutions. It is also helpful in learning more about a regional initiative and the African Union's goal of becoming conflict-free by 2020.

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