**NMUN•NY**

# General Assembly Second Committee
## Background Guide 2024

Written by Emma A. Bott, Crege Elisha La Ronde, Andrew Snow, and Catherine Marie Abbott

# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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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 General Assembly Second Committee (GA2). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Emma A. Bott and Assistant Director Andrew Snow (Session 1), and Director Crege Elisha La Ronde and Assistant Director Catherine Marie Abbott (Session 2). Emma A. Bott has a Bachelor of Management majoring in Human Resources and minoring in history as well as a Juris Doctor (J.D.). She is currently working on her Master's of International Public Policy and works as a Human Rights Officer with the Alberta provincial government. Andrew Snow is a graduate of General Studies, General Sciences, and Liberal Arts at Johnson County Community College with an emphasis on politics, sustainability, and leadership studies. Crege "Eli" La Ronde studied Mechanical Engineering at Midwestern State University in Texas and currently works as a Senior Account Manager for a National Fire Protection Corporation in the US. Catherine Marie Abbott is presently enrolled in the Political Science Program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she is actively engaged as an undergraduate researcher specializing in conflict analysis and conflict resolution. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Eileen Austin (Session 1) and Danielle Curtis (Session 2).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:
1. Promotion of Sustainable Tourism
2. Eradicating Rural Poverty to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable 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!

Emma A. Bott, Director
Andrew Snow, Assistant Director
Session 1

Crege Elisha La Ronde, Director
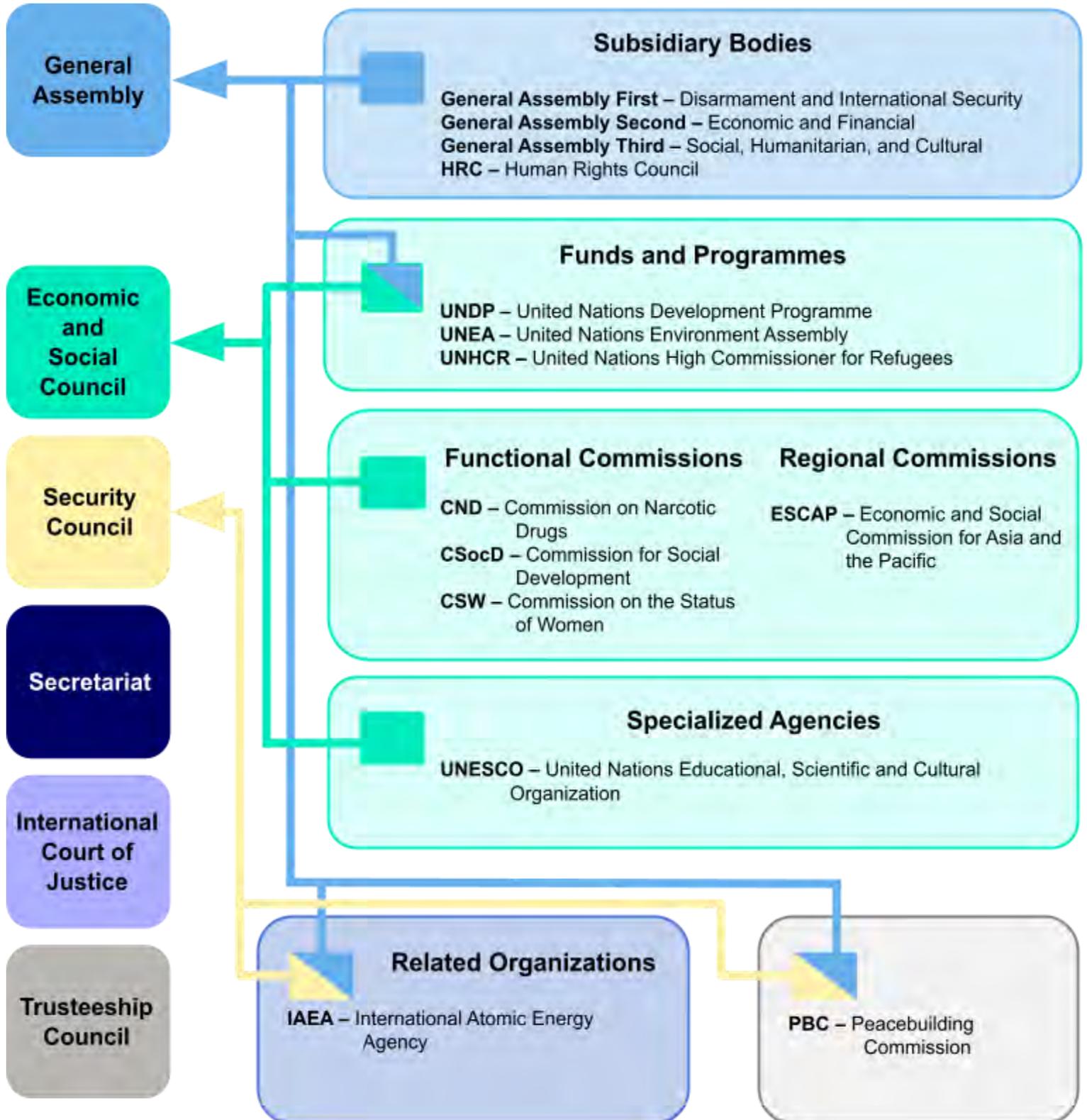Catherine Marie Abbott, Assistant Director
Session 2

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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.

**General Assembly**

**Economic and Social Council**

**Security Council**

**Secretariat**

**International Court of Justice**

**Trusteeship Council**

## Subsidiary Bodies

**General Assembly First** – Disarmament and International Security
**General Assembly Second** – Economic and Financial
**General Assembly Third** – Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural
**HRC** – Human Rights Council

## Funds and Programmes

**UNDP** – United Nations Development Programme
**UNEA** – United Nations Environment Assembly
**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## Functional Commissions

**CND** – Commission on Narcotic Drugs
**CSocD** – Commission for Social Development
**CSW** – Commission on the Status of Women

## Regional Commissions

**ESCAP** – Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

## Specialized Agencies

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## Related Organizations

**IAEA** – International Atomic Energy Agency

**PBC** – Peacebuilding Commission

# Committee Overview

*Introduction*

The General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body in the United Nations system.[1] With its universal membership, the General Assembly makes policy recommendations to actors at all levels, including governments, regional bodies, and other United Nations bodies.[2] Its work is spread across six Main Committees, each of which discusses and negotiates on topics within its thematic area, adopting resolutions that are then considered by the broader General Assembly Plenary.[3]

The Second Committee, the Economic and Financial Committee, addresses issues in eleven topical clusters: macroeconomic policy; operational activities for development; financing for development; groups of countries in special situations; globalization and interdependence; eradication of poverty; sustainable development; information and communication technologies for development; agriculture development, food security, and nutrition; human settlements and sustainable urban development; sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources; and the issue of global partnership.[4] Its powers and functions are derived from the broader mandate of the General Assembly, which was established by the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).[5]

*Mandate, Function, and Powers*

Chapter IV of the Charter established the foundational composition and capabilities of the General Assembly.[6] The mandate provided is broad, allowing for discussion on any questions or matters within the scope of the Charter.[7] The General Assembly acts as a forum for dialogue and cooperation, providing general policy recommendations rather than carrying out operative tasks.[8] Its policy recommendations are non-binding and their implementation is conducted by Member States, the United Nations Secretariat, and other United Nations bodies, each of which independently align their work with General Assembly resolutions.[9]

Under this mandate, the General Assembly adopts resolutions, which are formal documents expressing the agreement and will of the international community.[10] The vast majority of these resolutions are adopted by consensus, meaning no vote is taken and no Member States have objections to the content.[11] In line with the *Charter of the United Nations*, the mandate of the General Assembly can be summarized as:

- The General Assembly **will generally**: make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council, other United Nations bodies and organs, United Nations specialized agencies, and other international actors; initiate studies and advance efforts to promote international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields and in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms; consider or request reports from other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies; establish United

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[1] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Main Bodies*. N.d.
[2] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. pp. 1, 52.
[3] United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *UN General Assembly Documentation*. 2023.
[4] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 71.
[5] Ibid.
[6] United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 36.
[9] Ibid. p. 52.
[10] Ibid. p. 52; Council on Foreign Relations. *The Role of the UN General Assembly*. 2023.
[11] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. pp. 37, 52.

Nations observance days, create expert groups or commissions, formulate mechanisms for treaty negotiation, or refer an issue to the International Court of Justice.[12]

- The General Assembly **will not generally**: dictate the specific actions required for the implementation of policies it recommends, allowing Member States and other bodies to determine operational details; create new bodies, except for in those rare instances where ubiquitous international demand requires the consolidation of existing bodies or a concept and mandate have been fully developed, typically through years of negotiations; make recommendations on situations under consideration by the United Nations Security Council.[13]

Most debate, negotiation, and drafting of recommendations occurs within the General Assembly's Main Committees.[14] The General Assembly's mandate is the basis for each of its subsidiary committees's mandate, though each has its own working methods, traditions, and practices.[15] The Second Committee tends to make broad policy recommendations on the issues under its purview and adopts approximately 35-45 resolutions each year, mostly by consensus and without a recorded vote, after which they are sent to the General Assembly Plenary.[16]

### *Governance, Funding, and Structure*

The General Assembly is comprised of all 193 United Nations Member States.[17] It meets in regular annual sessions and may also convene special sessions on a particular topic at the request of the Secretary-General, Security Council, or a majority of Member States.[18] Each Member State has one equal vote and most decisions require a simple majority.[19] The Second Committee's procedures are managed by its Secretariat and an elected Bureau.[20] The Bureau of the committee assists with opening and closing each meeting, managing the discussions, pronouncing decisions, assisting with drafts and documents, and ensuring compliance with the rules of procedure.[21] The United Nations Secretariat assists the Second Committee by delivering substantive and logistical support.[22]

As a principal organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is largely self-governing, determining its own agenda, procedures, officer, president, and subsidiary bodies.[23] Its current subsidiary bodies include: the Disarmament Commission, the Human Rights Council, the International Law Commission, the Joint Inspection Unit, and an assortment of standing committees and ad-hoc bodies.[24] The General Assembly

[12] Ibid. p. 36; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; UNFOLD ZERO. *UN Bodies*. N.d.

[13] United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *Are UN resolutions binding?* 2023; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. N.d.; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Welcome to the Human Rights Council*. 2023; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

[14] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 68.

[15] Ibid. p. 68.

[16] Ibid. p. 72.

[17] United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

[21] United Nations, General Assembly. *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.19)*. 2021. pp. 30-31.

[22] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

[23] Ibid. pp. 13, 15, 44.

[24] United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

also jointly oversees the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[25] ECOSOC and the General Assembly also jointly receive reports from and provide oversight to the United Nations's funds and programs and various other United Nations entities.[26]

The Second Committee specifically considers reports from the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the Governing Councils for the *Convention on Biodiversity* (1992), the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (1992), and the *Convention to Combat Desertification* (1994).[27] As with all General Assembly committees, its meetings and events are funded through the United Nations regular budget.[28]

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 72.

[28] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2023-24*. p. 412.

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United Nations, General Assembly. *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.19)*. 2021. Retrieved 20 October 2023 from: https://undocs.org/en/A/520/Rev.19

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United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. N.d. Retrieved 20 October 2023 from: https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women/

# 1. Promotion of Sustainable Tourism

*Introduction*

Tourism constituted more than 10% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 and has created millions of jobs globally.[29] The sector's economic and social effects already make it significant, but tourism also accounts for 5% of global greenhouse emissions and can have permanent effects on the natural environment, including coral reefs, making sustainable tourism a common topic of discussion for the international community.[30] The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has described sustainable tourism as designed around optimal use of environmental resources, respectful of the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, and viable in the long-term, with economic benefits and welfare fairly distributed to all stakeholders.[31] Efforts to make tourism sustainable have included collaboration between state and non-state actors, including local and national governments, consumers, researchers, development agencies, businesses, and policymakers.[32]

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly curbed global tourism, exacerbating poverty and impeding efforts to make the industry sustainable.[33] Global travel plummeted by 51.4% in 2020, disproportionately affecting Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where tourism accounts for nearly 30% of GDP.[34] By 2022 there was a notable recovery, with a 22% increase in travel and tourism from 2021.[35] The recovery notwithstanding, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that tourism-dependent SIDS still faced a significant decrease in GDP, with some expecting a decrease of more than 16%.[36] SIDS often rely on few commercial sectors and struggle with high fiscal deficits, elevated debt levels, and constraints in securing public and private funding.[37] Declining tourism arrivals and remittances due to global economic shocks are particularly impactful to their economic health.[38]

As the tourism industry has continued to recover, governments and the international community have sought to reshape the relationship between tourism, the environment, and the economy.[39] Efforts have been made to reassess tourism's impact and improve measurement and management practices, especially concerning environmental impact.[40] In this context, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group has emphasized collaboration among tourism stakeholders to promote green investments, leverage economic recovery packages for sustainability, develop partnerships with the

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[29] Statista. *Share of travel and tourism's total contribution to GDP worldwide in 2019 and 2022, with a forecast for 2023*. N.d; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023.

[30] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Transport-related CO2 Emissions of the Tourism Sector – Modeling Results*. 2019. p. 9; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Climate Change and Tourism – Responding to Global Challenges*. 2008. p. 25; Souter et al. Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network and International Coral Reef Initiative. *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 Report*. 2021. p. 13; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*. 2004. p. 1.

[31] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Sustainable Development*. N.d.

[32] United Nations, Department Global Communications. *Responsible Production and Consumption*. N.d.

[33] United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism*. 2020. pp. 2-3.

[34] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in Small Island Developing States*. 2020.

[35] World Travel and Tourism Council. *World Economic Impact Report 2023*. 2023.

[36] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Gaps, challenges, and constraints in means of implementing the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction.* 2022. p. 36.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism. 2020*. p. 4.

[40] Ibid.

private sector, implement reliable transportation systems, and establish sustainable tourism observatories to track progress.[41]

***International and Regional Framework***

Articles 1 and 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) laid the foundation for global cooperation on economic, social, and, environmental issues, all of which are directly impacted by tourism.[42] In 1980, UNWTO adopted the *Manila Declaration on World Tourism*, recognizing that global tourism is an essential activity for the life and prosperity of nations, has a significant impact on the social, economic, and environmental sectors, and should be planned and developed in a sustainable manner.[43] Furthermore, the declaration highlighted tourism's wide-reaching impact and urged Member States and the private sector to use tourism as a catalyst to bridge the financial gap between developed and developing countries.[44] In 1982, UNWTO reaffirmed its cooperation and development principles through the *Acapulco Document on World Tourism*, reinforcing concepts from the *Manilla Declaration* and emphasizing tourism as a powerful force for global welfare.[45] In 1995, UNWTO published the *World Charter for Sustainable Tourism*, acknowledging tourism's socioeconomic and cultural benefits while establishing a framework that emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism in environmental conservation and economic development.[46] The charter also highlighted tourism's vulnerability, especially in SIDS and environmentally sensitive regions facing biodiversity loss.[47]

The 1994 *Barbados Programme of Action* (BPoA) and the 2005 *Mauritius Strategy of Implementation* (MSI) address the sustainable development challenges of SIDS, emphasizing sustainable tourism as a social and economic driver that must be carefully managed to avoid negative environmental and social impacts.[48] Both the BPoA and the MSI recommend the implementation of policies and frameworks for sustainable tourism that promote community participation, environmental protection, and cultural integrity.[49] In 2013, the Conference on Sustainable Development of Tourism in Islands, hosted by the UNWTO, adopted the *Réunion Island Declaration on Sustainable Tourism in Islands*.[50] The declaration set out a number of principles for sustainable tourism, including: minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on island environments by reducing pollution and waste; conserving water and energy and protecting biodiversity; and ensuring that tourism is conducted in a sensitive manner to ensure respect for island cultures and traditions.[51] In 2014, the Third International Conference on SIDS adopted the *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway* (*SAMOA Pathway*).[52] The *SAMOA Pathway* addresses the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SIDs in achieving sustainable development and recognizes that tourism is an essential driver for sustainable economic growth for SIDs.[53] It further recommends actions for SIDs to take to maintain sustainable tourism such as the development and implementation of policies that promote responsible and resilient practices that take into consideration local needs and

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[41] Ibid.
[42] United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.
[43] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Manila Declaration on World Tourism*. 1980. p. 1.
[44] Ibid.
[45] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Sustainable Tourism.* N.d; United Nations, General Assembly. *World Tourism Organization* (*A/RES/38/146*). 1983. pp. 118-119.
[46] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Charter for Sustainable Tourism*. 1995. pp. 2-4.
[47] Ibid.
[48] United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/CONF/167/9)*. 1994; United Nations, General Assembly. *Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States: Report of the Secretary General (A/60/401)*. 2005.
[49] Ibid.
[50] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Réunion Island Declaration on Sustainable Tourism in Islands*. 2013.
[51] Ibid.
[52] United Nations, General Assembly. *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (A/RES/69/15).* 2014. p. 7
[53] Ibid.

values.[54] This was complemented by General Assembly resolution 69/233 on "Promotion of Sustainable Tourism, including Ecotourism, for Poverty Eradication and Environment Protection," which encouraged global efforts to leverage sustainable tourism to combat poverty and biodiversity loss.[55]

In 2015, the General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda).[56] The 2030 Agenda addresses sustainable tourism in several ways, most notably in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 (decent work and economic growth), which includes as target 8.9 to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism.[57] SDG 12 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) also includes target 12.b, which highlights the crucial role of sustainable tourism in creating jobs.[58] SDG 14 (life below water) highlights the potential benefits of tourism in target 14.7, which emphasizes the economic benefits of tourism for SIDS.[59] As a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder industry, tourism also uniquely intersects with SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).[60]

In December 2022, the General Assembly reaffirmed its dedication to advancing sustainable tourism, by adopting resolution 77/162, "Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) 2021-2030."[61] This resolution underscored the need for unity within the tourism sector, especially during crises.[62] It also emphasized monitoring the impacts of sustainability and climate action on tourism while advocating for the integration of biodiversity conservation into tourism projects.[63]

### *Role of the International System*

The General Assembly has repeatedly promoted sustainable tourism, including through the adoption of resolution 77/178 on "Promotion of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, including Ecotourism, for Poverty Eradication and Environmental Protection," which spotlights sustainable and resilient tourism practices, notably through the promotion of ecotourism.[64] Additionally, the General Assembly designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (IYSTD), an initiative established to promote the potential of sustainable tourism to help achieve the SDGs.[65] The IYSTD acted as a catalyst for several initiatives and partnerships aimed at advancing sustainable tourism such as the Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals Programme, which includes the Tourism and SDGs platform, a co-creative space to inspire and empower the tourism sector to embrace and assist in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.[66]

The work of the General Assembly is often informed by reports and information provided by UNWTO, which was established as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 2003 and aims to promote the

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[54] Ibid.

[55] United Nations, General Assembly. *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/RES/69/233)*. 2014. pp. 2-5.

[56] United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 1-2.

[57] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Tourism*. N.d; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030*. 2018. pp. 54-55.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme*. N.d.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*. 2017.

[66] United Nations, World Trade Organization. The Closing Ceremony of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. 2018.

advancement of tourism through economic growth, international cooperation, and global welfare.[67] UNWTO provides technical assistance and training to developing countries to help them develop their tourism sectors in a sustainable way and facilitates the exchange of ideas and advancement of new concepts in sustainable tourism through the annual International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism.[68] UNWTO has developed various global initiatives and frameworks, such as the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* (GCET), which codified UNWTO's ethical tourism standards to reduce tourism's negative effects.[69] GCET outlines the importance of tourism stakeholders working to protect the natural environment by ensuring that tourism infrastructure safeguards natural heritage, ecosystems, and, biodiversity.[70]

In 2006, UNWTO, in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), introduced the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative, which focused on enhancing sustainable tourism's potential for economic growth in marginalized regions.[71] In 2007, the *Davos Declaration on Climate Change and Tourism* was adopted at the Second International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism, which was hosted by UNWTO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and other organizations.[72] The declaration called for developing long-term strategies to promote sustainable tourism that consider climate impact while providing financial support and technical training to build the capacity of Member States.[73]

In 2010, UNWTO established the United Nations Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD).[74] SCTD is focused on bolstering sustainability initiatives in the tourism sector and harnessing tourism as a sustainable development driver in least developed countries (LDCs).[75] SCTD has championed trade-related programs like the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).[76] EIF is a multilateral partnership that includes the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) and provides assistance to LDCs so that they can better use trade as an engine for growth.[77] EIF oversees the EIF Trust Fund, which supports the implementation of the EIF in 46 LDCs and aims to advance SDG 8, including the use of tourism for job creation and the promotion of local culture and products.[78]

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[67] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO Basic Documents, Volume I - Statutes, Rules of Procedure, Agreements*. 2023. p.17; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO and the UN System*. N.d.

[68] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *About Us*. N.d.

[69] United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (A/RES/56/212)*. 2002.

[70] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO and the UN System*. N.d.; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. N.d.

[71] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *ST-EP Initiative – The work of UNWTO in connection with the Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative*. 2006. p. 2.

[72] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Climate Change and Tourism – Responding to Global Challenges.* 2008. pp. 13-14.

[73] Ibid.

[74] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD)*. N.d; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD)*. N.d.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid; United Nations, World Tourism Organization et al. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*. 2018. p. 61; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Tourism for Sustainable Development in Least Developed Countries: Leveraging Resources for Sustainable Tourism with the Enhanced Integrated Framework*. 2017. P. 10-11.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

UNWTO has established several other programs aimed at monitoring tourism's wide-ranging impacts.[79] In 2016, UNWTO initially published the *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism* (MST), an organizing structure designed to comprehensively collect and present data about the sustainability of tourism, covering economic, environmental, and social aspects across different geographic scales.[80] The MST has been regularly updated and the most recent version was published in October of 2023.[81] Similarly, the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories supports destinations in monitoring the effects of tourism.[82] It seeks to enable evidence-based decision-making, promote sustainable practices, and strengthen institutional capacity for policy formulation and implementation through systematic evaluation and information management.[83]

On World Tourism Day 2022, UNWTO published what it signaled as a "turning point" report, *Rethinking Tourism-From Crisis to Transformation*, which focused on collaborative efforts between governments and non-governmental entities to promote investments in sustainable tourism, fostering industry growth and resilience.[84] On World Tourism Day 2023, UNWTO emphasized the need to advance these initiatives, urging stakeholders to advocate for investments that promote global well-being.[85]

Aside from UNWTO, UNEP and WMO manage the Tourism and Environment program, an initiative that focuses on working with local tourism stakeholders to include climate action within their policies and systems.[86] UNEP also created the Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level program in 1988 to assist local communities in preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies.[87] UNEP often works with the Secretariat of the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), which hosts the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) each year.[88] In 2021, COP 26 adopted the *Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism*, which outlined pathways for urgent climate action in tourism by 2050, including regenerating ecosystems, collaborating with stakeholders, and financing climate plans.[89]

Outside the United Nations System, several non-governmental organizations are working to promote sustainable tourism, including the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), which collaborates with the private sector and governments to promote sustainability.[90] WTTC has also worked with UNEP to provide policy recommendations to governments on how to promote resilience in tourism and highlight the efforts of private companies, including airlines, to promote environmental and economic sustainability in tourism.[91]

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[79] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST)*. 2023. p. 1.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories*. N.d.
[84] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *From Crisis to Transformation - World Tourism Day 2022.* 2022. p. 4.
[85] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *World Tourism Day*. 2023.
[86] United Nations Environment Programme. *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector: Frameworks, Tools and Practices*. 2008. p. 60.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism*. 2021. p.1.
[90] World Travel & Tourism Council at al. *A Net Zero Roadmap for Travel & Tourism: Proposing a New Target Framework for the Travel & Tourism Sector*. 2021. p. 7-9.
[91] Ibid. p. 2-11.

***The Importance of Sustainable Tourism to SIDS and LDCs***

The tourism industry is closely connected to the environment and is also a highly climate-sensitive economic sector.[92] The industry is susceptible to environmental changes, including rising sea levels, natural disasters, and changes to sea life, all of which can affect destination readiness and travel choices for tourists.[93] SIDS geographical situation makes them particularly vulnerable to environmental issues, especially on their coasts.[94] On average, natural disasters in SIDS cause damage equivalent to 2.1% of their GDP.[95] In 2017, hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria caused over $100 billion in damages to the economies of affected SIDS.[96] An average hurricane strike causes tourism arrivals to be approximately 2% lower than expected had no strike occurred.[97] In 2017 the Caribbean gateway airport of Miami saw year-on-year air arrivals decrease by 37% during September and by 13% in the following ten weeks after islands were affected by severe storms.[98]

To further develop sustainable tourism in SIDS, UNWTO has indicated that increased access to financial support for tourism projects is needed, especially given the increased intensity and frequency of natural disasters.[99] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recognized the difficulties SIDS face due to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic and has facilitated access via their Rapid Financing Instruments, which are used to help mitigate severe economic disruptions.[100] As of December 2020, 15 SIDS had received a total of $1.9 billion in funds from the IMF's financing programs.[101]

SIDS were among the first to raise the issue of climate change at the United Nations and lobbied to ensure that their special needs were recognized in the UNFCCC.[102] Some SIDS have leveraged this recognition to advance their sustainable tourism efforts.[103] With financial support from the Green Climate Fund and technical support from New York University, Grenada is undertaking a project to transform the capital, Saint George's, into a climate-resilient city in the Caribbean.[104] Countries like Dominica and Barbados are implementing mitigation and adaptation measures and increasing spending on

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[92] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Climate Change and Tourism – Responding to Global Challenges*. 2008. p. 39.

[93] United Nations Environment Programme. *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Tourism Sector: Frameworks, Tools and Practices*. 2008. p.1.

[94] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO Regional Seminar on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development*. 2018.

[95] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *For Heavily Indebted Small Islands, Resilience-Building is the Best Antidote*. 2021.

[96] Rossello et al. Science Direct. *The Effects of Natural Disasters on International Tourism: A Global Analysis*. 2020. p. 4.

[97] Strobl et al. Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association. *The impact of hurricane strikes on tourist arrivals in the Caribbean*. 2013. p. 1.

[98] World Travel and Tourism Council. *Caribbean Resilience and Recovery: Minimising the Impact of the 2017 Hurricane Season on the Caribbean's Tourism Sector*. 2017.

[99] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO Regional Seminar on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism Development - Final Report*. 2018. p. 11.

[100] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Gaps, challenges, and constraints in means of implementing the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction*. 2022. p. 35.

[101] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on External Debt in Small Island Developing States*. 2021. p. 20.

[102] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Gaps, challenges, and constraints in means of implementing the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction*. 2022. p. 35; International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Small Islands, Large Oceans: Voices on the Frontlines of Climate Change*. 2021. pp. 3-5.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

infrastructure including shelters, roads and bridges, and seawalls, while countries like Jamaica are focused on diversifying their tourism sectors, encouraging ecotourism.[105]

In 2022, the United Nations Secretary-General published a note on Sustainable Tourism that promoted initiatives, including ecotourism, to advance environmental protection in the industry.[106] The note highlighted the efforts of local and indigenous community groups in advancing ecotourism.[107] One instance is the Raja Ampat Homestay Association, a network of ecotourism enterprises owned by local communities in Papua and West Papua, Indonesia.[108] Having won the Equator Prize in 2017 in recognition of its outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the organization offers ecotourism services that connect tourists directly with family-run homestays through a web portal, creating more than 600 jobs for indigenous communities in homestays, fishing, and agriculture, and providing alternatives to the resort industry.[109] By focusing on hospitality and environmental standards for all member community-owned businesses, this project has promoted environmental sustainability, implemented forest patrols, and allowed for community enforcement of protected fishing zones, among other initiatives.[110] The Raja Ampat Local Homestay Business Association grew to 135 community-owned businesses in the Raja Ampat islands as of 2020.[111]

While many SIDS are working to make their tourism industries sustainable, they are also highly susceptible to external factors.[112] Human activity, including sea pollution and overfishing, threaten coral reefs in SIDS, and significant declines in coral cover have corresponded with increases in sea surface temperatures.[113] Coral reefs, found in over 100 countries and territories, contribute to the well-being, safety, and economic security of millions of people by supporting a quarter of marine species and providing coastal protection and sustenance.[114] Tourism-based activity at coral reef ecosystems brings in an estimated $36 billion annually in revenue to SIDS.[115] Biodiversity loss, particularly of coral reefs, is a significant challenge for SIDS, particularly in the Pacific where millions of residents depend on reef tourism for survival, but poor local practices coupled with global challenges from warming and acidification continue to degrade reefs.[116] This ongoing concern has led some Member States to develop initiatives to preserve coral and biodiversity, including through the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs).[117] MPAs and LMMAs are areas actively managed for conservation and use conservation methods to reverse coral loss.[118] Pacific islands,

[105] Roy. Council on Foreign Relations. *How the Caribbean Is Building Climate Resilience*. 2023; United Nations Environment Programme. *Ecotourism: Principles, Practices, and Policies for Sustainability*. p. 9. 2002.
[106] United Nations, General Assembly. *Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection (A/RES/77/178)*. 2022. p. 6
[107] United Nations, General Assembly. *Promotion of Sustainable Tourism, Including Ecotourism, for Poverty Eradication and Environment Protection: Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/274)*. 2018. p. 6
[108] United Nations Development Programme. *Asosiasi Usaha Homestay Lokal Kabupaten Raja Ampat, Republic of Indonesia*. 2020.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] United Nations, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. *Small Island Developing States in Numbers: Biodiversity & Oceans*. 2017. p. 16; Souter et al. Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network and International Coral Reef Initiative. *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020. Summary for Policymakers*. 2020. p. 4.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Souter et al. Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network and International Coral Reef Initiative. *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020. Summary for Policymakers*. 2020. p. 1.
[115] Ibid.
[116] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Climate Change and Tourism – Responding to Global Challenges*. 2008; World Resources Institute. *Reefs at Risk Revisited. Summary for Decision Makers*. 2012. p. 3.
[117] World Resources Institute. *Reefs at Risk Revisited. Summary for Decision Makers*. 2012. p. 34.
[118] Ibid.

including Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, have all implemented LMMAs successfully, allowing for better management of fishing and enforcement of local policies.[119] These efforts have been made more effective by incorporating training in improved management practices, restricting the overuse of reefs for fishing, and otherwise supporting reef health and resilience.[120]

**Involvement of the Private Sector in the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism**

The vast majority of tourism-related businesses and services are privately owned and operated, which has led international organizations to highlight the necessity of working with the private sector to advance sustainable tourism.[121] In its *Global Report on Public-Private Partnerships*, UNWTO indicated that Member States must rely on and work with the private sector, including investors, developers, accommodation providers, and others to deliver services to tourists.[122] Public-private partnerships can be particularly important after disasters or economic downturns.[123] The World Travel and Tourism Council encourages Member States to adopt measures that incentivize private sector participation in disaster recovery efforts, including by providing tourism sector training and education, increasing access to grants and loans for small- and medium-sized enterprises, and reducing tourism costs such as departure taxes.[124] For long-term policy and planning, General Assembly resolution 76/201 on "Sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America" encouraged the establishment and promotion of national strategies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, encouraging public and private collaboration to address these challenges.[125]

According to the *SAMOA Pathway*, sustainable economic growth through tourism involves the responsible development of tourism activities that focus on achieving economic expansion and reducing poverty while protecting the environment, developing local communities, and preserving history and culture.[126] To advance this kind of development, the OECD has suggested that Member States implement policy frameworks that allow for public-private partnerships to finance sustainable infrastructure investments, including investment in low carbon-climate sensitive infrastructure.[127] Tourism infrastructure plays an important role in industry competitiveness and helps to meet increased travel demands, but can often be cost-prohibitive for a single business or even government to undertake independently.[128] Foreign direct investment can provide financial support and expertise, especially if local governments work to establish an environment that enables that investment or provides their own financing.[129] For instance, New Zealand's Tourism Infrastructure Fund aids local communities in their efforts to expand the local tourism sector by offering four years of financial support for infrastructure development, encompassing transportation projects and building camping facilities.[130] The program provides up to $25 million New

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid. pp. 33-34.

[121] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Global Report on Public-Private Partnerships: Tourism Development*. 2015; Smith. Inter-American Development Bank. *Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Sustainable Tourism*. N.d. p. 4.

[122] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Global Report on Public-Private Partnerships: Tourism Development*. 2015. p. 15.

[123] Ibid.

[124] World Travel and Tourism Council. *Caribbean Resilience and Recovery: Minimising the Impact of the 2017 Hurricane Season on the Caribbean's Tourism Sector*. 2017. p. 3.

[125] United Nations, General Assembly. *Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development in Central America (A/RES/76/201)*. 2022. p. 6.

[126] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme*. N.d.

[127] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2018 Highlights*. 2018.

[128] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*. 2020. p. 11.

[129] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2018 Highlights*. 2018.

[130] Ibid.

Zealand dollars each year to support these initiatives, focused on incentivizing private sector engagement in the industry.[131]

As the tourism sector continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, so has the demand for labor.[132] Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development for the tourism industry enhance job creation and job security and improve employability for local populations and can include sustainable elements.[133] TVET and skills development can also help to fill in skills gaps in the industry and have a significant impact on boosting productivity and profitability.[134] ILO reports have suggested that governments working with the private sector to create stronger links for skills development initiatives can help to promote decent work and increase social inclusion.[135] For instance, in Sri Lanka, a private hotel group, Jetwing, instituted training programs in transportation, customer service, and preparing or transporting produce by locals for the hotel to help reduce antagonism among the rural community.[136] This training combined with free English language and vocational training programs provided by the hotel promoted sustainable employment for locals and increased the number of skilled professionals available for tourism employment.[137]

### Conclusion

By fostering economic growth, generating employment opportunities, and promoting environmental awareness, tourism has the potential to assist Member States in transitioning towards an environmentally sustainable economy.[138] The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of many industries, including tourism, and the need for resilient planning involving workers, business leaders, communities, and tourists.[139] International organizations have consistently indicated that efforts to make tourism sustainable require a cohesive policy framework and adequate financing, especially in SIDS.[140] Collaboration between the private sector and local and national government agencies may help promote economic sustainability and contribute to the promotion of sustainable tourism.[141]

### Further research

Delegates may begin their research by considering the following questions: How can Member States collaborate to promote sustainable tourism? How can SIDS maximize their resources to promote sustainable tourism? What support do SIDS and LDCs need to combat their challenges in promoting sustainable tourism? How can the resilience of the tourism sector to climate change and other shocks and stresses be improved? How can sustainable tourism policies and regulations be better designed and implemented? How can partnerships between Member States, governments, businesses, civil society, and local communities be strengthened to promote sustainable tourism?

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[131] Ibid.
[132] International Labour Organization. *The future of work in the tourism sector: Sustainable and safe recovery and decent work in the context of the COVID-19*. 2022. p. 26.
[133] Ibid. pp. 26 - 28.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] United Nations Development Programme. *Best Practices Guidelines and Toolkit on Engaging the Private Sector in Skills Development.* 2017. p. 10.
[137] Ibid.
[138] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Sustainable Tourism Governance and Management in Coastal Areas of Africa*. 2013. p. 8; United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook - Enhancing capacities for Sustainable Tourism for development in developing countries*. 2013. p. 44.
[139] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2023. p. 23.
[140] United Nations, World Tourism Organization et al. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030.* 2018. p. 39.
[141] United Nations, World Tourism Organization. *Global Report on Public-Private Partnerships: Tourism Development*. 2015.

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World Travel and Tourism Council. *Caribbean Resilience and Recovery: Minimising the Impact of the 2017 Hurricane Season on the Caribbean's Tourism Sector*. 2017. Retrieved 3 August 2023 from: https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2018/Caribbean%20Recovery%20Report%20-%20Full%20Report%20-%20Apr%202018.pdf?ver=2021-02-25-182520-540

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World Travel & Tourism Council et al. *A Net Zero Roadmap for Travel & Tourism: Proposing a New Target Framework for the Travel & Tourism Sector*. 2021.Retrieved 30 October from: https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/2021/WTTC_Net_Zero_Roadmap.pdf

## 2. Eradicating Rural Poverty to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

*"To eradicate poverty in all its forms, a greater focus on rural poverty is needed."*[142]

### Introduction

Rural poverty is a substantial challenge to the realization of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda), which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2015.[143] To successfully implement the 2030 Agenda, concerted efforts can be directed holistically toward eradicating rural poverty as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 (no poverty).[144] Poverty is more than a lack of income, it encompasses hunger and malnutrition, restricted availability of education and essential services, social bias and isolation, and a deficiency in involvement in decision-making processes.[145] The United Nations uses measurements of absolute poverty, which pertains to households with a fixed income level, and relative poverty, which pertains to households earning 50% less than the average household income.[146] Rural areas are home to roughly 79% of people living in extreme poverty and have a poverty rate of 17.2% compared to the 5.3% poverty rate in urban areas.[147] Rural poverty is caused by limited access to markets, education, quality infrastructure, employment, healthcare, and financial institutions.[148] The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has found that for every dollar invested in land restoration and sustainable land management practices, a substantial return of up to $30 in economic benefits can be realized.[149]

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), an alarming 733 million individuals across the globe lack access to electricity, 80% of which are in remote rural regions.[150] Increasing costs of gasoline and food are further exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and the persistent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to challenge the situation.[151] Sub-Saharan Africa contains 75% of all rural areas that lack energy access.[152] The educational divide further contributes to the already prevailing disparity between rural and urban communities, limiting the prospects of social and economic progress for vulnerable communities.[153] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 statistics report that students attending urban schools outperform their counterparts in rural schools by a substantial 28-point margin, a discrepancy equivalent to the educational and economic gains from an entire extra year of schooling.[154] The General Assembly Second Committee guides international macroeconomic policy frameworks on a variety of issues regarding economic growth and development, including poverty

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[142] United Nations, General Assembly. *Eradicating rural poverty to implement Sustainable Development (A/75/189)*. 2020. p.19.

[143] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *PAWSSD Chapter 2*. N.d.

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

[145] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Development Goal 1 No Poverty: End poverty in all forms everywhere*. 2023.

[146] United Nations Statistics Division. *SDG Indicator Metadata*. 2023.

[147] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Development Goal 1 No Poverty: End poverty in all forms everywhere*. 2023; Suttie. International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Overview: Rural Poverty in Developing Countries: Issues, Policies and Challenges*. N.d.

[148] Giving Compass. *Differences Between Rural and Urban Poverty*. N.d.

[149] United Nations Environment Programme. *Why Restoring Nature is Good for Farmers, Fisheries, and Food Security*. 2023.

[150] International Energy Agency et al. *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report 2022*. 2022. p.25.

[151] International Energy Agency. *Russia's War on Ukraine*. N.d.

[152] International Energy Agency et al. *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report 2022*. 2022 p. 25.

[153] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Issues Note for the Rural Development Conference*. 2022. pp. 12-20.

[154] Schleicher. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations.* 2018.

eradication, food security and nutrition, and sustainable development, all of which are key aspects of eradicating rural poverty.[155]

### *International and Regional Framework*

For decades, alleviating poverty in impoverished rural regions has been an integral component of the agenda for global development.[156] The *United Nations Conference on the Human Environment* of 1972 was the first to recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence of nations and the environment, underscoring the urgent need to address environmental challenges that often disproportionately affect impoverished rural regions.[157] The international community further elevated this foundation by incorporating the principles of sustainable development through the formal adoption of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* during the Earth Summit in 1992.[158] This document, encompassing 27 principles, forged a link between environmental preservation and the eradication of poverty through international partnerships and policy.[159] Of particular significance are Principles One, Three, and Ten, emphasizing that humans, especially those in impoverished rural areas, are at the core of sustainable development.[160] These principles advocate for the rightful entitlement to equitable development, access to essential environmental resources, and participatory decision-making processes, aiming to alleviate rural poverty.[161]

In Chapter 14 of *Agenda 21* (1992), there is a clear commitment to addressing the urgent challenges related to poverty and rural development by focusing on agricultural investments.[162] This approach emphasizes the importance of implementing the integrated frameworks of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) as outlined within Agenda 21, especially within national-level policies, with the aim of reducing poverty and promoting rural development.[163] Integrative mechanisms such as SARD have effectively addressed multifaceted challenges in rural provinces, where marginalized communities often bear the brunt of the adverse ramifications of economic hardship and environmental degradation.[164] In the continued context of sustainable development, 1995 saw the creation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* during the Fourth World Conference on Women, underscoring the imperative of addressing gender disparities in the efforts to alleviate rural poverty.[165]

In 2015, the General Assembly unanimously endorsed the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that no individual or community would be left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development objectives.[166] Sustainable development efforts prioritize the eradication of poverty, as outlined in SDG 1 (no poverty), and the provision of essential services and opportunities essential for human development as the two primary objectives for rural communities.[167] These objectives are consistently emphasized across all 17 SDGs, reflecting a prominent commitment to addressing rural

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[155] United Nations, General Assembly. *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*. N.d.
[156] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018*. 2018.
[157] United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (A/CONF.45/14/Rev.1)*. 1972. p. 45.
[158] United Nations, General Assembly. *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol.1))*. 1992.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. *Agenda 21*. 1992. pp.14.1, 14.104
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995.
[166] United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.
[167] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.

poverty and promoting sustainability.[168] This commitment underscores the link between the elimination of rural poverty and the SDGs.[169] SDG 1 (no poverty), specifically target 1.1, aims to ensure the eradication of extreme poverty in rural areas.[170] SDG 5 (gender equality) and its target 5.1 strives to empower rural women and promote gender inclusivity.[171] Additionally, SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), target 8.5 emphasizes the need to create sustainable livelihoods in rural areas.[172] A commitment to these specific SDGs and their corresponding targets underscores a dedication to addressing rural poverty and fostering sustainable development in a comprehensive manner.[173]

The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (2015), prioritizes reducing risk and bolstering resilience while acknowledging the heightened vulnerability of rural communities to the adverse consequences of disasters.[174] Priority 2 of the framework underscores the importance of incorporating disaster risk reduction (DRR) into sustainable development policies and planning, with a special focus on poverty reduction at global and regional levels.[175] In addition, Priority 3 emphasizes aims to substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, including those vital for rural communities, particularly at the national and local levels.[176] The complex interrelation between rural and urban domains was also highlighted by the *New Urban Agenda* (2016), adopted during the Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.[177] This agenda is relevant to poverty elimination by advocating for integrated rural-urban development planning and policies, with a specific focus on poverty alleviation and sustainable progress, even though its primary emphasis is on urban development.[178] Specifically highlighted in the *New Urban Agenda* is a commitment to strengthening the sustainable management of resources, encompassing land, water, energy, materials, and more, with attention to minimizing waste and environmental impact.[179] It further emphasizes the consideration of supply chains and circular economy concepts to ensure environmental sustainability, conservation, and resilience, aligning with the recognition of the complex relationship between rural and urban development.[180]

The 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, adopted during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, highlights the importance of mobilizing financial resources and services from both domestic and international investments to promote sustainable development, with a specific emphasis on combating rural poverty through agriculture and natural resources.[181] The Agenda also highlights the necessity to enhance collaborative mechanisms to effectively transform the aspirations outlined in the SDGs into tangible, financially supported, and actionable components.[182]

### Role of the International System

In recent years, the General Assembly has discussed the eradication of rural poverty in a variety of ways, including resolution 73/244 on "Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and Secretary-General report 75/189 on *Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030*

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[168] Ibid.
[169] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] United Nations, General Assembly. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/69/283)*. 2015.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Antonio et al. *Land in the New Urban Agenda: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward*. 2017.
[178] Ibid.
[179] United Nations, General Assembly. *The New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. 2016. p.31.
[180] Ibid.
[181] United Nations, General Assembly. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015.
[182] Ibid.

*Agenda for Sustainable Development*, both of which focused on the progress of eradicating rural poverty and the challenges in achieving complete eradication.[183] In 2019, there was an Expert Group meeting on "Eradicating Rural Poverty to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."[184] The focus of this meeting was to identify the issues and challenges in the eradication of rural poverty development; provide an update on the progress of ending rural poverty; and review current programs, policies, and strategies.[185] The General Assembly proclaimed 2019 to 2028 as the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDFF).[186] The decade is a global recognition of family farming's significance and is headed by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).[187] UNDFF aims to highlight the importance of food security and fostering sustainable agriculture needed to create jobs and other opportunities for empowering smallholder farmers and communities to preserve traditional knowledge, grow local economies, and increase rural development.[188]

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works in 170 countries to reduce inequality and end poverty.[189] UNDP supports sustainable rural development through guiding national programs and providing national and local support for programs working to achieve sustainable rural development.[190] UNDP supports Member States in analyzing and meeting the needs and abilities of their rural populations.[191] The UN DESA, an office of the United Nations Secretariat, releases reports such as the *World Social Report 2021*.[192] The *World Social Report 2021* recommends that stakeholders reconsider rural development with the focus on closing the rural-urban divide in addition to conserving the environment, eradicating poverty, and sustainable development in rural communities.[193] In 2019, FAO, a specialized agency, developed a framework on rural extreme poverty focusing on meeting the requirement of target 1.1 of the SDGs.[194] FAO focuses on ending hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition; eliminating poverty and progressing economic and social progress; and sustainable management and utilization of natural resources.[195] IFAD is another specialized agency of the United Nations and serves as a financial mechanism for agricultural development.[196] The focus of IFAD is on empowering rural populations to be in control of their own development.[197] IFAD provides funding and investments for rural populations to allow them to increase food security, improve nutrition in their and their families' diets, increase incomes, increase resiliency, and expand business.[198]The United Nations

[183] United Nations, General Assembly *Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/73/244)*. 2019. p.5; United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary-General: Eradicating rural poverty to implement Sustainable Development (A/75/189)*. 2020. p.19.
[184] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Inclusive Social Development. *Expert Group Meeting on "Eradicating Rural Poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"*. 2019. p. 1.
[185] Ibid. p. 2.
[186] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Introducing the UN Decade of Family Farming*. 2021.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] United Nations Development Programme. *About Us.* 2023.
[190] Xu et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Coming together, miles apart*. 2021.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *FAO Framework on Rural Extreme Poverty*. 2019. p. 1.
[195] Ibid. p. 17.
[196] International Fund for Food and Agricultural Development. *About us*. N.d.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) also takes action to support rural women by partnering with the General Assembly, World Food Programme (WFP), FAO, and IFAD.[199]

Oxfam International focuses on ending poverty through program development, humanitarian assistance, public education and advocacy campaigns.[200] Care International works to end poverty by addressing underlying causes of poverty related to unequal distribution of resources.[201] Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are essential partners for the on-the-ground work of the United Nations, and can have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and, therefore, observer status to ECOSOC and many of ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies.[202]

### *Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management*

To address rural poverty and promote rural development, the implementation of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management emerges as crucial strategies with the potential to eradicate poverty and advance the SDGs.[203] Sustainable agriculture is a key driver of economic growth and poverty reduction in rural communities.[204] As the profound impact of climate change on rural communities is confronted, climate-smart practices can be utilized in order to promote DRR and lower the impact of agriculture on climate change.[205] These practices encompass a range of strategies and techniques designed to enhance the adaptability and sustainability of agriculture in the face of climate-related challenges, which can include increasingly variable weather patterns, extreme events, and shifting growing seasons.[206] By integrating advanced technologies, crop diversification, and sustainable water and soil management, climate-smart practices not only strengthen farmers' resilience against increasingly volatile climate conditions but also hold the potential to increase their incomes.[207] By optimizing agricultural production, the international community can enhance rural livelihoods and fortify food security, thereby advancing the collective effort to address the challenges faced by impoverished rural communities.[208]

According to FAO, agriculture accounts for around 4% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and can account for up to 25% of GDP in some developing countries.[209] It also employs over 27% of the global workforce, particularly in developing countries.[210] Even though FAO reports that around 75% of those living in extreme poverty are employed in agriculture for their livelihoods, rural areas continue to grapple with significant food insecurity.[211] Efficiency in agricultural production involves adopting modern techniques such as precision farming, which is an approach that utilizes advanced management mechanisms, and improved irrigation, which are techniques for providing water to crops.[212] Studies by the

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[199] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The role of women in rural development, food production and poverty eradication*. N.d.

[200] Oxfam International. *Ending poverty*. 2023.

[201] Care International. *What we do*. 2023.

[202] United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The UN and Civil Society*. N.d.

[203] United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. *Agenda 21*. 1992.

[204] World Bank. *Agricultural Innovation & Technology Hold Key to Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries, Says World Bank Report.* 2019.

[205] United Nations Development Programme et al. *Climate Smart Agriculture: Insights from Practice*. 2019. p.1.

[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid. p.18.

[208] World Bank. *Agricultural Innovation & Technology Hold Key to Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries, Says World Bank Report.* 2019.

[209] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *World Food and Agriculture - Statistical Yearbook 2021*. 2021. p. xii

[210] Ibid; Convention on Biological Diversity. Poverty Reduction. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. N.d.

[211] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Strategic Work of FAO to Reduce Rural Poverty*. 2016. p. 4.

[212] United Nations, General Assembly. *Sustainable Development (A/70/472)*. 2015.

World Economic Forum show that precision agriculture technologies can increase crop yields by up to 10%, enhancing farmers' incomes and reducing poverty.[213] Agriculture, as a sector, represents a substantial consumer of freshwater resources, accounting for up to 92% of the world's total freshwater usage.[214]

Global food systems are responsible for approximately 30% of greenhouse gas emissions, a significant contributor to climate change.[215] According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate change poses a significant threat to agriculture, with the potential to cause reduced crop yields, thereby negatively impacting the well-being of rural communities.[216] Adopting proactive measures such as promoting climate-friendly agriculture and cultivating drought-resistant crop varieties can bolster climate resilience of rural areas and safeguard rural economic livelihoods.[217] Additionally, a concerning one-third of the food produced on a global scale is either lost or wasted, exacerbating resource inefficiencies and environmental strain.[218] These practices generate unsustainable levels of pollution and waste, resulting in reduced incomes for already impoverished communities while further exacerbating the challenges of environmental degradation and sustainability at the same time.[219]

The sustainable stewardship of natural resources is a pivotal cornerstone in the effort to eradicate rural poverty, given the substantial reliance of many rural communities on these resources for their sustenance.[220] The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates that an excess of 1.6 billion individuals derive their livelihoods from forests, encompassing vital necessities such as fuel and household income.[221] Moreover, forests play a crucial role in mitigating climate change by serving as substantial carbon sinks, a mechanism for absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.[222] Roughly 2.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide are absorbed by forests annually.[223] This accounts for approximately one-third of the carbon dioxide emissions generated from burning fossil fuels.[224]

Through the synergy of diverse stakeholders, public-private partnerships facilitate the mobilization of financial and technical resources for sustainable agriculture and resource management.[225] Programs like the Global Agriculture & Food Security Program offer significant financial aid to developing nations, with grants exceeding $1.7 billion to enhance agricultural productivity and food security.[226] Financial services, including microcredit, which involves providing small loans to individuals, are powerful instruments in empowering rural communities; however, they are not sufficient on their own.[227]

### *Women and Rural Poverty*

FAO indicates that women account for 43% of the agricultural workforce.[228] Women are important agents for sustainable development in rural areas but experience limited access to financial credit, health care,

[213] World Economic Forum et al. *Innovation with a Purpose: The Role of Technology Innovation in Accelerating Food Systems Transformation*. 2018.

[214] World Economic Forum. *How technology can help address challenges in agriculture*. 2022.

[215] World Bank. *Agriculture and Food*. 2023

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[217] World Bank. *Agricultural Innovation & Technology Hold Key to Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries, Says World Bank Report.* 2019.

[218] World Bank. *Agriculture and Food*. 2023

[219] Rolle. UN Chronicle. *We Can All Help Reduce Food Loss and Waste*. 2022.

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[221] International Union for Conservation of Nature. *Forests and Climate Change*. 2021.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Sundaram et al. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Public-Private Partnerships and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Fit for purpose?* 2016.

[226] Global Agriculture & Food Security Program. *Global Agriculture & Food Security Program*. 2023.

[227] Nijraini. Africa Renewal. *Microfinance: Good for the Poor?* 2015.

[228] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Reduce Rural Poverty.* 2023.

and education because of economic and social discrimination and gender inequality.[229] The limited access to these resources contributes to food and economic crises.[230] The role of women as farmers, producers, investors, caregivers, and consumers is often constrained, despite the fact that they represent a significant portion of both the agricultural workforce and consumer demographics.[231] Such constraints include discrimination and limited access to land and livestock ownership, compensation, decision-making, and access to financial and credit services.[232] This compounds upon gendered economic discrimination such as low wages, a lack of access decent work, a disproportionate share of providing unpaid care to family members, and longer work days.[233] In many rural communities, women remain in rural areas as the primary worker on subsistence farms while men often leave to work in urban environments.[234] SDG target 5.a calls for women to have equal rights to economic resources and for Member States and institutions to make the necessary reforms to allow women to access land ownership, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources.[235]

When women have access to land, there are often better economic outcomes for their family and their community.[236] General Assembly resolution 72/148 on "Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas" provided policy initiatives for Member States to improve the livelihoods of women and girls in rural areas.[237] In 2019, the Secretary-General provided a report 72/148 on *Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas* as a review of initiatives taken by the United Nations and Member States on these issues.[238] The Secretary-General called for the integration of gender equality into frameworks focusing on sustainable development and climate change.[239] In addition, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of agricultural and rural development policies and programs being gender-responsive.[240] The report also discusses the need for support of resilience and adaptive capacities for women and girls.[241] The General Assembly and the Secretary-General recommended that gender equality considerations be included in all contexts of sustainable development.[242]

Agricultural and rural development policies and programs can be gender-responsive by supporting women in capacity development, increasing access to financial services, and assessing the needs of rural women through data collection and gender-disaggregated data.[243] The General Assembly has recommended that Member States support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls by improving access to clean water supplies and sustainable energy along with the provision of information and communication technology.[244] Access to sustainable infrastructure and technology will assist in eliminating rural poverty, allow for the maintenance of biodiversity, and increase the ability to produce

[229] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Rural Women*. N.d; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The role of women in rural development, food production and poverty eradication*. N.d.

[230] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Rural Women*. N.d; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The role of women in rural development, food production and poverty eradication*. N.d.

[231] Women Watch. *The UN System: Working Together to Empower Rural Women*. 2012.

[232] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Reduce Rural Poverty*. 2023.

[233] Oxfam International. *Why a Majority of the World's poor are women*. 2023.

[234] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Rural Women*. N.d.

[235] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.* N.d.

[236] Food and Agriculture Organization et al. *The gender gap in land rights.* 2018. p.1.

[237] United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary-General: Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas (A/RES/72/148)*. 20189. p.1.

[238] Ibid.

[239] Ibid. p.5.

[240] Ibid. p.7.

[241] Ibid. p.9.

[242] Ibid. p.5.

[243] Ibid. p. 7.

[244] Ibid. p. 9

crops that are resilient to drought.[245] UN Women is forming partnerships and supporting programs that support women's access to food and nutrition, improve rural livelihoods, and support access to training and technology.[246] Ensuring that women fully participate in decision-making will also assist in addressing aspects of rural poverty, as it will allow for freedom and agency to make decisions to improve livelihoods.[247] In India, UN Women is working on the Dalit's Women's Livelihoods Accountability Initiative to assist marginalized women in participating in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee program, which assists participants with financial independence, access to bank accounts, and access to credit.[248] With UN Women's support, participation in the program increased from 2,800 to more than 14,000.[249] In Zimbabwe, through the provision of equipment and training, UN Women is helping women participate in the fishing industry.[250] This has allowed women to gain financial independence and participate in the male-dominated fishing industry.[251] UN Women, IFAD, WFP, and FAO work together under the initiative Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women to assist women in rural communities access rights to land, leadership, participation in community, and opportunities.[252] There is evidence that this will increase productivity and improve growth and development.[253] FAO is also working to address the discrimination of women in rural communities and empower the business opportunities of women in rural areas.[254]

### Conclusion

Promoting rural women's economic empowerment by utilizing sustainable agriculture and effective natural resource management in rural areas is a vital strategy to achieve the SDGs.[255] Sustainable agriculture and natural resource management present promising pathways toward alleviating rural poverty.[256] Climate-smart practices have the potential to raise farmers' incomes by up to 35%, enhancing their resilience against climate-related challenges.[257] These benefits encompass a wide range of positive outcomes such as increased crop yields, improved water availability, and reduced land degradation.[258] Women are significant actors in rural communities, but face frequent discrimination which hinders eradicating poverty from rural populations.[259] Emphasizing efficiency, resilience, and environmental preservation, while nurturing partnerships and financial inclusivity, holds the key to forging a more promising and equitable future for rural communities.[260]

### Further Research

While delegates conduct further research into this topic, they should consider the following: How can sustainable agriculture practices and natural resource management contribute to poverty reduction and enhance rural livelihoods while preserving environmental integrity? How can rural development initiatives

[245] Ibid. p.11.
[246] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Rural Women*. N.d.
[247] United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary-General: Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas (A/RES/72/148)*. 20189. p.13
[248] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Rural Women*. N.d.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Reduce Rural Poverty.* 2023.
[255] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.
[256] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.. *Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs: 20 Interconnected Actions to Guide Decision-Makers.* 2018. p.14
[257] United Nations Development Programme et al. *Climate Smart Agriculture: Insights from Practice*. 2019.
[258] United Nations Environment Programme. *Why Restoring Nature is Go od for Farmers, Fisheries, and Food Security*. 2023.
[259] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Rural Women*. N.d.
[260] United Nations, United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies.* 2020. p. 60-65.

be designed and implemented to ensure inclusivity and leave no one behind, especially vulnerable and marginalized populations? What are the key policy interventions and institutional reforms needed to create an enabling environment for sustainable rural development? How can community-based organizations and local leadership contribute to promoting sustainable rural development and reducing poverty?

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