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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL PLENARY COMMITTEE BACKGROUND GUIDE 2018

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2018 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to welcome you to the Economic and Social Council Plenary (ECOSOC). This year's staff are: Directors Stephanie N. Shady (Conference A) and Aiskell Roman (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Zachery Stuebs (Conference A) and Michael Oyakojo (Conference B). Stephanie holds a B.S./B.A from Texas Christian University and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Comparative Politics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Aiskell has a B.A. in Political Science and International Affairs from the University of California at Riverside. She is currently pursuing a law degree and is working for Latin American Perspectives, an academic journal focusing on Latin American politics. Zachery has a B.S. in Computer Science and Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Michael has a multidisciplinary background and holds a MS in Finance & Economic Development and a MPA.

The topics under discussion for Economic and Social Council Plenary are:

1. Strengthening the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
2. Integrating Sustainable Development into Post-Conflict Reconstruction
3. Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

As a principal organ of the United Nations, ECOSOC coordinates the activities of 14 specialized agencies, 13 regional and functional commissions, and over 3,900 civil society actors by commissioning studies and reports, monitoring the implementation of activities and initiatives, and encouraging cooperation and coherence among policy actions. In addition, ECOSOC coordinates funding mechanism and takes the lead role in formulating policy goals and frameworks for short and long-term programs, with particular emphasis on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. To accurately simulate the committee, it will be important to focus on ECOSOC's coordination and policy guidance role, as opposed to the activities carried out by ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies.

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 2018 in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

Two resources, to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Alexander Rudolph (Conference A) and Samantha Winn (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!

Conference A

Stephanie N. Shady, Director
Zachery Stuebs, Assistant Director

Conference B

Aiskell Roman, Director
Michael Oyakojo, Assistant Director



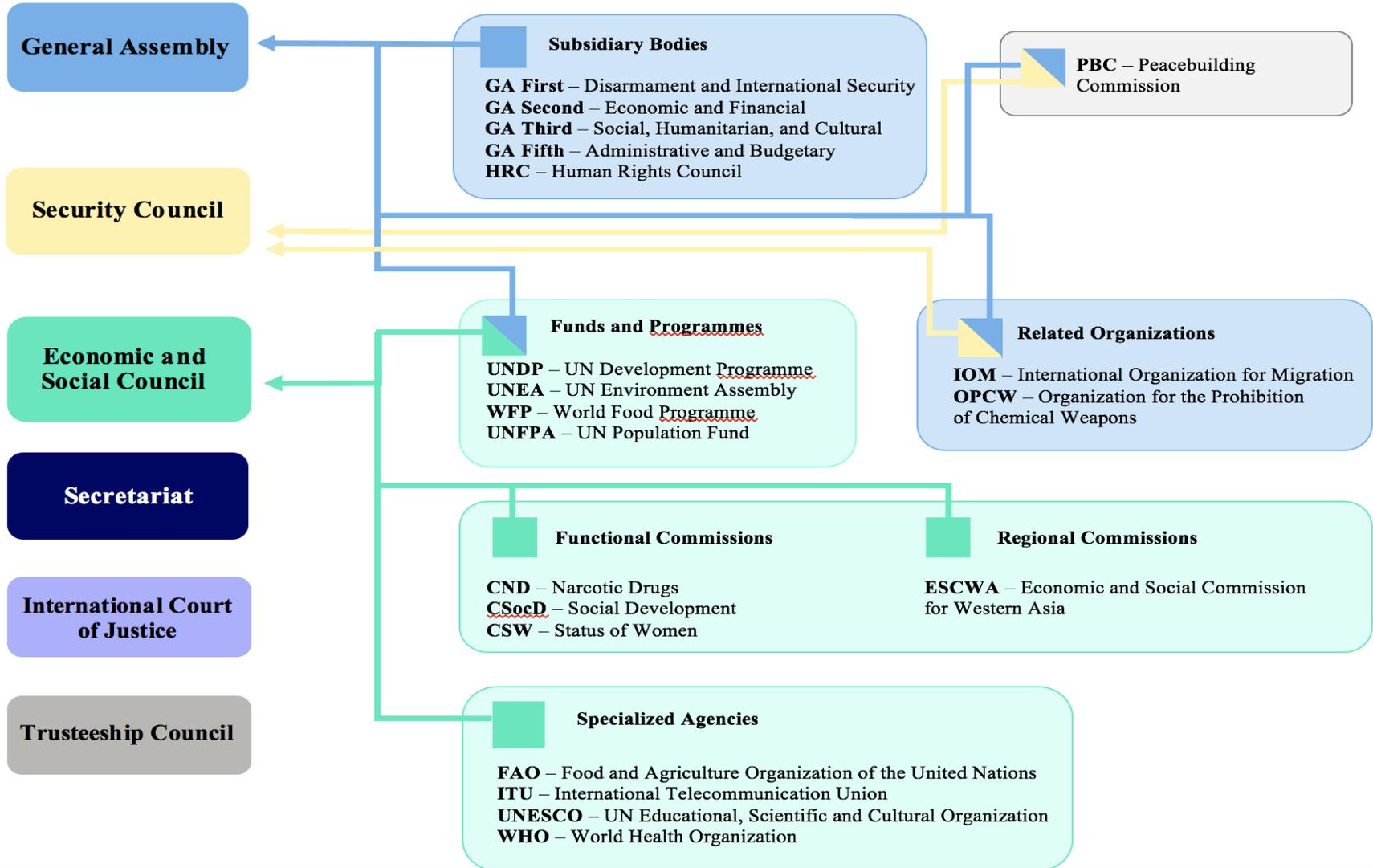
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

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





Abbreviations

AAAA	<i>Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)</i>
AU	African Union
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CMM	Coordination and Management Meetings
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRPD	<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>
CSA	Civil society actor
CSO	Civil society organization
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum
DRD	<i>Declaration on the Right to Development</i>
EAPN	Energy Access Practitioner Network
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
FfD	Financing for development
GHG	Greenhouse gas
Habitat III	Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development
HAS	Humanitarian Affairs Segment
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HLS	High-level Segment
HRC	Human Rights Council
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICESCR	<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IEA	International Energy Agency
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
IO	International organization
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
JPoI	<i>Johannesburg Plan of Implementation</i>
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official development assistance
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PPPs	Public-private partnerships
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
REC	Regional Economic Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEforALL	Sustainable Energy for All
UDHR	<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i>
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development



UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WSC	Women's Refugee Commission
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development



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 the primary body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics; to advise and coordinate the activities of 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 General Assembly resolution 2847(XXVI) (1971) increased ECOSOC membership from 27 to 54 in order to better reflect the UN's economic and geographic diversity.⁵ The General Assembly then adopted resolution 32/197 in 1977 to address the "Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System" and to improve ECOSOC's effectiveness by increasing coordination with its subsidiary bodies.⁶ 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.⁷ This interpretation was reinforced by General Assembly resolution 57/270 in 2002.⁸

The General Assembly implemented additional reforms over the past several years to strengthen the working methods of ECOSOC through resolution 68/1 of 2013.⁹ 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.¹⁰ These reforms reinforce ECOSOC's critical role in preparing, monitoring, implementing, and facilitating global discussions around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹¹

Governance, Structure, and Membership

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 members, each of which is elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.¹² The members are elected according to the geographical distribution of UN Member States to ensure 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, and 13 to Western European and Other Member States.¹³ 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.¹⁴ ECOSOC is

¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X; 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 Rosenthal, *The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*, 2005, p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

¹² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*.

¹³ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Ch. X, Art. 61.1-2.

¹⁴ 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.

governed by a President, Vice-President, and Rapporteur, in tandem with a Bureau consisting of five representatives: the President and four Vice-Presidents.¹⁵ All of these representatives are elected to one-year terms at the outset of each session.¹⁶ The Bureau is responsible for setting ECOSOC's agenda, devising action plans, and collaborating with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹⁷ Its presidency rotates equally among regional blocs.¹⁸

ECOSOC meets twice annually for one organizational session and one substantive session.¹⁹ During organizational sessions, items such as agenda setting and elections to the Bureau take place.²⁰ During substantive sessions, meetings are divided into five segments focusing on separate thematic aspects of the Council's work.²¹ 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).²²
- 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.²³
- Operational Activities for Development Segment: This segment helps ECOSOC guide subsidiary bodies on efficient coordination of funding and policy implementation in accordance with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).²⁴
- Coordination and Management Meetings (CMM): 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.²⁵ The Council works closely with the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) during these meetings.²⁶
- Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS): This segment serves as a thematic forum for discussing operational challenges and normative progress on humanitarian policy.²⁷

ECOSOC oversees 14 subsidiary bodies that hold their own sessions and provide recommendations, draft resolutions, and annual reports to the Council.²⁸ The two most common types of subsidiary bodies are functional and regional commissions, but other subsidiary bodies include standing, ad hoc, expert, and other related bodies and committees.²⁹ Each subsidiary organ has adopted specific methods of work to align with its mandate, and methods are updated regularly.³⁰ Types of subsidiary bodies include:

- 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.”³¹ Functional commissions, in particular, have a responsibility to follow up on the

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Bureau*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992, p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

²¹ Ibid., p. 8.

²² UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UN ECOSOC, *What is OAS*.

²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ UN ECOSOC, *2014 Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2014.

²⁸ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

²⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013, p. 7.

³¹ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

thematic considerations of major UN conferences and take measurable action in accordance with the role of ECOSOC.³²

- **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.³³ As regional commissions target problems and challenges within their geographical scope, members in most cases are Member States from this region.³⁴
- **Expert Bodies Composed of Governmental Experts:** The nine 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.³⁵ These bodies, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, consider issues falling within a 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.³⁶

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.³⁷ ECOSOC may also provide information to and assist the Security Council when necessary.³⁸ 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.³⁹ 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 HLS in 2007.⁴⁰

ECOSOC fulfills its mandate both through its subsidiary bodies and in consultation of a broad range of civil society actors (CSAs).⁴¹ 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.⁴² Consultative status is given by ECOSOC's Committee on NGOs, which was established in 1946 and is comprised of 19 Member States.⁴³ The Committee on NGOs directly reports to ECOSOC on the procedural and substantive matters raised by CSAs.⁴⁴ ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of 1996 defines the principles, eligibility requirements, rules, procedures, obligations, and responsibilities for NGOs and the UN in establishing the consultative relationship.⁴⁵ In the latest report from the June 2017 session, the Committee granted consultative status to 191 NGOs, deferred an additional 162 NGOs for consideration in 2018, and reviewed quadrennial reports.⁴⁶

³² 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.

³³ UN Regional Commissions New York Office, *About*, 2016.

³⁴ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016.

³⁵ UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, *Overview*, 2016.

³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Art. 62-63, 65.

³⁹ 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.

³⁹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*; UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)*, 2006, p. 2.

⁴¹ UN DESA NGO Branch, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ UN DESA, *Committee on NGOs convenes for first session of 2014*, 2014; UN DESA NGO Branch, *The Committee On NGOs*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; UN ECOSOC, *Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, 1996, pp. 53-61.

⁴⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2017 resumed session (E/2017/32 (Part II))*, 2015, pp. 1, 41.

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

Beginning with the Operational Activities for Development Segment from 28 February to 2 March, several 2017 ECOSOC sessions have reflected the Council’s priorities of strengthening humanitarian assistance and strategies for achieving the SDGs by 2030.⁴⁷ From 22-25 May 2017, the Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) met to review the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* (AAAA) on financing sustainable development.⁴⁸ The resulting report of FfD raised concerns about slowing trade flows, environmental disasters, and other phenomena that might hinder development in the short and medium terms, and these concerns were communicated to participants in the HLPF meeting later in the year.⁴⁹ Following the most recent HAS (21-23 June 2017), ECOSOC adopted resolution 2017/14 on “strengthening coordination for humanitarian responses,” which calls for a revitalized and central role for affected Member States as key partners of the international humanitarian assistance network.⁵⁰

From 10-19 July 2017, HLPF met to discuss the theme of “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.”⁵¹ HLPF focused on food security, healthcare, gender equality, infrastructure, and sustainable use of marine resources as means of eradicating poverty, as encompassed by SDGs 1, 3, 5, 9, and 14 respectively.⁵² On 17-20 July 2017, ECOSOC convened its annual HLS with the theme “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges.”⁵³ Drawing upon the earlier work of the May 2017 Integration Segment, the HLS emphasized the interrelatedness of social, political, and economic conditions and their impact on development and called upon the UN, states, and CSAs to refocus their efforts on efforts which support sustainable development, such as education and basic healthcare for a population.⁵⁴ The ministerial declaration from the HLPF and HLS underscored the importance of good governance and the rule of law as necessary conditions to empower individuals to mobilize development initiatives within their communities.⁵⁵

Conclusion

ECOSOC plays a key role in coordinating activities and programs through the expansive UN system for humanitarian, development, and various other issues.⁵⁶ The Council has demonstrated a commitment to mobilizing resources and effort to tackle key priority issues, including the promotion of development and the formation and maintenance of international partnerships.⁵⁷ It has also initiated collaboration across UN entities to ensure political commitment toward a new development framework and the SDGs, which the Secretary-General has called a “paradigm shift” for operations across the UN.⁵⁸ The contributions of the Council, both as a forum for discussion

⁴⁷ UN ECOSOC, *2017 Operational Activities for Development Segment*, 2017.

⁴⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda: The 2017 ECOSOC Forum for Financing Development follow-up*, 2017.

⁴⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (E/FFDF/2017/3)*, 2017, p. 2.

⁵⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2017/14)*, 2017, p. 6.

⁵¹ UN DESA, *High-Level Political Forum 2017*, 2017.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC High-Level Segment: “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges,”* 2017.

⁵⁴ UN ECOSOC, *2017 Integration Segment: Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: What will it take?*, 2017; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC High-Level Segment: “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/64)*, 2017, pp. 1, 11-12.

⁵⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2017 session of the Economic and Social Council on the annual theme “Eradicating poverty in all its form and dimensions through promoting sustainable development expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges” (E/2017/L. 29-E/HLPF/2017L. 2)*, 2017 pp. 1-10.

⁵⁶ Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

⁵⁷ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

⁵⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2016/8)*, 2016, p. 6.

and in providing policy guidance, are significant, and its role will continue to grow in the post-2015 era, which requires clear organizational leadership and strong monitoring mechanisms to assess the progress toward and remaining challenges to achieving the SDGs.⁵⁹

Annotated Bibliography

Charter of the United Nations. (1945). Retrieved 4 October 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/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 4 October 2017 from: https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Handbooks/United_Nations_Handbook-2016-2017.pdf

This is an excellent source for delegates to gain background information on the complex UN system and its main organs. This comprehensive handbook presents detailed information on 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 4 October 2017 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 4 October 2017 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, Economic and Social Council. (2016). *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Report of the Secretary-General (E/2016/8)*. Retrieved 20 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2016/8>

This report by the Secretary-General was submitted at ECOSOC's request to reflect the ECOSOC dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system. It reminds UN entities to reconsider their coordinated roles in the UN development system to ensure that they reflect the paradigmatic shift in UN goals following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Since ECOSOC closely monitors the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandate and its implementation, delegates should consider the tenants of this report and address short, medium, and long-term

⁵⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

strategies in their proposals for sustainable strategies in development and humanitarian assistance.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *ECOSOC High-Level Segment: Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/64)*. Retrieved 5 October 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2017/64>

This report of the Secretary-General from the 2017 HLS session delineates extant challenges to achieving the goals enshrined in the HLS theme of “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges.” Drawing upon several SDGs, this report emphasizes the interrelatedness of human well-being and sustainable development. As delegates consider strategies for addressing the eradication of poverty through coordination of UN agencies, they should read this report to better understand the social prerequisites for growth, such as education, healthcare, and gender parity.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2017/14)* [Resolution]. Adopted on a proposal considered in plenary meeting (E/2017/L.24). Retrieved 8 October 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/RES/2017/14>

This resolution, adopted by the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of ECOSOC in June 2017, reflects the segment’s theme of “Restoring humanity and leaving no one behind: working together to reduce people’s humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.” It highlights several areas where UN entities and their state and non-state partners can improve the efficiency of coordinated humanitarian assistance, such as early identification of disaster risks and timely prioritization of the needs of an affected population. The resolution also draws connections between sustainable development and humanitarian needs, and delegates should look to this resolution as an example of the intrinsic link between these two top ECOSOC priorities as they draft their own resolutions.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2013). *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 4 October 2017 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.

United Nations, General Assembly & Economic and Social Council. (2017). *Repositioning the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda – Ensuring a Better Future for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/124-E/2018/3)*. Retrieved 20 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/72/124>

This report by the Secretary-General was prepared pursuant to the outcome of the 2016 QCPR as outlined in General Assembly resolution 71/243 (2016). It contains the Secretary-General’s vision for the repositioning of the UN development system and was presented to the Economic and Social Council on 5 July 2017 for consideration. As the main body reviewing the implementation of the QCPR mandate, ECOSOC was highly involved in the drafting of the report through the ECOSOC Dialogue and will be influential in the finalization of the report through its Operational Activities Segment. Delegates should refer to this report to gain an understanding of ECOSOC’s long-term aims and consider what short-term policies and coordinating efforts will help ECOSOC achieve these goals.

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I. Strengthening the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

Introduction

The international community is currently facing a great number of humanitarian challenges, including forced displacement, climate-related disasters, food insecurity, and attacks on humanitarian personnel, with a growing gap between the funding needed to meet these challenges and what has been provided.⁶⁰ In 2016, the United Nations (UN) sought to provide humanitarian assistance to 96.2 million people impacted by disasters and conflict, the highest number since the creation of the UN, with 164.2 million people estimated to need aid in 2017.⁶¹ The UN is a significant actor in delivering humanitarian aid and development assistance.⁶² Humanitarian aid is focused on meeting short-term needs and responding to the immediate effects of a crisis, while development assistance promotes longer-term recovery in ways that prevent crisis relapse.⁶³ The coordination of humanitarian assistance increases the flow of information between actors on the ground and ensures harmonized and complementary approaches, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the international response to humanitarian emergencies.⁶⁴

A diverse range of partners have strengthened the ability of the UN to provide assistance to affected populations, but effective coordination and leadership from the UN system is necessary to mobilize available resources toward alleviating the suffering caused by humanitarian emergencies.⁶⁵ While affected Member States have the main responsibility for responding to crises, the UN plays a critical role in coordinating humanitarian assistance to address the needs of affected populations.⁶⁶ The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as the locus of coordination among UN entities, the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), and academia, provides a unique platform through its Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) to discuss current challenges in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance to meet emerging needs, find new solutions for protracted crises, and engage all stakeholders in a concerted manner.⁶⁷

International and Regional Framework

The responsibility of the UN to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance originates in the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which, in Article 1.3, calls for the organization to promote international cooperation on humanitarian matters.⁶⁸ In response to a report from Former Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the UN General Assembly first considered the issue of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance during its 46th session (1991).⁶⁹ During this session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182, which addressed three main areas where additional coordination would help Member States decrease the humanitarian impacts of disasters: disaster prevention, disaster preparedness, and stand-by capacity (which ensures a rapid response from humanitarian actors).⁷⁰ Some of the specific proposals for coordination in resolution 46/182 included a central financing mechanism for disaster relief; a registry of personnel, equipment, supplies, and services belonging to

⁶⁰ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76–E/2017/58)*, 2017, p. 2.

⁶¹ Lattimer & Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, 2017, p. 8; UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76–E/2017/58)*, 2017, p. 2.

⁶² Branczik, *Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance*, 2004.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76–E/2017/58)*, 2017, p. 3.

⁶⁶ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Coordination Leadership*, 2017.

⁶⁷ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*, 2017; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC humanitarian affairs segment*, 2017.

⁶⁸ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 1.3.

⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on the review of the capacity, experience and coordination arrangements in the United Nations System for humanitarian assistance (A/46/568)*, 1991, p. 2; UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance; Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence: joint debate*, 2017.

⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*, 1991, p. 50.

intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and streamlining the process of requesting assistance when a disaster occurs.⁷¹ In addition, the resolution stressed the importance of regional coordination in order to provide an additional channel for rapid aid delivery.⁷² The principles and mechanisms established by this resolution form the cornerstone of the current international humanitarian system and have been built upon through a number of reform processes.⁷³

Concerns about the international community's response to emergencies prompted the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review, which found that conflicting goals of humanitarian organizations, a lack of a global vision for humanitarian assistance, and a shortfall in human capacity remained major barriers to aiding populations affected by crises.⁷⁴ A second major set of reforms was introduced with the 2011 *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Transformative Agenda*.⁷⁵ This agenda from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) sought to improve the leadership of humanitarian response teams, strengthen planning at the national level of countries affected by disasters, and better adapt coordination mechanisms to situational constraints.⁷⁶ The new approach established by the *Transformative Agenda* led to increased coordination between international humanitarian actors, including donors, and faster response times to emerging crises.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the *IASC Transformative Agenda* sought to ensure a consistent yet flexible process for responding to emergencies through the establishment of a humanitarian program cycle consisting of six components: "emergency response preparedness, needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, implementation and monitoring, resource mobilization, and operational peer review and evaluation."⁷⁸ A number of remaining challenges were identified, including improving national-level capacities for disaster response and engaging local actors in emergency response and recovery.⁷⁹ ECOSOC resolution 2015/14, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (2015), proposed solutions to some of these challenges, such as transferring knowledge and technology to states, promoting long-term collaboration between states and IGOs, and increasing access to information and communication technologies in developing countries.⁸⁰

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), found in the 2015 *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, have expanded the international community's approach to the connected elements of sustainable development, peace and security, and humanitarian assistance.⁸¹ During the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from 2000 to 2015, progress was uneven, and the disconnect between the MDGs and the international humanitarian paradigm led to major shortfalls in crisis-affected countries.⁸² Several of the SDGs, including target five of SDG 1 on reducing vulnerabilities to disasters, target five of SDG 11 on reducing deaths and economic impacts of disasters, and SDG 16 on peaceful societies for sustainable development, aim to address states experiencing humanitarian crises.⁸³ The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has noted that the coordination on the implementation of the new international development agenda has improved since the MDGs.⁸⁴

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*, 1991, pp. 51-52.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁷³ UN OCHA, *OCHA on Message: General Assembly resolution 46/182*, 2012, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁴ Adinolfi et al., *Humanitarian Response Review*, 2005, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁵ IASC, *IASC Transformative Agenda - 2012*, 2012, p. 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Krüger et al., *IASC Transformative Agenda: A Review of Reviews and Their Follow-Up*, 2016.

⁷⁸ IASC, *IASC Reference Module for the Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁹ Krüger et al., *IASC Transformative Agenda: A Review of Reviews and Their Follow-Up*, 2016.

⁸⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2015/14)*, 2015, pp. 3, 6.

⁸¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 5, 7.

⁸² UNDP & WBG, *Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs*, 2015, pp. 9-10.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 9, 15, 22, 25.

⁸⁴ UNDP & WBG, *Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs*, pp. 22-23; UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/71/127)*, 2017, p. 32.

In addition, other recent international agreements are important for the achievement of the SDGs.⁸⁵ The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (AAAA)* (2015), adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, recognizes the importance of predictable financing for official development assistance (ODA) and mobilizing adequate resources in order to effectively respond to humanitarian emergencies.⁸⁶ The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015) identified gaps in coordination between international organizations (IOs) and national authorities; it also noted that CSOs, academia, and the private sector were often left out entirely.⁸⁷ Recommendations include creating and improving the capacity of regional mechanisms for rapid response, harmonizing the goals of international and regional financial institutions, and undertaking information sharing on disaster prevention and response.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was held in 2016 in order to strengthen support and improve coordination for disaster relief by harmonizing the post-2015 development agenda and the international humanitarian system.⁸⁹ The summit was attended by representatives from Member States, CSOs, academia, and the private sector.⁹⁰ The participants in the WHS concluded that the coordination of humanitarian assistance would be strengthened by empowering local actors in humanitarian response and decision-making.⁹¹

Role of the International System

The international humanitarian system is a complex network of 450,000 humanitarian workers belonging to over 4,000 organizations, with expenditures of \$25 billion in 2014.⁹² A number of UN bodies collaborate to oversee the coordination of humanitarian assistance, each with different responsibilities.⁹³ Additionally, ECOSOC hosts the annual HAS, where IOs, Member States, CSOs, and the private sector gather to address emerging challenges to strengthening humanitarian assistance coordination and to discuss system-wide policies for humanitarian assistance.⁹⁴ The theme for the 2017 HAS, which occurred from 21 to 23 June 2017, was “Restoring Humanity and Leaving No one Behind: Working together to reduce people’s humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.”⁹⁵ A wide range of issues were discussed, including coordination on famine response, addressing protracted crises, and the links between climate change, disasters, and displacement.⁹⁶ The HAS concluded with recommendations to a broad array of organizations and Member States on strengthening coordination for healthcare, food, gender equality, and other factors, which was adopted as ECOSOC resolution 2017/14.⁹⁷

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was created in 1991 to provide a dedicated office for centralizing the coordination of the diverse number of humanitarian actors active in the international community.⁹⁸ OCHA is led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and mandated to coordinate humanitarian action in response to crises and disasters.⁹⁹ The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) under OCHA is an example of a financing mechanism dedicated to early response, but challenges of balancing the allocation of financing with the needs of each situation remains.¹⁰⁰ The coordination of OCHA’s work is largely carried out by the

⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 10, 22.

⁸⁶ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, pp. 17, 20.

⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015, p. 4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 22.

⁸⁹ UN OCHA, *World Humanitarian Summit*, 2016.

⁹⁰ UN OCHA, *The Agenda for Humanity*, 2017.

⁹¹ UN OCHA, *About the Agenda for Humanity*, 2016.

⁹² Stoddard et al., *The State of the Humanitarian System*, 2015, p. 10.

⁹³ UN OCHA, *Who does what?*.

⁹⁴ UN OCHA, *ECOSOC 2016*, 2017.

⁹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Economic and Social Council Humanitarian Affairs Segment Draft Programme*, 2017.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*; UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2017/14)*, 2017, pp. 8-9.

⁹⁸ UN OCHA, *Who we are*, 2017.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014*, 2014, p. 111; UN OCHA, *CERF at a Glance and Key Publications*, 2017.

IASC, which facilitates the work of UN entities and NGOs, assesses humanitarian need, and arranges field support on a case-by-case basis.¹⁰¹ IGOs and international NGOs, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, participate in coordination at the highest level of the IASC.¹⁰² This includes managing the work of the IASC's subsidiary bodies, which are mandated to develop shared practices, tools, and initiatives to be implemented across the international humanitarian system.¹⁰³ For example, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Women's Refugee Commission (WSC), and the World Food Programme (WFP) lead the IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, which is responsible for issuing guidance on the integration of gender equality within humanitarian responses.¹⁰⁴

In addition, the Cluster Approach was developed to reconcile competing objectives, aid in developing a collective vision for action, and sharing expertise and capacities in sectors led by a designated organization.¹⁰⁵ The IASC is organized in 11 clusters led by one or more UN agencies, which are also the agencies involved in the actual distribution of aid, and arranged by area of expertise, including the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Health cluster, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the Nutrition cluster, and the WFP for the Emergency Telecommunications cluster.¹⁰⁶ Cluster leaders are responsible for providing technical expertise within and across clusters, developing technical tools, and creating standards relevant to their area.¹⁰⁷ OCHA is responsible for leading the humanitarian program cycle process and ensuring that all relevant actors, including IGOs and NGOs, are communicated with and consulted at each step so that actors are operating toward the same goals and with the same information.¹⁰⁸ Humanitarian program cycles are specific to a single crisis and led by a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), who are tasked by the IASC to strengthen coordination on the crisis and examine the successes and challenges encountered during the relief effort.¹⁰⁹ The leading organizations of each cluster cooperate with one another and each HC during the development and review of the humanitarian program cycles in order to determine areas for improvement.¹¹⁰

Improving the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Early Response

An early response by UN actors, CSOs, and donors to unfolding emergencies and sudden deteriorations of unstable situations is crucial in preventing an escalation that could lead to more loss of life.¹¹¹ However, there are significant barriers to the rapid mobilization of resources in the face of a crisis, which decreases the effectiveness of humanitarian response.¹¹² One such barrier is a lack of financial resources; in 2016, the international humanitarian budget was \$27.3 billion, or 60% of the total needed for a full response.¹¹³ Furthermore, although HCTs determine the amount of resources necessary for an adequate response to crises, at-will-based funding models – donors determining where their financial resources are allocated instead of through an impartial process coordinated by a UN agency – continue to be the norm.¹¹⁴ This leads to media attention and donor preferences determining where financial resources go, rather than allocation based on the relative needs, such as food, water, and shelter, of populations affected by crises.¹¹⁵ This is particularly true for conflict-related crises, such as the humanitarian emergency in Syria, which after six months of being declared an emergency in 2013 was only receiving 24% of the necessary funding to address the needs of affected populations, and in October 2017, was 40% funded.¹¹⁶

¹⁰¹ UN OCHA, *Who we are*, 2017.

¹⁰² IASC, *IASC Focal Points*.

¹⁰³ IASC, *Subsidiary Bodies*.

¹⁰⁴ IASC, *IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action*.

¹⁰⁵ UN OCHA, *What is the Cluster Approach?*; Steets et al., *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 Synthesis Report*, 2010, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ UN OCHA, *What is the Cluster Approach?*.

¹⁰⁷ UN OCHA, *Who does what?*.

¹⁰⁸ IASC, *IASC Reference Module for the Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle*, 2015, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ UN OCHA, *What is the Cluster Approach?*.

¹¹¹ Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014*, 2014, p. 82.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82; UN OCHA, *Needs assessment: Overview*.

¹¹⁵ Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014*, 2014, p. 82.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 84; UN OCHA, *Syrian Arab Republic*, 2017.

Another barrier to early response comes from structural obstacles in both national and UN-level early warning procedures and mechanisms.¹¹⁷ An early warning system is a broad term covering both human and technological capabilities for predicting, preparing for, and reacting to potential disasters.¹¹⁸ These include instruments for collecting and analyzing data, procedures for alerting populations vulnerable to an impending disaster, and training on how to react during a disaster.¹¹⁹ Coordination on early warning is essential; for example, WHO delayed the declaration of a health emergency during the 2014 to 2016 West African Ebola outbreak for six months although they had been strongly warned by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) about the potential for an epidemic.¹²⁰ In January 2015, WHO identified several reasons for the slow response to Ebola: the health infrastructure in the affected countries of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone was insufficient to expediently identify Ebola as the cause of the epidemic; the initial cases were not reported to WHO by the Member States involved until it was too late; and a lack of border security allowed the epidemic to quickly spread to neighboring countries.¹²¹ The failure of early coordination, plus a lack of communication between organizations and local authorities, contributed to the 11,315 deaths that occurred by the time the epidemic was declared over.¹²²

Complex and Protracted Emergencies

IASC defines a complex emergency as a humanitarian crisis meeting at least one of three criteria: national capacity to address the emergency is lacking due to conflict; no single agency has the mandate or capacity for a sufficient response; or extensive coordination is required.¹²³ For example, the crisis in Yemen is considered a complex emergency, where violence combined with mass displacement and food insecurity has created challenges for the coordination of a response.¹²⁴ Furthermore, a protracted crisis refers to an emergency lasting for a period greater than eight years.¹²⁵ The *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017* noted that 88% of official humanitarian assistance was spent on protracted crises, although most of that was granted on an annual basis, making it more difficult for humanitarian organizations to maintain consistent support year-to-year.¹²⁶ While these two categories have different criteria, typically complex emergencies take much longer to be adequately addressed compared to more single-dimension crises, and protracted emergencies often involve conflict, food insecurity, and the breakdown of institutions, leading to an overlap between the two categories.¹²⁷

Dialogues at the 2017 HAS addressed several dimensions of strengthening the coordination of the response to common themes in complex and protracted emergencies.¹²⁸ These crises often involve a conflict dimension, and in the past two decades, there have been increasing attacks carried out against humanitarian personnel on missions; there were 13% more humanitarian workers killed and 26% more kidnapped in 2016 compared to the decade before.¹²⁹ The protection of humanitarian personnel requires a high level of coordination among UN entities and parties to the conflict in order to achieve the impartiality necessary to ensure humanitarian assistance is viewed as legitimate by both sides.¹³⁰ To this end, ECOSOC reviewed OCHA's 2011 study *To Stay and Deliver* on strengthening the delivery of coordinated humanitarian aid in high-risk environments and examined methods to implement and build on the report.¹³¹ Since then, OCHA has published a follow-up, *Presence & Proximity: To Stay and Deliver, Five Years On*, containing a variety of system-wide recommendations, including stronger coordination

¹¹⁷ Stoddard et al., *The State of the Humanitarian System*, 2015, pp. 62-63.

¹¹⁸ UNISDR, *Terminology*, 2017.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Stoddard et al., *The State of the Humanitarian System*, 2015, p. 62.

¹²¹ WHO, *Factors that contributed to undetected spread of the Ebola virus and impeded rapid containment*, 2015.

¹²² *Ebola: Mapping the outbreak*, BBC, 2016; Stoddard, *The State of the Humanitarian System*, 2015, p. 64.

¹²³ IASC, *Definition of Complex Emergencies*, 1994, p. 2.

¹²⁴ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76-E/2017/58)*, 2017, p. 2.

¹²⁵ FAO, *Countries in protracted crisis: what are they and why do they deserve special attention?*, 2010, p. 12.

¹²⁶ Lattimer & Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, 2017, p. 57.

¹²⁷ FAO, *Countries in protracted crisis: what are they and why do they deserve special attention?*, 2010, p. 12; Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014*, 2014, p. 81.

¹²⁸ UN OCHA, *ECOSOC 2017*, 2017.

¹²⁹ Hoelscher et al., *Understanding Attacks on Humanitarian Aid Workers*, 2015, p. 3; USAID, *Major attacks on aid workers: Summary statistics (2006-2016)*, 2017.

¹³⁰ UN OCHA, *Thematic Areas: Humanitarian Access*, 2017.

¹³¹ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian assistance operations in high risk environments*, 2017.

of UN agencies while negotiating with armed groups for humanitarian access and safety, as well as supporting NGO security coordination platforms, which are designed to collect and disseminate information on security risks for NGOs.¹³²

In another session, ECOSOC sought to develop a new strategy for providing assistance to the record number of internally displaced persons (IDPs); this vulnerable population has been identified in a number of complex and protracted crises, including in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Sudan.¹³³ In part, the session focused on a lack of defined roles for governments and humanitarian actors, as well as suggestions in OCHA's report *Breaking the Impasse* such as ensuring that states establish clearly delineated responsibilities for government agencies and how they interact with the international humanitarian system.¹³⁴ Likewise, the report noted that there is room for improvement on how the international humanitarian system supports planning and coordination with national institutions on humanitarian assistance in cases of protracted displacement.¹³⁵

The Role of Civil Society and National Institutions

As noted by the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, local CSOs and national institutions are a vital part of humanitarian response, yet they directly receive only 0.3% of the total available financing for humanitarian assistance.¹³⁶ Localization is the process of transferring responsibilities and financing from IGOs and international NGOs to national and local institutions, and has been identified as a priority within the coordination of humanitarian assistance.¹³⁷ In disaster-affected countries, local CSOs and state agencies are often best suited to provide the most immediate, context-appropriate response to emerging crises due to their knowledge of the domestic environment and their physical proximity to crisis-affected areas.¹³⁸ Acknowledging this fact, many stakeholders have agreed to the *Grand Bargain* (2016), which pledges over 50 donor states and organizations to giving 25% of international humanitarian assistance to local and national institutions and CSOs by 2020.¹³⁹

CSOs in the Syrian Arab Republic

Since 2011, hundreds of thousands of Syrians have been killed and 11.1 million more displaced by the Syrian civil war.¹⁴⁰ International aid organizations, such as WFP, have assisted with the provision of humanitarian assistance, but the majority of aid is distributed through a complex network of local actors and structures.¹⁴¹ This environment can be difficult to navigate for IOs, so they use vetting processes to determine which local actors to work with.¹⁴² However, the outcomes of these processes are often not shared among UN agencies and international CSOs, putting a greater burden on local CSOs to get approved in multiple lengthy processes.¹⁴³ Furthermore, while UN agencies and international NGOs receive a set amount of financing for operational costs, most local and national CSOs must negotiate with UN agencies or international NGOs to determine how much funding they receive to pay for overhead costs.¹⁴⁴ For example, in 2014, 11.6% of WFP's budget went to operational costs, whereas in many cases, Syrian CSOs were unable to adequately compensate their staff after exhausting all resources.¹⁴⁵ Several Syrian CSOs have stressed that existing capacity building frameworks were not adequately preparing them to assume full responsibility

¹³² Jackson & Zyck, *Presence & Proximity: To Stay and Deliver, Five Years On*, 2017, pp. 40, 50.

¹³³ UN ECOSOC, *Breaking the impasse: a new approach to addressing protracted internal displacement*, 2017; UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76-E/2017/58)*, 2017, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁴ Kälén & Chapuisat, *Breaking the Impasse: Reducing Protracted Internal Displacement as a Collective Outcome*, 2017, p. 50.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Lattimer & Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, 2017, pp. 69, 74.

¹³⁷ EU, *The localisation of humanitarian aid "Act Global, think Local,"* 2016.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ UN OCHA, *Initiative: Grand Bargain*, 2016.

¹⁴⁰ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76-E/2017/58)*, 2017, p. 4.

¹⁴¹ Els et al., *Funding to national and local humanitarian actors in Syria: Between sub-contracting and partnerships*, 2016, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-16.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 19.

of humanitarian assistance when IGOs and international NGOs eventually withdraw.¹⁴⁶ These groups supported a greater ability to contribute to the discussion of what kinds of training their members should undergo and stronger coordination between UN agencies and local CSOs to explore capacity building opportunities as partners instead of employing generic approaches.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recognized the need to undertake significant reform in the provision of humanitarian assistance in order to meet existing and emerging humanitarian challenges.¹⁴⁸ In order to make resources stretch farther and address complex and protracted crises, the actors responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance can promote effective coordination among UN entities, national governments, CSOs, and local authorities.¹⁴⁹ Through strengthened coordination led by the UN system that also incorporates stakeholders at all levels, the international community can meet the increasing need for humanitarian assistance.¹⁵⁰

Future Research

In pursuit of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance, delegates should consider the following questions: How can the coordination of humanitarian assistance be further strengthened? How should financial resources and personnel be balanced between short-term and long-term responses? What specific coordination challenges do each of the clusters in the Cluster Approach face? How can ECOSOC help to bridge the gap between coordinating bodies and actors on the ground? In what ways can strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance promote the achievement of the SDGs?

Annotated Bibliography

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2010). *Countries in protracted crisis: what are they and why do they deserve special attention?* [Report]. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1683e/i1683e03.pdf>

This report discusses the challenges of protracted crises and the difficulties facing the international humanitarian system in resolving them. As protracted crises receive the majority of humanitarian assistance, learning lessons from these cases will help inform efforts toward the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The case studies presented will be helpful to delegates in identifying shortfalls in coordination, which can provide a basis for action in ECOSOC.

Lattimer, C., & S. Swithern. (2017). *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*. Development Initiatives. Retrieved 24 August 2017 from: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf>

Understanding the current state of the international humanitarian system is vital to knowing how to improve its coordination. This report covers the foremost challenges in providing humanitarian assistance at each stage, from acquiring the necessary funding, to mobilizing NGOs and other actors on the ground to deliver assistance. Delegates will find the combination of statistics and analysis helpful in gaining a thorough understanding of the current international humanitarian environment.

Steets, J., et al. (2010). *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 Synthesis Report*. Retrieved 1 September 2017 from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Cluster%20Approach%20Evaluation%202.pdf>

The Cluster Approach is an important paradigm for the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and this evaluation report identifies the successes and challenges encountered in the first five years of its implementation. The report is helpful in building an overview of how humanitarian

¹⁴⁶ Els et al., *Funding to national and local humanitarian actors in Syria: Between sub-contracting and partnerships*, 2016, p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *One humanity: shared responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (A/70/709)*, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ Lattimer & Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, 2017, p. 9; UN ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2017/14)*, 2017, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Lattimer & Swithern, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, 2017, p. 8.

assistance is coordinated and how actors on opposite sides of the globe can work in tandem to achieve results. It includes a list of recommendations for improvement at the end of the report, many of which are yet to be implemented. Delegates will find this source useful due its analysis of the Cluster Approach prior to the IASC Transformative Agenda and the changes since made.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2017/14)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 29 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/RES/2017/14>

This is the most recent ECOSOC resolution on coordinating humanitarian assistance, and provides an example of how the UN organ can call on a variety of actors to achieve a central goal. It also provides important documents and precedents that form the basis of action on humanitarian coordination, and ideas on how to improve the current international humanitarian system can be drawn from this basis. Delegates should examine this source to see how ECOSOC writes a resolution on this topic.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2016). *One humanity: shared responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (A/70/709)*. Retrieved 19 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/709>

This document helped frame the debate at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit by outlining the five areas for action necessary to end humanitarian crises: political leadership to prevent and end conflicts, uphold the norms that safeguard humanity, leave no one behind, change people's lives – from delivering aid to ending need, and invest in humanity. The report discusses ways to reform the international humanitarian system in order to promote greater coordination and efficacy, including outcome-based coordination to move toward longer-term recovery where appropriate. By focusing on the coordination aspects, delegates will be able to understand the future of humanitarian assistance.

United Nations, General Assembly & United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/76–E/2017/58)*. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2017/58>

This UN Secretary-General report provides an overview of the major humanitarian crises of 2016, as well as the challenges that the international community will face going forward. It also draws linkages between humanitarian assistance and related outcome documents of conferences, including the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Considering these linkages will be pivotal to ensuring that humanitarian assistance is firmly rooted in the vision of global peace and prosperity held in these documents. Delegates should examine the recommendations at the end in order to develop potential approaches to strengthening humanitarian coordination.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (n.d.). *Who does what?* [Website]. Retrieved 29 August 2017 from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/who-does-what>

The international humanitarian system is complicated, having many actors linked to each other in different ways. This website provides a thorough explanation of all the components of OCHA's coordination network and how they work together to prepare and implement an effective crisis response framework. Knowing how the different pieces interact is key to determining how to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance. This website also provides a list of additional resources that contain even finer details on OCHA's inner workings. Delegates will find this useful as they begin to study the different parts of the international humanitarian system to see where improvements can be made.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2016). *About the Agenda for Humanity* [Website]. Retrieved 19 July 2017 from: <http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/agendaforhumanity>

This website provides an in-depth explanation of the Agenda for Humanity, as well as individual Member States' commitments toward improving humanitarian assistance. As with One Humanity: Shared Responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General, not all of the areas of the Agenda for Humanity fall within the scope of the topic, but core responsibilities 3, 4, and 5 represent an important vision for the future of humanitarian assistance. Much of the Agenda focuses on

empowering Member States to break the cycle of recovery and relapse into conflict. This website can help delegates reflect on the basic purposes of humanitarian assistance and how to improve coordination to achieve those aims.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2016). *World Humanitarian Summit* [Website]. Retrieved 28 August 2017 from: <http://agendaforhumanity.org/summit>

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) was a monumental occasion inspired by the SDGs in order to catalyze reform of the international humanitarian system to better meet the needs of populations affected by emergencies. Member States in attendance created a comprehensive list of needs, many of which pertain to the coordination of humanitarian assistance. By exploring this portal, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the unsolved challenges of providing humanitarian assistance through the conference's outcomes, including the Platform for Action, Commitments, and Transformation. Many of the summit's outcomes have not been implemented yet, so delegates may find it useful to support their ideas with concrete steps proposed by the UN as found on this site.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2017). *ECOSOC 2017* [Website]. Retrieved 19 October 2017 from: <https://www.unocha.org/ecosoc-2017>

This website is a portal to the wide variety of topics discussed at the 2017 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment. The overall theme was "Restoring Humanity and Leaving No one Behind: Working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability." Each panel at the event has a corresponding memorandum, often listing reports for further reading or describing exactly what ECOSOC would like to do to address that dimension. While not all topics relate directly to strengthening the coordination of humanitarian affairs, delegates can use this website to gain an understanding of the most current concerns of ECOSOC within the area of humanitarian assistance.

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II. Integrating Sustainable Development into Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Introduction

For over three decades, sustainable development has been a central issue at the United Nations (UN).¹⁵¹ The 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹⁵² The concept of sustainable development acknowledges the limited nature of the resources required to meet unlimited needs.¹⁵³ Conflict poses a great threat to sustainable development, as it adversely impacts the ability of institutions and individuals to access resources.¹⁵⁴ In addition, conflict destroys resources that should be used for social and economic development.¹⁵⁵ The economic legacy of conflict includes loss of assets, disruption in productive economic activities, capital flight, and weak business climates for private sector investment.¹⁵⁶ In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide reduced gross domestic product per capita by 25% to 30% and resulted in the death of 10% of Rwandan citizens.¹⁵⁷ In 2001, 60% of the Rwandan population continued to live in poverty and 42% lacked access to food and basic amenities.¹⁵⁸ The combined economic and human cost of conflict is devastating.¹⁵⁹ Hence, effective reconstruction planning following a conflict should recognize local challenges and embrace inclusive solutions.¹⁶⁰ Economic growth and shared prosperity must be inclusive and environmentally sound to adequately meet the needs of both the present and future generations in a sustainable manner.¹⁶¹

Post-conflict reconstruction refers to the restoration of basic services and the rebuilding of infrastructure that is critical for the revival of economic activities that facilitate a return to pre-conflict life.¹⁶² It is a dynamic and multi-faceted process that involves distributing relief materials like food, medication, and shelter to victims of conflicts.¹⁶³ Also, post-conflict reconstruction requires rebuilding physical infrastructure to restore basic services; law and order; social services, such as the reopening of schools to children and postal and telecommunication services; and economic rehabilitation and revitalization to return the communities and individuals to their pre-conflict conditions.¹⁶⁴ Post-conflict reconstruction is a relatively long and challenging task and it varies across communities, countries, and regions.¹⁶⁵ Economic welfare, political institutional stability, and social inclusion are essential for effective post-conflict reconstruction efforts.¹⁶⁶ It is essential to integrate sustainable development into post-conflict reconstruction to prevent social disparities and inequality in access to resources, which could otherwise truncate peacebuilding efforts, impede development, and return the incidence of violence and conflict.¹⁶⁷ Poverty, economic and social inequalities, unemployment, political oppression, poor governance, corruption, and the mismanagement of public resources are some of the main causes or precursors to civil unrest, violence, and conflict.¹⁶⁸ The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is instrumental in fostering partnerships, coordinating humanitarian activities, and integrating sustainable development into post-conflict reconstruction efforts for lasting peace.¹⁶⁹

¹⁵¹ UN WCED, *Our Common Future (Brundtland Report) (A/42/427)*, 1987, p. 18.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ UNDP BCPR, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, 2008, p. 22.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Panic, *Reconstruction, Development and Sustainable Peace: A Unified Programme for Post-Conflict Countries*, 2005, p. 11.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ World Bank, *Sustainable Development Overview*, 2017.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Panic, *Reconstruction, Development and Sustainable Peace: A Unified Programme for Post-Conflict Countries*, 2005, pp. 11-12.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ UN DESA Development Account, *Development Account Projects*, 2017.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Promoting Sustainable Development*, 2017.

International and Regional Framework

Articles 3, 5, 7, 8, and 11 of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) outlined the commitments of the UN to peace, justice, and strong institutions.¹⁷⁰ The 1959 *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* condemned any form of discriminatory practices, cruelty, neglect, and exploitation that could interfere with the development of a child.¹⁷¹ In 1965, the first principle in the *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between People* reiterated the need for young people to embrace the spirit of peace, freedom, justice, and mutual respect for economic and social development.¹⁷² Thus, the role of youth is critical for promoting conflict prevention and successful post-conflict reconstruction efforts.¹⁷³

Moreover, the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) recognized the right of everyone to a peaceful and free society with equal rights for women and men without being deprived of the necessary resources for subsistence.¹⁷⁴ In 1975, the *Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind* encouraged Member States to utilize their scientific and technological innovations to strengthen peace and development.¹⁷⁵ This is similar to the 1978 *Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace*, with its focus on promoting sustainable development for current and future generations.¹⁷⁶ Gender equality and the significant role of women to international peace, economic, civil, political, and social affairs of society was outlined in the 1982 *Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation*.¹⁷⁷ In a related manner, individuals' collective right to social, economic, and cultural development was highlighted in the 1986 *Declaration on the Right to Development* (DRD).¹⁷⁸ In this document, Member States are encouraged to strengthen international peace and security through the appropriate and sustainable use of resources for post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable development.¹⁷⁹

Similarly, Article 11 of the 2006 *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) mandated Member States to ensure the safety and protection for persons with disabilities in the event of armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies.¹⁸⁰ Also, Articles 15 and 16 of the same Convention centered on the freedom from degrading treatment, torture, abuse, violence, and exploitation for persons with disabilities.¹⁸¹ In 2013, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 22/16 on the “Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Situations” to identify the problems preventing the enforcement of human rights in post-conflict situations and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.¹⁸² These challenges include racial discrimination, xenophobia, growing inequalities, a lack of accountability, and respect for the rule of law.¹⁸³

The *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000) set the agenda for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were succeeded in 2015 by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁸⁴ SDGs 16 and 17 focus on building peaceful and inclusive societies as well as fostering local, national, regional, and global partnerships for the implementation of sustainable development, including post-conflict reconstruction efforts in conflict-impacted

¹⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A (III)), 1948, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (A/RES/1386 (XIV)), 1959.

¹⁷² UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples* (A/RES/2037 (XX)), 1965, pp. 40-41.

¹⁷³ UN DPI, *Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world for generations to come - UN chief*, 2017.

¹⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (A/RES/2200 (XXI)), 1966.

¹⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Use of Scientific and Technological Progress in the Interests of Peace and for the Benefit of Mankind* (A/RES/3384 (XXX)), 1975, p. 86.

¹⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace* (A/RES/33/73), 1978, pp. 55-56.

¹⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation* (A/RES/37/63), 1982, pp. 194-195.

¹⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Right to Development* (A/RES/41/128), 1986, pp. 186-187.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (A/RES/61/106), 2006, p. 10.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁸² UN HRC, *Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Situations* (A/HRC/RES/22/16), 2013, p. 1.

¹⁸³ UN Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General: D. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights*, 2016.

¹⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (A/RES/55/2), 2000.

countries.¹⁸⁵ SDG 17 highlights the UN’s readiness to partner with the international community for the implementation of the SDGs and the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies in post-conflict countries.¹⁸⁶

Furthermore, the 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* (AAAA) provided a strong global framework for the financing and implementation of the SDGs.¹⁸⁷ In addition, the AAAA recognized the importance of adequate financing and investment in resilient and sustainable infrastructure, ecosystem preservation, and the “promot[ion] of peaceful and inclusive societies for achieving sustainable development.”¹⁸⁸ The AAAA acknowledged potential limitations of the UN Peacebuilding Fund and underlined the negative effects of conflicts on individuals and society.¹⁸⁹ The document encouraged Member States to ensure adequate funding of the Peacebuilding Fund for the sake of strong economic, environmentally-friendly, and socially-inclusive institutions.¹⁹⁰

Role of the International System

International partnerships and global collaborations are necessary for effective post-conflict reconstruction.¹⁹¹ In 2000, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan published a report entitled “*We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*.”¹⁹² His findings focused on the importance of peacebuilding operations, post-conflict rebuilding, efficient resource management, and sustainable development.¹⁹³ The 2009 report of the Secretary-General on “Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict” reiterated challenges encountered by post-conflict countries and the international community immediately after conflicts.¹⁹⁴

For more than six decades, ECOSOC has been at the forefront of coordinating peacebuilding efforts and fostering partnerships to promote economic prosperity and sustainable development.¹⁹⁵ Social, environmental, and economic development are integral to ECOSOC’s activities on sustainable development.¹⁹⁶ ECOSOC serves as a hub for knowledge sharing and learning among development partners; ECOSOC also coordinates the activities of UN specialized agencies to achieve the SDGs.¹⁹⁷ In 2006, the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflict highlighted the root causes of conflicts and made recommendations for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Guinea-Bissau, Burundi and other African post-conflict countries.¹⁹⁸ ECOSOC and the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) organized a joint meeting in 2016 on the intersection of sustainable peace and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, with emphasis on the need for an integrated and holistic approach by the UN system and strategies for the execution of the 2030 Agenda in conflict-affected countries.¹⁹⁹ The PBC is an intergovernmental advisory body that provides actionable plans and strategies on peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery, and reconstruction to return conflict-affected communities and individuals to the path of inclusive growth and sustainable development.²⁰⁰

¹⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 26.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, pp. 1-8.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 35.

¹⁹² Annan, “*We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century (Millennium Report of the Secretary-General)*,” 2000, pp. 5-7.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881)*, 2009, pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Promoting Sustainable Development*, 2017.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ UN DESA OESC, *ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflict: The Silent Avant-Garde*, 2006.

¹⁹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace*, 2016.

²⁰⁰ UN PBC, *Mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission*, 2017; UN PBC, *United Nations Peacebuilding Commission*, 2017.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) works with governments at all levels in 170 countries on development, crisis prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction.²⁰¹ UNDP's risk reduction and recovery programs have been instrumental in lowering the risk of armed conflicts while accelerating post-conflict recovery efforts.²⁰² UNDP and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) assist in the creation of national infrastructures for sustainable peace, including frameworks, strategies, institutions, mechanisms, resources, and personnel skills for conflict resolution in post-conflict countries.²⁰³ The UNDP-led Justice and Confidence Centers were instrumental in combating ethnic polarization and coordinating community-level peace agreements in South Sudan.²⁰⁴ Additionally, 450,000 South Sudanese women have benefitted from UNDP-sponsored maternal health services.²⁰⁵

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) provides guidance in the implementation of environmentally-friendly policies and practices for Member States.²⁰⁶ UNEP has responded to disasters and conflicts in Japan, Liberia, Rwanda, Iraq, Haiti, Ukraine, South Sudan, and other countries.²⁰⁷ In Afghanistan, prolonged conflict and natural disasters depleted the natural environment; in conjunction with the Afghan government, UNEP conducted post-conflict environmental assessments to help rehabilitate and restore the ecosystem.²⁰⁸ In South Sudan, UNEP has been actively involved in peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery, and sustainable development activities.²⁰⁹ For the 2017 World Environment Day, UNEP championed a tree-planting campaign to promote sustainable natural resources management and the environment in South Sudan.²¹⁰

Regionally, the African Union (AU) and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have been deeply engaged in the restoration of peace and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in conflict-affected countries.²¹¹ The AU implemented Quick Impact Projects in South Sudan, Liberia, the Comoros, and Cote d'Ivoire to facilitate post-conflict reconstruction efforts for sustainable development.²¹² Civil society also provides tremendous assistance in post-conflict situations.²¹³ Non-governmental organization (NGO) participation has been essential to raise funds and mobilize technical and human resources for the distribution of relief materials and the provision of health and other basic services in conflict-torn communities.²¹⁴ Development efforts in early post-conflict situations are often more difficult as a result of weak or ineffective institutions.²¹⁵ NGOs have effectively partnered with international donors and Member States to rebuild after conflicts.²¹⁶ In 2000, NGOs helped post-conflict Sierra Leone reintegrate more than 76,000 ex-combatants, including 6,000 children.²¹⁷ The ex-combatants were trained in skills for immediate employment, which provided a foundation for successful post-conflict reconstruction efforts.²¹⁸ For 23 years, the UN partnered with NGOs in Afghanistan on emergency relief efforts to curtail the humanitarian crisis.²¹⁹ Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction efforts of infrastructure and shelter rebuilding, reinstatement of education and health services, resettlement, institutional capacity building, and landmine detonations were coordinated by UN agencies, NGOs, and international organizations.²²⁰

²⁰¹ UNDP, *About us*, 2017.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*; UN DESA, *Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries*.

²⁰⁴ UNDP, *Response to the crisis in South Sudan*, 2017.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ UNEP, *What we do*, 2017.

²⁰⁷ UNEP, *Disasters and conflicts*, 2017.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ AU, *African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AU PCRD)*, 2015.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ UN DESA & UNDP, *The Challenges of Restoring Governance in Crisis and Post-Conflict Countries*, 2007, p. xiii.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²²⁰ UN DESA & UNDP, *The Challenges of Restoring Governance in Crisis and Post-Conflict Countries*, 2007.

Sustainable and Inclusive Strategies for Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Resource Management

The sustainable management of resources enhances post-conflict reconstruction efforts by ensuring that resources are efficiently allocated, utilized, preserved, and recycled in a sustainable manner.²²¹ Sustainable resource management is essential in guaranteeing that current and future needs are met.²²² Much like unsustainable human practices, conflicts and wars are devastating to natural resources.²²³ Socio-economic inequality and disparity in access to natural resources can create a significant risk of renewed violent conflicts.²²⁴ Competition over natural resources, such as gold, diamond, crude oil, and timber, is also a common cause of conflict.²²⁵ Accordingly, sustainable resource management is critical for successful post-conflict reconstruction efforts and the achievement of the SDGs.²²⁶ SDGs 6, 14, and 15 are centered on the sustainable resource management of ecosystems.²²⁷ UN DESA has recommended that regulatory agencies enact and enforce regulations to promote the sustainable management of natural resources in post-conflict areas.²²⁸ Sustainable resource management fosters economic prosperity and peaceful societies.²²⁹

Building Inclusive Processes

Inclusive governance processes are critical to both post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable development.²³⁰ Inclusive processes promote the participation of stakeholders across society, including traditionally marginalized groups such as youth and women.²³¹ Building inclusive processes helps to generate public support, build trust among different communities, and legitimize the post-conflict reconstruction process for lasting peace and sustainable development.²³² Member States and policymakers at all levels are encouraged to engage young people and women for sustainable peace and the successful achievement for the SDGs.²³³ Post-conflict reconstruction requires effective strategy, leadership, and greater inclusion of underrepresented members of society.²³⁴ The participation of women is particularly critical, as their input can help to identify and address the root causes of conflicts.²³⁵ As key stakeholders in post-conflict societies, women and girls play a vital role in peacebuilding and sustainable planning.²³⁶

In addition, young people have shown to be important agents of change and critical stakeholders in enhancing sustainable peace and post-conflict reconstruction.²³⁷ For example, youth engagement in the Justice and Security Dialogue program anchored by the United States Institute of Peace led to an 80% reduction in violence after 10 years of civil war in the Morang district of Southeast Nepal.²³⁸ Youth leaders helped to restore the rule of law and enhance public trust for post-conflict reconstruction efforts.²³⁹ The post-conflict reconstruction program in Nepal has

²²¹ UN WCED, *Our Common Future (Brundtland Report) (A/42/427)*, 1987, p. 24.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ Ernstorfer et al., *Governance Strategies for Post Conflict Reconstruction, Sustainable Peace and Development*, 2007, pp. 20-21.

²²⁴ UNDP BCPR, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, 2008, p. 20.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 18, 23-25.

²²⁸ Ernstorfer et al., *Governance Strategies for Post Conflict Reconstruction, Sustainable Peace and Development*, 2007, pp. 20-21.

²²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 23-24.

²³⁰ UNDP BCPR, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, 2008, p. xviii.

²³¹ Rausch & Luu, *Inclusive Peace Processes Are Key to Ending Violent Conflict*, 2017.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ UN DPI, *Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world for generations to come - UN chief*, 2017.

²³⁴ Greenberg & Zuckerman, *The Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Challenges in Development Aid*, 2009, p. 4.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

²³⁷ UN DPI, *Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world for generations to come - UN chief*, 2017.

²³⁸ Rausch & Luu, *Inclusive Peace Processes Are Key to Ending Violent Conflict*, 2017.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

been replicated in Yemen, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Iran, and Tunisia.²⁴⁰ The PBC further recognizes that youth employment and empowerment are an integral part of the peacebuilding process.²⁴¹ ECOSOC has been at the forefront of creating effective partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders for job creation and youth empowerment to sustain peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.²⁴²

Capacity Building for Strong Institutions and Communities

Conflict-affected areas are often characterized by weak public institutions.²⁴³ During early post-conflict reconstruction efforts, local participation and capacity-building support are imperative to promote strong institutions.²⁴⁴ Effective strategizing also promotes sustainable peace in early post-conflict situations.²⁴⁵ UNDP has focused on empowering local institutions to manage issues of access to natural resources for farming, grazing, and fishing.²⁴⁶ Also, well-supported public institutions are better equipped to restore basic health, economic, and transportation services, which are essential to sustaining peace in the early post-conflict time period.²⁴⁷

According to UNDP, effective post-conflict recovery strategies restore employment and income growth for vulnerable individuals affected by conflict.²⁴⁸ Fast-track training programs and low-skill jobs have proven to be effective in creating temporary employment for youth and ex-combatants.²⁴⁹ In Liberia, 40,000 people worked as laborers on UNDP-led road projects in during a period of post-conflict reconstruction.²⁵⁰ Strengthening institutions and building capacity will speed up post-conflict reconstruction efforts and assist in incorporating sustainable development into such efforts.²⁵¹

Conclusion

In light of the 2030 Agenda, sustainable development will continue to be a priority of the UN system for many years to come.²⁵² Integrating sustainable development into post-conflict reconstruction is an effective strategy for lasting peace, rapid post-conflict recovery, and social and economic growth.²⁵³ The involvement of youth and women is critical for successful peacebuilding and the achievement of SDGs.²⁵⁴ Also, youth empowerment and job creation for vulnerable people in post-conflict communities promote peace and stability.²⁵⁵ Sustainable resources management, inclusive processes, and capacity building for strong institutions are important for the successful integration of sustainable development practices for post-conflict reconstruction.²⁵⁶

²⁴⁰ Rausch & Luu, *Inclusive Peace Processes Are Key to Ending Violent Conflict*, 2017.

²⁴¹ UN DPI, *Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world for generations to come - UN chief*, 2017.

²⁴² *Ibid.*; UN ECOSOC, *Joint event of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission: Partnerships for job creation for young people in countries emerging from conflict*, 2012.

²⁴³ UNDP BCPR, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, 2008, p. 83.

²⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881)*, 2009, pp. 1-2.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ UNDP BCPR, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, 2008, p. 83.

²⁴⁷ Panic, *Reconstruction, Development and Sustainable Peace: A Unified Programme for Post-Conflict Countries*, 2005, p. 11.

²⁴⁸ UNDP BCPR, *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*, 2008, p. 83.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 71.

²⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881)*, 2009, pp. 1-2.

²⁵² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 1.

²⁵³ UN DESA Development Account, *Development Account Projects*, 2017.

²⁵⁴ UN DPI, *Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world for generations to come - UN chief*, 2017.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ UN DESA Development Account, *Development Account Projects*, 2017.

Further Research

How can Member States more effectively integrate sustainable development practices into post-conflict reconstruction? What other strategies can ECOSOC adopt to support post-conflict reconstruction activities? What capacity-building efforts can be adopted to promote sustainable resource management in post-conflict reconstruction? What strategies can ECOSOC use to effectively engage civil society and the private sector in post-conflict reconstruction? How can ECOSOC help increase the participation of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts?

Annotated Bibliography

Ernstorfer, A., et al. (2007). *Governance Strategies for Post Conflict Reconstruction, Sustainable Peace and Development*. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved 16 August 2017 from: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan028332.pdf>

This report provides insights into governance challenges that are associated with peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, and economic recovery for sustainable development. Post-conflict challenges faced by conflict-torn countries are difficult, complex, and different depending on historical, social, economic, geographic, and political contexts. A mix of best practices, strategies, policies, and management tools are vital to successful peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts for sustainable development. Peaceful collaborations and partnerships on public policy and development issues among different stakeholders are important for success.

Rausch, C., & T. Luu. (2017). *Inclusive Peace Processes Are Key to Ending Violent Conflict*. United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved 25 October 2017 from: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2017/05/inclusive-peace-processes-are-key-ending-violent-conflict>

This source reiterates the importance of building inclusive processes and participatory approaches to end conflict and violence for sustainable peace. Violence and conflict pose great challenges to peace, security, and sustainable development. Implementation will differ for various societies, communities, countries, and regions. Hence, peacebuilders create different paths and adopt strategies to ensure the participation of a wide range of different stakeholders for effective peacebuilding efforts for sustainable peace.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development. (n.d.). *Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries* [Guidance Note]. Retrieved 17 August 2017 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/guidancenotes.pdf>

This report provides guidance on how to achieve peacebuilding and sustainable development in post-conflict countries. The report centers on integrating peacebuilding and sustainable development into existing national planning and development strategies for synergy and stakeholder supports. Understanding the causes of conflicts, conflict resolution management, capacity building, and prioritizing policy reforms are essential for sustainable development in post-conflict economies. Building stakeholders' participation and inclusive processes are vital to successful post-conflict reconstruction and recovery in conflict-affected countries.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination. (2006). *ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflict: The Silent Avant-Garde* [Report]. Retrieved 18 August 2017 from: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/final_ahag_book_of_ecosoc.pdf

This report examines the role of ECOSOC's Ad Hoc Advisory Groups in identifying the root causes of conflicts. The report recommends comprehensive strategies for the promotion of peace for sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, and other African countries emerging from conflict. It highlights long-term economic programs and development strategies to help conflict-torn countries in their socio-economic stability and return them to path of economic recovery and prosperity. These findings and recommendations provide sound frameworks for crisis prevention and post-conflict recovery operations. The report further outlines lessons learned for effective peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2017, August 11). *Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world for generations to come - UN Chief* [News Article]. Retrieved 24 October 2017 from: http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57347#.We_p7FtSzIU

This article covers the 2017 International Youth Day and the UN system's commitment to youth inclusion in peacebuilding. Empowered youth have played positive roles in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction. For this event, the UN system celebrated the innovative contributions of youth to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In light of this article, policymakers and governments should continue to engage young people in the implementation of sustainable development and peacebuilding programs.

United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. (2008). *Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*. Retrieved 17 August 2017 from:

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/turkey/docs/Publications/PovRed/Post_Conflict_Economic_Recovery_Report.pdf

This report discusses the importance and challenges of post-conflict economic recovery. Violence and conflict have adverse impacts on resources, institutions, and assets. Strong institutions, human capital development, investment in infrastructure, job creation, and efficient resource utilization are vital to achieving post-conflict economic recovery. In addition, sound macroeconomic framework and functioning government are imperative for sustainable development in post-conflict reconstruction.

United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. (2011). *Women's Social, Economic and Political Empowerment in Crisis Prevention and Recovery 2010 Report*. Retrieved 22 August 2017 from: <http://www.bi.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/undp-cpr-women-social-economic-political-empower-2010-report-2011-05.pdf>

This report examines the significant role of women in the advancement of peace and security, crisis prevention, and economic recovery. Women and girls are frequently underrepresented in political, economic, and social leadership due to discriminatory practices and regulations. Judicial and structural reforms are imperative to remove barriers and realize the full potential of women in society. This report suggests that building capacity among women leaders can help enhance the participation of women in civic, social, and economic development processes.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2012). *Joint Event of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission: Partnerships for job creation for young people in countries emerging from conflict* [Website]. Retrieved 17 August 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/peacebuildingcommissionevent.shtml>

This website contains information, presentations, and press releases for the joint event hosted by ECOSOC and the UN Peacebuilding Commission on how to partner and collaborate on job creation for youth in post-conflict countries. Stakeholders shared diverse perspectives on the importance of collaboration and strategies for job creation youths in post-conflict Member States. Unemployment, underemployment, and a lack of opportunities could lead youth to violence, crime, and other illegal activities. Job creation has proven to be an effective strategy for peacebuilding in conflict-affected states.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 26 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

The source outlines the UN General Assembly's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets form the basis for the UN's action plans and strategies for the next 15 years on critical areas for the planet and humanity. The document builds on the results of MDGs. SDG 16 focus on building peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, while SDG 17 reiterates the importance of global partnerships and international collaboration among various development partners for the achievement of sustainable development, including in post-conflict countries.

United Nations, Peacebuilding Commission. (2017). *United Nations Peacebuilding Commission* [Website]. Retrieved 16 August 2017 from: <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/index.asp>

This website has information on the mandate, operations, programs, and activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. It contains important documents of the Peacebuilding Commission, General Assembly, Security Council, and ECOSOC; statements of the Secretary-General and Peacebuilding Commission Chair; and reports of the Annual Peacebuilding Commission. As an intergovernmental advisory body, its recommendations provide guidance and form the basis of actions for the UN's peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery operations. The post-conflict reconstruction efforts of PBC are focused on building inclusive processes, lasting peace, and sustainable development.

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III. Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

“Energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, increased social equity, and an environment that allows the world to thrive.”²⁵⁷

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recognizes the importance of energy for sustainable development and poverty eradication.²⁵⁸ The concept of sustainable development was defined in the UN World Commission on Environment and Development’s (WCED) 1987 publication *Our Common Future*.²⁵⁹ This report defined sustainable development as development that meets current global needs without hindering the ability of future generations to meet their own; it further recognized the importance of environmental protection in socio-economic development.²⁶⁰ Through the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7, “Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All,” the global community commits to increasing investment in and accessibility to reliable and sustainable energy infrastructure.²⁶¹

With a global population of 7 billion people projected to increase to 9 billion people by 2050, adopting sustainable energy practices is imperative to ensure that all sectors of society experience the social and economy benefits that energy can provide.²⁶² With approximately 40% of the global population still relying on non-renewable energy sources like coal, fossil fuels, and natural gas, renewable sources of energy play a key role in poverty eradication.²⁶³ Sustainable energy access can increase the standard of living of modern societies through improved health, education, and household conditions, as well as through productivity powered by manufacturing and technology revolutions.²⁶⁴ SDG 7 and its targets were adopted to ensure that by 2030, the global population will enjoy universal “access to affordable, reliable and modern” energy services, with substantial new sources of renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.²⁶⁵

The global energy system consists of a supply sector that converts energy into useful services.²⁶⁶ The energy supply sector involves the production and sale of energy through renewable or non-renewable methods.²⁶⁷ Renewable sources of energy have the potential to promote safer and cleaner energy services that are more efficient and affordable to all segments of society.²⁶⁸ Energy services allow converted energy to be used for household and commercial activities such as electricity, refrigeration, heating, and transportation.²⁶⁹ More than 2.9 billion people lack access to modern energy sources, especially for cooking and heating, while 1.1 billion people do not have access to electricity.²⁷⁰ Increasing renewable sources of energy will promote greater accessibility, reliability, and affordability of energy services for the world’s poorest communities.²⁷¹

²⁵⁷ Ban, *Remarks at Center for Global Development event on “Delivering Sustainable Energy for All: Opportunities at Rio+20”*, 2012.

²⁵⁸ UN ECOSOC, *President’s Summary of 2017 High-level political forum on sustainable development*, 2017, pp. 3-9.

²⁵⁹ UN WCED, *Our Common Future (Brundtland Report) (A/42/427)*, 1987, p. 54.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ UN ECOSOC, *President’s Summary of 2017 High-level political forum on sustainable development*, 2017, pp. 3-9.

²⁶² UN-Energy, *Energy: A Brief Discussion on Goals, Targets and Indicators*, 2014, p. 1.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, p. 4.

²⁶⁵ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2017.

²⁶⁶ UNDP, *World Energy Assessment: Energy and the challenge of sustainability*, 2000, p. 4.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ UN-Energy, *Energy: A Brief Discussion on Goals, Targets and Indicators*, 2014, p. 1.

²⁶⁹ UNDP, *World Energy Assessment: Energy and the challenge of sustainability*, 2000, p. 4.

²⁷⁰ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, p. 4.

²⁷¹ UN-Energy, *Energy: A Brief Discussion on Goals, Targets and Indicators*, 2014, pp. 3-6.

International and Regional Framework

The relationship between sustainable development and energy gained momentum in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).²⁷² UNCED adopted *Agenda 21* to highlight the importance of making energy production and consumption sustainable in order to protect human health and environmental well-being.²⁷³ Greater emphasis was given to the importance of energy for development during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002.²⁷⁴ Its plan of action, the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)*, called for the diversification of energy sources to increase access to renewable sources of energy and increase efficiency, affordability, and accessibility for social and economic development.²⁷⁵ Thus, the JPOI recognized that energy services play an essential role in poverty alleviation, and that the diversification of energy resources is necessary to meet the global growing energy demand.²⁷⁶ The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, recognized energy as a priority for sustainable development.²⁷⁷ In the Rio+20 outcome document, *The Future We Want*, Member States committed to improving the implementation of renewable sources of energy policies to promote the use and affordability of energy technologies and services in order to combat climate change and eradicate poverty.²⁷⁸

Adopted in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a landmark framework for substantially improving the lives of the world's poor through global efforts to eradicate poverty, improve health, reduce social and economic inequalities, and promote environmental sustainability.²⁷⁹ As the MDGs' 2015 deadline approached, Member States adopted 17 new goals with 163 targets in General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 2015, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.²⁸⁰ This framework outlined new global commitments toward poverty eradication, environmental protection, peace, and justice.²⁸¹ Energy was recognized as a main priority and given its own goal (SDG 7), targets, and indicators to “ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services” by 2030.²⁸² Energy also plays an essential role in achieving other goals and targets such as SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 13 (climate action).²⁸³ Energy is particularly important for SDGs 11, 12, and 13; with an increasing number of people living in cities, sustainable energy sources and services are essential to ensure safe and healthy cities with responsible production and consumption patterns that help reduce waste and pollution and in turn minimize the carbon footprint in order to mitigate climate change.²⁸⁴

In 2015, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development achieved historic support for financing sustainable development in its outcome agreement, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)*, which stated that stakeholders should increase investment for clean energy technologies and improve its affordability to bring about environmental and development benefits.²⁸⁵ AAAA recognized the importance of public-private partnerships as a financing mechanism to support efforts to achieve the SDGs.²⁸⁶ The *Paris Agreement*, adopted during the Twenty-First Conference of the Parties (COP) to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* in 2015, recognized the role of clean energy technologies as an integral part of combating the risks of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.²⁸⁷ Finally, the *New Urban Agenda (2016)* adopted at the

²⁷² UN DESA, *Energy*, 2017.

²⁷³ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

²⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Energy*, 2017.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ UN WSSD, *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, 2002, pp. 5-6.

²⁷⁷ UN DESA, *Energy*, 2017.

²⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, pp. 24-25.

²⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000.

²⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ McCollum et al., *SDG7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All*, 2017, p. 130.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, pp. 37-38.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

²⁸⁷ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) established that access to clean and reliable energy is a requirement for sustainable urban development.²⁸⁸

Role of the International System

Over the years, the UN General Assembly has encouraged Member States to ensure that energy resources are affordable, safe, and available to all.²⁸⁹ General Assembly resolution 60/199 of 2005, titled “Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005,” reaffirmed the importance of implementing the JPoI and urged Member States to invest in, support, and adopt clean energy technologies.²⁹⁰ General Assembly resolution 62/197 of 2007 on the “Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy” further emphasized the role of sustainable energy for poverty eradication and encouraged the international community to provide financial, technological, and capacity-building support to adopt and produce renewable energy.²⁹¹ Greater international awareness was given to sustainable energy and its importance for development in General Assembly resolution 65/151 of 2011, which declared 2012 as the “International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.”²⁹² To increase international action and in preparation for the post-2015 development agenda, the General Assembly established 2014 to 2024 as the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All in its resolution 67/215 of 2012.²⁹³ In 2014, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need for increased global efforts to implement SDG 7, given that roughly 3 billion people still relied on hazardous energy sources.²⁹⁴ Recently, General Assembly resolution 71/233 of 2017 on “Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” highlighted the social, economic and environmental benefits that can be achieved through collaborative efforts to share clean energy technologies, diversify the energy market, and adopt sustainable energy policies.²⁹⁵

In response to global commitments made at the 2002 WSSD, UN-Energy was created in 2004 as an inter-agency mechanism to help Member States adopt sustainable energy policies.²⁹⁶ Its main objective is to promote the implementation of the JPoI, ensuring coherence of energy-related activities across the international system, and encouraging dialogue and information exchange.²⁹⁷ While UN-Energy does not implement programs on the ground, it contributes to international discussions regarding sustainable development by providing advice, advocacy, knowledge sharing, and coordination of activities throughout the UN system.²⁹⁸ In 2011, the Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) initiative was launched with the objective to bring sustainable energy to all levels of society.²⁹⁹ SEforALL’s main goal is to promote the implementation of SDG 7 by assisting Member States with sustainable energy best practices through the SEforALL Knowledge Hub.³⁰⁰ The hub produces research and monitors progress based on policy and case studies.³⁰¹ This data is presented in a comprehensive biannual report, the *Global Tracking Framework*, on sustainable energy trends and progress monitoring.³⁰²

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is an international energy forum comprised of 29 Member States that focuses on promoting energy security and enhancing sustainable energy development for economic and

²⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda of the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (New Urban Agenda)* (A/RES/71/256), 2016, pp. 8-11.

²⁸⁹ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy* (A/RES/69/225), 2015, p. 1.

²⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme* (A/RES/60/199), 2005.

²⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy* (A/RES/62/197), 2007, pp. 3-4.

²⁹² UN General Assembly, *International Year of Sustainable Energy for All* (A/RES/65/151), 2011, p. 2.

²⁹³ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy* (A/RES/67/215), 2012, p. 2.

²⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Development for All: Report of the Secretary-General* (A/71/320), 2016, p. 2.

²⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all* (A/RES/71/233), 2017, pp. 3-7.

²⁹⁶ UN DESA, *Energy*, 2017.

²⁹⁷ UN-Energy, *Mission and Activities*, 2017.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ SEforALL, *About Us*, 2017; SEforALL, *Home*, 2017.

³⁰⁰ SEforALL, *Tracking Progress*, 2017.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*; IBRD et al., *Global Tracking Framework Progress toward Sustainable Energy 2017*, 2017.

environmental prosperity.³⁰³ To assist Member States in the implementation of sustainable energy measures within its national policies, IEA provides a series of frameworks and regional expert workshops to foster economic and technological advancements in the energy sector, particularly on topics such as wind energy, bioenergy, and smart grids technologies.³⁰⁴ Another organization fostering sustainable energy implementation is the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an intergovernmental organization (IGO) that seeks to provide a platform for international cooperation for dialogue, technology, and information sharing.³⁰⁵ IRENA collects and shares data on energy progress, frameworks, and country policy examples.³⁰⁶ Its most recent report, *REthinking Energy 2017: Accelerating Global Energy Transformations*, provides inclusive policy analysis for governments and businesses to adopt best practices for a sustainable energy sector.³⁰⁷

ECOSOC held its 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July with the theme of “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges.”³⁰⁸ This high-level meeting gathered Member States, the private sector, and civil society members to discuss strategies and make recommendations for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.³⁰⁹ This was the first HLPF to review the SDGs, focusing on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14.³¹⁰ Although SDG 7 was not directly addressed, HLPF highlighted the importance of sustainable energy for poverty eradication, fostering innovation, building resilient energy infrastructures, and for the sustainable use of oceans by focusing on renewable tidal, wave, and wind energy.³¹¹ HLPF emphasized that the SDGs are interrelated and finding synergies among the goals can advance progress; participants encouraged Member States to build awareness and monitor progress for better results.³¹² Through its voluntary national review process, ECOSOC’s HLPF urges Member States to share their experiences and lessons learned; HLPF considers the reviews in its annual meetings to strengthen policies and improve initiatives for the implementation of the SDGs.³¹³ For the 2018 HLPF meeting, the theme is “transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies,” which includes discussion of SDG 7 as well as SDGs 6, 11, 12 and 15.³¹⁴

ECOSOC’s regional commissions work collaboratively to implement the objectives of SDG 7.³¹⁵ The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) partnered with the African Union (AU) and other regional stakeholders to develop the *Africa Bioenergy Policy Framework and Guidelines*; this framework seeks to assist African states in the adoption of bioenergy policy and regulations as an alternate option for clean energy.³¹⁶ Furthermore, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is focusing on the interrelated relationship between energy and the SDGs.³¹⁷ Through the UN Development Account project, ESCWA prepared a regional policy toolkit, titled *Developing the Capacities of ESCWA Member Countries to Address the Water and Energy Nexus for Achieving Sustainable Developing Goals*.³¹⁸ This policy toolkit focused on a comprehensive natural resource management approach that promotes sustainable social and environmental development among Arab states.³¹⁹ Regional IGOs

³⁰³ IEA, *Our Mission*, 2017.

³⁰⁴ IEA, *How2Guides*, 2017.

³⁰⁵ IRENA, *Vision and Mission*, 2017.

³⁰⁶ IRENA, *About IRENA*, 2017.

³⁰⁷ IRENA, *REthinking Energy 2017: Accelerating the global energy transformation*, 2017.

³⁰⁸ UN DESA, *ECOSOC President’s Summary of the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*, 2017, p. 1.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

³¹² UN DESA, *ECOSOC President’s Summary of the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*, 2017, p. 11.

³¹³ UN DESA, *Voluntary National Reviews*.

³¹⁴ UN DESA, *High-level Political Forum 2018*, 2017.

³¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Development for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/320)*, 2016, pp. 8-13.

³¹⁶ UN ECA, *Africa bioenergy policy framework and guidelines: towards harmonizing sustainable bioenergy development in Africa*, 2014.

³¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda of the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (New Urban Agenda) (A/RES/71/256)*, 2016, pp. 8-11.

³¹⁸ UN ESCWA, *Developing the Capacity of ESCWA Member Countries to Address the Water and Energy Nexus for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Resource Efficiency Module*, 2017, pp. 15-16.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

such as the European Union (EU) plan to protect the environment and promote clean energy.³²⁰ The EU's *2030 Climate and Energy Framework* looks to lower GHG emissions, increase renewable sources of energy, and increase energy efficiency in Europe.³²¹

Sustainable Energy

In order to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all, international action to implement SDG 7 must involve the three pillars of sustainable development, which are social, economic, and environmental development.³²² Energy is a primary contributor to climate change, with energy production generating 60% of the global GHG emissions.³²³ Sustainable energy enhances social progress while promoting economic growth and can help minimize environmental concerns such as climate change.³²⁴ Thus, it is imperative to consider energy access, efficiency, and sustainability as a development concern.³²⁵ Socially, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) recommends that efforts should be directed toward increasing access and reliability of clean energy services; for instance, by assisting Member States in sustainable energy harvesting solutions to enhance rural and urban sectors' access to efficient cooking and heating devices.³²⁶ Economically, UNDP highlights that the affordability and reliability of energy services can help alleviate poverty by improving the standard of living through affordable household services and by promoting economic diversification through investment in alternate energy resources.³²⁷

To implement SDG 7, particularly target 7.2 to substantially increase the share of renewable energy sources, it is necessary for global efforts to shift to sustainable and low-emission energy technologies.³²⁸ These technologies include renewable sources of energy, which can be defined as “energy derived from natural processes (e.g. sunlight and wind) that are replenished at a faster rate than they are consumed.”³²⁹ Sources of renewable energy include wind, hydro, geothermal, and solar energy.³³⁰ Non-renewable sources of energy include fossil fuels, which currently comprise 80% of the world's energy use.³³¹ While non-renewable sources of energy are unsustainable, technological advancements such as carbon capture and storage technology can help reduce and manage GHG emissions.³³² Diversification of the energy sector with renewable sources of energy can help accommodate growing energy demands, lower energy-related GHG emissions, mitigate environmental degradation, improve air and water quality, and allow the global poor to have reliable, safe, and cost-effective energy services.³³³

Access to Alternate Energy Resources

SDG 7's target 7.1 calls for the international community to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services by 2030.³³⁴ This target highlights the importance of equal access to energy services, in particular for marginalized groups such as women and the rural poor.³³⁵ Efforts to increase energy access must also take into consideration the affordability and reliability of the energy supply and services.³³⁶ These efforts can include a decentralized energy approach that supports off-grid locations using a sustainable energy mix as a power system to

³²⁰ European Commission, *2030 climate and energy framework*, 2017.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy 2017-2021*, 2016, p. 9.

³²³ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, p. 4.

³²⁴ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy 2017-2021*, 2016, p. 9.

³²⁵ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, pp. 4-5.

³²⁶ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy 2017-2017*, 2016, pp. 32-33.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³²⁸ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, p. 4.

³²⁹ IEA, *Renewable Energy*, 2017.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Foster, *The Role of Fossil Fuels in a Sustainable Energy System*, *UN Chronicle*, 2015.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ UNEP, *Renewable Energy: Investing in energy and resource efficiency*, 2011, pp. 219-221.

³³⁴ UN-Energy, *Energy: A Brief Discussion on Goals, Targets and Indicators*, 2014, p. 3.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4.

increase supply and stabilizing energy consumption.³³⁷ To achieve these efforts, SEforALL coordinates partnerships with public and private stakeholders to provide capacity building, knowledge sharing, and greater financing support for sustainable energy technologies and the delivery of services.³³⁸

Gender inclusion is essential to ensure energy access for all.³³⁹ Women are disproportionately affected by a lack of inefficient energy services, as they are often responsible for household cooking and water collection.³⁴⁰ Modern energy services can provide women with efficient cooking solutions that improve health conditions related to the hazardous smoke and air pollution from burning traditional fuels.³⁴¹ The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) recognizes women’s empowerment as a key element in increasing access to clean energy through the sustainable use and consumption of renewable energy technologies.³⁴² To implement this objective, UN-Women has partnered with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to launch a global initiative, Women’s Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy, to promote women’s access to sustainable energy and to empower women’s roles in the transition to clean energy.³⁴³ This initiative facilitates women’s participation in energy policy discussions and planning, promotes women’s entrepreneurship in the energy sector through capacity building and financing, and enhances women’s education on sustainable energy uses, in particular in agricultural and micro-enterprises.³⁴⁴

Increasing sustainable energy across all sectors of society is a must for social and economic development.³⁴⁵ There are 1.2 billion people without electricity access, with a majority living in rural areas.³⁴⁶ Even if electricity is available, it may be unreliable and unaffordable.³⁴⁷ As a consequence, rural communities lack the necessary energy services to support a decent standard of living and promote economic productivity.³⁴⁸ One solution is for Member States to adopt a decentralized renewable energy system where energy is generated and stored in off-grid locations close to where it would be used, promoting household electrification, lower energy costs, greater reliability, and lower carbon emissions.³⁴⁹ UNDP’s Africa Regional Energy Programme for Poverty Reduction promotes the implementation of decentralization energy solutions in rural African countries through devices that can generate power for electricity or refrigeration.³⁵⁰

With 70% of the global energy demand concentrated in cities, SDG 7 also affects urban populations.³⁵¹ While urban centers have access to energy, electricity may be unreliable due to outdated and unstable power grids.³⁵² Additionally, energy services may have high connection costs, making it unaffordable for many households.³⁵³ Urban centers often rely on unsustainable energy sources; a high demand and usage of fossil fuels produce high levels of GHG emissions, which in turn adversely contributes to climate change.³⁵⁴ Reliable, modern, and affordable energy supplies can increase access to energy services, particularly in urban areas where renewable energy resources can contribute up to 60% of the global energy supply.³⁵⁵ To take advantage of this potential, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) encourages Member States to implement low carbon technologies, invest in

³³⁷ SEforALL, *Strategic Framework for Results: Going Further, Faster – Together*, 2016, p. 25.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

³³⁹ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy 2017-2021*, 2016, p. 16.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*; WHO, *Burning opportunity: clean household energy for health, sustainable development, and wellbeing of women and children*, 2016.

³⁴² UN-Women, *Flagship Programme Women’s Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy*, 2016.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy 2017-2021*, 2016, p. 9.

³⁴⁶ UN DESA, *Synthesis of Energy-related Issues Highlighted in National Reports of Rio+20*, 2014, p. 28.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, p. 12.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

³⁵¹ UN-Habitat, *World Cities Report 2016: Urbanization and Development – Emerging Futures*, 2016, p. 40.

³⁵² UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy*, 2017, p. 4.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ UN-Habitat, *World Cities Report 2016: Urbanization and Development – Emerging Futures*, 2016, p. 16.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

efficient energy distribution infrastructures, and change consumption patterns to save on energy use.³⁵⁶ UN-Habitat has asked Member States to adopt sustainable energy national policies that support cleaner energy technologies and discourage the use of unsustainable energy options.³⁵⁷ UN-Habitat published a policy guide titled *Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policy*, which contains a series of recommendations to empower Member States in these efforts.³⁵⁸

Financing Energy

According to Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for SEforALL, roughly one trillion dollars in annual investment is needed from the public and private sectors to increase energy access and efficiency and to adopt renewable energy technologies.³⁵⁹ The *Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2017* report found that investment in renewable sources of energy fell by 23% in 2016 to \$241.6 billion; however, in its *World Energy Investment 2017* report, IEA found increased spending in energy efficiency.³⁶⁰ Sources of investment for renewable energy technologies and projects include commercial banks, multilateral development banks, and direct private investment.³⁶¹ The World Bank is working with the private sector to mobilize \$25 billion between 2016 and 2020 to expand access to renewable sources of energy.³⁶² It also supports policymakers in making informed financial decisions to mobilize public funds for renewable energy technologies and to promote economic growth.³⁶³ In collaboration with several regional development banks, the World Bank put forth an overview of public financial instruments and how should they be selected to meet national needs.³⁶⁴ In addition, the World Bank has committed to assisting countries directly in promoting sustainable energy across all sectors; the World Bank partnered with SEforALL through the Lighting Africa initiative to bring electricity to sub-Saharan Africa and provide basic electricity needs to 250 million people by 2030.³⁶⁵ The World Bank also supports SEforALL initiatives through its Knowledge Hub, which recently published the *Global Tracking Framework* to measure global progress toward SDG 7 objectives.³⁶⁶

In the 2017 progress report on the SDGs, the UN Secretary-General stressed that progress in the implementation of SDG 7 is stagnant and global commitments on energy finance and policy measures must be embraced in order to achieve SDG 7 targets.³⁶⁷ One way to increase commitments is through partnerships; for example, public-private partnerships (PPPs) play a key role in financing energy efficiency.³⁶⁸ PPPs can help Member States overcome challenges by fostering additional financing for local projects, reducing financial risks, and improving the performance of services.³⁶⁹ In order for PPPs to be successful, IEA recommends that Member States implement good institutional and legislative policies and establish mutually beneficial mechanisms with the private sector for coordination and monitoring.³⁷⁰ The UN Foundation promotes the Clean Energy Mini-Grids initiative through PPPs to increase the delivery of reliable energy services to areas not powered by centralized energy grids.³⁷¹ These grids provide the necessary power for agricultural and industrial production.³⁷² In addition, the UN Foundation founded the Energy Access Practitioner Network (EAPN) to build partnerships, encourage innovative knowledge sharing,

³⁵⁶ UN-Habitat, *Energy*, 2017.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ UN-Habitat, *Addressing Climate Change in National Urban Policy: A Policy Guide for Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Urban Development*, 2016, pp. 1-2.

³⁵⁹ Leone, SE4All Highlights Investment Needs for SDG 7 Implementation, *SDG Knowledge Hub*, 2016.

³⁶⁰ FS-UNEP Collaborating Centre, *Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2017*, 2017, p. 12; IEA, *World Energy Investment 2017*, 2017.

³⁶¹ World Bank, *Financing renewable energy options for developing financing instruments using public funds*, 2013, pp. vii-viii.

³⁶² World Bank, *Energy Overview*, 2017.

³⁶³ World Bank, *Financing renewable energy options for developing financing instruments using public funds*, 2013, pp. vii-viii.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ Lighting Africa, *About Us*, 2017.

³⁶⁶ IBRD et al., *Global Tracking Framework Progress toward Sustainable Energy 2017*, p. iii.

³⁶⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 9.

³⁶⁸ IEA, *Joint Public-Private Approaches for Energy Efficiency Finance*, 2011, pp. 14-15.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³⁷¹ SEforALL, *Clean Energy Mini-grids HIO Group*, 2017.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

and work globally toward achieving SDG 7 by connecting energy providers with governments to increase delivery of clean energy.³⁷³

Conclusion

By dedicating a goal to energy in the 2030 Agenda, Member States acknowledged the importance that energy has in sustainable development and the realization of the other SDGs.³⁷⁴ The implementation of SDG 7 can help ensure sustainable livelihoods and alleviate poverty by lowering energy costs and increasing access to sustainable energy services through improved cooking, refrigeration, and transportation costs.³⁷⁵ Services powered by clean energy technologies improve businesses, decrease emissions, and promote environmental sustainability.³⁷⁶ To ensure access, affordability, and the reliability of clean energy services, global sustainable energy efforts should focus on strengthening Member States' capacity to adopt national policies and initiatives and to take advantage of clean energy technologies and delivery mechanisms to improve energy availability and efficiency.³⁷⁷ To foster the implementation of SDG 7 and facilitate the 2030 Agenda, ECOSOC should serve as a platform for promoting collaboration among IGOs, regional commissions, civil society, and financial institutions such as the World Bank to increase international cooperation and awareness, financial investment, capacity-building support, and accessibility to clean energy initiatives.³⁷⁸

Further Research

To achieve its targets by 2030, the international community must work collaboratively to streamline sustainable energy access, efficiency, and reliability. Delegates can consider: How can Member States incorporate sustainable energy strategies into other SDG efforts? How can Member States ensure greater access to energy in rural and impoverished urban areas? How can Member States increase affordability and reliability of energy services across all segments of society? How can developing states take greater advantage of renewable sources of energy? What can the international community do to facilitate investment in low carbon technologies? How can public, private, and civil society entities coordinate with Member States to finance and deliver sustainable energy services? How can ECOSOC take a greater role in the implementation of SDG 7?

Annotated Bibliography

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, et al. (2017). *Global Tracking Framework Progress toward Sustainable Energy 2017*. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from:

<http://www.se4all.org/sites/default/files/GTF%20Executive%20Summary%202017.pdf>

This report focuses on four important areas for social development: electrification, cooking, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. The report evaluates recent efforts, based on accessibility, investment and energy consumption made by Member States worldwide. The report outlines the progress made toward sustainable energy and how and where these four areas have been rapidly implemented, while also pointing out why not all countries have successfully benefitted from sustainable energy policies. Delegates will benefit from this source as they gain better understanding of the regional and individual needs of Member States and what targeted commitments, economic and political, must be made to implement Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7.

International Energy Agency. (2017). *World Energy Investment 2017* [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from:

<http://www.iea.org/publications/wei2017/>

Delegates will find this source helpful when considering challenges and areas of improvement for the global energy system. This publication provides delegates with statistics on the total global

³⁷³ EAPN, *About Us*, 2017.

³⁷⁴ IRENA, *REthinking Energy 2017: Accelerating the global energy transformation*, 2017, p. 95.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 9.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

energy sector investment and spending trends, and how relevant stakeholders have invested in the global energy sector. The report tracks global energy research and development spending between the public and private sectors. This publication also outlines spending patterns, including in energy innovation and green technology employment. Delegates can learn how regulated investment and national policies can help foster economic growth and create a growing and competitive global market for clean energy.

International Renewable Energy Agency. (2017). *REthinking Energy 2017: Accelerating the global energy transformation*. Retrieved 24 August 2017 from:

<http://www.irena.org/menu/index.aspx?mnu=Subcat&PriMenuID=36&CatID=141&SubcatID=3802>

As an intergovernmental organization (IGO), IRENA's main objective is to serve as a platform to foster collaboration and provide independent researched-based knowledge on the impact of sustainable energy and best practices opportunities. IRENA's REthinking report assesses sustainable energy global trends that foster economic growth, improve livelihoods, and protect the environment. Delegates will benefit from this report as it provides an overview of global investment and financial instruments that can be adopted to promote renewable energy technologies to bring electricity to areas without access.

McCollum, D., et al. (2017). *SDG7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All*. International Council for Science. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <https://www.icsu.org/cms/2017/03/SDGs-interactions-7-clean-energy.pdf>

This publication will help delegates understand that an integrated and cooperative policy approach is needed by Member States to successfully and efficiently attain the goals of the 2030 Agenda. While explaining how SDG 7 interacts with other SDGs, this publication provides delegates with possible policy options that can be implemented in order to achieve goals in a sustainable way. For instance, SDG 7 can pave the path to poverty eradication by promoting renewable and efficient energy sources and services that can improve the standard of living of impoverished areas.

Sustainable Energy for All. (2017). *Home* [Website]. Retrieved 24 August 2017 from: <http://www.se4all.org>

The Sustainable Energy for All global initiative was initiated to promote action forward mechanisms, gather research, and to share knowledge to achieve universal access to energy, improve energy efficiency, and increase the use and accessibility of renewable sources of energy by 2030. This website provides delegates with a wide range of information related to the impact of energy in social development, energy and climate change, energy financing mechanisms, and tracking progress toward the implementation of the SDGs. Delegates will benefit from thoroughly reviewing the Global Tracking Framework reports for 2013, 2015, and 2017, as well as the RISE: Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy initiative. RISE is aimed to monitor and assess policy and regulatory frameworks across 111 countries. In addition, delegates are encouraged to review the SEforALL's Cooling for All initiative to learn more how sustainable energy options can be used to bring affordable and modern cooling solutions without further impacting climate change.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy* [Strategy Document]. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: <http://www.un-energy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/UNDP-Energy-Strategy-2017-2021.pdf>

This strategy document focuses on the interconnected relationship of the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic, and environmental – per their application to achieving a sustainable energy system. It points out that sustainable energy is a key element for attaining the SDGs, reducing the impact of climate change, and ensuring affordability and access to urban areas, which host two-thirds of the global population. In addition, this publication highlights UNDP's role in working with Member States and coordinating sustainable energy solutions to facilitate public and private investment for energy access, efficiency, and renewable energy sources.

United Nations Development Programme. (2017). *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy* [Report]. Retrieved 21 August 2017 from: <http://www.un-expo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/7-Clean-Energy-Feb-2017.pdf>

UNDP plays an essential role in providing Member States with the support necessary to increase the energy supply through all segments of society through decentralized grid connections. UNDP also provides capacity-building support to strengthen regulatory and financial frameworks that foster sustainable energy. This report explains why energy access to modern energy technologies and efficiency of energy services is important for economic, social, and environmental development. It also provides guiding principles that cover a wide range of challenges faced globally, particularly finance and investment through cost-effective measures.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2017). *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*. Retrieved 24 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/E/2017/66>

This report provides an update overview of progress made thus far toward achieving the SDGs. The data in this report highlights slow progress toward achieving global energy access; yet, there has been an increase in the use of renewable sources of energy. Delegates should review this report to gain a greater understanding of the overall actions taken toward all of the SDGs and use this knowledge to find synergies where sustainable energy measures can increase progress toward achieving the other SDGs.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All: Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/320)*. Retrieved 24 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/71/320>

The UN Decade of Sustainable Energy now aligns with the commitments made to achieve SDG 7. This report highlights activities by individual Member States that focus on efforts made to transform their energy sector from fossil fuel-based to investing on low carbon technologies, enhancing energy efficiency and access strategies, and adopting regulatory and monitoring frameworks. The report also provides a synopsis of current regional and UN organizations that are invested in fostering sustainable energy and how international cooperation can be strengthened to increase accountability and investment.

World Health Organization. (2016). *Burning opportunity: clean household energy for health, sustainable development, and wellbeing of women and children* [Report]. Retrieved 18 July 2017 from: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204717/1/9789241565233_eng.pdf?ua=1

This source highlights the importance of providing clean energy sources to vulnerable groups who depend on polluting energy sources for cooking. With more than half of the worldwide population using polluting fuels for household energy, it is imperative to promote the implementation of SDG 7 to ensure better health and living conditions for the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children. This report highlights the importance of making clean energy solutions widely available and investing in the development of efficient stoves that promote safe and clean cooking. Delegates will benefit from this source as they learn how SDG 7 can help create healthy living environments, fight against climate change, and promote gender equality.

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