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Economic and Social Council Background Guide 2024

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2024 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce to you our committee, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Matthias Burtscheidt and Assistant Director Chizulu Uwolloh (Session 1), and Director Luke Glasspool and Assistant Director Tamara Carmen Titz (Session 2). Matthias Burtscheidt holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Sociology and is pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy at Trier University. Chizulu Uwolloh is a Program Assistant at the Ford Foundation and supports the offices' work on its natural resources and climate change, and gender, racial, and ethnic justice program areas. She is a lawyer licensed to practice in Nigeria and earned a Bachelor of Laws, LLB from the University of Lagos, Nigeria in addition to a Bachelor of Laws from the Nigerian Law School. Luke read History, Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway and just graduated with an M.A. in Legal and Political Theory from UCL. Tamara C. Titz studies International Relations with a specialization in Economics at Leiden University. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Eric Lowe (Session 1) and Johanna Barton (Session 2).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Combating Food Insecurity and the Risk of Famine
2. Empowering Youth to Accelerate Development

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 bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET on 1 March 2023 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which 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.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes 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 this committee, please contact the Deputy Secretaries-General at dsg.ny@nmun.org.

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

Matthias Burtscheidt, Director
Chizulu Uwolloh, Assistant Director
Session 1

Luke Glasspool, Director
Tamara Carmen Titz, Assistant Director
Session 2



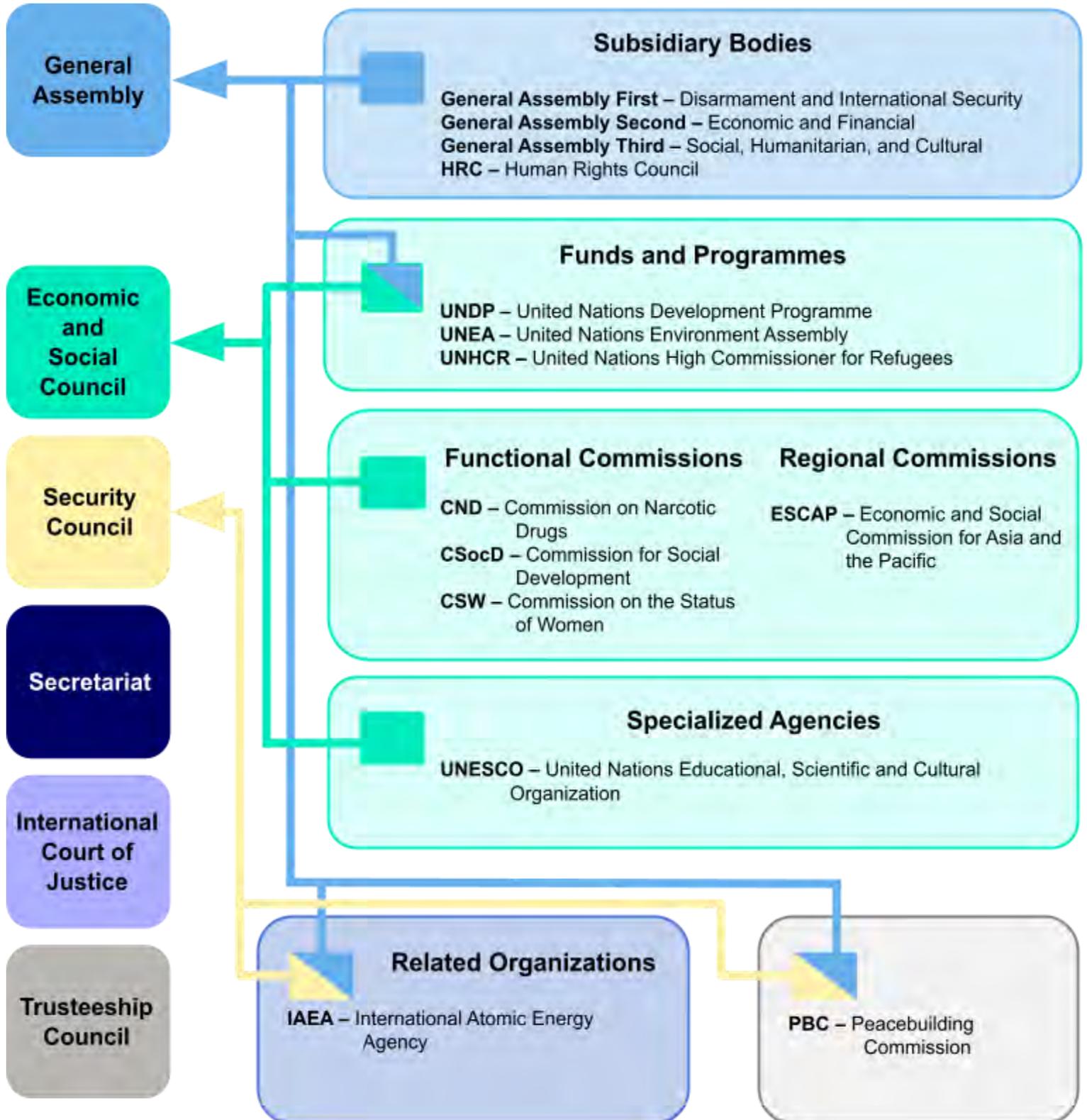
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United Nations System at NMUN·NY

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN·NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate 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 United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations established by the *Charter of the United Nations* in 1945.¹ It serves as the primary body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics, advises and coordinates the activities of its subsidiary bodies on these topics, and leads discussions on the implementation of the international development framework.² As such, ECOSOC is highly involved in coordinating efforts to achieve the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) and efforts to advance several other international frameworks.³

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The main function of ECOSOC is to coordinate the activities of its subsidiary bodies and other United Nations specialized agencies.⁴ Article 62.1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* allows ECOSOC to “make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters” to present to the General Assembly and to United Nations specialized agencies.⁵ ECOSOC may also call for or convene international conferences and hold special meetings on global development emergencies and humanitarian crises.⁶ A prominent example of such a special meeting is the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which is held annually under the auspices of ECOSOC, apart from every fourth year, when it is held under the auspices of the General Assembly.⁷

Broadly speaking, the following non-exhaustive list summarizes ECOSOC’s mandate:

- **ECOSOC will generally:** provide policy recommendations to Member States and other international bodies; coordinate efforts by its subsidiary bodies and United Nations specialized agencies; follow up and review progress towards these activities; convene international conferences; create subsidiary thematic commissions, in those rare instances where there is ubiquitous demand for continuous examination of a broad subject area.⁸
- **ECOSOC will not generally:** design and implement projects or programs; direct United Nations specialized agencies to develop or implement specific projects or programs; decide on budgetary matters of United Nations entities.⁹

Governance, Structure, and Membership

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 Member States, 18 of which are elected each year by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms under a system of rotation that ensures equitable geographic

¹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *About us*. N.d.; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. art. 7.

² United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *About us*. N.d.; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. art. 62.

³ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. para. 47.

⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *About us*. N.d.

⁵ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. art. 62.

⁶ Ibid; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Special Meetings on Emerging Issues and Emergency Situations*. N.d.

⁷ United Nations, High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Structure*. N.d.

⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Brochure*. 2021. p. 3.

⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *About us*. 2023; United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2023; United Nations, General Assembly. *Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee)*. N.d.



representation.¹⁰ ECOSOC proceedings are overseen by a President and four Vice-Presidents, which together comprise its Bureau.¹¹ The Bureau sets ECOSOC's agenda, devises action plans, and collaborates with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹²

ECOSOC oversees the work of five regional commissions, eight functional commissions, 12 specialized agencies, six funds and programs, and several other related United Nations bodies.¹³ The functional commissions focus on specific issues and the regional commissions have a geographic focus.¹⁴ Other subsidiary bodies include standing, ad hoc, expert, and other related bodies.¹⁵ Each subsidiary body adopts specific methods of work to align with its mandate, which are updated regularly.¹⁶ ECOSOC also allows for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to consult on the work of the UN.¹⁷ More than 6,000 NGOs have been granted ECOSOC consultative status, enabling them to attend and participate in various United Nations meetings, conferences, special sessions, and other international discussions.¹⁸

The ECOSOC meeting cycle lasts one year from July to July and is divided into four groups.¹⁹ The first group consists of the Partnership Forum and the Coordination Segment, which are held in February.²⁰ While the Partnership Forum aims to bring together a wide array of stakeholders, from civil society and the private sector to academia and local governments, to discuss and exchange ideas to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the Coordination Segment is set up to coordinate the work of ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies and United Nations specialized agencies through general policy recommendations.²¹ The second group of meetings include various fora established by ECOSOC, including the Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up and the Youth Forum, which take place between April and May of each year.²² The Development Cooperation Forum, which is also part of the second group, takes place every two years.²³ The third group comprises the Operational Activities for Development Segment, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, and the Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development.²⁴ The fourth group focuses on the review of the implementation and progress towards the 2030 Agenda, comprising the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC, both of which take place in July at the end of a meeting cycle.²⁵ The ECOSOC meeting cycle is further complemented by the Management Segment in June, which focuses on procedural questions and considers the reports and recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and United Nations specialized agencies.²⁶

¹⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.19)*. 2021. p. 39.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Coordination Segment*. N.d.

¹⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. N.d.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/75/290 A)*. 2021. p. 9.

¹⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*. N.d.

¹⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Brochure*. 2021. p. 23.

¹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/75/290 A)*. 2021. pp. 4-5.

²⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 5.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*. 2018. p. 6.



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1. Combating Food Insecurity and the Risk of Famine

“Ending hunger is within our reach. But unless we solve this problem today, we face the specter of global food shortages. (...) Our only chance of lifting millions of people out of hunger is to act together, urgently and with solidarity.”²⁷

Introduction

In 2020, 265 million people faced food insecurity, a state in which they lack regular, stable access to safe and nutritious food that meets their physiological needs.²⁸ As defined at the 1996 World Food Summit, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”²⁹

A lack of food security can lead to malnutrition, especially for children.³⁰ The World Health Organization describes malnutrition as a form of undernutrition caused by a decrease in food consumption and/or illness that results in sudden weight loss or edema.³¹ When food insecurity reaches its most severe form, it is referred to as famine, which the World Food Programme (WFP) defines as occurring when 20% of households experience extreme food shortages, 30% of children suffer from acute malnutrition, and 2 people per 10,000 die from starvation, disease, or malnutrition in one and the same country.³² While there are currently no Member States actively suffering from famine, conditions in Yemen, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Somalia are poor enough that 43 million people face extreme food insecurity.³³

While there are numerous causes of food insecurity and famine, the international community has recently focused on conflict, climate change, COVID-19, and inequality, with conflict being the most common cause of famine.³⁴ Hunger increases as a direct result of people who are displaced by violence and lose their homes, land, and employment.³⁵ Famines are also more prone to occur in areas where food access is restricted, as is frequently the case in conflict zones.³⁶ Furthermore, the changing climate contributes to food shortages, especially as it exacerbates and increases the frequency of droughts and other disasters.³⁷ Other economic and societal disruptions can also increase food insecurity, as was the case with COVID-19, which is still contributing to an increase in hunger.³⁸ COVID-19 and efforts to combat its spread weakened economies at every level and drove millions into poverty, leaving governments and donors with fewer resources to satisfy the most vulnerable people's food and nutritional needs.³⁹ Even where people have returned to work, low wages, rising inequality, and higher food prices have continued to put food out of reach for millions.⁴⁰

²⁷ United Nations Secretary-General. *Secretary-General's remarks to the Global Food Security Call to Action Ministerial*. 2022.

²⁸ United Nations, World Food Programme. *COVID-19 will double number of people facing food crises unless swift action is taken*. 2023.

²⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Policy Brief. Food Security*. 2006. p. 3.

³⁰ World Health Organization. *Urgent action needed as acute malnutrition threatens the lives of millions of vulnerable children*. 2023.

³¹ Ibid.

³² World Food Programme. *Fighting famine*. 2023.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.



International and Regional Framework

The international community has worked to mitigate global food-related challenges since before the creation of the United Nations, but the first major United Nations framework to address the subject was the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which established the right to adequate food and water in its 25th article.⁴¹ The international community regularly addressed food security thereafter, adopting a new major framework every few decades.⁴² The *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition*, adopted in 1974, emphasized the global community's commitment to eradicating hunger and malnutrition, identifying them as basic concerns requiring coordinated worldwide action.⁴³ In 1996, the World Food Summit adopted the *Rome Declaration on World Food Security*, which stressed everyone's right to safe and nutritious food and advocated for policies and efforts to achieve food security for all, especially the most vulnerable populations.⁴⁴

In 2009, the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (ITPGRFA) was adopted.⁴⁵ The objectives of this treaty are to conserve and utilize plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in a sustainable manner, as well as to share the advantages generated from their usage in conformity with the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992).⁴⁶ Also in 2009, the *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security* was adopted with the aim of eradicating hunger by 2015.⁴⁷ The declaration focused on agriculture in developing countries and Member States agreed to reverse declining funding, improve governance, and address climate change challenges.⁴⁸

Adopted in 2014 by the FAO and WHO, the *Rome Declaration on Nutrition* further established everyone's right to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.⁴⁹ That same year, the FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted the *Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition* (GSF) in an effort to advance policy coherence and provide a framework for policymakers that have a direct or indirect impact on food security and nutrition, such as those involved in trade, agriculture, health, environment, natural resources, and economic or investment policies.⁵⁰

In 2015, the General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda), which included the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of aspirations that in part address food insecurity and famine.⁵¹ SDG 2 seeks to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.⁵² SDG 2's targets focus on providing sufficient food for all people year round (SDG 2.1) and eradicating all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2.2).⁵³ Many other SDGs indirectly related

⁴¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

⁴² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Rome Declaration and the World Food Summit Plan of Action*. 1996.

⁴³ World Food Conference. *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition*. 1974.

⁴⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Rome Declaration and the World Food Summit Plan of Action*. 1996.

⁴⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. 2009.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Declaration of the world summit on food security*. 2009.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization. *Second International Conference on Nutrition*. 2014.

⁵⁰ Committee on World Food Security. *Global Strategic Framework for Food Security & Nutrition (GSF)*. 2014.

⁵¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Sustainable Development Goals. 17 Goals to Transform Our World*. 2023.

⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

⁵³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021: The world is at a critical juncture*. 2021.



to food security, including SDG 12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), which includes a target to reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses, by half by 2030.⁵⁴ SDGs 14 (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) and 15 (protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss) relate to food insecurity and famine by protecting the natural environment, which both affects and is affected by food production.⁵⁵

Regionally, the *Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa* (2003) provides a framework for African Member States that are affected by food insecurity and/or famine.⁵⁶ Adopted in 2003, the declaration aims to promote active participation in all aspects of agricultural and food production with civil society organizations and other key stakeholders and to establish a regional food reserve system by the Member States.⁵⁷ In Europe, the European Union's (EU) Leaders' Summit on Global Food Security committed to strengthening international cooperation and partnership initiatives between the United Nations, regional and sub-regional organizations, and civil society organizations since the pandemic, climate crisis, high energy and fertilizer prices, and long-term conflicts, such as the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, have disrupted production and supply chains, increasing global food insecurity.⁵⁸ The declaration calls for new financial donations to humanitarian organizations, in-kind donations for food commodity transportation and delivery, open food, fertilizer, and agricultural markets, increased fertilizer production, sustainable agriculture and food system efforts, increased research and technology investments, and market monitoring to ensure transparency and share.⁵⁹

Role of the International System

Numerous United Nations bodies are actively working on and implementing frameworks and initiatives to address food insecurity.⁶⁰ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) regularly addresses food scarcity and famine, especially after global shocks increase food insecurity.⁶¹ In 2008, ECOSOC held a special meeting on the Global Food Crisis, at which national and international short-term emergency initiatives were identified, it was agreed to increase regional and international cooperation, and a strong coordinated United Nations system and international community strategy were established.⁶² After the crisis, in 2013, ECOSOC hosted a special meeting on "Food security and nutrition: Scaling up the global response" at which efforts to prevent a recurrence of the 2008-2009 food crisis were discussed.⁶³ In 2022, two of ECOSOC's meetings were dedicated to "Recurrent Crises, Food Insecurity, and Displacement" as part of the lead-up to its Humanitarian Affairs Segment.⁶⁴ Discussions at these meetings emphasized the need to enhance resilience and preparedness and facilitate a more effective transition from short-term relief to long-term development.⁶⁵ During ECOSOC's Humanitarian Affairs Segment in June of 2023, the global

⁵⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ African Union. *Declaration on Agriculture and Food security in Africa*. 2003.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Council of the European Union. European Council. *Declaration of Leaders' Summit on Global Food Security*. 2022.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Economic and Social Council Focuses on Recurrent Crises, Food Insecurity, Displacement, in Lead Up to Humanitarian Affairs Segment*. 2022.

⁶¹ Ibid; United Nations Economic and Social Council. *United Nations Special meeting on food security and nutrition*. 2013.

⁶² United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Global Food Crisis*. 2008.

⁶³ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Economic and Social Council Focuses on Recurrent Crisis, Food Insecurity, Displacement, in Lead Up to Humanitarian Affairs Segment*. 2022; United Nations Economic and Social Council. *United Nations Special meeting on food security and nutrition*. 2013.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.



challenge of food insecurity and the risk of famine were addressed.⁶⁶ Focusing on scaling up prevention, response, and resilience, attendees discussed driving transformation and solutions to address the urgent challenges of rising food insecurity and the risk of famine, protection risks, and climate change.⁶⁷

In addition to its direct work on the subject, ECOSOC is also the United Nation's primary coordinating body for economic, social, and cultural matters, and it connects United Nations specialized agencies and other bodies and programs that are involved in combatting food insecurity and famine.⁶⁸ FAO, a specialized agency, conducts research on food security and nutrition and publishes numerous reports annually, including *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*.⁶⁹ FAO also collects food-related data and establishes classifications and assessments.⁷⁰ Its Food Insecurity Experience Scale categorizes food insecurity and its International Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) provides an analysis and classification system that allows various stakeholders to assess the severity and magnitude of food security issues.⁷¹

WFP provides direct food and logistical assistance worldwide and reports to the General Assembly and ECOSOC.⁷² WFP's principal goal is to provide emergency food aid and collaborate with communities to promote nutrition and resilience.⁷³ To achieve its aims the WFP operates within a strategic plan, the current of which is the *Strategic Plan for 2022-2025*, which is based on a renewed global commitment to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.⁷⁴ The plan outlines the numerous methods by which the WFP, in collaboration with others, can most effectively save and change lives, including through collaborations with governments, the private sector, other United Nations bodies, international financial institutions, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society.⁷⁵

Complementing FAO and WFP is the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), a financing institution and specialized agency of the United Nations that seeks to reduce poverty and hunger in developing countries' rural areas.⁷⁶ It is the only international development agency devoted entirely to rural economies and food security.⁷⁷

In addition to IFAD, WFP, and FAO, which are collectively known as the Rome-based agencies (RBAs), the General Assembly also addresses food security and nutrition and hosted the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in 2021.⁷⁸ At that conference, a group of 28 food system scientists appointed by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General met under the auspices of the UNFSS's Scientific Group.⁷⁹ The Scientific Group operated as a separate entity, with members serving in their individual roles to present research-based, state-of-the-art, solution-oriented knowledge and evidence to inform the transformation of contemporary food systems.⁸⁰

⁶⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *30th meeting of ECOSOC on Humanitarian Affairs Segment*. 2023.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *About Us: ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. N.d.

⁶⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021: The world is at a critical juncture*. 2021.

⁷⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The Food Insecurity Experience Scale*. 2023; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Understanding the IPC Scales*. 2022.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² United Nations, World Food Programme. *Who we are*. 2023.

⁷³ United Nations, World Food Programme. *Mission*. 2023.

⁷⁴ United Nations, World Food Programme. *WFP Strategic Plan (2022-2025) - Turning the tide against hunger*. 2023.

⁷⁵ Ibid; World Food Programme. *Partner with us*. 2023.

⁷⁶ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Investing in rural people*. 2023.

⁷⁷ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Why rural people?* 2023.

⁷⁸ United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021. *Scientific Group of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021*. 2023.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.



Regionally the Agriculture and Food Security Division of the African Union (AU) coordinates the implementation of AU decisions related to agricultural transformation in Africa.⁸¹ These include the African Day of School Feeding initiative and the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study.⁸² The European Union (EU) combats food insecurity and famine on a regional and global scale.⁸³ The EU supports farmers and promotes sustainable agriculture through its Common Agricultural Policy, which seeks to ensure food security in its Member States.⁸⁴ The EU also provides humanitarian support to famine-stricken Member States around the world through its development programs and humanitarian operations.⁸⁵

Non-governmental organizations also play a significant role in combatting food insecurity, including CARE, which focuses on empowering communities in need by providing them with the tools and knowledge to improve their food production, nutrition, and resilience to climate-related challenges.⁸⁶ CARE's interventions often extend beyond emergency relief to encompass long-term sustainable solutions, including capacity-building and advocacy for policy changes that address the root causes of food insecurity.⁸⁷ Another NGO dedicated to fighting food insecurity and famine is the CGIAR, formerly known as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, which is a network of 15 international agricultural research centers.⁸⁸ Its mission is to promote innovative and sustainable agricultural methods and technology with the goal of decreasing poverty, boosting nutrition, and strengthening farming communities around the world.⁸⁹

Causes and Drivers of Famine

Conflict and hunger are seen as cyclical, meaning that famine is both a cause and a result of conflict.⁹⁰ At a meeting of the United Nations Security Council in 2022, Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized that “when this Council debates conflict, you debate hunger.”⁹¹ Between 2018 and 2021, the reported number of people living in Member States where conflict was the main driver of food insecurity increased by 88% to over 139 million people.⁹² The conflict in Ukraine came at a time when the international community was already facing a crisis of famine due to climate change and the economic shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹³ Ukraine and the Russian Federation are responsible for exporting 30% of wheat and 67% of sunflower oil in the world and are leading exporters of corn and fertilizer.⁹⁴ A 2023 report concluded that the lack of food supply and increased shipping costs have led to increases in the price of food that now affects 400 million people globally.⁹⁵ The United Nations Security Council condemned the use of starvation as a weapon of war, acknowledging the link between conflict and famine, through Security Council resolution 2417 (2018) on “The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.”⁹⁶

⁸¹ African Union. *Agriculture Development*. 2023.

⁸² African Union. *Promoting Health & Nutrition*. 2023.

⁸³ European Union. *EU actions to enhance global food security*. 2023.

⁸⁴ European Commission. *The common agricultural policy at a glance*. 2023.

⁸⁵ European Commission. *Food assistance*. 2023.

⁸⁶ Care. *Food & Water*. 2023.

⁸⁷ Care. *Food Equals Future*. 2023.

⁸⁸ CGIAR. *Impact*. 2023.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Haga. United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Breaking the Vicious Circle of Hunger and Conflict*. N.d.

⁹¹ Dasgupta et al. *Nature. Attributing Changes in Food Insecurity to a Changing Climate*. 2022.

⁹² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Conflict and Food Security - Security Council, 9036th Meeting*. 2022.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Food Security Information Network. *Global Report on Food Crises*. 2023. p. 13.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ United Nations, Security Council. *The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2417(2018))*. 2018.



Recent studies have recognized that climate change has increased the probability of, and damage caused by, famine over time.⁹⁷ The reported effects of climate change include: the continued rise of global temperatures; changes in precipitation patterns; an increased frequency of droughts and heatwaves; sea-level rise; melting of sea ice; and a higher risk of more intense natural disasters.⁹⁸ Since the early 1990's, the number of weather-related disasters has doubled, exacerbating the already negative effect that the climate has on increasing famine such as destroying crops.⁹⁹ Climate change crises, specifically drought, have had a negative impact on the global yield of both maize and wheat, which provides nearly a quarter of the world's caloric and protein intake.¹⁰⁰ Other areas affected by climate crises include an increase in pests that consume crops and a loss of one-third of all food being produced due to natural disasters.¹⁰¹ About 80% of the global population most at risk from the potential drop in food supply as a result of climate change are in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.¹⁰² Furthermore, small-scale farmers, whose livelihood depends on crop yields, are among the most likely to be affected by climate change.¹⁰³

Economic shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the shutting down of trade routes and mass unemployment, have also contributed to the risk of famine.¹⁰⁴ These realities were in some cases exacerbated by governments adopting protectionist export policies.¹⁰⁵ For instance, in 2022, 48 Member States suffered financially from an increase in fertilizer prices partly due to export restrictions.¹⁰⁶ Reports have shown that the closure of trade lanes during the COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the increase in the price of food.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, inflation of the price of food causes famines as shown in South Sudan, where on average, one would have to spend 186% of their daily salary on ingredients for a basic meal such as rice and beans.¹⁰⁸ Inflation is not just a problem for the present, however, as the mean projected price increases by 2050 are 87% for maize, 31% for rice, and 44% for wheat compared with 2010.¹⁰⁹ Inflation leaves the most economically challenged families the most vulnerable; for instance, individuals from some Member States spend up to 75% of their income on food.¹¹⁰

Systemic Barriers to Food Security

As outlined above, conflict is among the main barriers to tackling global hunger and famine, and ECOSOC has discussed methods to address food insecurity during protracted conflict in particular.¹¹¹ Protracted conflict is a conflict that has lasted for an extended period and often resulting in combatants acting contrary to international humanitarian law, including using blockades to prevent delivery of

⁹⁷ Dasgupta et al. *Nature. Attributing Changes in Food Insecurity to a Changing Climate*. 2022.

⁹⁸ United Nations Academic Impact. *The World's Food Supply is Made Insecure by Climate Change*. N.d.

⁹⁹ Concern Worldwide. *How Climate Change Increases Hunger - and Why We're All at Risk*. 2022.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations Academic Impact. *The World's Food Supply is Made Insecure by Climate Change*. N.d.

¹⁰¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Special Report On Climate Change and Land*. 2019.

¹⁰² World Bank. *What You Need to Know About Food Security and Climate Change*. 2022.

¹⁰³ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. *Climate Change and Food Security: Risks and Responses*. 2015.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, World Food Programme. *Fighting Famine*. 2023.

¹⁰⁵ International Monetary Fund. *Tackling the Global Food Crises: Impact, Policy Response, and the Role of the IMF*. 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trade and Development*. 2022.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations, World Food Programme. *Hunger, Conflict, and Improving the Prospects for Peace*. 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. *Climate Change and Food Security: Risks and Responses*. 2015. p. 22.

¹¹⁰ Concern Worldwide. *How Climate Change Increases Hunger - and Why We're All at Risk*. 2022.

¹¹¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development: Recurrent Crises and Sustainable Solutions: Building Resilience and Addressing Rising Food Insecurity and Displacement*. 2022.



humanitarian assistance.¹¹² International bodies often negotiate or attempt to subvert these actions, but it is often difficult, leading many to focus on long-term stabilization efforts.¹¹³ In the Sahel region of Africa, for example, the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the SDG Fund worked with local governments to provide aid to citizens and reduce tensions caused by local conflict.¹¹⁴ In 2019, the PBF funded a project in Niger and worked with officials to provide safe passage of food to citizens affected by conflict.¹¹⁵ Long-term policies can range from constructing water points, as has been done in South Sudan, to increasing the supply of resistant crops, as was undertaken in northern Pakistan.¹¹⁶ However, the systemic barrier of conflict remains.¹¹⁷

In 2013, ECOSOC targeted economic shocks as a systemic barrier to food security and recognized the importance of reducing trade restrictions to prevent famine during a special meeting with the RBAs.¹¹⁸ The impact of international trade on famine led the World Trade Organization (WTO) Deputy-Director General, Jean-Marie Paugam, to suggest that there should be no restrictions on exports.¹¹⁹ In 2022, the WTO adopted the *Geneva Package*, a negotiated multilateral trade deal that, in part, seeks to eliminate the export costs and restrictions that NGOs face when trying to provide food to Member States suffering from famine.¹²⁰ In some situations, such as with the Black Sea Grain Initiative, trade restrictions are removed during a time of conflict.¹²¹ The Black Sea Grain Initiative allowed the reopening of three key ports in Ukraine to export food and fertilizer, despite the ongoing conflict.¹²² Up until the Russian Federation's exit from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, it was deemed a success by the WFP as it allowed 33 million metric tons of food to be exported.¹²³ The World Bank and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees have responded to an increase in trade restrictions by producing, and providing, organic fertilizer for Member States that desperately require it.¹²⁴

FAO has recognized the important role that data collection plays in tackling the climate change barrier to food security.¹²⁵ In 2021, FAO created the Data in Emergencies Information System (DIEM) in order for Member States to have more information on dealing with climate-induced food insecurity.¹²⁶ Currently, DIEM is active in 25 Member States that are facing food insecurity, equating to over 150 thousand

¹¹² International Review of the Red Cross. *Protracted Armed Conflict*. 2017.

¹¹³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development: Recurrent Crises and Sustainable Solutions: Building Resilience and Addressing Rising Food Insecurity and Displacement*. 2022.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. *Sahel Situation*. 2023.

¹¹⁵ United Nations United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. *Building Peace in the Sahel*. 2023.

¹¹⁶ Haga. United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Breaking the Vicious Circle of Hunger and Conflict*. N.d.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *United Nations Special Meeting on Food Security and Nutrition*. 2013.

¹¹⁹ World Trade Organization. *DDG Paugam: Trade is Crucial to Ensure Sustainable Food Supplies in Times of Crisis*. 2023; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Food Export Restrictions Hurt Millions in Least Developed Countries*. 2023.

¹²⁰ Ibid; World Trade Organization. *MC12 "Geneva Package"- In Brief*. 2023.

¹²¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Russian Federation Attacks on Ukrainian Port Risk Far-Reaching Impacts for Food in Developing Countries, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council*. 2023.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Seddon et al. Financial Times. *Russia Pulls Out of Black Sea Grain Deal*. 2023; World Trade Organization. *DDG Paugam: Trade is Crucial to Ensure Sustainable Food Supplies in Times of Crisis*. 2023.

¹²⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Economic and Social Council Focuses on Recurrent Crises, Food Insecurity, Displacement, in Lead Up to Humanitarian Affairs Segment*. 2022.

¹²⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Ground-Breaking Data Platform Plays Key Role in Tackling Acute Food Insecurity in Food Crises*. 2023.

¹²⁶ Ibid.



households or 650 million people.¹²⁷ An example of DIEM in action was the response to an earthquake that devastated Türkiye and Syria, during which the data provided by DIEM aided in the application of on-the-ground assessments and humanitarian assistance.¹²⁸ While DIEM provides data as a response to climate shocks causing famines, there are calls for an evidence-based strategy for anticipatory action in the form of early warning systems (EWS).¹²⁹ Despite calls for the use of EWS to forecast potential famines and for there to be funding and responses in place, a study of nine climate crises found that only 2.3% of funding was pre-arranged.¹³⁰ Existing EWS, such as the Famine Early Warning Systems Network and IPC Global Platform, are lacking in their ability to produce data that will mitigate the impact of future climate shocks.¹³¹ Climate change still acts as a systemic barrier to food security, however, as recently as last year, WFP vowed to expand its toolkit for monitoring, evaluation, and assessment in regard to data, leaving space for the further development of EWS.¹³²

Conclusion

While the global production of food is the highest it has ever been, famine and hunger remain a major global concern.¹³³ Reaching the goal of ending hunger by 2030 is becoming increasingly challenging due to conflict, economic shocks, and climate change.¹³⁴ Innovation in tackling protracted conflict, trade restrictions, and climate change have been discussed as necessary components of ending global hunger and food insecurity.¹³⁵ Building on the work of the 2023 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies will likely continue to discuss and identify innovative methods to fight food insecurity and famine.¹³⁶

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider the following: How can knowledge be shared to minimize the impact of future climate shocks? How can Member States be incentivized to negotiate the removal of trade restrictions? How can small-scale and rural farmers be assisted by the international community? How can the international community maximize humanitarian in a time of conflict and create suitable conditions for peace?

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development: Recurrent Crises and Sustainable Solutions: Building Resilience and Addressing Rising Food Insecurity and Displacement*. 2022.

¹³⁰ Crossley et al. Centre for Disaster Protection. *Funding Disasters: Tracking Global Humanitarian and Development Funding for Response to Natural Hazards*. 2021.

¹³¹ International Rescue Committee. *Reenergising the High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine*. 2023.

¹³² United Nations, World Food Programme. *Failing to Open Ukrainian Ports Means Declaring War on Global Food Security, WFP Chief Warns UN Security Council*. 2022.

¹³³ Haga. United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Breaking the Vicious Circle of Hunger and Conflict*. N.d.

¹³⁴ Food Security Information Network. *Global Report on Food Crises 2023*. 2023.

¹³⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Economic and Social Council Focuses on Recurrent Crises, Food Insecurity, Displacement, in Lead up to Humanitarian Affairs Segment*. 2022.

¹³⁶ Ibid.



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2. Empowering Youth to Accelerate Development

“Young people have become a driving force for societal change through social mobilization - pushing for climate action, seeking racial justice, promoting gender equality and demanding dignity for all. [...] By advocating for their active inclusion in policy spaces, young people provide diverse perspectives that improve and inform critical decisions.”¹³⁷

Introduction

With over 1.8 billion young people in the world, making up 16% of the world’s population, this is the largest generation of youth in history.¹³⁸ About 90% of young people live in developing countries, with the largest populations living in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific regions.¹³⁹ The United Nations defines youth as persons between 15 and 24 years.¹⁴⁰ Youth are “agents of change” for global development as they often advocate for more inclusion, development, and political change, which can have great societal impact.¹⁴¹ Global digital connectivity also expands youth’s engagement by increasing the interconnection of youth activism, amplifying youth’s contributions to social and political progress worldwide, and facilitating the development of innovative solutions.¹⁴² Youth’s possibilities for active participation in decision-making are still very limited.¹⁴³ Youth often participate in politics as activists in social movements rather than as formalized members of political parties, as this is how they can articulate their opinions publicly and actively participate in politics and society.¹⁴⁴ Young people are still facing enormous challenges and barriers, such as lack of infrastructure, funding, and opportunities, which need to be removed to support their inclusion and foster development and political participation.¹⁴⁵

The development, empowerment, and engagement of youth are cross-cutting issues within the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)* (2015).¹⁴⁶ Recognizing the role of youth in the achievement of sustainability and development, the United Nations and its organizations have implemented several programs and initiatives that encourage and promote the inclusivity of youth in human rights, climate justice, peacebuilding, and community development, address catalysts of development such as youth employment and entrepreneurship, and ensure the empowerment of young people as torchbearers of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁴⁷ The United Nations Secretary-General, in a policy brief to General Assembly resolution 75/982 on “Our Common Agenda,” recognized youth as key stakeholders in the achievement of the SDGs.¹⁴⁸

¹³⁷ United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 3: Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policymaking and Decision-making Processes*. 2023. p. 2.

¹³⁸ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. *Youth*. N.d.

¹³⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Youth and Empowerment*. 2023.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Youth*. N.d.; Youth Policy Labs. *Factsheets*. N.d.

¹⁴¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Young People Need ‘Seat at the Table’ as Agents of Change to Help Build Better, More Inclusive World, Speakers Stress as Annual Youth Forum Concludes*. 2019; Oni et al. United States Institute of Peace. *Youth Leadership in Peacebuilding: A Catalyst for Advancing U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 16*. 2022.

¹⁴² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Youth and Empowerment*. 2023.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. *Youth, Political Participation and Decision-Making*. N.d.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Youth and Empowerment*. 2023.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Affairs. *Global Issues: Youth*. N.d.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Our Common Agenda (A/75/892)*. 2021; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 3: Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policymaking and Decision-making Processes*. 2023.



International and Regional Framework

In the preamble of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), Member States committed to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”¹⁴⁹ In 1965, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2037(XX) on the “Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples,” establishing principles for the education of young people to promote peace, human rights, and mutual intercultural understanding.¹⁵⁰ It laid a foundation for youth empowerment around the world.¹⁵¹ In 1985, which was proclaimed International Youth Year by General Assembly resolution 34/151 (1979) on “International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace,” the World Congress on Youth, organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was held in Barcelona.¹⁵² The *Barcelona Statement*, adopted and issued by UNESCO, stated that “youth, by its very nature, constitutes a permanent social category particularly sensitive to the changes occurring in the contemporary world and experiencing them in a specific way.”¹⁵³ In 1989, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the General Assembly.¹⁵⁴ The convention highlights the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights of children and youth, and further promotes youth to participate as active parts of society.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, in 1995, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/81, the *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, a framework of policy guidelines for international cooperation and national action to address challenges of young people in fifteen priority areas including education, employment, and intergenerational issues and creating mechanisms for development, participation and empowerment of youth worldwide.¹⁵⁶

The 2030 Agenda represents a milestone for the empowerment of youth, as it established the SDGs.¹⁵⁷ While the 17 SDGs generally promote youth participation in different areas, in this context SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships for the goals) are of relevance.¹⁵⁸ In the spirit of achieving the 2030 Agenda through the participation of youth, the *Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People* strategy was launched in 2018.¹⁵⁹ This United Nations system-wide youth strategy asserts that the participation of young people should be promoted in decision-making processes toward a more inclusive future, and thereby supports sustainable development by focusing on five priority areas: participation, education, economic empowerment, human rights, and peace.¹⁶⁰

Various other international documents on youth empowerment have also been adopted in recent years, including Commission for Social Development (CSocD) resolution E/CN.5/2021/L.5 (2021) and the report of the Secretary-General E/CN.5/2021/5 (2020), both on “Policies and programmes involving youth.”¹⁶¹

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (A/RES/2037(XX))*. 1965.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace (A/RES/34/151)*. 1979; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *The Barcelona Statement*. 1985.

¹⁵³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *The Barcelona Statement*. 1985.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*. 1989.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *World Programme of Action for Youth*. 1995.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People*. 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Policies and programmes involving youth (E/CN.5/2021/L.5)*. 2021; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Policies and programmes involving youth. Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2021/5)*. 2020.



Some resolutions relate to specific issues and roadblocks to development, like insecurity and unrest, including Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), and 2535 (2020) on “Maintenance of international peace and security” that focus on the youth, peace, and security agenda and highlight the role of youth for international peace.¹⁶²

The *Intergovernmental Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Change*, passed at the 25th Conference of Parties (COP 25) in 2019, amplifies youth voices in climate policies at the intergovernmental level, recognizes the critical role youth play as agents of change, and commits states to consider youth’s specific needs in their policies.¹⁶³ At the 2021 Conference of the Parties (COP 26), the Global Youth Position Statement was also adopted on behalf of over 40,000 youth by YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) from 1992.¹⁶⁴ The Global Youth Advisory Council on Climate Change is a group of youth selected by the United Nations Secretary-General to advise on all matters related to climate change and assist in the formation and implementation of United Nations climate policies.¹⁶⁵

Role of the International System

As the central United Nations body mandated with the advancement of economic, social, and environmental development, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the institution coordinating partnerships between Member States, the private sector, civil society, and policymakers, including youth.¹⁶⁶ Established in 2012 and organized in partnership with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the ECOSOC Youth Forum is regarded the primary platform for the mobilization and engagement of young people and inclusion of youth voices in the monitoring, review, and achievement of sustainability, development, and the 2030 Agenda.¹⁶⁷ Outcomes of the forum are often considered informal contributions and shared as policy recommendations at various United Nations and intergovernmental meetings, including the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).¹⁶⁸ The 2023 forum was focused on accelerating COVID-19 recovery and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda with and for youth, and it ended with attendees highlighting major challenges to global development such as the lack of flexible resources for youth-led projects, and the need to appoint official government youth delegates, engage youth at multiple levels, and accelerate youth entrepreneurship.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2250 (2015))*. 2015; United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2419 (2018))*. 2018; United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2535 (2020))*. 2020.

¹⁶³ United Nations Children’s Fund. *Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action*. N.d.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, Climate Change Conference of Youth. *COP 27 Global Youth Statement: Declaration for Climate Change*. 2022.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN Secretary-General announces new youth climate advisers; calls on young people globally to ratchet up pressure this year*. 2023.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *About Us*. N.d.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Economic and Social Council Youth Forum “Accelerating the COVID-19 recovery and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda with and for youth”*. 2023. p. 2; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Youth Forum*. N.d.; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Youth Forum: Creating a Sustainable Future: Empowering Youth with Better Job Opportunities*. N.d.

¹⁶⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Youth Forum*. N.d.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Economic and Social Council Youth Forum “Accelerating the COVID-19 recovery and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda with and for youth”*. 2023. p. 2; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Key Takeaways from the Youth & the SDGs Online Consultation: Young People’s Proposals for the 2030 SDG Summit*. 2023. pp. 10-17.



With the creation of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in 2013 and the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office (UNYO) in 2022 by General Assembly resolution 76/306 on "Establishment of the United Nations Youth Office," the United Nations has taken steps to ensure the integration of youth in sustainability and development.¹⁷⁰ The resolution also highlights the need for human resources and funding for UNYO, of which a part will be set aside in the United Nations regular budget but this will only cover UNYO's baseline funding and not the additional programs.¹⁷¹ This limited funding can lead to further issues including a lack of flexibility in funding for additional programs and implementation.¹⁷² Financing of youth activities has been a longstanding issue faced by the United Nations, and even more so by the Youth Envoy as a majority of its funding has stemmed from public fundraising and donations.¹⁷³

The Youth Envoy and UNYO assure the incorporation of a youth perspective in the United Nations sustainable development strategies through the participation of youth in decision-making spaces and partnerships with youth-led organizations to ensure youth priorities are infused within all developmental decisions.¹⁷⁴ The envoy's role is to position youth not just as beneficiaries of the SDGs but as active stakeholders in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷⁵ In 2016, the first 17 Young Leaders for the SDGs were selected as champions to represent youth voices at the United Nations by participating in the achievement of the SDGs through United Nations initiatives and their individual impact projects.¹⁷⁶

UN DESA, through its Youth Focal Point, focuses on addressing youth issues and increasing the impact youth have on policies.¹⁷⁷ Through the Division for Inclusive Social Development, mandated by General Assembly resolution 76/137 (2022) on "Policies and programmes involving youth," UN DESA publishes a periodical youth report that outlines the key issues and challenges faced by youth globally.¹⁷⁸ The 2020 report explores the role of youth social entrepreneurship in alleviating youth unemployment and implementing the SDGs, and highlights limited access to funding, national legal and regulatory restrictions, and a lack of access to technology as challenges to youth entrepreneurship.¹⁷⁹ Further, UN DESA in collaboration with the General Assembly, CSocD, and HLPF coordinates the United Nations Youth Delegate Program, which empowers selected delegates to represent young people at intergovernmental meetings, gain institutional knowledge, and build consensus with peers on youth priorities.¹⁸⁰ However, as the decision to have a youth delegation and the selection of delegates falls only

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Establishment of the United Nations Youth Office (A/RES/76/306)*. 2022.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.; United Nations, General Assembly. *Summary record of the 19th meeting (A/C.5/77/SR.19)*. 2023. pp. 7-9; Yusuf. PassBlue. *The New UN Youth Office Creates a Chance for Stellar Leadership to Take Hold*. 2023.

¹⁷² Yusuf. PassBlue. *The New UN Youth Office Creates a Chance for Stellar Leadership to Take Hold*. 2023; United Nations, General Assembly. *Summary record of the 19th meeting (A/C.5/77/SR.19)*. 2023. pp. 7-9.

¹⁷³ Hettihewa. Blog of the European Journal of International Law. *Looking behind the UN Youth Office: Considering Structural Limitations of Youth Participation After the Party*. 2022; Yusuf. PassBlue. *The New UN Youth Office Creates a Chance for Stellar Leadership to Take Hold*. 2023; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *Donate Now*. N.d.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *Envoy's Workplan*. N.d.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *About the Young Leaders for the SDGs*. N.d.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN DESA and Youth*. N.d.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *United Nations - World Youth Report (WYR)*. N.d.; United Nations, General Assembly. *Policies and programmes involving youth (A/RES/58/133)*. 2004; United Nations, General Assembly. *Policies and programmes involving youth (A/RES/76/137)*. 2022; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *World Programme of Action for Youth*. 1995.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda*. 2020.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *UN Youth Delegate Programme*. 2020.



to Member States, youth from many countries are often unrepresented usually due to funding and austerity measures.¹⁸¹

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through programs and publications like the Generation17 initiative, #TheLoop Updates, and the #UNDP4Youth campaign, aims to advance the role of youth in the design, implementation, and achievement of the SDGs through mentorship, magnifying the voices of young changemakers, and creating youth networks.¹⁸² Other organizations, such as UNESCO, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organisation, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the World Tourism Organisation, have included youth in tackling developmental issues such as human rights violations, conflicts, global health, the treatment of refugees, and sustainable and accessible tourism.¹⁸³

At the regional level, organizations have developed policies to increase the participation of young people to advance development, including the African Union's (AU) *African Youth Charter, Youth Engagement Strategy 2016-2020*, and *African Youth Decade 2009-2018*.¹⁸⁴ At the national level, the AU has laid out action plans for the implementation of national youth policies in Member States.¹⁸⁵ In 2018, the European Union (EU) passed Council resolution 2018/C 456/01, which established the *European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027* to ensure the participation of youth in civic, social, and economic engagement through the 11 European Youth Goals and "Sustainable Green Europe."¹⁸⁶ The strategy and goals are designed, defined, and implemented by the EU Youth Dialogue, which facilitates discussions between youth and policymakers to create youth-centric policies.¹⁸⁷ Further regional examples include the Organization of American States's *Strategy on Youth* and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations's *Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025*.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 7.

¹⁸² Jacovella. United Nations Development Programme Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace. *THE LOOP: UNDP Youth Empowerment Update*. 2021; United Nations Development Programme. *GENERATION17*. N.d.; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017: Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future*. 2014; United Nations Development Programme. *Youth Empowerment*. N.d.

¹⁸³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Global Youth Community*. N.d.; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *A new Youth Advisory Board champions youth engagement*. 2022; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Youth and Human Rights 75 initiative*. N.d.; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Working with and for youth in vulnerable situations*. N.d.; World Health Organization. *WHO launches youth council to advise on global health and development issues affecting young people*. 2020; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Global Youth Advisory Council Annual Report 2018*. 2018; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Global Youth Tourism Summit (GYTS)*. 2022.

¹⁸⁴ African Union. *African Youth Charter*. 2006; African Governance Architecture. *Youth Engagement Strategy 2016-2020*. 2018; African Union. *African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action*. 2011.

¹⁸⁵ African Union. *Youth Development*. N.d.

¹⁸⁶ European Union. *Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (2018/C 456/01)*. 2018; European Union. *EU Youth Strategy*. N.d.; European Union. *European Youth Goals*. N.d.

¹⁸⁷ European Union. *EU Youth Dialogue*. N.d.; European Union. *What is the EU Youth Dialogue?* 2022; European Commission. *#YouthGoals Structured Dialogue*. 2018.

¹⁸⁸ Organization of American States, The Inter-Departmental Working Group on Youth. *Strategy on Youth of the OAS General Secretariat*. 2012; ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025*. 2022.



Youth Participation in Peace Processes

Through SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) the topic of sustainable peace is determined to be one of the major issues for global development.¹⁸⁹ Peaceful and inclusive societies with strong and just institutions constitute the basis for well-being as well as economic growth, and are therefore crucial for sustainable development.¹⁹⁰ In this context, the work of ECOSOC and its subsidiary committees, such as the ECOSOC Youth Forum, lay an important foundation by promoting the participation of young people and strengthening their role in promoting peace and security.¹⁹¹

Until recent years, the positive impact of youth on peace and security has been little understood and largely ignored by decision-makers worldwide.¹⁹² Young people in conflict areas were either considered “victims” or “perpetrators.”¹⁹³ After more than 11,000 young people signed the *Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace, and Security*, the Security Council put the topic of youth, peace, and security on its agenda in 2015.¹⁹⁴ The unanimous adoption of the aforementioned Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on “Maintenance of international peace and security” was a landmark event because it recognized the positive impact that youth engagement can have on peace and security, and called for more participation of young people in decision-making in peace processes on all levels.¹⁹⁵ The resolution was followed by an independent progress study on the topic as well as two subsequent resolutions that highlighted the role of youth in conflict prevention and resolution, and called for representation mechanisms in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements.¹⁹⁶

Young people have a positive impact on peace processes and the recovery of societies in conflict.¹⁹⁷ Thousands of young people worldwide are working and engaging in ending violence and building strong institutions, and in doing so are reshaping the understanding of peacebuilding.¹⁹⁸ The work of young activists is helping reduce violence, combat corruption, deliver justice, and ensure participation and sustainable and long-lasting solutions to promote peaceful and respectful communities.¹⁹⁹ Youth are acting as powerful agents to establish positive peace, not only by addressing physical violence but also by challenging structural and cultural violence and driving social change.²⁰⁰ The transformation of oppressive and hierarchical structures as well as changing behaviors and attitudes of societies are active goals in youth work.²⁰¹ Young people actively contribute to conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict

¹⁸⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Why They Matter*. 2020.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ United Nations Population Fund. *ECOSOC Youth Forum 2023 side event: What works to amplify the rights and voices of youth in peace and resilience building? 2023*

¹⁹² Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security. *Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security*. 2015; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. *Youth, Peace and Security*. N.d.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security. *Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security*. 2015; United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2250 (2015))*. 2015.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2250 (2015))*. 2015.

¹⁹⁶ Youth, Peace & Security. *The Missing Peace. Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*. 2018; United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2419 (2018))*. 2018; United Nations, Security Council. *Maintenance of international peace and security (S/RES/2535 (2020))*. 2020.

¹⁹⁷ Ozerdem. Global Development Commons. *The Role of Youth in Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities*. 2016.

¹⁹⁸ Oni et al. United States Institute of Peace. *Youth Leadership in Peacebuilding: A Catalyst for Advancing U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 16*. 2022.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ozerdem. Global Development Commons. *The Role of Youth in Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities*. 2016.

²⁰¹ Ibid.



reconstruction on all levels.²⁰² Young people work towards appeasing tensions, fostering social cohesion, rebuilding trust, and addressing marginalization and exclusion in creative and resourceful ways.²⁰³ In this way, the work of youth activists goes far beyond the classic definition of peacebuilding and creates innovative means for conflict resolution in the future.²⁰⁴

Youth are actively contributing to achieving SDG 16 by creating and participating in grassroots initiatives and institutions, ranging from the community level to international campaigns.²⁰⁵ With the creation and implementation of just, fair, and transparent institutions, young people play a crucial role in the sustainable development of their societies and the international community.²⁰⁶ There are various examples of youth initiatives, movements, and networks from all continents focusing on different context-specific development aspects.²⁰⁷ In Nigeria, various youth-led social organizations work to counter societal violence and extremism through dialogue and education, and work on issues such as gender empowerment or climate change.²⁰⁸ In Rwanda, youth played a major role in reconciliation and social cohesion after the 1994 genocide by communicating, educating, and building new narratives for peace.²⁰⁹ In Colombia, young people have been heavily engaged in implementing the peace accords from 2016 by fostering reconciliation and demanding equality and social change.²¹⁰

Despite these great examples of youth peacebuilders and development promoters, young people are still facing severe challenges around the world that hinder their participation.²¹¹ In many regions, youth are not recognized as political actors, and their trajectories and efforts in peacebuilding are ignored.²¹² Therefore, a more comprehensive understanding of their role in addressing societal conflicts may help promote their political and social participation.²¹³ Further, youth initiatives are severely lacking resources and funding.²¹⁴ While the topic is discussed by the United Nations, for example in the 2030 ECOSOC Youth Forum, the international community still faces many remaining challenges when it comes to the empowerment of youth for peace and development.²¹⁵

²⁰² United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. *Young People Powerful Agents for Resolving, Preventing Conflict, Speakers Tell Security Council Open Debate amid Calls to Change Negative Stereotypes*. 2018.

²⁰³ Youth, Peace & Security. *The Missing Peace. Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*. 2018. p. 40.

²⁰⁴ Oni et al. United States Institute of Peace. *Youth Leadership in Peacebuilding: A Catalyst for Advancing U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 16*. 2022.

²⁰⁵ Youth, Peace & Security. *The Missing Peace. Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*. 2018. p. 40f.

²⁰⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Why They Matter*. 2020.

²⁰⁷ United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. *Young People Powerful Agents for Resolving, Preventing Conflict, Speakers Tell Security Council Open Debate amid Calls to Change Negative Stereotypes*. 2018.

²⁰⁸ Building Blocks for Peace Foundation. *Connecting and Amplifying Voices of Youth Building Peace in Nigeria*. 2020.

²⁰⁹ Interpeace. *Rwanda: Empowering young people to communicate for peace*. 2021.

²¹⁰ Álvarez González. Peace Policy. *Youth Provoking Peace: Lessons From Colombia*. 2022.

²¹¹ Ozerdem. Global Development Commons. *The Role of Youth in Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities*. 2016.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ United Nations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Political Speaking. *Grassroots: Peacebuilding by Youth, for Youth ... and Everyone*. 2021.

²¹⁵ United Nations Population Fund. *ECOSOC Youth Forum 2023 side event: What works to amplify the rights and voices of youth in peace and resilience building? 2023*; Ozerdem. Global Development Commons. *The Role of Youth in Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities*. 2016.



Youth and the Climate Change Movement

ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, like the HLPF, recognize climate change as “the greatest challenge facing our world”, which undermines socio-economic progress and sustainable development globally.²¹⁶ At COP26, the decision-making body of UNFCCC, ECOSOC and HLPF reiterated ECOSOC’s role in addressing climate change as a matter of equity and development, and emphasized the need to link the commitments of COP26 with that of the *Paris Agreement* (2015) and the 2030 Agenda.²¹⁷

The role of youth in addressing climate change has been recognized as pertinent in ensuring the future of our planet by the ECOSOC Youth Forum.²¹⁸ Young people constitute a majority of the global population and are the most vulnerable to the slow onsets of climate change, but are also the generation needed to address this pressing issue.²¹⁹ United Nations entities recognize the need for youth inclusion in climate policy creation and of promoting responsible environmental behavior.²²⁰ For example, UNFCCC extended constituency status to youth-led non-governmental organizations in 2009, granting them access to information, meetings, speaking opportunities, and support to attend UNFCCC conferences.²²¹

In 2021, the UNDP G20 People’s Climate Vote surveyed over 302,000 people under the age of 18 on climate change.²²² 70% of youth surveyed regarded climate change as a global emergency.²²³ Young people have been at the forefront of the fight against climate change and the achievement of SDG 13 (climate action) by leading movements, raising awareness, and executing behavioral change campaigns.²²⁴ Youth-led movements such as Fridays for the Future and the Sunrise Movement mobilize young people to demand concrete climate solutions and changes in national policies through school strikes, which have led to legislative action such as the development of the European Green Deal.²²⁵ Youth have also taken action through legal systems and litigation to advocate for the protection of their

²¹⁶ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Briefing on the Outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)*. 2021.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Schuppert. United Nations Children’s Fund. *Climate Change and Intergenerational Justice*. 2012; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Youth in Action*. N.d.; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Economic and Social Council Youth Forum “Accelerating the COVID-19 recovery and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda with and for youth”*. 2023. p. 2.

²¹⁹ United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change. *Youth and Climate Change*. N.d.; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. *#YouthStats: Environmental and Climate Change*. N.d.

²²⁰ Mod er et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Tapping into the power of young people for climate action*. 2022; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Youth Report*. N.d.

²²¹ United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change. *Youth in action on climate change: inspirations from around the world*. N.d. p. 14; United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change. *Youth Participation in the UNFCCC Negotiation Process: The United Nations, Young People and Climate Change*. 2010.

²²² United Nations Development Programme, University of Oxford Department of Sociology. *The G20 Peoples’ Climate Vote*. 2021.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change. *Youth in action on climate change: inspirations from around the world*. N.d.

²²⁵ Martin. Green Economy Coalition. *How the youth climate movement has evolved from school strikes to systemic change*. 2023; Lowery et al. Global Citizen. *The 2023 Global Climate Strike Is Almost Here. Here’s Everything to Know*. 2023; United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change. *Youth in action on climate change: inspirations from around the world*. N.d.; Geneva Environment Network. *Youth and the Environment*. 2023; Cracknell et al. Climateworks Foundation. *The case for funding youth-led climate initiatives*. 2023.



right to healthy environments and the implementation of climate regulations.²²⁶ Through behavioral change and social media campaigns, youth have called for conscious consumerism and consumption.²²⁷ Youth-led organizations, like Young Voices of Sahel of Mali, have promoted climate-smart education through workshops and the creation of educational climate content.²²⁸ Young people have also advocated for the implementation of climate-friendly policies, calling for non-climate-friendly organizations to be held accountable.²²⁹

The impact of young people on the climate movement is clear, as youth involvement has generated an increase in climate finance to over \$600 billion.²³⁰ However, their exclusion from climate policy and decision-making spaces severely limits their influence, as youth advocacy in the form of marches, strikes, and awareness building often has very little institutional recognition or effect.²³¹ Where youth are given a seat at the table, their inclusion is often tokenistic and performative in nature, with their concerns and views not regarded or implemented.²³² As youth-led climate action is usually done at the grassroots and community levels, funding is another issue.²³³

Beyond the provision of flexible funding for youth-led climate action, young people also require capacity building, mentorship, and access to opportunities to properly implement their innovative solutions to address climate change.²³⁴ Issues such as youthwashing, discrimination, and the digital divide further prevent the design of inclusive policies and exclude youth from crucial climate policy decisions, as they are often uncertain of how to approach governments, international institutions, and other stakeholders when bringing climate solutions to the fore.²³⁵ The lack of representation of indigenous and marginalized youth in decision-making, who are often the most affected by climate change, is another challenge.²³⁶ Furthermore, environmental human rights defenders are vulnerable and often face threats of violence, harassment, and stigmatization.²³⁷ The United Nations system has often recognized and reiterated that youth are “not just victims” but changemakers and active contributors to climate action, and are thus necessary in ensuring sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.²³⁸

²²⁶ Geneva Environment Network. *Youth and the Environment*. 2023; United Nations, High Commissioner for Human Rights. “*This is about our human rights: U.S. youths win landmark climate case*.” 2023; Climate Change Litigation Databases. *Duarte Agostinho and Others v. Portugal and 32 Other States*. N.d.

²²⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Youth embrace eco-friendly lifestyles for a sustainable future*. 2021; Mod er et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Tapping into the power of young people for climate action*. 2022.; Tyson et al. Pew Research Center. *Gen Z, Millennials Stand Out for Climate Change Activism, Social Media Engagement with Issue*. 2021.

²²⁸ Diagne. United Nations Children’s Fund. *Building future eco-responsible generations*. 2023.

²²⁹ Post. Tradesafe. *Youth Climate Movements: Achievements and Limitations*. 2022.

²³⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN Secretary-General announces new youth climate advisers; calls on young people globally to ratchet up pressure this year*. 2023.

²³¹ Geneva Environment Network. *Environmental Human Rights Defenders*. 2023; Roesch et al. ReliefWeb Blog. *Including youth in peace and climate decision-making*. 2021; The Climate Reality Project. *You’ve Heard of Greenwashing, but what is Youthwashing?* 2023.

²³² The Climate Reality Project. *You’ve Heard of Greenwashing, but what is Youthwashing?* 2023.

²³³ Cracknell et al. Climateworks Foundation. *The case for funding youth-led climate initiatives*. 2023.

²³⁴ United Nations, Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Youth Leading on Climate Change: Interview with Elizabeth Gulugulu*. 2022.

²³⁵ Geneva Environment Network. *Youth and the Environment*. 2023; Mod er et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Tapping into the power of young people for climate action*. 2022.

²³⁶ Mod er et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Tapping into the power of young people for climate action*. 2022.

²³⁷ Geneva Environment Network. *Environmental Human Rights Defenders*. 2023.

²³⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Youth in Action*. N.d.



Conclusion

With the 2030 Agenda and its related activities, the foundation for the active participation of youth in accelerating global development has been laid.²³⁹ The international community has understood the role of young people as agents of change in development.²⁴⁰ However, youth participation possibilities in decision-making are still very limited as they face a lack of support and resources.²⁴¹ The United Nations and its Member States are tasked with promoting and empowering young people and fostering their participation to profit from their positive impact on development.²⁴² Existing challenges and barriers for youth, such as inadequate flexible funding, structural and institutional limitations, a lack of education and opportunities, ageism and discrimination, and tokenism, should be addressed and their participation in decision-making ensured to foster their role in sustainable development.²⁴³

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should ask: What role do young people play in development and how can the international community support them? How can the impact of youth on development be magnified? How can the promotion and empowerment of youth be improved and made more efficient? What barriers exist to the participation of youth in decision-making? How can youth participation on all different levels - local, national, regional, and global - be ensured and improved? How can the problems and challenges of youth be addressed in the best way? How can the United Nations system support the promotion of young people? How can especially marginalized young people be empowered? What lessons can be learned from the case studies of youth activism in peacebuilding and climate action?

²³⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

²⁴⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Young People Need 'Seat at the Table' as Agents of Change to Help Build Better, More Inclusive World, Speakers Stress as Annual Youth Forum Concludes*. 2019.

²⁴¹ United Nations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Political Speaking. *Grassroots: Peacebuilding by Youth, for Youth ... and Everyone*. 2021

²⁴² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Young People Need 'Seat at the Table' as Agents of Change to Help Build Better, More Inclusive World, Speakers Stress as Annual Youth Forum Concludes*. 2019.

²⁴³ Ibid.



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