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United Nations Development Programme Background Guide 2026

Written by Diamond James, Hassan Moinuddin, Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck, and Chizulu Uwolloh



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck (Conference A) and Director Chizulu Uwolloh (Conference B). Ashley is the Vice President of a nonprofit for veterans, and holds a Bachelor's in Public Policy and Administration with certifications in Advancing Sustainable Development and Green Fiscal Policy. Zulu is a Program Assistant at the Ford Foundation, where she supports the programmes on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice, and Natural Resources and Climate Justice. She is a lawyer licensed to practice in Nigeria and holds an LL.B. from the University of Lagos and a B.L. from the Nigerian Law School.

A portion of these materials was authored by Diamond James and Hassan Moinuddin, both of whom are Directors of Conference Management. Diamond received her Bachelor's degree in International Studies with minors in Cultural Anthropology and Business Marketing from Cal Poly Humboldt. She currently works in private child care and is preparing to apply for a master's program. Hassan studied Philosophy at Royal Holloway, University of London. He currently works for London council in SEND Education while advocating for Deaf and Disabled people's rights. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Alliyah Edwards (Conference A) and Mariana G. Marañón Laguna (Conference B).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Reducing Poverty to Accelerate Efforts towards the 2030 Agenda
2. Unlocking Potentials for Community-Based Tourism

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 PM ET on 1 March 2026 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!

Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck, Director
Conference A

Chizulu Uwolloh, Director
Conference B



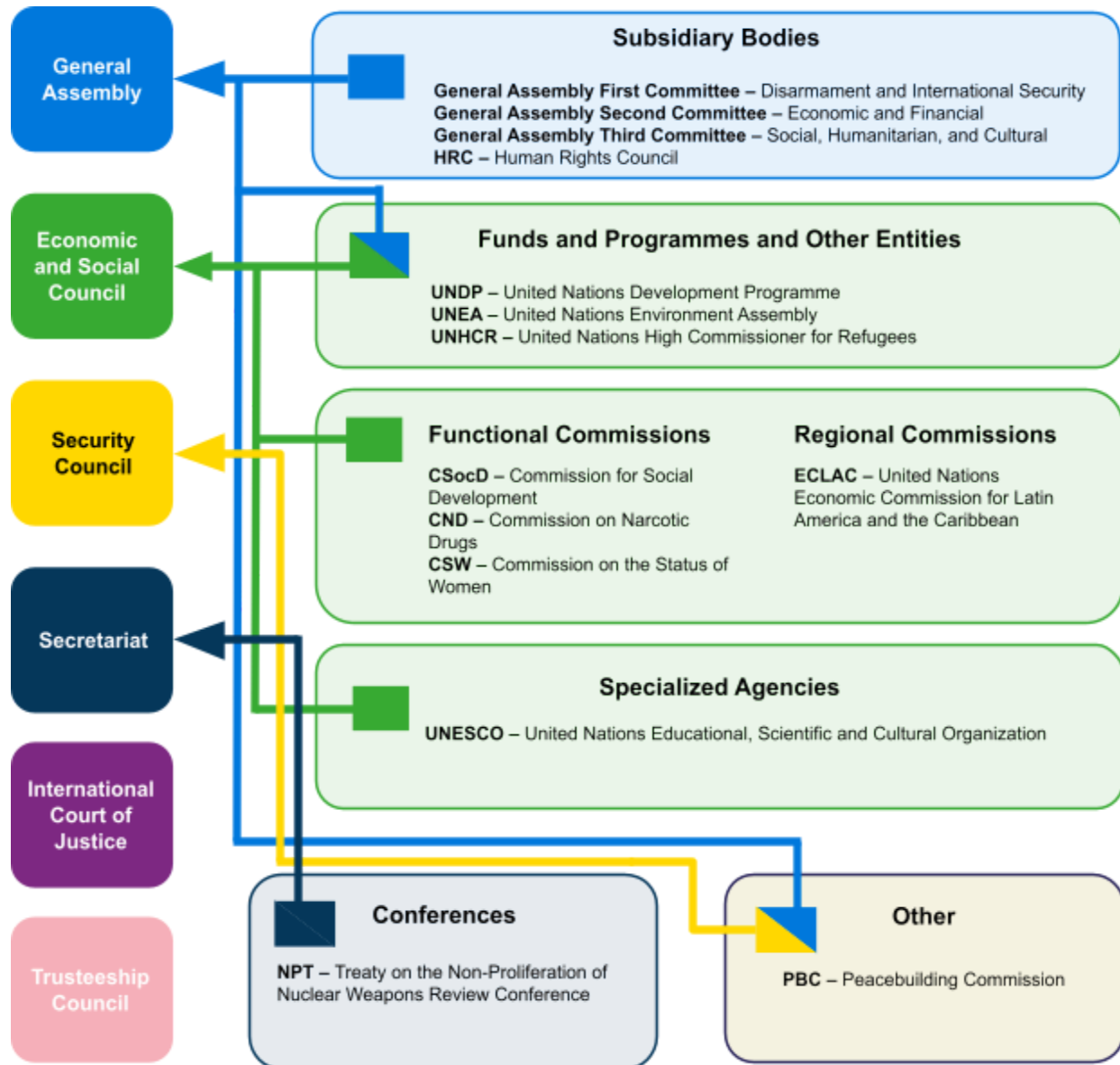
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United Nations System at NMUN·NY

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 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) draws its purpose from Article 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which outlines that the organization should promote “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development.”¹ UNDP is the leading United Nations agency on sustainable development and assists Member States with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015).²

NMUN simulates the **Executive Board** in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board. For the purposes of NMUN·NY, the committee can make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNDP in line with the overall function of the organization.

Mandate, Function, and Powers

UNDP’s core mandate is to “end poverty, build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions.”³ The *Strategic Plan 2026-2029* (2025) outlines four strategic objectives: (1) prosperity for all, (2) effective governance, (3) crisis resilience, and (4) a healthy planet.⁴ It has defined accelerators that drive progress along those strategic objectives towards the coexistence of human development and a healthy planet, which are digital and AI transformation, gender equality, and sustainable finance.⁵

While the following list is not exhaustive, UNDP’s mandate can be summarized as:

- UNDP will **generally**: support country-led efforts to achieve the SDGs with its projects and programs; work with governments to identify funding, investment, and partnership opportunities for programs focused on development and a healthy planet; support Member States to develop their governance structures, institutional capacities, and legislative approaches; provide data and analysis to Member States; develop and foster partnerships between local, national, and international actors; make recommendations to and coordinate with Member States, regional bodies, and other international actors on the achievement of the SDGs.⁶
- UNDP **will not generally**: direct Member States, non-governmental organizations, other United Nations agencies, and stakeholders to carry out specific development activities or actions; create new development frameworks or policies that do not align with those adopted by the General

¹ United Nations Development Programme. *About us*. 2024; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. art. 55.

² United Nations Development Programme. *The SDGs in Action*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

³ United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2025. pp. 6-7.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 8-9.

⁶ Ibid; United Nations Development Programme. *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*. 2025: Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021.



Assembly and Economic and Social Council; and work on areas not covered by its *Strategic Plan 2026-2029*.⁷

Governance, Funding, and Structure

UNDP reports annually to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁸ Its leadership consists of an Administrator and an Executive Board.⁹ The Administrator leads a team of five Regional Bureaus and provides support to other Bureaus, such as the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and the Crisis Bureau, to carry out UNDP's programs.¹⁰ In addition, the Administrator also acts as the Vice-Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, which is the United Nations system's high-level forum for policy coordination on sustainable development and includes other United Nations entities focusing on sustainable development.¹¹

The Executive Board oversees all of UNDP's projects, approves budgets, and ensures that projects adapt to changing situations and the unique needs of each Member State.¹² The Executive Board consists of 36 rotating Member States from five geographic groups: eight from the group of African states, seven from the group of Asia-Pacific states, four from the group of Eastern European states, five from the group of Latin America and the Caribbean states, and 12 from the group of Western European and other States.¹³ Member States of the Executive Board are elected by ECOSOC each year for three-year terms.¹⁴ Only the group of Western European and other States decides on its rotation internally.¹⁵ The Executive Board holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.¹⁶ UNDP shares its Executive Board with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).¹⁷

UNDP's work is carried out by its offices in different Member States, which are focused on helping governments develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and reduce inequalities.¹⁸ UNDP also administers and utilizes the United Nations Volunteers program and the United Nations Capital Development Fund to support its work for sustainable development.¹⁹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2024.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Leadership*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *2024 Organizational Chart*. 2024.

¹¹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *Who We Are*. 2024.

¹² United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹³ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Members of the Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Reports on Sessions*. 2024.

¹⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

¹⁹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2024-2025*. 2024. p. 8.



To achieve its mandate, UNDP relies entirely on voluntary contributions.²⁰ Its budget is segmented into core resources, which are unrestricted and can be used for its day-to-day operations, and earmarked contributions, which can only be used for specific themes, programmes, or projects.²¹ In 2024, the total annual contributions to UNDP decreased slightly by 1% to \$4.9 billion from the year before.²² Three quarters of its financial resources come from donor countries and multilateral institutions, and one quarter from countries where projects are implemented.²³

²⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Funding*. 2024.

²¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Funding*. 2024.

²² United Nations Development Programme. *Funding Compendium 2024*. 2025. p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*



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1. Reducing Poverty to Accelerate Efforts towards the 2030 Agenda

“Eradicating poverty is not a task of charity, it’s an act of justice and the key to unlocking an enormous human potential.”²⁴

Introduction

The eradication of poverty and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are deeply interlinked.²⁵ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), poverty extends beyond low income.²⁶ It is a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society.²⁷ Poverty includes the deprivation of basic needs such as adequate housing, healthcare, education, and access to water and sanitation, which are needed to live a life of dignity, opportunity, and hope.²⁸ As of June 2025, the World Bank defines extreme poverty as “surviving on less than USD 3.00 per person per day,” with about one in ten people still living in extreme poverty.²⁹ The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) identifies SDG 1 (no poverty), aimed at eradicating all forms of poverty, as the foundational goal and an indispensable requirement for the achievement of all other SDGs.³⁰ Reducing poverty is statistically linked to progress on SDGs 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 6 (clean water and sanitation), and 10 (reduced inequalities).³¹ Where poverty is reduced, progress on the SDGs will accelerate, and where it persists, development will stall.³²

By 2030, about 7.3% of the global population, nearly 622 million people, are projected to remain in extreme poverty, threatening progress toward the 2030 Agenda.³³ If poverty reduction efforts are not accelerated, 8.9% of the global population will live in extreme poverty by 2030, leaving millions behind and further reducing global development gains.³⁴ Despite progress made since 2013, poverty reduction has slowed down due to the compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising conflicts, climate-

²⁴ Global Goals Campaign. *Goal 1: No Poverty*. N.d.

²⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.

²⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *A new lens on poverty: Why community stories matter*. 2024.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Ending Poverty*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *What makes one poor - Understanding the Multidimensional Poverty Index*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *The True Meaning of Poverty*. 2023; United Nations Development Programme. *A new lens on poverty: Why community stories matter*. 2024; World Bank Group. *Understanding Poverty*. 2025.

²⁹ World Bank Group. *Measuring Poverty*. 2025.

³⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017*. 2017. p. 12; United Nations Development Programme. *What Makes One Poor - Understanding the Multidimensional Poverty Index*. 2022.

³¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Poverty eradication*. N.d.; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Ending Poverty*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *What makes one poor - Understanding the Multidimensional Poverty Index*. 2022.

³² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.

³³ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Ending Poverty*. 2024.; World Bank Group. *Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024*. 2024. p. 49.

³⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.



and weather-related shocks, economic instability, and inflation.³⁵ According to UNDP, COVID-19 has reversed more than four years of progress in poverty reduction.³⁶ Today, around 808 million people live in extreme poverty, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for 60%.³⁷ Between 2015 and 2019, the world recorded the slowest rate of poverty reduction in decades, showing that progress is not only stalling but also at risk of reversal.³⁸

Poverty does not exist in isolation but affects all aspects of life and remains deeply connected to broader developmental challenges.³⁹ It manifests in various ways and intersects with other global issues, including hunger and malnutrition, poor health, limited access to essential services, opportunities and choices, social discrimination, and exclusion from decision-making processes.⁴⁰ For example, poverty hinders the achievement of SDG 4 by limiting the ability of individuals and families to afford schooling, which in turn reduces children's opportunities for development and decent work, and contributes to high rates of unemployment.⁴¹ Similarly, addressing poverty among women and girls advances SDG 5 by creating opportunities for financial independence and participation in community development.⁴² The ripple effects of poverty extend beyond individuals, impacting communities and the global economy by reducing social cohesion, and driving crime, instability, and conflicts.⁴³ As poverty is multidimensional, no two individuals experience it in the same way, with each case shaped by gender, age, geographic location, race, disability, and other intersecting factors.⁴⁴ Eradicating poverty, therefore, requires a multidimensional approach that addresses both economic deprivation and the structural inequalities that perpetuate it.⁴⁵

³⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*. 2024. p. 3; Sanchez-Paramo et al. World Bank Blogs. *COVID-19 leaves a legacy of rising poverty and widening inequality*. 2021; World Bank Group. *Understanding Poverty*. 2025.

³⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere*. 2025; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The COVID-19 boomerang effect: New forecasts predict sharp increases in female poverty*. 2020; Sanchez-Paramo et al. World Bank Blogs. *COVID-19 leaves a legacy of rising poverty and widening inequality*. 2021.

³⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.

³⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Ending Poverty*. 2024; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*. 2025.

³⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.

⁴⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Eradication of Poverty: Statement to the Economic and Social Council*. 1998; United Nations Development Programme. *The True Meaning of Poverty*. 2023; Wong. Earth.Org. *Exploring the Interconnectedness of Sustainable Development Goals*. 2021.

⁴¹ Filho et al. *Poverty: A central barrier to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. 2021. pp. 102-103.

⁴² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How can gender equality reduce poverty?*. 2024.

⁴³ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere*. N.d.

⁴⁴ Bixby. *Intersectional inequalities: How socioeconomic well-being varies at the intersection of disability, gender, race-ethnicity, and age*. 2024.

⁴⁵ Foster et al. World Bank Blogs. *Beyond income: A multidimensional approach to tackling inequality*. 2024.



International and Regional Framework

The global commitment to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development is grounded in various international frameworks.⁴⁶ The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) establishes that all humans should enjoy a high standard of living, social development, and their human rights, laying the foundation for the 2030 Agenda and SDG 1.⁴⁷ Poverty is also recognized as a violation of fundamental human rights, as seen in Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (1948), which establishes that every person has the right to an adequate standard of living, even in circumstances beyond their control.⁴⁸ The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1976) similarly guarantees the rights to work, housing, food, health, education, and an adequate standard of living, which are all paramount to eradicating poverty.⁴⁹ Recognizing the complex and multi-dimensional nature of poverty, Chapter 3 of *Agenda 21* (1992), adopted at the Conference on Environment and Development, calls for country-specific anti-poverty strategies and international cooperation to achieve sustainable development.⁵⁰ The *Copenhagen Declaration* (1995), adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, further emphasizes poverty eradication, employment generation, and social integration as central to social development.⁵¹ The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015), created to complement the 2030 Agenda, highlights the need to finance sustainable development through international cooperation, public and private investments, resources, and services.⁵² AAAA's plan to abolish poverty exists in three dimensions: promoting inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment, and facilitating social inclusion.⁵³

The 2030 Agenda outlines the interrelated nature of the SDGs, all of which call for the eradication of extreme poverty in all its forms, everywhere.⁵⁴ Interlinked with this SDG, SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and promote economic empowerment for women and girls, which is key to reducing gendered poverty.⁵⁵ Likewise, SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) promotes sustained and inclusive economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all, ensuring improved living standards for everyone.⁵⁶ SDG 10 seeks to end all forms of inequality that reinforce poverty and ensure equal

⁴⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015.

⁴⁷ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

⁴⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

⁴⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966.

⁵⁰ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. *Agenda 21*. 1992.

⁵¹ United Nations, World Summit for Social Development. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development: Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995*. 1996.

⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015.

⁵³ Ibid.

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

⁵⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. N.d.; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 18.

⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*. N.d.; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 19.



opportunities for all.⁵⁷ Together, these SDGs reflect that the eradication of poverty cannot be achieved in isolation.⁵⁸ Most recently, the *Pact for the Future* (2024) reinforces this interconnection by reaffirming that extreme poverty remains the greatest global challenge and that its eradication is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.⁵⁹ Action 2, specifically, asserts that poverty eradication will be placed at the center of global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.⁶⁰ UNDP plays a pivotal role in the implementation of these frameworks by supporting Member States to integrate SDG 1 targets into national development plans, mobilize financing for program implementation, and promote inclusive growth strategies that address poverty's structural dimensions.⁶¹

At the regional level, numerous frameworks promote development goals tied to poverty reduction.⁶² The African Union's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (Agenda 2063) (2015) sets long-term development goals aimed at eradicating poverty by 2063 through economic transformation, creation of decent jobs, and social development.⁶³ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' *Declaration on Strengthening Social Protections* (2018) focuses on enhancing the well-being and livelihood of people of all ages.⁶⁴ It seeks to reduce poverty by promoting inclusion and ensuring equitable access for vulnerable groups to opportunities and social protection.⁶⁵ The *Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development* (2020), developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as a response to the 2030 Agenda, emphasizes the need to invest in human resources capabilities and technology to reduce poverty and inequality.⁶⁶

Role of the International System

At the core of UNDP's mandate is the elimination of all forms of poverty.⁶⁷ As the United Nations' leading agency for poverty reduction, UNDP collaborates with 170 Member States to eradicate poverty and inequality everywhere.⁶⁸ Reporting to both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council,

⁵⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Reduce inequality within and among countries*. N.d.; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 21.

⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 28.

⁵⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024. p. 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁶¹ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026-2029*. 2025. pp. 6-11.

⁶² African Union. *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. 2013; Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection - Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection*. 2018; United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. *United Nations - Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development*. 2020.

⁶³ African Union. *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want*. 2013. p. 2; African Union. *AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment 2018-2028*. 2018. p. 10.

⁶⁴ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection - Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection*. 2018. p. 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁶⁶ United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. *United Nations - Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development*. 2020. p. 34.

⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Our mission, our goals, our mandate*. N.d.

⁶⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Poverty Reduction*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *No Poverty - UNDP Sustainable Development Goals*. 2025.



UNDP supports Member States to develop national strategies that center on sustainable and inclusive human development to address poverty.⁶⁹ An example of this work is the *2024 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index*, which utilizes health, safety, and standard of living indicators to determine the degree of poverty within populations.⁷⁰ UNDP's *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* (2021) further reflects the program's focus on human development as it aims to help 100 million people escape multidimensional poverty, i.e., multiple forms of disadvantage experienced beyond income, and realize their full potential through investments in enhanced capabilities and opportunities.⁷¹ The *Strategic Plan 2026-2029* (2025) serves as a successor to the previous plan, reaffirming UNDP's commitment to eradicating poverty through three accelerators of change: digital and artificial intelligence transformation, gender equality, and sustainable financing.⁷² The plan tailors each of these objectives to Member States' specific contexts to address the root causes of poverty.⁷³

Beyond UNDP, the broader United Nations system also contributes to poverty eradication through targeted programs and policy initiatives that address the diverse needs of populations.⁷⁴ At its 72nd session, the General Assembly declared 2018-2027 to be the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.⁷⁵ Acting as the Decade's focal point, the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs strengthens international cooperation for social development by providing policy advice to governments and intergovernmental bodies.⁷⁶ The Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council, examines the relationship between poverty and human rights.⁷⁷ To promote economic growth and reduce poverty, UNDP collaborates with other agencies like the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support employment programs for young people and marginalized groups.⁷⁸ Both the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) address poverty and inequality through initiatives such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and programs that promote women's economic empowerment, financial inclusion, and gender-responsive social protection, equipping individuals with practical skills and knowledge for employment.⁷⁹

⁶⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Our mission, our goals, our mandate*. N.d.; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021; United Nations Development Programme. *About Us - UNDP Nigeria*. 2025.

⁷⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *2024 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index: Poverty Amid Conflict*. 2024. p. 2.

⁷¹ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021.

⁷² United Nations Development Programme. *The Landscape of Development*. 2025; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026-2029*. 2025. p. 1.

⁷³ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026-2029*. 2025. p. 6.

⁷⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Ending Poverty*. 2024.

⁷⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) (A/C.2/73/L.9)*. 2018. p. 4.

⁷⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty*. 2025.

⁷⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*. 2025.

⁷⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Youth Skills Development for Employment*. 2020.

⁷⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) - UNESCO Amman Field Office*. 2023.



Regional commissions and organizations play a critical role in advancing the 2030 Agenda and reducing poverty by addressing the specific development needs and priorities of their regions.⁸⁰ The five regional commissions of the United Nations support Member States through technical assistance, capacity building, research, policy support, and by organizing and coordinating regional forums to promote economic and social development, reinforcing progress on SDG 1 and the 2030 Agenda.⁸¹ The commissions also undertake specific regional interventions, such as the Economic Commission for Africa's division on poverty, inequality, and social policy, which strengthens Member States' capacity in these areas.⁸² For instance, the African Union drives regional economic growth and has programs aimed at tackling poverty within the region through frameworks such as Agenda 2063, focused on socio-economic transformation.⁸³ UNDP's Multi-Country Office Programs address challenges like youth unemployment, gender-based violence, and poverty across several Member States.⁸⁴

Multilateral institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) support the reduction of poverty globally through the mobilization of financial resources.⁸⁵ The World Bank provides loans, grants, and technical expertise to support poverty alleviation strategies of Member States.⁸⁶ The International Monetary Fund promotes macroeconomic stability and inclusive growth that are necessary for poverty reduction.⁸⁷ The International Fund for Agricultural Development invests in rural communities by providing financing to help improve food production and livelihoods.⁸⁸ Multilateral development institutions also address poverty reduction in specific regions, such as the African Development Bank, through its 10-year strategy, which focuses on access to financing for women and the youth.⁸⁹ NGOs such as Oxfam International, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, and CARE International work at the grassroots level to deliver humanitarian aid, implement programs, and advocate for vulnerable groups most affected by poverty.⁹⁰

Addressing Youth Unemployment as a Driver of Poverty

ILO identifies youth unemployment as one of the most urgent challenges undermining global poverty reduction efforts, thus hindering the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.⁹¹ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development defines youth unemployment as the population of young people of

⁸⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Remarks for meeting on Regionalism and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2016.

⁸¹ International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Member States Discuss Role of Regional Commissions in UN Reform, SDGs*. 2018; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The UN Regional Commissions and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. 2015.

⁸² United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. *Poverty, Inequality and Social Policy*. N.d.

⁸³ African Union. *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. 2013.

⁸⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Multi-Country Office Jamaica CPD 2022-2026*. 2022. pp. 2-4.

⁸⁵ Wood. Bretton Woods Project. *What Role for the Multilateral Institutions, Donors, and NGOs in the New Framework for Poverty Eradication*. 2000.

⁸⁶ World Bank Group. *Understanding Poverty*. 2025.

⁸⁷ International Monetary Fund. *IMF Pamphlet Series No. 52: Preface - Poverty Policy Advice by Ravallion and Chen*. 1996.

⁸⁸ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *What We Do*. N.d.

⁸⁹ African Development Bank Group. *African Development Bank Group Ten-Year Strategy 2024-2033*. 2025. p. 3.

⁹⁰ Oxfam International. *About Us - Fighting Inequality to End Poverty and Injustice*. 2025.

⁹¹ International Labour Organization. *Youth employment: From a national challenge to a global development goal*. 2005.



working age, 15-24, who do not have a job and are actively seeking employment.⁹² Despite representing 17% of the global population, UNESCO reports that 40% of the global unemployed are young people.⁹³ The issue of youth unemployment is a recurring theme throughout the 2030 Agenda, particularly with SDG 1 and SDG 8, which both recognize the importance of productive human potential through the protection of labor rights and the eradication of unemployment.⁹⁴ SDG 4 is also relevant, as it underlines the persistent gap between education and the job market for youth who are not in education, employment, or training due to underdeveloped skillsets.⁹⁵ Youth unemployment over a long time decreases wage potential, increases the risk of later life unemployment, and affects social inclusion in rural communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty across many generations.⁹⁶ In urban areas, youth unemployment is often driven by skills mismatches, limited suitable employment opportunities, and economic instability, emphasizing the need to address SDG 4.⁹⁷ In rural areas, youth unemployment is often linked to underdeveloped infrastructure, a lack of educational facilities, and the persistence of low-paying agricultural work, which restricts sustainable development.⁹⁸

Member States have prioritized addressing youth unemployment and development by implementing policies that strengthen access to skills training and entrepreneurship opportunities.⁹⁹ General Assembly resolution 78/179 on “Policies and programmes involving youth” calls on Member States to develop policies regarding youth employment and development to ensure their integration in society.¹⁰⁰ As a result, UNDP has made young people a central priority of their Multi-Country Office Programs, particularly in the Caribbean and Pacific subregions.¹⁰¹ These programs have enabled UNDP to identify and address barriers to youth employment while strengthening their resilience, inclusion in society, and access to decent work and opportunities.¹⁰² One notable outcome of the Multi-Country Office Programs is the Youth 2030 Moonshot Initiative, which aims to support over 7 million youth-led social innovations by 2030 through a one-stop solution hub that supports young entrepreneurs.¹⁰³ UNDP has also implemented

⁹² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Youth Unemployment Rate - OECD Data*. 2025.

⁹³ Global Change Data Lab. *Population by Age Group*. 2025; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2019; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Meet the SDG 4 Data: Giving Youth the Skills They Need for the Job Market*. 2018.

⁹⁴ European Commission. *SDG 1 - No Poverty (Statistics Explained)*. 2025; Global Goals Campaign. *Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*. N.d.

⁹⁵ International Labour Organization. *Number of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) a cause for concern, despite falling jobless rate*. 2024; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Meet the SDG 4 Data: Giving Youth the Skills They Need for the Job Market*. 2018.

⁹⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *World Economic Situation and Prospects Monthly Briefing No. 111*. 2018.

⁹⁷ Clayton. Centre for Cities. *Youth Unemployment: Five Facts That Take You Beyond the Headlines*. 2015.

⁹⁸ Elder et al. International Labour Office. *Youth and rural development: Evidence from 25 school-to-work transition surveys*. 2015. p. 43.

⁹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Policies and programmes involving youth (A/RES/78/179)*. 2013. p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 6.

¹⁰¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Multi-Country Office Jamaica CPD 2022-2026*. 2022. pp. 2-4.

¹⁰² United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Ready Set Great Youth Conference to Tackle Youth Poverty on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*. 2023.

¹⁰³ United Nations Development Programme. *Youth Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific: Reaching Every Youth Changemaker, Everywhere (Youth 2030 Moonshot)*. 2025.



long-term solutions to youth unemployment issues in multiple Member States by connecting young people to internships and apprenticeships.¹⁰⁴ Through these initiatives, young people are given the skillset and the opportunity to escape poverty by bridging the gap between employment and education, empowering them financially.¹⁰⁵

Decent work is particularly important for young people as it fosters better futures, promotes gender equality, and contributes to inclusion and peace.¹⁰⁶ ILO defines decent work as involving opportunities for work that is productive and ensures a fair income and equal treatment, and opportunity for all women and men.¹⁰⁷ Where such opportunities are absent, the resulting poverty and economic exclusion can lead to frustration, social unrest, and even political instability.¹⁰⁸ Including young people in policymaking and expanding their access to skills and workplace experience are therefore essential to promoting stability and sustainable development.¹⁰⁹ To this end, ILO has set up Decent Jobs for Youth, an initiative aimed at granting youth work experience placements and ensuring quality jobs for young people, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda.¹¹⁰ Building on these efforts, UNDP continues to support Member States in integrating youth employment strategies in their national development plans and advancing social protection systems, all as core drivers of poverty eradication and sustainable development.¹¹¹

Gender Inequality and the Feminization of Poverty

Due to structural gender inequalities, women and girls experience poverty at higher rates and face more severe multidimensional consequences than men.¹¹² This global phenomenon, known as the feminization of poverty, refers to the disproportionate impact of poverty on women and girls due to systemic inequalities in access to education, healthcare, financial resources, property rights, and employment opportunities.¹¹³ According to UN Women, more than 10% of women globally live in extreme poverty, with women aged 25-34 being 25% more likely than men in the same age group to live in extremely poor households.¹¹⁴ This gendered poverty gap is further exacerbated by a number of intersecting factors such

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Addressing Youth Unemployment Through Private-Public Partnerships*. 2024.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Ready Set Great Youth Conference to Tackle Youth Poverty on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*. 2023.

¹⁰⁶ World Economic Forum. *Why Investing in the Future Should Mean Investing in Youth*. 2024.

¹⁰⁷ Global Goals Campaign. *Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*. N.d.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Programme on Youth. *Youth in the Global Economy - Chapter 2: Employment*. 2005. p. 64; Ruto et al. *The Guardian*. *Young people can help solve the climate crisis. Let's give them a seat at the table*. 2023.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ International Labour Organization. *Youth for Jobs - Decent Action for Youth Employment: A Global Initiative*. 2016.

¹¹¹ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Policy and Programme Brief: UNDP Support to the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2016. p. 13; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026-2029*. 2025. p. 6.

¹¹² Burchi et al. *The Gendered Nature of Poverty: Data, Evidence and Policy Recommendations*. 2023. p. 1.

¹¹³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Feminization of Poverty*. 2000.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How can gender equality reduce poverty?*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Two billion women and girls worldwide lack access to any form of social protection, UN Women report shows*. 2024.



as age, race, ethnicity, disability, and geographic location.¹¹⁵ For instance, in conflict and climate-affected areas, women are eight times more likely to live in extreme poverty than those in non-fragile environments.¹¹⁶ The gap increases during childbearing years, when women and girls face higher poverty risks due to a lack of financial support and economic security during maternity leave.¹¹⁷ These disparities are also increased in the workplace with societal norms restricting opportunities, and women having limited access to social protection, financial resources, cash benefits, unemployment protection, maternity benefits, pensions, unemployment insurance, and healthcare leave, among others.¹¹⁸ This is especially true in rural areas, where inadequate infrastructure and specialized services, including healthcare and childcare, increase women's vulnerability.¹¹⁹

Although access to social protection systems has improved over the years, there are still significant gender gaps in place.¹²⁰ According to UN Women, two billion women and girls worldwide still lack access to any form of social protection, leaving them even more vulnerable to poverty.¹²¹ The World Bank defines social protection systems as policies and programs that bridge skill, financial and information gaps, and safeguard people from vulnerabilities that may occur in life.¹²² Target 1.3 of SDG 1 highlights the need for establishing universal social protection systems for all to end poverty.¹²³ As of February 2025, 3.8 billion people lack access to any social protection.¹²⁴ Gender-responsive and inclusive social protection systems, including maternity leave benefits for all sectors of work, affordable healthcare, unemployment protection, and access to childcare support for those who are self-employed, are therefore necessary to address the specific risks that affect women in the formal and informal workforce.¹²⁵ When these systems fail to consider women and girls' specific needs and vulnerabilities, they are exposed to financial dependence and poverty, especially when they become mothers or during periods of unpaid care work.¹²⁶ The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1978) and the *Beijing Declaration* (1995) lay the foundation for global efforts to address poverty, violence and education for

¹¹⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Inequality - Bridging the Divide*. N.d.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Two billion women and girls worldwide lack access to any form of social protection, UN Women report shows*. 2024.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *How can gender equality reduce poverty?*. 2024.

¹¹⁹ Mascherini et al. Eurofound. *Bridging the rural-urban divide: Addressing inequalities and empowering communities*. 2023.

¹²⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Two billion women and girls worldwide lack access to any form of social protection, UN Women report shows*. 2024.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² World Bank Group. *Understanding Poverty: Social Protection and Labour*. 2025.

¹²³ International Labour Organization. *SDG 1.3. Social Protection Systems for all, including and Floors, Key to Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity*. N.d. p. 3.

¹²⁴ Ibid; International Labour Organization. *Universal social protection: A precondition for accelerating social development*. 2025. p. 6; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Policy Brief No. 7: Making Social Protection Gender-Responsive*. N.d. p. 1.

¹²⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization. *Gender-Sensitive Social Protection*. 2025; Staab. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Op-ed: Gender-responsive social protection: a key to unlock progress across the SDGs*. 2025; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Two billion women and girls worldwide lack access to any form of social protection, UN Women report shows*. 2024.

¹²⁶ Ibid.



women and girls at an international level.¹²⁷ Similarly, the outcomes of the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2024 reaffirmed the need to invest in gender-responsive policies and social protection systems to address gender inequalities and eradicate poverty.¹²⁸

Tackling gendered poverty requires structural reforms, data-driven policy making, and investments in gender-centered solutions that transform economic systems and social norms.¹²⁹ UNDP and UN Women promote an intersectional, gendered, and holistic approach focused on investing in women and girls through education and the development of skills, which are proven pathways to eradicating poverty.¹³⁰ These efforts to strengthen women's agency and leadership are particularly necessary in rural areas, in comparison to urban areas, where progress needs to be 26 times faster to achieve the 2030 Agenda by its set date.¹³¹ UNDP has led global efforts to dismantle structural barriers that perpetuate the feminization of poverty by providing women with access to essential and financial services, empowering them economically, and breaking cycles of poverty.¹³² Through initiatives such as Equanomics, UNDP has supported 57 Member States in aligning fiscal policy reforms with gender equality, implementing gender-responsive social protection and care systems, and investing in inclusive economic growth.¹³³ UNDP has also established the Funding Windows mechanism, which supports the training, education, and provision of decent work opportunities for women.¹³⁴ This development of skills also improves access to job opportunities and reduces poverty among women and girls.¹³⁵ The Fund for Gender Equality supports Member States and civil society organizations through grants and tailored programs that advance economic opportunities to close gendered poverty gaps.¹³⁶ Investments in both paid and unpaid care work, together with the collection of gender-disaggregated data, are vital for designing effective,

¹²⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979; United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*. 1995.

¹²⁸ Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board. *Social Protection to Promote Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women - CSW68 (2024): Accelerating the Achievement of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls by Addressing Poverty and Strengthening Institutions and Financing with a Gender Perspective*. 2024.

¹²⁹ Neto et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Empowering lives for a future without poverty*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023*. 2023.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Commission on the Status of Women - CSW68 (2024): Accelerating the Achievement of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls by Addressing Poverty and Strengthening Institutions and Financing with a Gender Perspective*. 2024.

¹³² United Nations Development Programme. *Annual Report of the Administrator on the Implementation of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy in 2024*. 2025. pp. 3-5.

¹³³ Food and Agriculture Organization. *Gender-Sensitive Social Protection*. 2025; United Nations Development Programme. *Annual Report of the Administrator on the Implementation of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy in 2024*. 2025. p. 5.

¹³⁴ Neto et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Empowering lives for a future without poverty*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Breaking the cycle of poverty for women and their communities*. 2024.

¹³⁵ Neto et al. United Nations Development Programme. *Empowering Lives for a Future Without Poverty*. 2024; World Bank Group. *Getting to Equal: How Educating Every Girl Can Help Break the Cycle of Poverty*. 2011.

¹³⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Fund for Gender Equality*. 2025.



gender-responsive policies that promote poverty reduction and advance SDG 1, SDG 5, and the broader 2030 Agenda.¹³⁷

Conclusion

Poverty remains both a consequence and driver of broader development challenges.¹³⁸ Although international, regional, and national efforts have made progress, it still drives global inequality, affecting the most vulnerable communities, especially women and young people.¹³⁹ Poverty manifests in many ways and is shaped by a number of intersecting factors, including gender, age, geography, and disability, among others.¹⁴⁰ As such, a multipronged approach is necessary to reduce poverty and achieve the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁴¹ To do this, UNDP and other actors in the international, regional, and national systems have adopted multiple strategies that address the multifaceted nature of poverty, including through employment, economic empowerment, capacity and skills-building, social protections, education, and provision of livelihoods.¹⁴² Through these efforts, progress can be accelerated towards achieving SDG 1 and the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that no one is left behind.¹⁴³

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can Member States address multidimensional poverty and accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 1? How does poverty affect overall development in Member States? What are the remaining gaps in international and regional frameworks that promote poverty mitigation? How can Member States tackle youth unemployment and the feminization of poverty as key drivers of inequality? What strategies can help address poverty in rural and urban contexts? How can Member States strengthen social protection systems to address unemployment and poverty among youth and women? How can Member States design and implement inclusive social protection systems that address the distinct needs of women and girls in rural and urban areas and help close the overall gender poverty gap? How might investments in education and skills development reshape the economic opportunities available to women and youth?

¹³⁷ Elson. *Reducing Women's Poverty Through New Development Strategies*. N.d. p. 14.

¹³⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Ending Poverty*. 2024.

¹³⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *World YOUTH Report*. 2003. p. 73; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The Feminization of Poverty*. 2000.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Eradication of Poverty: Statement to the Economic and Social Council*. 1998.

¹⁴¹ Hardoon. Development Initiatives. *Why we need a multidimensional approach to measuring poverty that leaves no one behind*. 2022.

¹⁴² United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2024*. 2024. p. 6.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 6.



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2. Unlocking Potentials for Community-Based Tourism

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), recognizes the role tourism plays in workforce development, ecological protection, and poverty mitigation.¹⁴⁴ UNWTO defines tourism as a social, cultural, and economic activity that involves people traveling to locations outside of their normal surroundings for business, pleasure, or other reasons.¹⁴⁵ These individuals, referred to as visitors, may be residents or non-residents, tourists or day trippers, and they frequently engage in travel-related economic transactions.¹⁴⁶ Community-based tourism (CBT) is an inclusive model of tourism that puts local communities and residents at the forefront of shaping and managing tourism activities, helping protect cultural traditions, and supporting environmental sustainability.¹⁴⁷ CBT is an inclusive approach that gives locals the authority to direct tourism planning, operations, and benefit-sharing, particularly in relation to ecotourism, which emphasizes sustainable travel that prioritizes safeguarding natural environments, and sustainable tourism, which promotes a comprehensive approach to preserving the long-term economic and social well-being of communities and cultures.¹⁴⁸ Through this approach, tourism becomes an innovative means to advance broader sustainability goals like promoting sustainable economic opportunities and safeguarding the environment.¹⁴⁹ CBT aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the General Assembly, through resolution 70/1 (2015) "*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*" (2030 Agenda), most notably advancing SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 15 (life on land).¹⁵⁰ In 2018, UNDP reported tourism as one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide through its publication *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*, where tourism was recognized for its crucial role in boosting economic growth, job growth, reducing poverty, and encouraging sustainable environmental practices.¹⁵¹

According to UNWTO's 2024 International Tourism Highlights, an estimated 3.4 trillion USD in direct gross domestic product was generated by tourism in 2023, making up approximately 3% of the world economy.¹⁵² In 2023, 1.286 million foreign overnight visitors traveled globally, according to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, a publication that tracks short-term trends in global tourism, showing an increase of 325 million from 2022.¹⁵³ Amid this growth, CBT offers a meaningful way to connect guests

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030*. 2017.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Glossary of Tourism Terms*. 2025.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ MPDI Journal. *Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight*. 2025; Global Sustainable Tourism Council. *The Difference Between Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism*. 2025.

¹⁴⁸ MPDI Journal. *Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight*. 2025.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 19, 23-24.

¹⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030*. 2018.

¹⁵² United Nations World Tourism Organization. *International Tourism Highlights*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁵³ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *World Tourism Barometer: January 2024*. 2024.



with the local communities through cultural exchanges and UNDP recognizes the use of tourism as an effective approach to both safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting sustainable development.¹⁵⁴

International and Regional Framework

Global tourism plays a key role in advancing international cooperation and deepening cultural understanding.¹⁵⁵ Articles 1 and 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) highlight the importance of international cooperation in addressing economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian challenges.¹⁵⁶ This influenced future global tourism policies by fostering sustainable development, inclusive economic growth and cultural understanding.¹⁵⁷ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) established key rights in relation to freedom of culture, religion, and movement, which have influenced future global tourism frameworks.¹⁵⁸ UDHR shapes the ethical foundations of global tourism by framing it as a human-centered activity promoting cultural exchange, education, and global engagement.¹⁵⁹ Articles 13 and 27, which affirm the right to freedom of movement and participation in cultural life, both promote global tourism by supporting inclusive travel and access to cultural heritage.¹⁶⁰ In 1980, UNWTO adopted the *Manila Declaration on World Tourism* (Manila Declaration), which established a framework recognizing global tourism as a force for international cooperation, peace, cultural exchange, and economic development.¹⁶¹ The Manila Declaration strengthened tourism's role in national development plans, especially in developing countries interested in its potential for economic growth and international engagement.¹⁶² Further, UNWTO adopted the *Acapulco Document on World Tourism* (Acapulco Document) (1982) to build upon the Manila Declaration by emphasizing the importance of sustainability, inclusion, and equitable participation.¹⁶³ These principles have become key pillars of global tourism policies, influencing global initiatives focused on sustainable tourism and community empowerment, and tackling tourism's environmental and social impacts.¹⁶⁴

CBT is essential to fostering sustainable development and cultural preservation.¹⁶⁵ In 1995, the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, held in Lanzarote, Spain, led to the adoption of the *Charter for*

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Introducing Creative Tourism: what is this and why is it valuable for community empowerment*. 2022.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, General Conference. *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. 1972; United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Manila Declaration on World Tourism*. 1980.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Manila Declaration on World Tourism*. 1980. pp. 1-5.

¹⁶² Ibid. pp. 4, 7-8.

¹⁶³ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Acapulco Document*. 1982. pp. 1-5.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, General Assembly et. al. *Implementation of the Manila Declaration and the Acapulco Document on World Tourism (A/RES/40/363)*. 1985. pp. 2, 6.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Charter for Sustainable Tourism*. 1995; International Labour Organization. *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*. 1989; United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. 2001; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2018; United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*. 2007. pp. 2-3, 8-9.



Sustainable Tourism (World Charter).¹⁶⁶ The World Charter promotes environmental conservation, respect for local cultures, and equitable economic benefits in global tourism.¹⁶⁷ These principles reinforce the foundational values of CBT by prioritizing local empowerment, sustainable resource management, and cultural preservation, further enhancing the long-term relevance of CBT initiatives.¹⁶⁸ The International Labour Organization's (ILO) *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* (1989) affirms Indigenous rights to land, culture, and participation in tourism development.¹⁶⁹ Indigenous participation is essential to ensuring tourism is both culturally authentic and environmentally sustainable.¹⁷⁰ It also protects communities from exploitation and fosters long-term conservation, supporting the values of CBT, which prioritize community decision-making, cultural preservation, and fair benefit-sharing.¹⁷¹ Building on this legal foundation, subsequent cultural and heritage frameworks have expanded this focus to highlight the importance of preserving culture.¹⁷² In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (CSICH), which encourages locals to share and preserve their cultural practices, aligning closely with CBT's objectives.¹⁷³ By formally recognizing intangible heritage and supporting capacity-building and funding initiatives, the CSICH empowers communities to manage tourism in ways that protect their culture and ensure local benefits.¹⁷⁴ The importance of Indigenous involvement in CBT is affirmed by General Assembly resolution 61/295 on "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (UNDRIP) (2007).¹⁷⁵ This resolution underscores the need for sustainable and equitable development grounded in respect for Indigenous knowledge, culture, and land rights, as emphasized in Articles 11, 29, and 31.¹⁷⁶ These principles align closely with the goals of CBT, which rely on Indigenous leadership and cultural integrity to ensure equitable and sustainable tourism.¹⁷⁷

The General Assembly highlights the importance of CBT by supporting cultural preservation and increasing local economic benefits.¹⁷⁸ The 2030 Agenda and SDGs provide a global framework for addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges through inclusive and sustainable development approaches.¹⁷⁹ SDG 1 (no poverty) target 1.4 calls for equal access to economic resources,

¹⁶⁶ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Charter for Sustainable Tourism*. 1995.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ International Labour Organization. *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*. 1989.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2018.

¹⁷³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2018.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*. 2007. pp. 2-3, 8-9.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 2-3, 8-9.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 2-3, 8-9.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015; United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (A/RES/70/200)*. 2016; United Nations, General Assembly. *Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection (A/RES/77/178)*. 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027 (A/RES/78/260)*. 2024.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.



land, and services, aligning with CBT's emphasis on empowering marginalized communities.¹⁸⁰ SDG 4 (quality education) target 4.7 promotes education for sustainable development and cultural appreciation, while SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) target 8.9 supports sustainable tourism that creates employment and preserves local culture, both reflecting CBT objectives.¹⁸¹ SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) target 10.4 emphasizes inclusive policy frameworks that enable community participation in decision-making, and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) target 11.4 highlights the protection of cultural and natural heritage that sustains responsible tourism.¹⁸² Collectively, these targets promote sustainable economic growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment, which are central to the success of CBT.¹⁸³ Most recently, General Assembly resolution 78/260 (2024) on the "International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027" declared 2027 the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, signifying the global commitment to inclusive, culturally respectful, and sustainable tourism.¹⁸⁴ These resolutions support CBT's mission of ethical, locally driven, and sustainable development rooted in cultural preservation, community empowerment, and economic growth.¹⁸⁵

At the regional level, various frameworks guide CBT by promoting sustainability, community empowerment, cultural preservation, and inclusive economic opportunities.¹⁸⁶ The Economic Community of West African States introduced the ECOTOUR Regional Tourism Policy and 2019 - 2029 Action Plan, which prioritizes local development by offering marginalized groups and regions access to both skilled and unskilled jobs.¹⁸⁷ By positioning communities as protectors of cultural heritage, this plan supports SDG target 8.9 and international goals for inclusive growth and respectful tourism.¹⁸⁸ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Community-Based Tourism Standard (2016) provides guidelines to ensure sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven tourism initiatives.¹⁸⁹ It empowers local communities by strengthening their role in tourism management while enhancing the quality and authenticity of visitor experiences.¹⁹⁰ The Community-Based Tourism Enterprise Handbook (2019), jointly developed by the Caribbean Tourism Organization and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, offers practical tools and guidance to help local enterprises effectively plan, manage, and benefit from CBT.¹⁹¹ Collectively,

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 15.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 17, 20.

¹⁸² Ibid. pp. 21-22.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027 (A/RES/78/260)*. 2024.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (A/RES/70/200)*. 2016; United Nations, General Assembly. *Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection (A/RES/77/178)*. 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027 (A/RES/78/260)*. 2024.

¹⁸⁶ Economic Community of West African States. *ECOTOUR Regional Tourism Policy and 2019-2029 Action Plan*. 2019; Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard*. 2016. pp. 5-15; Caribbean Tourism Organization et al. *Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Enterprise Handbook*. 2019. pp. 7, 34, 76, 103.

¹⁸⁷ Economic Community of West African States. *ECOTOUR Regional Tourism Policy and 2019-2029 Action Plan*. 2019.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 20.

¹⁸⁹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard*. 2016. pp. 5-15.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 5-15.

¹⁹¹ Caribbean Tourism Organization et al. *Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Enterprise Handbook*. 2019. pp. 7-8, 11.



these regional frameworks reinforce and promote CBT's role as a sustainable, inclusive, and culturally respectful model.¹⁹²

Role of the International System

UNDP is a key actor in advancing CBT efforts, providing support through policy development, capacity-building initiatives, and sustainable tourism projects.¹⁹³ UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022–2025 (2021) supports countries in achieving the SDGs by empowering local actors and promoting community-driven economic models that advance SDG 1 and SDG 10 through targeted support for marginalized groups.¹⁹⁴ This plan highlights inclusive, locally led development approaches such as strengthening local governance and improving access to economic resources, both essential for CBT's success.¹⁹⁵ The Community-Based Tourism Social Innovation Playbook (2022), jointly developed by the UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand and Local Alike, offers tools like capacity mapping and data collection designed for CBT in Thailand's post-COVID setting.¹⁹⁶ Its comprehensive approach emphasizes building resilience, fostering local empowerment, and promoting sustainable practices, making it especially valuable for communities striving to recover from crises while addressing ongoing challenges in complex, evolving environments.¹⁹⁷ This approach is further reflected in UNDP's Sustainable Tourism Recovery Project (2022) in Malaysia, which aims to enhance community resilience and preserve cultural and natural assets by engaging local stakeholders and capacity-building in Manjung, Setiu, and Mersing.¹⁹⁸ Aligned with national policies and the SDGs, the project also supports Malaysia's National Tourism Policy, which aims to enhance CBT efforts.¹⁹⁹

As the leading United Nations agency for tourism, UNWTO advances CBT by establishing frameworks and advocating for sustainable, inclusive tourism that empowers local communities and protects cultural and natural heritage.²⁰⁰ In 1999, UNWTO created the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* (GCET), a set of principles aimed at fostering responsible and sustainable tourism across economic, social, cultural, and

¹⁹² Economic Community of West African States. *ECOTOUR Regional Tourism Policy and 2019-2029 Action Plan*. 2019; Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard*. 2016; Caribbean Tourism Organization et al. *Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Enterprise Handbook*. 2019. pp. 7-8.

¹⁹³ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021. pp. 2-4, 12; United Nations Development Programme. *Community-Based Tourism Social Innovation Playbook*. 2022. pp. i-ii, 2; United Nations Development Programme. *Sustainable Tourism*. 2025.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021. pp. 2-9; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 15, 21.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021. p. 9.

¹⁹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Community-Based Tourism Social Innovation Playbook*. 2022. pp. i-iii.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. i-iii.

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Sustainable Tourism*. 2025.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

²⁰⁰ United Nations Development Programme et al. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030*. 2017; United Nations World Tourism Organization. *The Initiative*. 2023; UN Tourism *Announces Best Tourism Villages 2024: 55 Rural Communities Shaping the Future of Sustainable Travel*. 2024.



environmental dimensions.²⁰¹ Building on the Acapulco Document, the GCET incorporates environmental protection and human rights while promoting ethical and socially responsible tourism.²⁰² The GCET continues to evolve through periodic reviews to ensure it is responsive to emerging challenges in the tourism sector and aligned with international standards like the SDGs.²⁰³ In 2017, UNWTO and UNDP developed the *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030 Report*, offering practical guidance on how tourism can support the 2030 Agenda, discussing all 17 SDGs.²⁰⁴ In 2021, UNWTO launched The Best Tourism Villages Initiative to promote rural development by using tourism to create economic opportunities, preserve cultural heritage, and improve education through community engagement and capacity-building.²⁰⁵ By 2024, the initiative recognized 55 villages for demonstrating sustainable and inclusive tourism practices that reduce economic inequalities by generating local jobs and income, while enhancing education through training programs and knowledge sharing.²⁰⁶ The initiative now recognizes 254 villages worldwide, reflecting its expanding role in empowering rural communities.²⁰⁷

Numerous international bodies contribute to the enhancement of CBT through targeted initiatives.²⁰⁸ ILO's Enterprise Training Programme on Community-based Rural Tourism and Decent Work (2023) introduced a new methodology combining local training and inclusive planning to promote entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism in rural areas while safeguarding labor rights and social protection.²⁰⁹ This integrated approach fosters sustainable tourism operations grounded in decent work principles, setting it apart from previous models.²¹⁰ In Bolivia, 28 tourism experts participated in technical workshops to explore tools for identifying local resources and services, to generate CBT products that support income opportunities and reinforce CBT principles through local ownership and cultural promotion.²¹¹ UNESCO's World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme (2011) promotes sustainable tourism at World Heritage sites by supporting heritage conservation and empowering local communities through policy, guidance, and capacity-building.²¹² This programme strengthens CBT by encouraging inclusive participation and community-led planning that aligns tourism with cultural values and local needs.²¹³ In the Jaisalmer Fort

²⁰¹ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. 2001.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

²⁰⁴ United Nations Development Programme et al. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030*. 2017; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

²⁰⁵ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *The Initiative*. 2023; United Nations World Tourism Organization. *UN Tourism Announces Best Tourism Villages 2024: 55 Rural Communities Shaping the Future of Sustainable Travel*. 2024.

²⁰⁶ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *UN Tourism Announces Best Tourism Villages 2024: 55 Rural Communities Shaping the Future of Sustainable Travel*. 2024.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme*. 2011; International Labour Organization. *Community-based Rural Tourism Programme: A new methodology to boost productive employment and decent work in Bolivia*. 2023.

²⁰⁹ International Labour Organization. *Community-based Rural Tourism Programme: A new methodology to boost productive employment and decent work in Bolivia*. 2023.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme*. 2011.

²¹³ Ibid.



project in India, this approach balances heritage preservation with local well-being through responsible tourism and community involvement.²¹⁴

Safeguarding Cultural Heritage

CBT plays a key role in safeguarding cultural heritage by promoting community-centered and sustainable products that highlight the diversity and strengths of local resources.²¹⁵ Article 7 of UNWTO's Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics (2020) emphasizes that tourism policies and activities should protect and preserve cultural heritage for future generations, aligning with CBT's focus on community engagement and heritage-based tourism.²¹⁶ For example, at Angkor Wat in Cambodia, heritage preservation efforts led by the International Coordinating Committee, including infrastructure improvements, temple restoration, and sustainable site management, have significantly boosted tourism.²¹⁷ Over 25 years, this growth has benefited nearly 700,000 residents across 112 villages, demonstrating how local ownership and decision-making can transform heritage conservation into inclusive, sustainable development, core principles of CBT.²¹⁸ Despite efforts guided by ethical principles, challenges persist.²¹⁹ In Ethiopia's Amhara region, tourism has contributed to persistent theft and illicit trade of sacred cultural items, such as religious crosses and ancient manuscripts.²²⁰ As a result, their spiritual and cultural significance has been diminished due to commodification and the removal of traditional contexts.²²¹ Such cases underscore the urgent need for locally driven, inclusive approaches that both protect culture and manage tourism growth in a respectful manner.²²²

UNDP has developed multiple programs aiming to protect cultural practices and items through inclusive initiatives.²²³ In 2024, UNDP's Bangladesh Accelerator Lab trained locals in Naikkhonchari in the production and selling of handicrafts.²²⁴ The program's 15-day workshops train around 30 men and 30 youth in handicraft-making, livestock management, and raw-material marketing, equipping them to produce goods, access markets, promote their products, and support their household incomes.²²⁵ These sessions combine practical skills with business knowledge, helping participants understand pricing, quality control, and customer engagement, ensuring that the training creates sustainable economic

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics*. 2020. pp. 7-15; United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization. *Cultural heritage: 7 successes of UNESCO's preservation work*. N.d.

²¹⁶ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics*. 2020. pp. 14-15.

²¹⁷ United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization. *Cultural heritage: 7 successes of UNESCO's preservation work*. N.d.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Assaye Alamineh et al. *The local communities' perceptions on the social impact of tourism and its implication for sustainable development in Amhara regional state*. 2023.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ United Nations Development Programme. *Resilience Through Sustainable Tourism: Empowering Local Communities at Naikkhongchari in Bangladesh*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strengthens Value Chains of Traditional Crafts to Boost Tourism and Export Potential in Kyrgyzstan*. 2025.

²²⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Resilience Through Sustainable Tourism: Empowering Local Communities at Naikkhongchari in Bangladesh*. 2024.

²²⁵ Ibid.



opportunities within the community.²²⁶ By integrating these skills into local tourism, the initiative strengthens CBT by linking traditional livelihoods with tourism activities that preserve cultural heritage and generate income.²²⁷ This approach aligns with the goals of CSICH and contributes to SDG 1, SDG 8, and SDG 11.²²⁸ UNDP's 2025 Aid for Trade project in Kyrgyzstan strengthens the supply chains for traditional felt and leather crafts by training and supporting artisans to improve production, enhance product quality, and expand access to local and international markets.²²⁹ By focusing on capacity-building, quality improvement, and establishing local economic opportunities, this project contributes to preserving Kyrgyzstan's cultural heritage and further supports the goals of CBT.²³⁰ By safeguarding traditional knowledge and skills, the project aligns with SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 8, and SDG 11, as well as the World Charter, and CSICH.²³¹

By advancing sustainable growth, heritage management, and local capacity-building, numerous initiatives support the preservation of cultural heritage through CBT.²³² UNWTO and UNESCO's Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy Project (2013) provides planning support to five countries, selected for their shared Silk Road heritage corridors, developing policies that prioritize heritage conservation and community engagement.²³³ UNESCO's 2023–2026 project, Strengthening Capacities for Resilient Communities through Sustainable Tourism and Heritage Safeguarding In Latin America and the Caribbean, supports ten countries across the region.²³⁴ It provides training, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing platforms to help communities manage tourism sustainably while protecting cultural heritage.²³⁵ Both initiatives highlight the growing importance of CBT as a tool for sustainable development, emphasizing heritage-focused tourism that is rooted in community participation and respect for local cultures.²³⁶ In Colombia, the Indigenous Ingano community manages their sacred territory through the

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2018; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 15, 19, 21.

²²⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strengthens Value Chains of Traditional Crafts to Boost Tourism and Export Potential in Kyrgyzstan*. 2025.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid; United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Charter for Sustainable Tourism*. 1995; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. 2018; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 15, 17, 19, 21.

²³² United Nations World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO/UNESCO Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy Project*. 2013; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Strengthening capacities for resilient communities through Sustainable Tourism and Heritage Safeguarding Latin America and the Caribbean Project*. 2023; United Nations Environment Programme et al. *A handbook for the Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas Registry*. 2010. p. 10.

²³³ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO/UNESCO Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy Project*. 2013.

²³⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Strengthening capacities for resilient communities through Sustainable Tourism and Heritage Safeguarding Latin America and the Caribbean Project*. 2023.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *UNWTO/UNESCO Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy Project*. 2013; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Strengthening capacities for resilient communities through Sustainable Tourism and Heritage Safeguarding Latin America and the Caribbean Project*. 2023.



co-governance of Alto Fragua–Indiwasi National Park, established in collaboration with the national government as part of their Life Plan to integrate cultural values into the management of tourism and conservation.²³⁷ CBT initiatives that safeguard cultural heritage often operate under strong local governance, while broader impact may depend on the presence of clear national policies supporting community leadership and equitable benefit-sharing.²³⁸ Research indicates that without such frameworks, local efforts can be affected by challenges such as governance gaps, dependency on external funding, and cultural commodification.²³⁹ Addressing these challenges requires innovative solutions such as technological integration like digital marketing and virtual tourism platforms, and long-term community resilience planning that support local capacity building and inclusive governance.²⁴⁰

Enhancing Local Development

CBT contributes to enhancing local development by directly involving communities in managing tourism activities, which promotes economic diversification and poverty reduction.²⁴¹ CBT is expected to expand rapidly, rising from a global market value of \$575.9 billion in 2022 to approximately \$2136.8 billion by 2032, representing a compound annual growth rate of about 14.1%.²⁴² This surge is driven by growing demand for sustainable and culturally immersive travel experiences.²⁴³ Together, these trends underscore the increasing global relevance of CBT as a tool for development that benefits both travelers and local communities.²⁴⁴ CBT may lead to negative outcomes such as land dispossession and economic inequality due to weak governance, lack of legal land rights, and external investor pressures.²⁴⁵ For example, in Sri Lanka, communities were displaced to create space for tourism developments, often through forced evictions and land grabs in areas where locals lacked official land titles.²⁴⁶ In Zanzibar, locals experienced limited economic benefits while facing higher living costs due to increased demand for goods, housing,

²³⁷ United Nations Environment Programme et al. *A handbook for the Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas Registry*. 2010. p. 10.

²³⁸ Bui. *Georgetown Journal of International Law. Governance of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development in Southeast Asia*. 2025.

²³⁹ Jackson. *Tourism and Hospitality. Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight*. 2025.

²⁴⁰ Ibid; Riswandy Marsuki et. al. *Research Gate. Constructing Sustainable Community-Based Tourism: Institutional Challenges and Local Empowerment in Gowa Regency, Indonesia*. 2025.

²⁴¹ Jackson. *Tourism and Hospitality. Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight*. 2025.

²⁴² Allied Analytics LLP. *Einpresswire. Community Based Tourism Market to Hit \$2136.8 Billion by 2032 with a 14.1% Annual Growth Rate*. 2024.

²⁴³ Allied Market Search. *Community Based Tourism Market Size, Share, Competitive Landscape and Trend Analysis Report, by Age (Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z), by Traveler Type (Solo, Group), by Sales Channel (Travel Agents, Direct): Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2022 - 2032*. 2023.

²⁴⁴ Jackson. *Tourism and Hospitality. Community-Based Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals One and Eight*. 2025; Allied Analytics LLP. *Einpresswire. Community Based Tourism Market to Hit \$2136.8 Billion by 2032 with a 14.1% Annual Growth Rate*. 2024; Allied Market Search. *Community Based Tourism Market Size, Share, Competitive Landscape and Trend Analysis Report, by Age (Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z), by Traveler Type (Solo, Group), by Sales Channel (Travel Agents, Direct): Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2022 - 2032*. 2023.

²⁴⁵ Human Rights in Tourism. *Community Impact*. 2018; Timothy et al. *PubMed Central. Perception of residents on the impacts of beach tourism: The case of Nungwi village in Zanzibar, Tanzania*. 2023.

²⁴⁶ Human Rights in Tourism. *Community Impact*. 2018.



and services.²⁴⁷ This situation disproportionately affected low-income residents and those excluded from tourism employment.²⁴⁸ These cases highlight the need for stronger protections and inclusive governance to ensure that CBT initiatives empower local communities and distribute economic benefits equitably.²⁴⁹

UNDP supports CBT as a means to enhance local development by promoting inclusive, sustainable livelihoods, empowering marginalized communities, and fostering socio-economic growth through frameworks and programmes.²⁵⁰ In Vietnam, UNDP's Indigenous People's Planning Framework (2023) ensures the inclusion of ethnic minority communities in development by boosting their involvement in planning and decision-making through consultations and management boards.²⁵¹ Through this framework, ethnic groups can engage in CBT-related activities like forest restoration, environmental monitoring, and sustainable resource use, enabling them to earn income while preserving their ecosystems and cultural traditions.²⁵² This approach aligns with the principles of UNDRIP and contributes to achieving SDG 1 and SDG 8 by promoting equitable participation and sustainable livelihood opportunities for marginalized communities.²⁵³ In Turkey, UNDP collaborates with UNESCO, UNWTO, and the United Nations Children's Fund to map potential CBT opportunities in regional areas.²⁵⁴ The program begins with a comprehensive assessment of Turkey's existing legal and institutional frameworks, aiming to develop an action plan aligned with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Tourism Strategy of Turkey - 2023.²⁵⁵ Additionally, it develops capacity-building activities such as trainings and study tours, and the creation of practical toolkits and policy recommendations to support implementation at both local and national levels.²⁵⁶ This initiative reflects key principles of the World Charter and supports SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 11 by promoting locally driven, heritage-based tourism models that are inclusive and environmentally sustainable.²⁵⁷

International organizations have launched targeted initiatives to improve local development through CBT.²⁵⁸ UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative, through the RAICES Indigenous Tourism Incubator Program in Costa Rica, supports nature-based tourism that empowers Indigenous communities while conserving biodiversity and preserving local culture.²⁵⁹ With \$1.54 million in funding, the program supports

²⁴⁷ Timothy et al. PubMed Central. *Perception of residents on the impacts of beach tourism: The case of Nungwi village in Zanzibar, Tanzania*. 2023.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Human Rights in Tourism. *Community Impact*. 2018; Timothy et al. PubMed Central. *Perception of residents on the impacts of beach tourism: The case of Nungwi village in Zanzibar, Tanzania*. 2023.

²⁵⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Indigenous People's Planning Framework*. 2023. pp. 8-9; United Nations Development Programme. *Capacity Development for Sustainable Community Based Tourism*. 2023.

²⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Indigenous People's Planning Framework*. 2023. pp. 8-9,11.

²⁵² Ibid. pp.8,11.

²⁵³ Ibid. pp. 11, 30-31; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 15, 19.

²⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Capacity Development for Sustainable Community Based Tourism*. 2023.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid; United Nations World Tourism Organization. *Charter for Sustainable Tourism*. 1995; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 17, 21.

²⁵⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Investing in nature is critical for climate stability, safeguarding economic development, say experts in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 2024.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.



local communities in building sustainable tourism models that generate sustainable jobs, such as forest management.²⁶⁰ This approach exhibits CBT principles by promoting community ownership, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.²⁶¹ However, despite notable progress, several challenges remain in providing long-term solutions.²⁶² Research highlights that while international policies often promote sustainability, they may not be effective at the local level without collaboration among a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities.²⁶³ Persistent barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure, incompatible governance and limited skills training, can restrict the growth and long-term sustainability of CBT initiatives.²⁶⁴ This underscores the need for more cohesive, inclusive, and locally focused approaches to ensure that CBT can support sustainable and economic development.²⁶⁵

Conclusion

Over 1 billion individuals cross international borders annually, impacting local economies, various societies, and the environment.²⁶⁶ CBT directly affects the achievement of the 2030 Agenda (2015) with specific attention to SDG 1 target 1.4, which supports equitable access to economic opportunities, SDG target 8.9 that promotes local culture, and SDG target 11.4, preserving and promoting cultural and natural heritage.²⁶⁷ Due to its connection to various sectors, tourism has the capacity to facilitate progress towards all 17 of the SDGs.²⁶⁸ As the tourism sector expands, pressure on the natural environment increases, threatening the livelihood of local communities and the very foundation of tourism.²⁶⁹ UNDP, in collaboration with key partners such as UNWTO, continues to advance CBT through strategic planning and increased local empowerment.²⁷⁰ CBT enables not only economic growth but also strengthens local communities through capacity development and by promoting tourism that embraces community participation and preserves local heritage.²⁷¹ It is a key strategy for boosting local development, and building local and national capacities for sustainable tourism planning, application, and coordination.²⁷²

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Lee-Remond et al. Research Gate. *Reconciling UNESCO Site Accessibility and Sustainable Tourism Development by Co-Creation with Multiple Stakeholders*. 2024. p. 8; United Nations World Tourism Organization. Hospitality Net. *UNWTO Identifies Priorities for Boosting Rural Tourism Potential*. 2023.

²⁶³ Lee-Remond et al. Research Gate. *Reconciling UNESCO Site Accessibility and Sustainable Tourism Development by Co-Creation with Multiple Stakeholders*. 2024. pp. 8-9.

²⁶⁴ United Nations World Tourism Organization. Hospitality Net. *UNWTO Identifies Priorities for Boosting Rural Tourism Potential*. 2023.

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²⁶⁶ United Nations World Tourism Organization. *World Tourism Barometer: January 2024*. 2024.

²⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030*. 2018.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Capacity Development for Sustainable Community Based Tourism*. 2013.

²⁷² Ibid.



Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How do crisis events like pandemics and climate change affect the sustainability of CBT models? What strategies can be implemented to strengthen partnerships between local communities and governments to unlock the full potential of CBT? How might digital technology be used to support or limit the success of CBT goals? How can CBT projects be set up in a way that actively includes women, youth, and Indigenous people? How can communities keep their cultural identity preserved while also meeting the needs and preferences of tourists?



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